

SUNDAY

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Here's how Deepawali is celebrated in different parts of India

While diyas, fairy lights, lamps, firecrackers and rangoli are common sights on Deepawali, here's how the Hindu festival is celebrated in different parts of India. According to the Hindu calendar, Diwali or Deepawali falls on the 15th day in the month of Kartik and this year the festival of lights will be celebrated in India on October 24. While diyas, fairy lights, lamps, firecrackers and rangoli are common sights on Deepawali, the Hindu festival is celebrated in varied ways in different parts of the country.

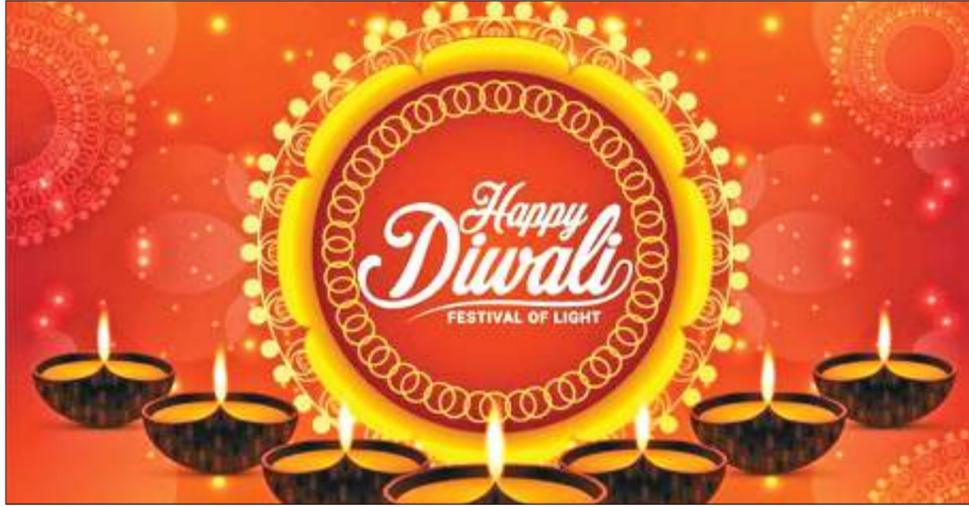
For Hindus in Northern India, Diwali symbolises the return of Ram with wife Sita and brother Laxman to Ayodhya after being exiled for 14 years. When he returned, Ram was welcomed home with diyas and fireworks which were lit throughout the kingdom since it was a new moon day in the month of Kartik season and it was dark all around.

Hence, the lighting of diya signifies the triumph of good over evil when people are united during the occasion of Diwali and there are celebrations happening all around. The tradition of lighting diyas and fireworks continue even today in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar and neighbouring areas while in Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Punjab, people also engage in gambling on Diwali night as it is considered to be auspicious.

The gurdwaras in Punjab are illuminated on Diwali night even though the Sikhs do not celebrate Diwali but they are a part of the celebrations and light their houses with candles and diyas. In Delhi, UP and other surrounding Indian states, houses are decorated with candles, lights, diyas, bandhanwars and rangolis with Laxmi puja being performed at night.

The devotees in some houses even put a silver coin in a tumbler of milk, which is then sprinkled in all the rooms as a tradition along with indulging in shopping, cleaning, gambling, redecoration, whitewashing, home decoration, exchanging of gifts and sweets are part and parcel of the celebrations.

Diwali's history can be traced back to ancient India, with several legends associated with it. Many believe that Diwali is the celebration which marks Lakshmi's wedding with Vishnu while others mark it to be a celebration of Lakshmi's birth, as



it is believed that she was born on the new moon day of Kartik.

In Bengal, the Goddess of strength Kali is worshipped during Diwali. In certain homes, Ganesha is worshipped since he is a symbol of auspiciousness. In Eastern India, the rituals of lighting of lamps, candles, diyas and bursting firecrackers remain the same but additionally, some devotees keep the doors of their lit houses open for Lakshmi to enter as it is believed that the diety does not enter a dark house.

West Bengal celebrates Diwali as Kali Puja where late-night worshipping of Kali is done on Diwali night, there are Kali Puja pandals in various areas, rangoli is drawn and the night of Diwali is believed to be the night of the ancestors or Pitripurush where diyas are lit on long poles to guide their

souls on the way to heaven - a practise followed in rural Bengal even in contemporary times.

The Hindu community in Odisha too pays tributes to ancestors on Diwali while the festival in Western India is mostly associated with business and trade where new ventures, buying of properties, the opening of offices and shops and special occasions like marriages are considered auspicious. Few days before Diwali, the markets of Western India are crowded with Diwali shoppers while rangoli making and painting footprints to welcome Laxmi is an integral part of Diwali celebrations, which is New Year for Gujaratis.

A very auspicious Diwali custom in Gujarat is to keep a diya lit with ghee and left burning the whole night then collect the

flame from this diya the next morning and use it to make kaval, which is applied by women on their eyes, as it is believed to bring prosperity for the whole year. Hindus in Maharashtra celebrate Diwali for four days with Vasubaras being the first day and marked by performing an Aarti of the cows and calves to signify love between a mother and her baby.

Dhanteras or Dhanatrayodashi is celebrated on Day 2 while the third day is Narakachaturdashi where people take scented oil bath early morning and visit a temple, then feast on a special Diwali preparation called Fasal which consists of delicious sweets like "karanji" and "ladoo" and spicy eatables like "chakli" and "sev" and the fourth day is the main Diwali day when Lakshmi Puja is performed by worshipping Lakshmi and items of wealth like money and jewellery.

Southern India celebrates Diwali in the Tamil month of aipasi where Naraka Chaturdashi is the main day of the celebrations. One day before Naraka Chaturdashi, the oven is cleaned, then smeared with lime, religious symbols are drawn on it, filled with water and then used on the main day for the oil bath.

