

Hindu Festivals Dates 2012 Calendar

Below is the Hindu Festivals Dates 2012 Calendar based on the important Hindu festivals, rituals and auspicious dates followed in various parts of India. The Hindu Festivals 2012 calendar is prepared with reference to major traditional calendars followed in India. On each festival name to read about the importance of the festival and the legends and rituals associated with it.

January 2012 Festival Dates

5th January 2012 - Vaikunta Ekadasi Festival

13th January 2012 - Lohri Festival

14th and 15th January 2012 – Makar Sankranti

15th January 2012 – Thai Pongal

16th January 2012 – Swami Vivekananda Jayanti

28th January 2012 – Basant Panchami or Vasanth Panchami

30th January 2012 – Ratha Sabtami

February 2012 Festival Dates

6th February 2012 – Thaipusam or Thaipooam

14th February 2012 – Ashtami at Vaikom Mahadeva Temple

20th February 2012 – Maha Shivaratri

March 2012 Festival Dates

5th March 2012 – Aayilyam at Pambady Pampumkavu Snake Temple

7th March 2012 - Maasi Magam - Holika Dahan or Chotti Holi

8th March 2012 - Holi Festival - Attukal Pongala

14th March 2012 - Karadayan Nonbu - Arattu at Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple

15th March 2012 – Ratholsavam at Kollur Mookambika Devi Temple

23rd March 2012 – Gudi Padwa

26th March 2012 – Kodungalloor Bharani Festival

April 2012 Festival Dates

1st April 2012 – Ram Navami

5th April 2012 – Panguni Uthiram or Pankuni Uthram

6th April 2012 – Hanuman Jayanti

14th April 2012 – Vishu

24th April 2012 – Akshaya Trithiya

26th April 2012 – Sree Shankaracharya Jayanti

May 2012 Festival Dates

1st May 2012 – Thrissur Pooram

2nd May 2012 – Madurai Meenakshi Thirukalyanam

4th May 2012 – Narasimha Jayanthi and Agni Nakshathram starts

6th May 2012 – Chitirai Poornima

28th May 2012 – Agni Nakshathram ends

June 2012 Festival Dates

3rd June 2012 - Vaikasi Visagam - Arattu at Kanyakumari Devi Temple

21st June 2012 – Puri Rath Yatra at Jagannath Temple Orissa

July 2012 Festival Dates

18th July 2012 – Aadi Amavasya

24th July 2012 – Naga Panchami

27th July 2012 – Varalakshmi Puja

August 2012 Festival Dates

2nd August 2012 - Raksha Bandhan Avani Avittam

3rd August 2012 – Gayathri Japam

5th August 2012 – Sri Maha Sankatahara Chathurthi

9th August 2012 – Sri Krishna Janmashtami

10th August 2012 – Sree Krishna Jayanti in North India
21st August 2012 – Tripunithura Atha Chamayam
29th August 2012 – Onam Festival in Kerala

September 2012 Festival Dates

18th September 2012 – Haritalika Teej
19th September 2012 – Ganesh Chaturthi or Vinayaka Chavithi
30th September 2012 – Pitru Paksha Shradh starts

October 2012 Festival Dates

15th October 2012 - Pitru Paksha Shradh Mahalaya
16th October 2012 – Navratri Festival starts
22nd October 2012 – Durga Ashtami
23rd October 2012 – Maha Navami, Saraswathi Pooja, Ayudha Pooja
24th October 2012 – Vijaya Dashami or Dussehra

November 2012 Festival Dates

2nd November 2012 – Karva Chouth
11th November 2012 – Dhanteras
13th November 2012 – Diwali or Deepavali
13th November 2012 – Lakshmi Puja
16th November 2012 – Sabarimala Mandala Kalam Festival
Pilgrimage season 2012 – 2013 begins
19th November 2012 – Skanda Shasti
24th to 28th November 2012 – Tulsi Puja and Vivah
27th November 2012 – Thiruvanamalai Deepam

December 2012 Festival Dates

6th December 2012 – Kal Bhairav Ashtami
23rd December 2012 – Vaikunta Ekadasi
23rd December 2012 – Gita Jayanti
27th December 2012 – Sri Dattatreya Jayanti

[Background for some important festivals](#)

Lohri Festival

Lohri festival is a well-renowned harvest festival celebrated in North India, especially in Punjab. According to the Hindu Solar Calendar, Lohri falls in the month of Paush (around 13 January) and is celebrated a day before Makara Sankranti. Lohri festival marks the sun's entry in to the northern hemisphere. A festival dedicated to fire and the Sun God, Lohri denotes the end of winter on the last day of Paush, and beginning of Magha (mid January). Lohri Festival coincides with Pongal Festival in Tamil Nadu, Makar Sankranti in Bengal & Kerala, Magha Bihu in Assam and Thai Pongal in Kerala. This year, the date of Lohri Festival 2011 is on 13th January 2011, Thursday.

Lohri Festival Traditions

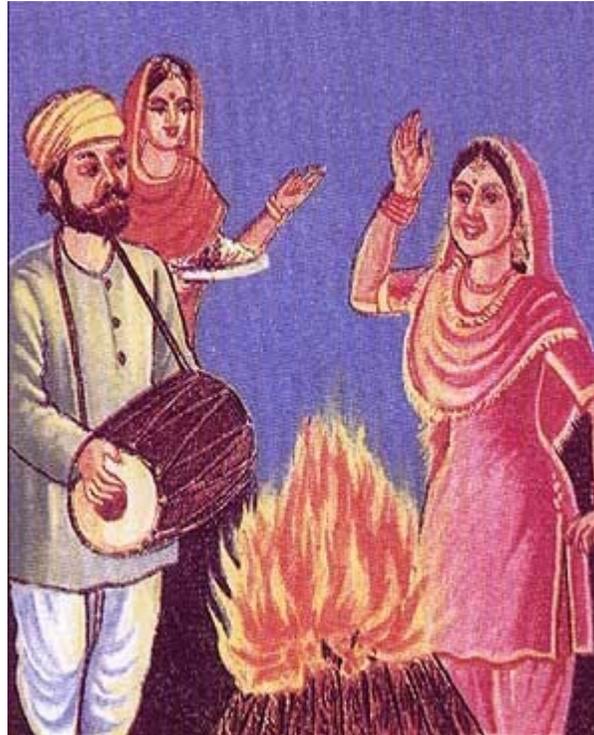
Lohri is not only a function but also an occasion for people to get together with friends and relatives. People light up the harvested fields and front yards with flames of fire. They throw sweets, puffed rice and popcorn into the flames, sing folksongs and exchange Lohri greetings.

After the crack of dawn, children visit every house by singing songs in praise of Dulha Bhatti, a Punjabi version of Robin Hood who is said to have robbed from the rich and helped the poor. They are given money as they knock on doors, and in the evening, people gather around bonfires.

The Bonfire Customs

During the Lohri celebrations, huge bonfires are lit in the harvested fields and in the front yards of houses. This custom is a kind of prayer to Lord Agni, the God of fire, to bless the land with wealth and prosperity. People then meet friends and relatives, exchange gifts, and distribute prasad (offerings made to God). The prasad comprises of five main items, namely, til (gingelly), gajak (a hardened bar of peanuts in jaggery or sugar syrup), gur (jaggery), moongphali (peanuts), and phuliya (popcorn). They serve winter savories around the bonfire with the traditional dinner of makki-ki-

roti (multi-millet hand-rolled bread) and sarson-ka-saag (cooked mustard herbs).



Lohri dances are performed on the day. Male dances include Bhangra, Jhoomer, Luddi, Julli and Dankara. Female dances are Giddha and Kikli.

Significance of Fertility

Lohri is also a festival that celebrates the first marriage or birth of the male child in the family. On the day, the new-born baby sits on the lap of his/her mother and the relatives shower their blessings. Afterwards, the family members shake their leg around the bonfire by singing traditional songs and by performing certain rituals. In the same way, the newly wed couples receive blessings of elders from the family.

The Maghi Day

The next day of Lohri, known as Maghi, denotes the beginning of the month of Magh. The day is marked by preparing Kheer in sugar cane juice. It is also an auspicious day for the Sikhs in commemoration of

a battle. The forty immortals who were the followers of Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth Guru of Sikhism) and who died in his defense are revered during the day.

[Makar Sankranti](#)

Makar Sankranti, also known as Makara Sankrant or Sankranthi, is an important Hindu harvest festival celebrated in various parts of India. Celebrated in the Hindu Calendar month of Magha (mid January - mid February), Makar Sankranti is the day when the Sun God enters into the Northern Hemisphere, denoting the beginning of Uttarayana Punya Kaalam. Makar means Capricorn and Sankranti means transition and Makar Sankranti marks the transition of the Sun into Capricorn on its celestial path.

Makara Sankranti also honors the worship of Goddess Saraswati and also for the departed ancestors. As this festival is dedicated to Sun God, people take a holy dip at Prayag and Ganga Sagar (important pilgrimage centers of India) to worship Sun.

