

Maa Skandmata – Fifth manifestation of Devi Durga

The fifth manifestation of Devi Durga is known as Maa Skandmata. She is fifth among Nava Durgas, that's why she is worshipped on the fifth Navratri. Devi Maa is the mother of Kumara Skanda or Kumara Kartikeya also called Lord Murugan in south India. Kumar Skanda was chosen by Gods as their commander in 'Deva-Sura Sangram' (the war of gods and demons) against the demons. Lord Murugan's glory has been narrated in the Puranas and he is referred to as Kumara and Saktidhar. His vehicle being peacock he is also called Mayuravahana.

Thus being the mother of Skanda she is Skandmata. Worshipping Skandmata on the fifth day of Navaratra has very importance for Yogis & Sadhaks. This day devotee's mind reaches Visuddha Chakra and stays therein. In her image the Lord Skanda in his infant form is always found. She holds him in her lap.

Using a lion as a vehicle, Mother Goddess has four arms and three eyes. She holds Lord Skanda in her right upper arm and a lotus flower in her right lower hand, which is slightly raised upward. The left upper arm is in a pose to grant boon and in left lower hand, which is raised, she again holds lotus. She is of Golden colour. She is seated on lotus flower so she is called Padmasana.

The scriptures are very eloquent in glorifying the fifth day of Navaratra period. As the mind of the aspirant, on this day, is in the Visuddha Chakra, so all his actions internal as well as external completely stop and the mind bereft of all thought-waves, is calm like a wave less ocean. It would be advancing towards the state of pure consciousness. It is completely submerged in the meditation of Mother Padmasana,

quite devoid of worldly thoughts or coats of Maya. It is time when the aspirant should be most careful and cautious on the path of his Sadhana.

By worshipping the Goddess in the form of Skandmata, the devotee gets all his desires fulfilled. He starts tasting the Supreme joy even in this very mortal world. The gateway for salvation to him is spontaneously opened. Her worship automatically includes the worship of Lord Skanda in his child form. Only she has got this pride of place. So the Sadhak should particularly be attentive to her worship. Being the presiding deity of Sun God, she bestows an uncommon luster and radiance on her devotee. He is always surrounded by an invisible divine halo, which always maintains his 'Yoga-Ksena'.

Therefore, we should try very sincerely to take refuge under her. There is no better way to Moksha from this world. She is the Goddess of Fire. The daughter of Himalaya, after observing penance got married with Shiva. She had a son named Skanda. Skanda is a leader of the army of Gods. Skanda Mata is a deity of fire. Skanda is seated in her lap. She has three eyes and four hands. She is white and seated on a lotus. Some also depict her sitting on a lion with her son Skand (Lord Kartikeya) in her lap with two hands holding lotuses while the other two hands respectively display defending and granting gestures.

It is said, by the mercy of Ma Skandmata, even the idiot becomes an ocean of knowledge. The great and legendary Sanskrit Scholar Kalidas created his two masterpiece works viz. Raghuvansh Maha Kavya and Meghdoot by the grace of Ma Skandmata. However some believe Kalidasa was also inspired and blessed by Maa Kushmanda.



NAVRATRA SPECIAL RECIPE Aloo Peanut Cutlet



Ingredients
 2 boiled potato
 1 tablespoon water chestnut flour
 1/2 teaspoon dry mango powder
 black salt as required
 1/2 cup crushed peanuts
 1/2 teaspoon cumin powder
 1/2 teaspoon red chilli powder
 2 tablespoon ghee

Method:
 Peel the boiled potatoes and collect them in a bowl. Mash them properly with a masher or fork. Add crushed peanuts, salt, red chilli powder, dry mango powder, cumin powder and water chestnut flour. Add 2 tbsp water and mix well with your hands to form a mixture. Grease your hands a bit with ghee. Take out small portions from the dough and flatten them out to make tikkis. Make tikkis using all mixture. Smear 1-2 tbsp ghee on a non-stick pan. Place the tikkis on the pan and let them cook from one side. Once golden brown, flip them towards the other side and let them cook properly. Serve the tikkis with some mint chutney. Enjoy!

