

STATE TIMES

SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday

# Navratri is the celebration of the spirit

The word ‘Navratri’ means nine nights in Sanskrit. ‘Nava’ has two meanings; one is ‘nine’ and the other is ‘new’. “Ratri” means night – which gives solace and rest and brings rejuvenation. It gives relief at three levels of our existence – physical, subtle and causal. This is a period for self-referral and transformation; getting back to the source. During this time nature sheds the old and life rejuvenates and emerges back afresh in the spirit.

Like a baby is in the mother’s womb for nine months before it is born, similarly, during these nine days and nights, the seeker through fasting, prayer, silence and meditation gets back to its true source; which is love, joy and peace. While fasting detoxifies the body, silence purifies the speech and brings rest to the chattering mind. Meditation takes one deep into one’s own being.

During these nine nights of Navratri, our mind should be in divine consciousness. We should ask self these questions, “How was I born? What is my source?” Then we become creative and victorious. When negative forces haunt us, we are disturbed and we grumble. Craving, aversion, uncertainty and fear are the negative forces. To get relief from all this, we need to go to the source of energy within us.

During these nine nights and ten days, nine forms of Devi Shakti i.e. female divinity is worshipped. On the first three days of Navratri we honour Durga, the embodiment of valour and self-confidence. The next three days are committed to Lakshmi, the embodiment of wealth and the last three days are dedicated to Saraswati, the embodiment of knowledge.

There are many stories on how the divine mother manifested herself to restore peace and order by slaying the asuras (demons) – Madhu and Kaitabha, Mahishasura and Shumbha and Nishumbha and many other demons. These demons are symbolic of the negative forces that can take over anyone at anytime. Madhu is craving and Kaitaba means aversion. Raktabijasur means deeply ingrained negativities and obses-

sions. Mahishasur means dullness. It is symbolic of heaviness and inertia. The Divine Shakti brings energy, and inertia is lifted. Doubt of the self is ‘Shumbh’. Nishumbh is doubt of everything.

Navratri is the celebration of the spirit or prana which alone can destroy these asuras. Though our life is governed by the three gunas, we seldom recognize and reflect on them. During the first three days of Navratri, our consciousness sails through tamo guna (it leads to depression, fear and emotional instability), the next three days through rajo guna (this leads to anxiety and feverishness) and then blossoms in the sattva guna of the last three days (it gives us clarity and focus and we become peaceful and dynamic). These three primordial gunas are considered as the feminine forces of our magnificent universe.

By worshipping the Mother Divine during Navratri, we harmonise the three gunas and elevate sattva in the atmosphere. Whenever sattva dominates in life, victory follows.

On the tenth day we celebrate Vijaydashami – the day of victory. This is the day of culmination in the awakening of our divine consciousness. It means, simply feel blessed and more honoured for everything that we have received.

Many yagnas are conducted during these nine auspicious days. Although we may not necessarily understand the meaning of all the yagnas and ceremonies which are performed, we should simply sit with our hearts and minds open and feel the vibrations it creates.

The chantings with all the rituals and customs bring about purification and upliftment of the consciousness. The entire creation becomes alive and we recognize life in everything just as children see life in everything.

The Mother Divine or the pure consciousness itself pervades all the forms. Recognizing the one divinity in every form and every name is the celebration of Navratri.

**Wish You Happy Navratri !**



## 6 Places to Celebrate Navratri in Six Different Style



Surroundings with the fragrance of divinity, the continuous chanting of Mantra, environment soaked in religious zeal, the temple bells and arti echoes at the break of dawn, spellbinds the soul. This is the time to welcome one of the most vibrant festivals of India “The Navratri” to invoke the Goddess of Power. Navratri, the festival is devoted to Maa Durga and celebrated with immense fervor in the month of “Ashwin”. According to the English calendar, the pious Ashwin month is dedicated between September-October which is the time to welcome winter season. The atmosphere during Navratri is filled with floral essence that makes the devotees feel the eternal bliss showered by Maa Durga. The festival is celebrated around the country with boundless enthusiasm. Like every year, this year also the colorful vibes of Sharad Navratri is all set to welcome Maa Durga for ten divine days around the country.

The religious diversity with unity can be seen in every part of the country, as rituals and tradition to celebrate the festival differs in every part of the country. Planning a religious trip to such places during Navratri can make the people feel the colorful culture of India. It’s the time to rejoice and reunite with our family to commemorate these 10 days celebration. There’re popular destinations to visit during the festival which can mesmerize the devotees with its religious essence.

This year, Maa Durga is arriving on elephant which directly means plenty of rainfall for harvesting. Religiously, it is considered as a good sign for farmers to produce variety of crops. The celebration will commence from 15th October with the ritual of “Kalashthapan” and it will end on 23rd October with Ravan-Dahan ceremony. So, get ready to feel the rhythm of this festival to different corners of India. Check online seat availability in trains to book tickets. There are many places in India to enjoy the grand fiesta of Navratri in different style. Let’s explore the places to be the part of this energetic celebration of the Goddess of Shakti.

**Kolkata, West Bengal**

The smell of the Dhuni, sight of Maa in all her resplendent glory, Durga Puja of Kolkata holds an importance in the heart of devotees. During Navratri, locals believe that Maa returns to her home like a married woman return to her paternal house. People erect and decorate pandals which is like a rural tent made with bamboo sticks and decorated lavishly. Inside the pandal, one can please their eyes by seeing the majestic idol of Maa Durga. Apart from the pandals, the other major attractions during Navratri season are the arts and creativity of the artisans. With no doubt, Kolkata is the prime place of this celebration.

**Ahmedabad, Gujarat:**

The celebration of Navratri starts here with fireworks which could be witnessed throughout the night. People can enjoy the stage drama of Ramleela. During Navratri, Dandiya is the prime event of Ahmedabad which attracts people from different corners of India to join this grand event. Women wear traditional attire Lehenga Choli while men wear Kedia. During Navratri season, the place is a hub for shopaholics to buy ethnic and traditional things, especially for the upcoming festival Diwali.

**Kullu, Himachal Pradesh**

Durga Puja in Kullu is celebrated in a unique way and carries on for 7 days. People of Kullu worship Lord Ragunath on the fairground of Dhalpur Maidan. Villagers nearby bring the idols of local Gods and Goddesses. People could be found overloaded with joy and happiness for the whole week.

**Chhattisgarh, Raipur**

People of Chhattisgarh celebrate Navratri in an eco-friendly style by rejoicing nature and the presiding deity of the state. They worship their goddess Danteshwari and perform their unique rituals known as pata jatra (worship of wood), deri gadahai (installation of Kalash), and nisha jatra (night time festival).

**Coorg, Karnataka**

Durga Puja is celebrated here as a carnival organized on a grand scale in the Indian state of Karnataka. This vibrant kind of carnival is also popular as Mariamma festival. People dedicate folk dance to Draupadi, the wife of Pandavs. Parade is also organized in which drama of god, goddess and evils are performed. This grand festival holds along and interesting history belongs to the supremacy of Haaleri kings.

**Patna, Bihar**

When the Navratri season arrives, Patnites get drenched in festive colors. Pandals are decorated on different themes that attract locals and visitors from other parts of Bihar. One can get a mesmerizing view of the pandal and puja style of Bengali community in Bengali Akhara. Dak Bunglow road, the commercial heart of Patna is the center location where people from all areas arrive to see the unique décor and beautiful idols. Also, Vijay Dashmi is extravagantly celebrated in the Gandhi Maidan area.