Mythological Significance of Makar Sankranti Festival

According to legends, on this day, the Sun God visits the house of his son, Shani (Saturn) who is the Lord of Makar Rashi (Capricorn). Though father and son do not have a cordial relationship, Lord Surya comes to his son's house, for a month. This denotes the importance of special relationship of father and son.

It is said that the 'day' of Devas begins from Uttarayana and the 'night' of devatas is said to be Dakshinayana. Therefore, most of the auspicious events are done during this time. Uttarayana is also called as Devayana, and the next half is called Pitrayana.

Makara Sankranti Festival in India

Makar Sankranti is celebrated differently in various parts of the country. In Andhra Pradesh, Makar Sankranti is celebrated as a 3 day harvest festival known as Pedda Panduga, while in Assam the

festival is known as Bhogali Bihu, in Haryana and Punjab the festival is known as Lohri, in Uttar Pradesh Makar Sankranti is celebrated as Khichiri festival and in Tamil Nadu Makar Sankranti is known as Pongal Festival and celebrated for four days.

Thai Pongal Festival

Pongal festival or Thai Pongal festival is a four-day harvest festival celebrated in Tamil Nadu, South India. One of the most popular Tamil festivals, Pongal is celebrated as offering of prayers to nature. Pongal festival is celebrated for four days from the last day of the Tamil month of Margazhi (mid December – mid January) to the third day of Thai (mid January - mid February) and coincides with the festival Makara Sankranti and Lohri festival of north India.

The word Pongal means boiling over and the Tamils refer Pongal as Tamizhar Thirunal (the festival of Tamils). In Astrology, this is the period when the sun traverses from the Tropic of Capricorn to the Tropic of Cancer via the Equator (from 14th January to 14th July), and this movement is termed as Uttarayan. Following are the four days of Pongal Festival celebrated.

- 1) Bhogi Pongal
- 2) Surya Pongal
- 3) Maatu Pongal
- 4) Kaanum Pongal (or Kanum Pongal)



Regional Significance of Pongal Festival

Pongal is celebrated in almost all the states of India. In northern India, the festival is known as Lohri, in Assam it is called Bhogali Bihu, in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar it is known as Sankranti, and in Andhra Pradesh it is celebrated as Bhogi.

[Thaipusam Festival - Thai Poosam or Thaipooyam](#)

Thaipusam, also known as Thaipooyam or Thai Poosam, is a major Hindu festival celebrated mainly by the Tamils in South India. Thaipusam festival commemorates the birthday of Lord Murugan or Lord Subramanya and the occasion when Goddess Parvati gave Murugan a Vel (spear) to defeat the evil demon Soorapadman. Thai Pusam festival falls on the full moon day in the Tamil month of Thai (mid January - mid February). Thai refers to the Tamil month and Pusam (Pushya) refers to one of the 27 asterisms. As a result of migration, the Tamil community settled in Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and elsewhere around the world are also celebrating Thaipusam now a days with greater joy and enthusiasm. Thaipusam is celebrated by Kerala Tamils as Thaipooyam.

Significance of Thaipusam Festival

Thaipusam Huge Crowd at Batu Caves Murugan Temple Malaysia

Thai Poosam is regarded as the most powerful day to pray the Lord for getting rid of enemies, diseases and debts.

Thaipusam Festival Celebrations – Kavadi Attam

Devotees make offerings to Lord Muruga for removing their troubles and the most important rite that a devotee undertakes is the Kavadi. Kavadi Attam is made of two semi-circular pieces of wood or steel which are curved and attached to a cross structure, balanced on the shoulders of the devotee. It is decorated with flowers and peacock feathers.

Persons who take Kavadi should perform intricate ceremonies at the time of taking the Kavadi and at the time of offering it to the Lord. They should follow the rules of Brahmacharya and take only pure vegetarian food, once a day.

Several devotees of Lord Murugan offer fruits and flowers of yellow or orange color and they also adorn dresses of the same color. You can see some devotees walk barefoot from home to one of the temples of Lord Muruga, carrying the Kavadi. Some devotees involve in piercing the skin, tongue or cheeks with Vel skewers.

Legends of Thaipusam Festival

There are a number of legends associated with this festival.

According to one legend, Lord Muruga killed the demon, Tarakasura, on this day and hence Thai Poosam is celebrated to commemorate this event.

Another legend, associated with Kavadi, tells about testing the spirit of Idumban, the student of Sage Agasthya, by Lord Muruga.

Thai Pusam Festival in Murugan Temples

The temples dedicated to Lord Muruga, especially the 'Arupadai Veedu in Tamilnadu' (six holy abodes), bear a festive look on Thai Poosam day.

However, Thaipusam festival at Palani Temple is well-renowned than any other Murugan temples. In Palani, Thaipusam is celebrated as a ten-day festival in a grand manner. Large numbers of devotees flock here and carry Kavadi.



The Murugan Temple at Batu Caves, near Kuala Lumpur, attracts millions of devotees during this occasion. The procession starts at the Sri Mahamariamman Temple, Kuala Lumpur, and continues for 15 kilometers to the caves, concluding in a flight of 272 steps to the top.

Kukke Subramanya Temple in Karnataka and Thiruchendur Murugan Temple in Thiruchendur also celebrates Thaipooyam festival with much religious importance.

At Udayanapuram Subramanya Temple in Vaikom of Kerala, Thaipusam festival is conducted with Kavadis, wherein the devotees take Panchamritha Kavadi, Paal Kaavadi and Bhasma Kavadi.

The Utsava moorthy (procession idol) is taken in procession on a vahanam (mount) at the Satyavageswara Temple located in Karamana of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. A ritual called Nel (Paddy) Parai Alappu or Nel alavu, is performed for prosperity.



Vaikom Mahadeva Temple in Kottayam Kerala

Vaikom Mahadeva Temple is one of the oldest Shiva Temples in South India, situated at Vaikom, in Kottayam district of Kerala. Referred as Thekkan Kashi (Southern Kashi), Vaikom temple enshrines Lord Shiva as Vaikkathappan - is the presiding deity of the temple. It is believed that Lord Shiva manifests himself as Dakshinamurthy in the Panthirathi pooja in the morning, Kiraata Murthy during the Uchcha pooja at noon and as Satchitananda in the evening. Lord Shiva is. Vaikom Shiva Temple is considered as one of the largest and the oldest of all Kerala temples. Vaikom Mahadeva Shiva Temple, along with Ettumanoor Shiva Temple and Kaduthuruthy Mahadeva Temple is considered a powerful tri-some. Vaikom Temple is 33 km south of Ernakulam and 40 km north of Kottayam.

Vaikom Temple Architecture

Vaikom Sree Mahadevar Temple spreads over eight acres of land with five prakarams (enclosures) and four towers. There is a Balikalulpura (the place of the sacrificial stone) where Stambha Ganesh is found at its north-east corner. The Namaskara Mandapa bears the story of Ramayana sculptured on its inner roof. On the

east of this hall is a huge Nandi (the celestial bull) made in a single stone and a small one for Archana.

The Sreekovil or the sanctum of Vaikom Siva Temple is oval in shape, covered with a copper plated roof and a golden kalasam at its top. It has two chambers. Mukhamandapa (the main hall) is the first chamber, built in shaped stone and single piece woods. Garbha Griha (Sanctum Santorum) is the second chamber, built completely in stone with the roof in a square shape. A Peedhom or platform is seen here, which is of about three feet high. On this Peedhom is the six feet high Siva Lingam of Shree Vaikathappan which is made of chaste black stone. The Linga is decorated with Chandrakala (crescent), three eyes, nose and four hands with ornaments in the form of 'anky' in pure gold. The outer walls of Sreekovil are decorated with wooden sculptures and stories from Puranas. The golden flagstaff is about 317 feet high. The deity here is also known as 'Annadana Prabhu'- giver of feasts. Hence, feeding the public, devotees and visitors are considered to be offerings to propitiate the God. They are fed at the 340 m long double-storey structure called the Uttuppura or the dining hall which is on the northern side of the sanctum. The temple has two large tanks (Pushkarinis) which are considered sacred.

In the south-east corner, outside the Sreekovil, is the Vighneswara Prathishta on a Peedhom of stone, Maha Ganapathy in the south and Sakthy Ganapathy in the north. These idols are made of Panchaloha (an alloy of five metals). The Ashtadikpalakas or Lords of the eight directions are consecrated in the yard of the Sreekovil and Varuna, the Lord of water, is consecrated in the west. To the south side of Vaikom temple yard is the shrine of Panachikkal Bhagavathi. There is also a shrine for Snake Gods, where poojas and rituals are offered only once a year

Mythology

Story goes that a demon called Khara (cousin brother of Ravana as mentioned in epic Ramayana) did severe penance at Chidambaram Temple to propitiate Lord Shiva who presented him with three

Shivalingams. The demon was returning south from Himalayas with the Lingas, one in his right hand, one in left hand and other by the neck. As he felt tired, he thought to rest a while and set the Shivalingams on the ground. To his surprise, the lingams got rooted to the ground. The demon handed over the lingams to a sage named Vyaghrapada who had followed him invisibly. He asked the sage to protect and worship them. Thus, Vaikom acquired the name Vyagrapuri which eventually became Vaikom.