Instead of rangolis, like in North India, Hindus in South India decorate their houses with kolam designs. After the oil bath, new clothes are worn and firecrackers are burst along with observing Thalai Deepavali, another unique ritual, where newlyweds spend their first Diwali in the bride's parental home.

Andhra Pradesh celebrates Diwali with Harikatha or the musical narration of the story of Hari as it is believed that Krishna's consort Satyabhama had killed demon Narakasura so, prayers are offered to special clay idols of Satyabhama. In Karnataka too, the day of Diwali or Ashwija Krishna Chaturdashi commences with people taking an oil bath as it is believed that Krishna took the oil bath to remove the bloodstains from his body after killing Narakasura.

In Karnataka, Bali Padyami is Diwali's third day which is marked by women sketching colourful rangolis in their houses, building forts from cow dung and narrating stories associated with King Bali.

Top tips to make your home festive ready



Diwali, the most awaited and loved Hindu festival is around the corner. A massive show of lights, colours, and decorations accompanies Diwali. Given that this festival stands for the triumph of good over evil, Diwali decorations emphasise optimism with lots of lights and vibrant decorations. People clean their homes, decorate them with lights, flowers, and Rangolis, and pray for prosperity and peace. Decorate your home for Diwali with cheerful accents and traditional decor mixed with modern touch. The various lampshades represent our joyful emotions and through the mithais, we share the sweetness of life. So this Diwali, decorate your home with these fresh and contemporary decor ideas.

Flower decoration: Flowers are a necessary component of Diwali decorating. For Goddess Lakshmi and your loved ones who will be visiting you this Diwali, make sure your houses are prepared. A floral door or window decoration that draws attention will undoubtedly draw appreciative glances from passersby. Beautiful yellow,



cerise, and red carnations, orange gerberas, and yellow roses in a vase make the ideal Diwali flowers.

Colourful candles: Vibrant candles come in different shapes, sizes and colours and grab everyone's attention. This Diwali, there are three different methods to use candles to create enchantment. For a stunning visual treat, use engraved candles, utilise colourful candles to brighten up the corners of the house, or use chic candle burners that have been stylishly carved.

Diwali torans: Diwali torans, or wall hangings, serve as both ornamental accents and auspicious seasonal features. You may generate that genuine Diwali charm by making torans out of discarded materials or using Ganesha wall hangings. They look stylish and will add a traditional charm to your Diwali decor.

Glass jar lanterns: This is one of the creative home decorating ideas. An empty glass jar can be used as a lantern. You can draw your own designs on them to make



them more inventive. Either a diya or modest artificial lights can be placed inside. You can use these lovely glass jar lanterns to spruce up your home's shelves or balcony.

Metallic showpieces: Rustic-looking metallic objects give an otherwise modern room a hint of beauty and traditionalism. Furthermore, Diwali is the ideal opportunity to experiment with home decor. If you have old, large metallic containers lying around your house, you can scatter them around the walls and ceilings of your living room, hallway, and balcony. They should be filled with water, decorated with petals and flowers, and lit with candles or diyas (earthen lamps).

Fairy lights: Fairy lights are frequently used to embellish a house's facade. Bring them inside for an amazingly original Diwali decoration now. Your saviour is fairy lights, which can be placed in glass vases for a stunning illuminating effect or in puja rooms.

Diwali : No-sugar Dessert recipes for diabetics and weight-watchers

On Diwali, everyone goes for those sugar-laden sweets. Sweets are an inseparable part of the biggest festival of the year, but they can be a big trouble for diabetics and weight-watchers. delightful array of no-sugar Indian dessert recipes, specially crafted for diabetics and weight-watchers. How about making some innovative recipes that will not only satisfy the sweet cravings but also prioritize health, making it easier for individuals with diabetes or those aiming for weight management to enjoy the goodness of Indian desserts without the guilt. Take a look at some of these dishes.

Sugar-free Gulab Jamun

It's a classic Indian dessert that can be made in a healthier way by substituting sugar with natural sweeteners like stevia or dates. The traditional fried dumplings soaked in rose-flavoured syrup retain their authentic taste without compromising on health. Rich in fibre and essential nutrients, this guilt-free version caters to both diabetics and weight-watchers alike.

Low-carb Kheer with Almond Milk

Kheer is a popular sweet dish that can be prepared around Diwali. All you need to do is replace high-calorie ingredients with healthier alternatives. Use almond milk instead of regular milk to reduce the calories, while the addition of nuts and seeds enhances the dessert's nutritional profile. A dash of cardamom and saffron provides a burst of flavour without the need for excess sugar.

Steamed Whole Wheat Jaggery Cake

This steamed cake combines whole wheat flour and jaggery, a natural sweetener with a low glycaemic index. Enriched with nuts and spices, this moist and spongy cake offers a delightful texture and taste without the harmful effects of refined sugar. It's an excellent choice for those monitoring their blood sugar levels and calorie intake.

No-sugar Added Fruit Chaat

For a refreshing dessert option, a fruit chaat made with a variety of fresh fruits and chaat masala is a delightful choice. The natural sweetness of fruits combined with the tangy spices creates a burst of flavours, eliminating the need for added sugar. This dessert is not only diabetic-friendly but also a low-calorie alternative for weight-conscious individuals.

Date and Nut Laddoo

Dates, revered for their natural sweetness, take centre stage in this dessert. Blended with nuts, seeds, and a hint of ghee, these bite-sized laddoos offer a satisfying crunch and delightful taste. These energy-packed treats are free from added sugars and preservatives, making them an ideal choice for diabetics and those on a weight-loss journey.