Tips
 You can stuff the tikkis with some pomegranate seeds for added taste.

Temples of Goddess Durga in India with unbelievable Truths

While, there are several temples of Goddess Durga in India, some of them are so special that it is hard to resist the temptation of not visiting them even after knowing their facts. So here we share amazing facts about five shrines dedicated to the goddess.

Kasar Devi, Almora
 Kasar Devi is located on a hilltop, in Almora district on the Kaashay hills of Kumaon Himalayas. Situated in the middle of deodar and pine forests, the temple site offers the views of Almora, the Hawalbagh Valley, and the Himalayas from the Bandarpunch peak on the Himachal Pradesh border. The ash of dhuni burning in the temple premises can cure any mental disease. A unique magnetic power in and around the temple site bestows mental peace to the visitors. In 2013, a team of NASA scientists visited this temple to study the unique phenomenon and conduct experiments to know the effects of this abundant magnetic energy. As per the NASA research, the temple area is a part of Van Alan belt that store surplus amount of electro-magnetic particles similar to the Machu Picchu in Peru and the Stonehenge in England.

Dhari Devi, Dang Chaura, Uttarakhand
 Dhari Devi temple is situated between Srinagar and Rudraprayag on the banks of Alaknanda River in Kalyasaur village. She is the guardian deity of Uttarakhand. In this shrine, only the upper body of the goddess is worshipped while the lower body is enshrined elsewhere. Legend has it that a severe flood had washed away Dhari Devi's idol in its waters. The idol of the Devi was trapped against a rock near the village Dhara. The locals heard the wail of the idol and divine voice commanded them to install the idol in the village. An amazing fact about this shrine is that the stone image of the goddess changes face from that of a girl to a woman, and finally of an old lady as the day progresses.

Jwala Devi, Kangra
 Located in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, about 56 km from Dharamsala, the temple of Jwala Devi or



Jwala Devi, Kangra

Jwala ji stands out for its eternal flame which has been burning since ages. The temple finds a mention in the Mahabharata and other scriptures. It is a natural cave where the eternal flames continue to burn. As per lore, once a proud Emperor Akbar had donated a golden umbrella to the shrine which turned into an unknown metal by will of the goddess. The flame of Jwala Ji never got extinguished even when tyrants in the past attempted to pour gallons of water over it.

Karni Mata Mandir, Deshnoke
 It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Karni Mata at Deshnoke, located 30 km from Bikaner, in Rajasthan. Also called the Temple of Rats, the shrine has about 25000 black rats that live and a few white rats residing within the temple premises. These holy rats are known as kabbas, and are revered by everyone. As per a legend, Karni Mata was a divine incarnation whose mission was serving the people. One day, her sister's son drowned in a pond while trying to drink water. Karni Mata implored Yama, the god of the mortals, to restore the life of the boy. Yama relented and granted the boon that all the male children of Karni Mata's clan will be born as rats before being born as humans again. Eating food that has been nibbled on by the rats is believed to be fortunate. No disease has been ever spread by the temple rats.

Kamakhyia Devi, Guwahati
 On the Nilachal Hill in Guwahati, Assam, is located the awe-inspiring temple of goddess Kamakhya. What makes it shrine unique is the fact that no stone idol of the goddess is worshipped in the inner sanctum within the shikhara, the garbhagriha. Instead, the object of worship is the rock shaped like the female genital which is believed to be of the goddess herself.

The rock fissure in the shape of a yoni (female genital) is always filled with water from an underground spring. Every year in June, a famous fair is held known as Ambubehi Mela during which the goddess menstruates, as per a belief.

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ii)	Last date for submission of Application form on the email : uietko@gmail.com (without late fee)	11.10.2021
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