It is believed that the Shiva linga placed by Khara by his right hand is worshipped at Vaikom, the one in left hand at Ettumannoor Temple and the one by neck at Kaduthuruthy Temple. Therefore, it is said that the worship of these three temples on the same day is considered good.

Vaikom Temple Festivals – Vaikom Ashtami

Two major Ashtami festivals are held annually in the Vaikom Siva temple. One is celebrated in the month of Kumbhom (February - March) and the other in Vrischikam (November - December). However, Ashtami festival during the dark lunar fortnight of the Malayalam month Vrischikam, known as Vaikkath Asthami, is the most popular one. The celebrations last for 12 days, with Ashtami falling on the last day. On the Ashtami night, Thidampu, a symbolic idol of the Lord Siva is taken out in procession and kept in the Anakkottil (elephant shed). The deities from nearby temples are also taken in procession to the Anakkottil. After this, a ceremony called Kanikkiduka (offering of presents) is performed which is unique to this temple. Classical music and dance performances including Kathakali performances on the eighth and ninth days are the major attractions. The festival concludes with an Arattu (holy bath) at Udayanapuram which is the abode of Lord Subramanya. In 2011, Vaikom Ashtami Festival begins on 8th November 2011 and Arattu Festival is on 20th November 2011.

A special offering called Mukkudi Neivedyam is made to the lord in connection with the Vaikom Temple annual festival. Mukkudi is prepared using some herbs which are combined and made into a

powder using a secret formula. It is considered as a great medicine and is prepared in the Thidappally (kitchen inside the temple where holy offerings are prepared) in a new earthen pot and mixed with fresh butter milk. Mukkudi Neivedyam is offered after the Arattu.

How to reach Vaikom Mahadeva Temple

By Train

Vaikom Road Railway Station, on the Ernakulam - Kottayam line, is the nearest railway station. However, the nearest major station is Kottayam Railway Station, about 25 km away.

By Flight

Cochin International Airport is about 76 km from Kottayam.

By Bus

Regular bus services are available to Vaikom from major cities and towns nearby including Kottayam, Ernakulam, Kozhikode, and Thiruvananthapuram. Vaikom Bus Station, operated by KSTRC, lies on the Ettumanoor - Ernakulam Highway (State Highway 15).

Famous Temples near Vaikom Temple

Chottanikkara Bhagavathi Temple, Udayanapuram Subrahmanya Temple, Ettumanur Siva Temple, and Kaduthuruthy Thaliyil Mahadeva Temple are some of the famous Hindu temples situated nearby.

[Maha Shivaratri Festival - Shivratri Utsav](#)

Maha Shivaratri or Shivratri Utsav is a famous Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva, one of the Trimurtis in Hinduism. Sivaratri, which literally means "Great Night of Shiva" or "Night of Siva", is observed on the 13th night/14th day in the Krishna Paksha on the month of Phalgun (February – March) in the Hindu Calendar.

Mahashivaratri is celebrated on the night before Amavasya, the night before and day of the new moon.

Maha Shivratri Legends

There are numerous interesting legends associated with Maha Shivaratri festival.



Rudra Tandav

According to Rudra Tandava, it was on the Shivaratri night Lord Shiva performed the 'Tandava Nrithya' – the cosmic dance of primeval creation, preservation and destruction.

Divine Wedding

Another popular legend is that, Shivrathri marks the divine wedding day of Parvathi Devi and Lord Shiva.

Linga Purana

According to Linga Purana, Lord Shiva manifested himself as the 12 Jyotirlingas (lingams of light) on Shivaratri Day.

Samudra Madhan

Maha Shivaratri is also associated with Samudra Manthan (the Churning of the Ocean), and this is one of the most popular legends associated with Sivaratri. Devas (Gods) and Asuras (Demons) churned the Ocean of Milk to get Amrit or Amrita (the nectar of immortality). While performing the Samudra Manthanam, a pot of highly toxic poison (Kalakuta or Halahal) came out of the ocean. Devas and Asuras were terrified seeing the poison as it was so toxic to destroy all creation. Lord Vishnu advised the Devas and Asuras to pray and seek help of Lord Shiva. Out of compassion for living beings, and leashed with the prayers of devas and asuras, Lord Shiva drank the poison. Goddess Parvati was terrified seeing this and stopped the poison in Lord Shiva's throat with her hands. The poison was so toxic that Shiva's throat turned blue. Thus the name Neelakantha, which literally means "One who has Blue Throat". Devas and Asuras started praying the whole night and Lord Shiva was pleased with their devotion and said whoever worships me on Shivaratri day will get all their wishes fulfilled.

Maha Shivaratri Traditions and Customs

Every year Shivratri is celebrated across the country with much religious fervor by all Hindus. Devotees fast on Shivarati day, singing Shiva Bhajans, chanting Shiva Mantras and Sanskrit Stotras, offering prayers in honour of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati Devi. Most devotees also visit nearby Lord Shiva temples and offer prayers and worship on Shivratri Day.

The corresponding month of Shivaratri in Kerala is Kumbha, and in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra it is Maagha (Magha).

[Maasi Magam Festival 2012 in Tamilnadu - Masi Magam](#)

Masi Magam or Masi Makam is one of the most important Tamil Hindu festivals celebrated in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, especially by the Tamil speaking people. Every year, Masi Makam is celebrated on the full moon day of Makam nakshatra (Magam or Magha) on the Tamil month of Masi (February – March). Hence Masi Makam is

observed on the full moon day, it is also called Masi Pournami. The date of Masi Magam festival 2012 is 7th March 2012.



On the auspicious day of Maasi Makam, temple idols of Gods, especially Lord Shiva, Goddess Shakti, and Lord Vishnu, are brought to the sea shore and ritually bathed. Thousands of devotees gather to get a glimpse of the holy ritual. After the ritual immersion the idols are returned to the respective temples in huge procession.

On Masi Makam day, all the households prepare payasam (rice pudding made with milk and sugar) and offer it to Lord Chandra (Moon God). It is believed that offering payasam to Lord Chandra on Masi Pourmani day attain good health and long life to Children.

Maha Maham or Maha Magam Festival

Once in every 12 years, apart from the full moon being in conjunction with the Makam Nakshatram in the month of Maasi, planet Jupiter (Guru or Brihaspati graha) moves in to the Singa Rasi also takes place. This Masi Makam which is considered much auspicious and is called Maha Maham.

Masi Magam in Temples

Masi Makam Festival is observed with much pomp and splendor on Srirangam, Pondicherry, Mahabalipuram, and Kumbakonam and in numerous other temples in Tamil Nadu.

Holi Festival - Festival of Colors

Holi festival, popularly known as the Festival of Colors, is an important Hindu festival celebrated in India, Nepal, Guyana, Trinidad, and the United Kingdom. Holi is a spring festival observed on the Phalgun Purnima, which usually falls on the February end or early March. Similar to most other Hindu festivals, Holi also celebrates the victory of 'good' over 'evil'. The most important ritual celebrated on Holi is spraying colours on each other, and this is the reason why Holi is known as the "Festival of Colors". Holi is known as Doljatra (Dolyatra) or Boshonto Utsav in West Bengal and in Orissa, Holi is observed as Dola Purnima.



Holi festival begins on Duwadashi, three days before full moon day (purmina) on the Rang Pashi. All entire family members gather in the evening and the female members in the family sprinkle gulal on all the male members in the family. The second day is called 'Puno' and Holika Dahan, or burning of the demoness Holika (demon King

Hiranyakashipu's sister), is performed on this day. It is believed that on this day young Prahlad was escaped when demoness Holika carried him into fire. In the evening hundreds of people gather on the street and huge bonfires are lit to mark the Holika Dahan ritual. Holika Dahan is known as Kama Dahanam in Andhra Pradesh.

The next day is called Dhulheti or `Parva`, is the main day of Holi Festival. On this day people celebrate the event of Holi by throwing coloured powders and coloured water at each other. To avoid any skin diseases during the weather changes, natural coloured powders traditional made of Neem, Bilva, Kumkum (Kum Kum), Haldi, and other medicinal herbs are prescribed by Ayurvedic physicians.

The 5th day of the pourmani is the Rangapanchami or Ranga Panchami, which marks the end of Holi Festival.

[Attukal Pongala Festival at Attukal Temple, Thiruvananthapuram](#)

Attukal Pongal Festival (Attukal Ponkala) is a world famous annual festival celebrated at Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Trivandrum, Kerala. Attukal Pongala is a 10 day festival which starts from the Bharani day on the Karthika nakshatra of the Malayalam month of Makaram - Kumbham (February - March) and ends with the sacrificial offering known as Kuruthitharpanam at night. Attukala Pongala Mahotsavam, is an exclusive women's only festival, which has entered the Guinness Book of World Records for being the World's largest religious gathering of women. Attukal Bhagavathy Temple is called as the 'Sabarimala of Women'.

Attukal Pongala Celebrations

The 9th day of the ten day festival is the Pongala day. 'Pongala' literally means "to boil over" and is an offering of boiled rice in earthen pot to Attukal Amma, an incarnation of Goddess Parvathi Devi, the presiding deity of Attukal Bhagawathy Temple. Women prepare Pongala Payasam, a sweet offering of boiled rice with jaggery, coconut gratings, nuts and raisins in earthen pots. Some

people also prepare other sweet dishes like therali appam, elayappam, panchamrutam, and mandaputtu (prepared with rice powder and jaggery).



Every year more than a million women from different parts of India and world gather at the temple premises and in the temple vicinity to offer Pongala to Attukal Amma. Devotees who gather to offer Pongala to Attukal devi increases in numbers every year. The rush is so intense that the entire Trivandrum City, about 5 km radius around the Attukal temple, becomes the holy grounds for women to offer Pongala nivedyam to Goddess. From temple grounds to courtyards of houses, to bus station and railway station to public roads one can see only devotees offering Pongala to Attukal Devi.

The Pongala cooking rituals starts around 10.30 in the morning and by noon the ponkala would be ready. The ceremony concludes at around 2.30 PM when the temple priests starts sprinkling of holy water (theertham) on the Pongala payasam offered by devotees. The Flying Club of Thiruvananthapuram sends a helicopter around the area to shower flowers to the honour of the Goddess.

Let us all pray for the blessings of Attukal Amma

*"Sarva Mangala Mangalie Sive Sarvardha Sadhike
Saraneye Thryambake Devi Narayani Namosthute"*

Karadayan Nonbu 2012 - Tamil Festival Karadaiyan Vratam

Karadayan Nonbu or Karadaiyan Nonbu is a major Tamil festival celebrated at the time of Meena Sankramam - ending of the Tamil month of Maasi (Malayalam month Kumbham) and beginning of Panguni (Meenam in Malayalam). Also known as Savitri Vrat, Karadayan Nonbu ritual is observed by all married women for the well being of their husband and that the couples should remain together always. Unmarried women also observe Karadaiyan Nonbu and pray to Goddess Shakti to get good men as their husband. This year Karadayan Nonbu is on 14th March 2012.

Karadaiyan Nombu is celebrated in honour of Sathi Savithri's success in bringing back her husband Satyavan's life from the hands of Yama Dev, the God of Death. This is why the ritual is known as Savitri Nonbu.

How to perform Karadayan Nonbu Puja

On the day of Karadaiyan Nonbu, women prepare a sweet prasadam known as Karadiyan Adai. Karadiyan Nonbu Adai is specially prepared for the Karadayan pooja with rice flour, jaggery and a red coloured dry beans known as Kaaramani. After the Karadiyan Adai preparation it is time to start the Karadaiyan puja. All female members in the family will get ready to start the puja. Kolams (rangoli) will be drawn by all ladies in front of the pooja place and a banana leaf will be placed on each kolam. The women in the family perform the nivedyam after placing one sweet Karadai, one Kozhukkattai, a blob of fresh butter, two bananas, arali flowers, betel leaves and nuts, and the most important Nonbu Charadu. Nonbu Charadu or Manjal Saradu is a sacred yellow cotton thread dipped in turmeric paste and tied in the middle with some flower. The puja starts and the naivedyam is offered to Goddess Gowri

(Kamakshi) or Goddess Shakti. While offering the women chant this mantra:

**"Urugada Vennaiyum Oradaiyum Naan Tharuven
Orukaalum En Kanavar Ennai Piriyaadirukkanum"**

After performing the puja the Nonbu Charadu is tied around the neck. While wearing the Nonbu Charadu, women chant this sloka:

**"Throram Krishhnam Subhake Saharithamdharami Aham
Bharthuayushya Sidhartham Supreethabhava Sarvadha."**

After wearing the sacred yellow cotton string the prasadam is taken by the offerers. The manjal saradu will not be removed until the next Karadaiyan Nonbu ritual. Following the tradition of Kaaradayan Nonbu every year is believed to attain Dheerga Sowmangalyam (a long married life).

Karadaiyan Nonbu festival is celebrated with great importance on the Southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

Sweet Karadaiyan Nonbu Adai Recipes – How to prepare Kara Adai
Here are the recipes to prepare Sweet Karadaiyan Nonbu Adai. Karadaiyan Nonbu is named after the unique Karadaiyan Adai prepared during the Karadayan Nonbu. Karadaiyan Nonbu is a special Tamil festival to married women all over Southern India. It is celebrated at the conjunction of the Tamil months of Masi and Panguni. The festival commemorates the battle won by Savithri - a mythological character, over the God of Death – Yama. During the day, women offer their prayers to Goddess Gowri or Kamakshi, requesting for long life and welfare of their husband. Read more about Karadayan Nonbu or Karadaiyan Nonbu [HERE](#)

On Karadayan Nonbu day, two special Karadaiyan Adai dishes are made. One is a savory (Uppu Kara Adai), signifying Lord Shiva and the other one is a sweet (Sweet Karadaiyan Adai / Kozhukattai), signifying Goddess Shakti.

Ingredients for preparing Sweet Karadaiyan Adai / Kozhukattai

Roasted Rice Powder – 1 cup

Karamani (Dried cowpeas) - 2 table spoons

Jaggery Grated – 1 and ¼ cups

Cardamom Powder - 1 teaspoon

Ghee - 1 to 2 table spoons

Coconut-grated - 1 and ½ cup or half a coconut (medium size)

A pinch of salt

Butter - 50 g

Preparation of Sweet Karadaiyan Nonbu Adai

Preparing the roasted rice powder:

1) Wash and soak 1 cup of raw rice in water for 1 to 2 hours. Drain water and dry the soaked rice in a white cloth under shade. Dry grind it to a fine powder, once the moisture is removed completely. Roast it in a frying pan till a nice fragrance comes out of it. Keep it aside.

2) Roast the cow peas and soak it in water for about 5 to 6 hours before cooking them.

3) Cook the cow peas and keep it aside.

4) Melt the jaggery in 1 and ½ cups of water. Filter it and allow for boiling. Add the grated coconut and pinch of salt. Stir it till the raw smell goes.

5) Now add the roasted rice flour and the cooked peas into the melted jaggery, stir until both mix together.

6) Add the cardamom powder and the ghee; stir well till the dough forms a thick paste.

7) Remove from fire and allow to cool

8) Roll the dough into balls. Take some balls and flatten in the form of adais on plantain leaves. The remaining balls are to be shaped into Kozhukkattais.

9) Steam the balls in an idli steamer or in a rice cooker for about eight to ten minutes

The Karadaiyan Nonbu Adais and Kozukattais are offered to God before consumption. Along with these, betel leaves, betel nut (areca nut) and a ripe banana are placed in a plantain leaf and Naivedyam is performed.

[Guruvayoor Temple Arattu Festival in Guruvayur, Kerala](#)

The annual Guruvayur Festival or Guruvayur Ulsavam is celebrated in the month of Kumbha (February - March) at the Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple at Guruvayoor, Kerala. Guruvayur Temple is one of the one of the most renowned and oldest temples in Kerala. The 10 days Guruvayur Arattu festival starts with Kodiyettam (hoisting of the temple flag atop the flagstaff) on the Punartham Nakshatra (Pushya Star).

The festival starts with unique Anayottam - the Elephant Race



One the unique feature of Guruvayoor Ulsavam is that the first day of Guruvayur Festival starts with Anayottam (elephant race). The winning elephant is given the honour of carrying the Thidambu (the idol of Guruvayoorappan) on all special occasion for one year. Devotees can watch elephant processions in the morning, afternoon and night for the next six days of the festival. Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple will host several cultural programs such as Chakkyar Koothu and Krishnanattom at the Koothambalam (special temple theater) during the festival days. Krishnanattom, referred as the precursor of Kathakali, a traditional Kerala dance performance which plays Lord Krishna's life from his birth to 'Swargarohanam'. Another special feature of the festival is the `Kazhchasheeveli' for the first eight days of the festival.

On the 8th day of the Guruvayur Ulsavam, Utsavabali oblations are offered to Lord's lieutenants. The 9th day of the festival is the Pallivetta day (the royal hunt), which starts with Sree Krishna on elephant starts hunting of wild boars - 40 to 50 people dress like boars using masks called Pannimanushams. Pallivetta represents the symbolic destruction of Kama (desire) and Krodha (anger) from the minds of the people. Pallivetta also symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

Guruvayur Arattu - 10th Day of Festival

The 10th day is the Guruvayur Arattu (Guruvayoor Aarattu). The temple will be opened late after 6:00 am as the Lord would be tired after Pallivetta. All usual pujas and rituals are performed except the Usha puja. The Arattu procession starts at 6:30 pm and the Lord's idol is taken to the Rudratheertha (holy water tank) for Arattu. Thousands of devotees will also take a holy dip after Lord's Arattu to wash off their sins. After the Aarattu, Lord's Idol is again taken on the elephant and the elephant runs round the temple eleven times and the devotees follow the elephant with good spirit. This is another unique and thrilling feature of festival. This marks the end of the Guruvayur annual festival and the Lord returns to the sanctum

sanctorum. The temple flag is lowered marking the end of the Guruvayur annual Ulsavam.

Thousands of devotees from in and around Kerala visit the temple on all festival days.

How to reach Guruvayur Temple

Guruvayur is around 25 km north-west of Thrissur city, in Thrissur District, Kerala. Both Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and private busses offer interstate bus services to and from major South Indian cities including Palani, Chennai, Mangalore, Mysore, Coimbatore, Madurai, Mookambika, and Coimbatore.

Guruvayur Railway Station is the nearest railhead and operates passenger trains from the station to Thrissur Railway Station (29 km) and Ernakulam Railway Station (Kochi). Guruvayur Railway Station also has an overnight Express train (Guruvayur Express) to Trivandrum Central Railway Station and further to Chennai Egmore Railway Station.

Cochin International Airport and Calicut International Airport (100 km) are the nearest airports.

[Ram Navami Festival - Rama Navami Significance](#)

Ram Navami or Rama Navami Festival is a Hindu festival celebrated as the birthday of Lord Ram or Ramachandra, the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu. Ramnavami occurs on the ninth day of the Hindu Chaitra Masa (March - April), hence the festival is also named Chaitra Masa Suklapaksha Navami. Ram Navami is a nine-day festival in many places of India, especially North India and Rama Navami is observed on the final day of Chaitra Navaratri or Vasant Navaratri. These nine days of Ramanavami festival is considered as the 'Ramayana Week', and the great Hindu epic Ramayana is recited on houses as well as in temples dedicated to Lord Ram and Lord Vishnu.

Rama Navami Celebration



Rama Navami Celebrations starts with a special prayer to Lord Surya in the early morning. Lord Ram Mandirs and Lord Vishnu temples are beautiful adorned with the images of Lord Ram, Sita Devi, Lakshmana and Hanuman Swamy, the ardent devotee of Lord Rama. Slokhas from Sri Ramacaritamanas (Ramacharita Manas) an epic poem composed by Tulsidas is recited. Special pujas are performed at midday, as it is when Lord Ram was born.

Most Lord Ram devotees undertake fasting on the Ramanavami day. People perform the Kalyanotsavam or marriage celebration of Lord Rama and Sita Devi using small idols on Ramnavami day. The Ram Navami procession takes place in the evening. The murtis (idols) of Lord Ram, Sita Devi, Lakshman, and Lord Hanuman are taken out to a procession of the streets in a beautifully decorated chariot. The chariot is accompanied by numerous persons dressed up resembling Rama's soldiers in ancient costumes.

Lord Ram Bhajans, Rama Stotras, devotional songs of Lord Ram, and Hanuman Mantras, are recited on the Ram Navami festival. The Ramlila, a theater art form which tells the story of Lord Ram's life is enacted in memory of Lord Ram's prosperous and righteous reign of Ayodhya.

People also exchange Ram Navami Gifts to their loved ones to share the joy of Rama Navami festival.

In South India, special pujas and celebrations are conducted on Lord Rama temples and Lord Vishnu temples. The Kalyanotsav celebrated at the Sree Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple of Bhadrachala in Andhra Pradesh is very famous and attracts thousands of devotees from nearby states as well.

[Panguni Uthiram Festival.](#)

Panguni Uthiram, also known as Paiguni Uttaram or Meena Uttara Phalguni, is one of the most famous and important festivals to Tamil Hindus. One of the most popular, Tamilnadu festival or Tamil Festival, Panguni Uthiram falls on the day, the moon transits in the asterism Uttara-Phalguni or Uthiram in the twelfth month of the Tamil solar calendar, that is Panguni (March - April). As stated in the Brahmanda Puranam, on Panguni Uthiram, every holy water joins Thumburu teertha, which is one of seven sacred tanks in Tirupati Tirumala.

Panguni Uthiram Festival in Tamilnadu Temples

According to legends, celestial weddings take place on this day and so Panguni Uthiram is called as the Full Moon of Divine Marriages. The day signifies the marriage of Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva, Murugan and Teyvayanai, and Aandaal (also known as Kothai) and Rangamannar. According to Valmiki's Ramayana, it is on this day and star that Sita's marriage with Rama was celebrated. Also, this day is said to be the birth day of Lord Ayyappan. It is also believed that on this day, Goddess Mahalakshmi incarnated on earth from the ocean of milk (after the ocean was churned by the Gods and the

demons) and hence it is celebrated as Mahalakshmi Jayanti. It is on this day that Goddess Parvati in the form of Gowri married Lord Siva in Kanchipuram. Hence this day is also celebrated as the Gowri Kalyanam day.



Panguni Uthiram Festival Celebrations in Temples

Srivilliputhur in Virudhunagar district celebrates the celestial marriage of Goddess Andal in a grand manner. On this day, Goddess Ranganayaki meets Lord Sri Ranganathar at Srirangam. Panguni Uthiram festival is also of great importance to Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple in Kerala.

Panguni Uthiram in Muruga Temples

Large numbers of devotees throng to all Murugan temples during the Panguni Uthiram festival. Panguni Uthiram festival is celebrated for ten days at Tiru Avinankudi Temple which is situated at the foothills of Palani, the third abode of Lord Muruga. On each day, the

procession idol of Muttukumara Swamy along with his consorts Valli and Teyvanai is taken in procession in the forenoon and again at night. Devotees fetch water from Cauvery River during Panguni month and bring it in Kavadis to pour on the Nava Bashana idol. Some even observe fast for 15 days to carry holy kaavadis. Carrying Pal Kudam and Padayatra (walk) to Lord Murugan Temples are also observed by the devotees. They chant hymns of Lord Muruga such as Thevaram, Thiruvagasam and Thirumurai parayanam and play percussion instruments in the temples.

[Vishu Festival 2012 in Kerala – Zodiac New Year](#)

Vishu is one of the most important and unique Malayalam Hindu Festival celebrated in Kerala, India. Vishu Festival is celebrated as the astronomical or Zodiac New Year by Malayalis (Malayalam speaking people) all over the world. The festival of Vishu is observed on the first day of the Malayalam month of Medam (April - May) and is also regarded as the harvest festival of Kerala. The major attractions of Vishu festival is the Vishukani, Vishukaineetam and Vishubhalam. In 2012, the date of Vishu festival 2012 is on 14th April 2012, Saturday.

Observing Vishu Rituals



The arrangement for Vishu starts by preparing Vishukkani the previous night before Vishu. On the Vishu day, the custom is to wake up early before sunrise in the morning and proceed towards the puja room with closed eyes and then see the Vishukani or Vishu Kani first. This ritual is called the Kani Kanal or Kanikanal. It is believed that the fortune of the New Year depends on the first thing one sees on the Vishu day. So people prepare the Vishukani for Kani Kanal with much importance so as to bring in another year of prosperity.

How to prepare Vishu Kani

Vishu Kani is usually prepared by the eldest female member of the family. The Vishukani is exhibited in a circular bell-metal vessel known as 'Urali' or 'Urule'. Raw rice is put in it and over it a beautifully folded Kasavu Mundu (traditional Kerala cloth) will be placed. The Urali will then be decorated with a golden coloured cucumber, one coconut broken in to 2 equal pieces, some gold coins, mango, banana, jackfruit, and the beautiful Kani Konna or Kanikonna (cassia fistula) flower which blossoms especially for Vishu. Behind the Urali vessel a mirror and the garlanded idol of Lord Krishna will be kept. The traditional Kerala lamp will be placed near the Sree Krishna idol.

Vishnukani and Vishukaineetam

On the Vishu day, the eldest female member of family wakes up and lights the lamp and watches Vishukani first. Then she wakes up the other members one by one and tells not to open the eyes and takes them to the puja room and shows them the auspicious Vishukani.

After all the members have completed Kani Kanal, it is time for Vishukaineetam or Vishu Kaineetam. The eldest member of the family starts giving Vishukaineetam to every younger family member. Vishukaineetam is the ritual of giving silver coins (in olden days) or money to other members of the family and wishing them that the coming years will be blessed with prosperity and success. In some places, especially in the northern parts of Kerala, children begin to fire crackers on Vishu.

Almost all Kerala temples also prepare Vishu Kani in the temples. Devotees also visit the nearby temples to have this "Vishukani Kazhcha". Thousands of devotees throng to famous temples in Kerala like Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple and Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple for the auspicious Vishu Kani Kazhcha on Vishu.

Vishubhalam

As Vishu is considered as the astronomical New Year by Kerala, Vishubhalam or Vishu Bhalam is of great importance. Vishu Bhalam literally means predictions for the next one year. In olden days, a regional astrologer visits the illams (traditional Kerala homes) and used to tell the Vishubhalam or forecast of each family members. Nowadays Vishubhalam is published in popular Jyothisham magazines.

Vishupootu

Vishupootu refers to preparing the agricultural land for the next agricultural season.

[Akshaya Tritiya - Akha Teej Festival](#)

Akshaya Tritiya, also spelled Akshaya Trithiya or Akshya Thiritiya Festival, is a highly auspicious day in the Vedic Calendar which falls on the 3rd day of the new moon month (third Tithi of Sukhla Paksha) of Hindu month of Vaisakha (April – May). Akshaya Trithiya is also known as Akha Teej festival. According to Hindu astrology it is said that there is no need to check for any good 'muhurat' or 'muhurtham' on Akshaya Tritiya as every second of Akshaya Trithiya day is favorable. The Chardham Yatra temples, Gangotri Temple and Yamunotri Temple in Himalayas will open on Akshaya Tritiya Day.

Importance of Akshaya Tritiya Festival

In Sanskrit, the word Akshaya means "never diminishing" and any new venture started on Akshaya Tritiya day is believed to bring success and prosperity. Akshaya Trithiya is considered as the most ideal day to start new business ventures, ground breaking for

construction, buying gold, diamond, and other precious ornaments, marriages and ring exchanges, and real estate property.



Akshaya Trithiya is also known as Aakha Teej or Akha Teej. Astrologically, Lord Surya and Lord Chandra are most radiant and best placed on Akshaya Trutheeya day, which is believed to be most auspicious. The Hindu Puranas provides numerous religious importance to Akshaya Trithiya and link it to several important occasions. Parasurama Jayanti and Balarama Jayanti falls of Aksaya Trithiya Day and it is also on Akshaya Tritiya day Guru Adi Shankaracharya recited Sri Kanakadhara Stavam and Goddess Lakshmi blessed poured golden goose berries as rain to the poor woman's house.

Char Dham Temple Yatra Beginnings

Every year the Char Dham Temples, Gangotri Temple and Yamunotri Temple, opens for Char Dham Yatra on Akshaya Trithiya Day.

[Thrissur Pooram 2012 – Cultural Festival of Kerala](#)

Thrissur Pooram or Trichur Pooram Festival is considered as one of the most colourful temple festivals of Kerala celebrated at Thrissur, the Cultural Capital of Kerala. The annual Thrissur Pooram Festival is celebrated in the sprawling Thekkinkadu Maidan (Thrissur Swaraj Round), on the premises of one of the largest and ancient Shiva temples in Kerala, the Vadakkumnathan Temple at Thrissur. Celebrated on the Pooram Nakshatram day in the Malayalam month of Medam (April – May), Thrissur Pooram is known as the pooram of all Poorams and the mother of all temple festivals in Kerala due to its unique style and its largest gathering of people to a single event from all parts of the Kerala and neighbouring states. The date of Thrissur Pooram 2012 festival is on 1st May 2012.

Tourist Attraction of Thrissur Pooram Festival



The main attraction of Thrissur Pooram is the processions of luxuriously decorated elephants from various neighbouring temples, drum concerts, parasol exchanges, and magnificent spectacle with fireworks. The processions from Paramakkavu Bhagavathy from Paramakkavu Temple and Thriuvambadi Bhagavathi from the Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple are the most impressive processions in the Thrissurpooram. The celebrations of the Thrissur

Pooram festival last for more than 36 hours. It was Sakthan Thampuran (1751 – 1805, also known as Raja Rama Varma, the Maharaja of the erstwhile Cochin State, who first introduced the cultural festival, Thrissur Pooram in the late 18th century.

Major Celebrations

The Thrissur Pooram festival starts in the early morning with the ezhunellippu of the Kanimangalam Shasta, and ezhunnellippu of the other 6 minor temples in the neighbourhood. The main participants of Trichur Pooram are the two devaswams - Paramekkavu and Thiruvambadi – the two rival groups who competes each other to make the fireworks display more colourful. A maximum of 15 elephants will be allowed to display by each group. Each party will try to get the best South Indian elephants and several kinds of artistic parasols (Kudamattam) will be raised on the elephants during the display. Panchavadyam (an orchestra of five instruments - Timila, Idakka, Maddalam, Ilathalam, and Kombu) is another major attraction of Thrissur Pooram festival with more than 200 artistes participates in the event. Pandemelum or Pandi Melam which starts at noon is another major event of Thrissur Pooram. The Thrissur Pooram Festival celebrations last till the break of dawn, the next day with magnificent display of fireworks by each group.

Thrissur Pooram is not simply a temple festival but a cultural highlight of Kerala participated by people across religion and caste.

[Meenakshi Thirukalyanam at Madurai Meenakshi Temple](#)

Meenakshi Thirukalyanam or Meenatchi Thirukkalyanam is the divine marriage of Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswarar (Goddess Parvathi and Lord Shiva). Meenakshi Sundareswarar Thirukalyanam is a major annual festival celebrated at the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple during the twelve days Chithirai Brahmotsavam Festival on the Tamil month of Chithirai (April – May).



Minakshi Thirukalyanam attracts thousands of devotees from all over Madurai, Tamil Nadu and near by states as well. Meenakshi Kalayanam is also a reunion of Shaivites (Lord Siva devotees) and Vaishnavites (Lord Vishnu devotees) reminding everyone that Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu are all the same - Brahman.

The next day of Meenakshi Thirukkalyanam is the Therottam or Car Festival and the Chithirai Festival concludes with Theerthavari or Theertha Festival.

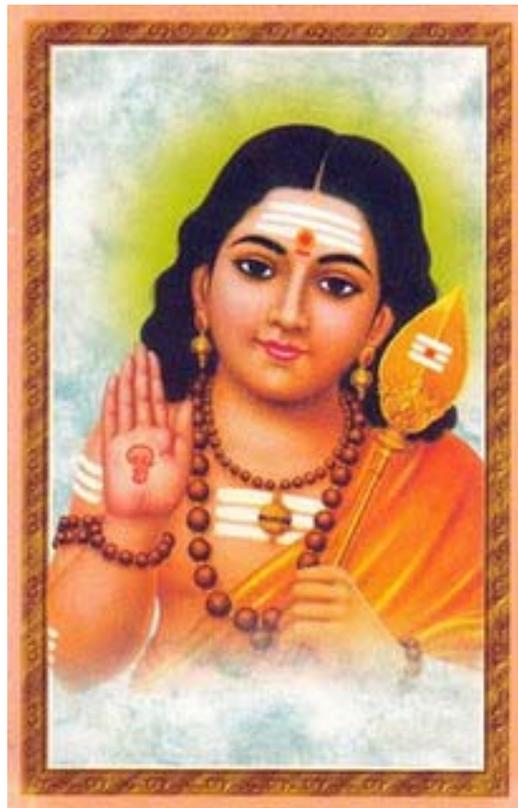
[Vaikasi Visakam Festival - Birthday of Murugan](#)

Vaikasi Visakam, also spelled Vaigasi Visakam or Vaikashi Vishakam, is observed as the birthday of Lord Subrahmanya or Lord Muruga during the Tamil month of Vaikasi (Mid May - Mid June). Vaikasi is the second month of Tamil Calendar and Visakam (Visakham) is the fourteenth nakshatra of the 27 Nakshatras (astrological stars). Vaigasi Visakam falls on the full moon day (pournami day) in the month of Vaikasi on the Visakam star. Visakam is considered to be the birth star of Lord Murugan and so he is also known by the name Visakan. The day honors the divine birth of Lord Subrahmanya as

Shanmugan and is a significant occasion celebrated with religious fervor.

How to observe Vaikasi Visakam?

Vaikhasi Vishakam is performed with a special puja to Lord Murugan and Sarkarai Pongal is offered as Neivedyam. Some of the Hindu religious poems addressed to Lord Muruga such as Kanda Sashti Kavacham, Subrahmanya Bhujangam, Thiruppugazh (Muthai Tharu Bakthi), and Shanmukha Kavacham are recited with devotion. According to Hindu Tamilians belief, these Kavasams protect everybody from the evil spirits.



Devotees carry milk pots to Lord Murugan temples. Some people take Kavadi (a strong ritual bearing some form of physical hardship) on the Vaikasi Visakam day. Valli Kalyanam is held in Murugan Temples on Vaikasi Visakham day. Large numbers of devotees throng especially to famous Lord Subramanya Temples nearby.

Vaikasi Visakam at Murugan Temples

Vaikasi Visakam is celebrated with much religious importance at the Arupadaiveedu of Lord Muruga or the six adobes of Lord Murugan in Tamil Nadu. These temples are the Palani Hill Temple, Thiruchendur Murugan Temple at Tuticorin, Arulmigu Swaminatha Swami Temple at Swamimalai, Thiruthani Murugan Temple, Sri Subramanya Temple at Pazhamudircholai, and Thiruparamkundram Subramanya Swamy Temple.

Vaigasi Visakam is also celebrated at Murugan Temples in Malaysia. Thousands of devotees visit the Batu Caves Murugan Temple of Kuala Lumpur and Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Murugan Temple at Penang, Malaysia to and perform rituals on the Vaikasi Visakam Festival every year.

Murugan Temples in Singapore also celebrate the Vaikasi Visakam festival annually. Sri Thandayuthapani Temple (Chettiar Hindu Temple), Murugan Hill Temple at Bukit Timah Road, and the Sri Holy Tree Sri Bala Subramaniam Kovil are the main Subramanya Temples in Singapore where Vaigasi Visakam festival is held with great religious importance.

[Kanyakumari Devi Temple in Tamilnadu India](#)

Kanyakumari Temple is a famous Goddess Parvati temple located on the seashore of Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of India, in Tamilnadu. Kanyakumari is the merging point of three seas; the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. This is an ancient temple, dedicated to Devi Kanya Kumari. She is worshipped as Kumari Amman (the virgin goddess) who is one of the forms of Goddess Shakti. Kanyakumari Devi is also known as Bhagavathy Amman, Kanya Devi, and Devi Kumari. The town is named after the deity.



Temple Architecture

Picture of Goddess Devi Kanya Kumari at Kanyakumari Devi Temple, Tamilnadu Kanyakumari Bhagavathy Amman Temple is known for its architectural beauty and stands facing the shoreline. Main entrance to the temple is through the northern gate and the deity faces east. A door to the east of the shrine is opened only five times a year. There are three corridors which encircle the sanctum. Though there are no special shrines in the outer corridor, there is a Navarathiri mandapam and a pathway that leads to the second corridor. Devotees can see the flag mast or Kodisthambam from where a clear view of the Goddess is seen. A symbol of a Hindu Nun, the Goddess is seen in a black stone image in the sanctum with a garland. The most significant feature of the deity is the glittering diamond nose ring that is visible from a distance. Other deities of the temple are Vijayasundari and Balasundari, friends of the Goddess. One can see 11 theerthams in the surrounding area. There are two rocks rising out of the ocean on the southeast of the Kanyakumari Amman Temple. Footprints of the goddess are seen on one of the rocks.

Another one is the rock where Swami Vivekananda meditated and attained enlightenment.

Legend of Kanyakumari Temple

Legend has it that a demon named Baanaasuran caused damages to the Devas and the public. The helpless victims sought Mahavishnu for help. The Lord in turn directed them to pray Goddess Shakthi to destroy the demon. The Goddess answered their prayers and appeared as a young virgin girl at Kanyakumari. She started penance to marry Lord Shiva at Suchindram temple (about 11 km away). However the wedding did not happen. The rice and cereals remained uncooked and turned into sand and seashells. These are scattered along the seashore and the Devi became a virgin goddess.

Offerings

Besides the usual abhishekam and archanas, people lit lamps in the temple and offer new saris to the goddess.

Kanyakumari Temple Visiting Hours

The temple is open from 4.30 AM to 11.45 AM and 5.30 PM to 8.45 PM.

Temple Festivals

A ten-day festival called Vaikasi Visakam is held during the Tamil month of Vaikasi (May/June) with a Boat Festival. Navarathri is also celebrated during September/October.

the 133 ft Thiruvalluvar Statue at Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari

How to reach Kanyakumari

Kanyakumari is 25 km from Nagercoil, 91 km from Tirunelveli and 242 km from Madurai. Trivandrum International Airport at

Thiruvananthapuram is the nearest airport, 93 km away. Kanyakumari is well connected by train and bus services also.



Tourist Attractions in Kanyakumari

There are numerous tourist attractions and places to visit in Kanyakumari, apart from the spectacular views of Sunrise and Sunset. Some of the major tourist places in Kanyakumari include Kanyakumari Beach, the 133 ft Thiruvalluvar Statue, Vivekananda Rock Memorial, the Gandhi Memorial, and the Government Museum. Tourist places located a short drive from Kanyakumari are Vattakottai (Round Fort), the Snake Temple at Nagercoil, Suchindram Temple, Udayagiri Fort and Padmanabhapuram Palace.

[Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra Festival in Orissa](#)

Rath Yatra or Ratha Jatra is the massive Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath celebrated at the Sree Jagannath Temple with a great zeal and religious fervor in the holy land of Puri in Orissa, India. Celebrated to honor Lord Jagannath (Lord Krishna), the presiding deity of Puri, this remarkable Hindu Car Festival lasts for around eight to ten days. Puri Ratha Yatra is the grand culmination of a

series of festivities, celebrated on the second day of the bright fortnight of the month of Ashada (June - July), the fourth month in the traditional North India Hindu calendar.

Highlights of Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra Festival

During the annual Rathyatra, the three deities - Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balarama and Goddess Subhadra, with the celestial wheel Sudarshana, are taken out from the temple in a ritual procession to their respective chariots. The huge decorated chariots are drawn by millions of devotees to the Puri Gundicha Temple, situated about 2 km from Shree Jagannatha Temple. This festival is also known as Gundicha Jatra, Ghosa Jatra, Navadina Jatra and Dasavatara Jatra. The deities return to their abode after a stay for seven days.

The Chariots used for Jagannath Rath Yatra



Every year, the three chariots of Balarama, Subhadra and Lord Jagannath are newly built. Lord Jagannatha's Chariot, called

Nandighosa, is forty-five feet high and forty-five feet square at the wheel level. Its sixteen wheels are decorated with a cover made of red and yellow cloth.

Taladhwaja, the Chariot of Lord Balarama, is forty-four feet and has a Palm Tree on its flag. It has fourteen wheels which are covered with red and blue cloth. The Chariot of Subhadra is known as Dwarpadalana. It is forty-three feet high with twelve wheels and is decked with a covering of red and black cloth. Black color is traditionally associated with Shakti and the Mother Goddess.

There are nine Parsva devatas found around each of the chariots. These are painted wooden images representing different deities on the chariots' sides. All the chariots are attached to four horses which are of different colors. White colors for Balarama, dark ones for Jagannatha, and red ones for Subhadra. A charioteer called Sarathi is there for each chariot.

Chandan Jatra - The Sandalwood Paste Festival

The construction of the chariots starts on Akshaya Tritiya, the third day of the bright fortnight of Vaisakha. Known as the sandalwood festival or Chandan Yatra (Chandana Yatra), this auspicious day marks the beginning of the summer festival of the deities, which lasts for three weeks. During Chandan Yatra festival, the representative images of the presiding deities are taken out in colorful processions. They are given a ceremonial boat ride in the Narendra tank for 21 consecutive days.

Snana Jatra

Snana Yatra festival marks the culmination of the sandalwood festival. Snana Jatra or the Bathing Festival is held on the full moon day of the month of Jestha. In this festival, the three deities are taken to Snana Badi, a bathing platform, where the deities are ceremonially bathed with 108 pitchers of water.

Subsequently, the deities are made to rest inside the sanctum sanctorum and undergo treatment in which special ayurvedic

medicine and some special liquid diet (sarapana) is offered to them. They are closed to public view for 15 days and the pilgrims would have a darshan of images on the Pattachitra paintings hanged there. After this period of isolation, the deities come out of the temple in a colorful procession to board their respective Chariots. From then on begins the journey known as "Ratha Jatra".

Ratha Yatra

The deities are then seated in their respective chariots. A ceremony called Chera Pahara, the ritual of sweeping of the chariots is held with a golden broom by the Gajapati King of Puri. The king arrives on a richly decorated palanquin from his palace. The procession then starts with Balabhadra's chariot, followed by Subhadra and then the Lord Jagannath's, pulled by large numbers of devotees to the Gundicha Ghar. On the way, deities are offered a special Cake called Podapitha, at the shrine of Goddess Aradhamsini.

After reaching Gundicha Mandir, the deities give darshan to devotees every day. They stay there for eight days and then return to Jagannath Temple with a similar procession. This is called Bahuda Yatra which is held on the tenth day of bright fortnight of Ashada month. The three chariots arrive at the Singhadwara in the late afternoon of the Bahuda day. On the next day, the Bada Ekadasi, the three deities are attired in costumes of gold ornaments and are worshipped by devotees. This form of the deities is known as the Suna Vesha or Bada Tadhau Vesha. The three deities go back to their original place of the temple, the Ratna Singhasana (Ratna Singhasana), on the Dwadasi day. The arrival of deities into the sanctum sanctorum marks the end of the Rathajatra festival.

How to reach Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra Festival Location

By Flight

Biju Patnaik Airport at Bhubaneshwar, about 60 km away, is the nearest airport to reach Jagannath Temple.

By Train

Puri Railway Station is well connected with all the major cities of India.

By Road

Puri is well connected with other major towns and cities in India. Puri Bus Station is about 1 km from the Puri Railway Station. Regular buses connect Puri to Konark, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Taptapani, Sambalpur, Kolkata and other nearby towns and cities.

[Raksha Bandhan – Rakhi Festival](#)

Raksha Bandhan or Rakhi Festival is a Hindu festival that celebrates the sacred relation between brothers and sisters. Raksha Bandhan literally means bond of protection. Celebrated on the full moon day of the month of Shravan (July-August), Raksha Bandhan festival is famous in north and western region of India. However, it is also celebrated with great enthusiasm in southern and coastal regions, but by other names and rituals. Raksha Bandhan or Rakhi is called by various names such as Vish Tarak (the destroyer of poison), Punya Pradayak (the offer of boons), and Pap Nashak (the destroyer of sins). Rakhi signifies the various phases of protection from evil forces and as a mark of this, the sister ties Rakhi to her brother, wishing him for happiness and well-being.

History of Rakhi or Raksha Bandhan

The origin of Rakhi Festival can be traced back to around 6000 years when Aryans created the Indus Valley Civilization. Indian history bears witness to the facts that the Rajput and Maratha queens have sent Rakhis even to Mughal kings who had rescued their Rakhi-sisters by offering help and protection. The history is also stuffed with the great Hindu King Porus who abandoned to attack Alexander, the Great. This is because Alexander's wife approached the King Porus prior to the battle and tied a Rakhi on his hand,

requesting him not to harm her husband. Thus it is not necessary that this holy thread should be given only to siblings. It can be a cousin or a friend.

Rakhi Ritual

The Rakhi Festival celebration starts with a prayer and then the sister ties the sacred Rakhi string on her brother's right wrist. The brother in turn offers gifts and money. Rakshabandhan Festival is also considered as an occasion where all members of the family enjoy the day with a get-together and have fun.

Rakhi Traditions and Customs

The celebration of Rakhi Festival starts much in advance. You can see people shop for fancy Rakhis, new clothes, delicious sweets and beautiful Rakhi gifts before the Shravana Purnima. On this day, after the early bath, sisters make the Puja Thali. It consists of roli, tilak, Rakhi threads, rice grains, aggarbattis (incense sticks), diyas and sweets. Prayers are offered to the deities and the sister takes Aarti for the brother and ties the holy thread on his wrist. Kumkum (vermillion) is applied on his forehead and sweets are distributed. You can see variety of Rakhis in the market, ranging from a colored cotton string to beautifully decorated balls of various sizes and materials such as soft cotton, 'zari' paper, tinsel and beads.

Regional Significance of Raksha Bandhan

The same festival is celebrated differently by different communities of India.

Rakhi in West India

Rakhi is celebrated here as Nariyal Purnima or the coconut full moon. Dedicated to Sea God, Varun, the festival is celebrated in western India and parts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa. The festival marks the beginning of the fishing season for the fishermen who offer coconut to the Lord to seek his blessings. They throw the

decorated coconuts in the water and worship. Coconut Rice is prepared on the day.

Rakhi in South India

Upakarma or Avani Avittam is a ritual followed by the Brahmin Community, in southern and Central parts of India such as Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Orissa.

Rakhi in North India

The festival is celebrated as Kajari Purnima in the Central India including Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and part of Uttar Pradesh. Mainly celebrated by the farmers, this festival denotes the beginning of the sowing season for wheat and barley. Goddess Bhagavati is commemorated on this day for good crop.

Pavitropana – Festival of Gujarat People

The festival of Gujaratis, Pavitropana or the Shravana Purnima, is the auspicious day for the three eyed God, Lord Shiva. On this day, people offer water to the Shiva Lingams in the temples and offer prayers to Lord Shiva. Worship of Lord Shiva on this day is said to relieve the sins. During the festival, a few threads of cotton are soaked in Panchagaivya (a mixture of cow's ghee, milk, curd, urine and excreta) and then fixed around the Shiva Lingam. Panchagaivya means five products taken from cow which is considered as the sacred animal for Hindus.

[Avani Avittam – Upakarma Festival](#)

Avani Avittam or Aavani Avittam is one of the most famous South Indian festivals celebrated in the southern states of India such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Orissa and Maharashtra. Also known as Upakarma or Yagnopaveetha Dhaarana, Avani Avittam Festival is followed mainly by the Brahmin community. It falls during the Tamil month of Aadi (mid July-mid August) or Avani (mid August - mid September) on the full moon day of the Hindu calendar.

In North India, Aavani Avittam is celebrated as Rakshabhandan (Raksha Bhandan) and a Rakhi is tied round the wrist of brothers by the sisters. This day is said to be the day when Lord Vishnu took his incarnation as Lord Hayagriva who protected the Vedas. He is also called as the God of wisdom and knowledge. It is believed that reciting Vedas on Aavani Avittam day is really significant. There are four different Vedas and the Avani Avittam is performed in different ways by the followers.

Significance of Avani Avittam Ritual

The word Upakarma means 'beginning', that is, to begin traditional Vedic studies. It is on this day that the Sacred Thread ceremony (Yajnopavitam) is held for the Brahmins, as per the Vedas and rituals. The religious pouring of liquid called libation is performed by them. This is done to their ancestors to whom they owe their birth and to the great Rishis (sages) from whom they acquired the spiritual knowledge and the Vedas. It is believed that the thread changing process indicates breaking of all sins and making a new beginning. Taking a holy dip after the changing of thread during the day also forms part of the ritual.

Procedures for Avani Avittam Ritual (for Yajur Vedics)

- 1) Offering prayers to the ancient Rishis (sages), called as Rishi Tharpanam is recited.
- 2) After doing Mahasankalpam (reiterating their vows of apologies), the Brahmin bachelors perform 'Samitha Daanam' and 'Kamo Karshith Japam'. Next, with the guidance of the priest, 3) Kaanda Rishi tharpanam is performed.
- 4) The male members are required to have only a light meal at night.
- 5) Gayathri Japam is recited on the next day after an early bath. Appam and Idli are served.

6) Naivedhyam for the Homam (fire ritual) include Green Gram, Dhal or Kondai Kadalai (Chick Pea) Sundal.

7) The fire ritual is performed either in the houses or at temples, assisted by priests. Aarti is performed on returning home.

Procedures for Avani Avittam Ritual (for Rig Vedic)

For Rig Vedic, there is no 'Kamo Karshith Japam' or Homam. Rests of the procedures are same as that of Yajur Vedic.

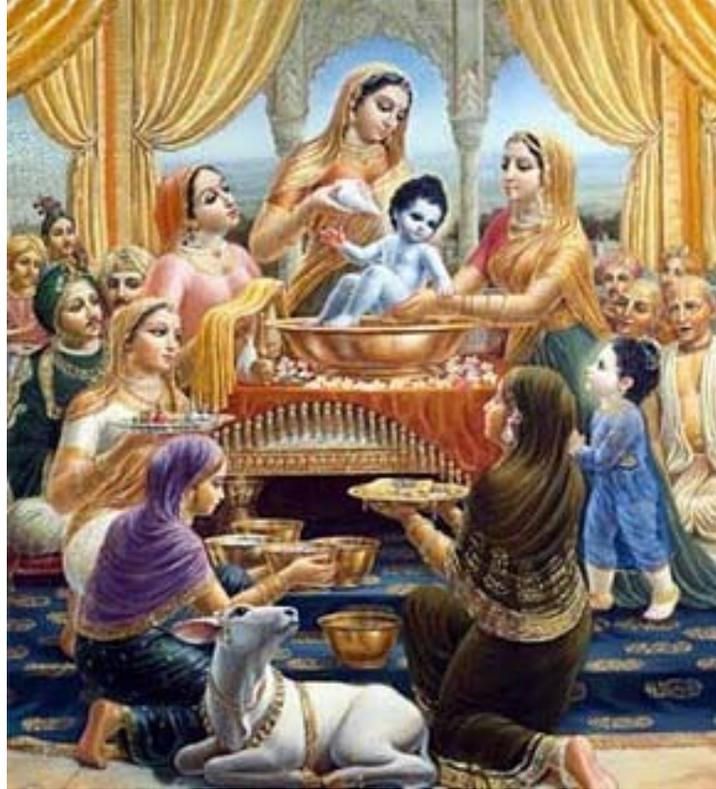
Procedures for Avani Avittam Ritual (for Sama Vedic)

For Sama Vedic, Avani Avittam is celebrated on Ganesh Chaturthi day. The procedures for Avani Avittam ritual for Sama Vedics are similar to the Yajur Vedic.

[Sree Krishna Jayanthi - Ashtami Rohini Festival](#)

Sri Krishna Janmashtami, also known as Ashtami Rohini Festival or Sree Krishna Jayanthi, marks the birthday of Lord Shri Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Krishna Janmashtami festival is observed on the eighth day, Ashtami tithi, of the dark half in the month of Shravana (mid August - mid September); on the day of Rohini nakshatra (star). Sri Krishna Janmashtami is known by various names such as Krishnashtami, Gokulashtami, Saatam Aatham, Ashtami Rohini, Sri Krishna Jayanti and Sree Jayanthi. Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated for two days. The first day is known as Krishnashtami and the second day is known as Kalashtami. According to traditions, Lord Krishna was born to demolish Kamsa, the demon king of Mathura. Lord Krishna played an important role in Hindu epic Mahabharata (legendary battle in Kurukshetra) and also emphasized the theory of bhakti.

Rituals of Krishnashtami Festival



Krishna Janmashtami is observed through various customs and rituals in various states of India. However, the fasting observed during the festival is a common one. Devotees observe fast for the entire day and it is broken after the birth of the Lord at midnight. Only milk and milk products are preferred by them, as these were the favorites of Lord Krishna. Some undergo 'Nirjal' fast which means not consuming even a single drop of water. Few devotees fast for two days also.

Ashtami Rohini Celebrations in India

On this auspicious day, devotees recite slogans and mantras of Lord Krishna. Another important custom of Sri Krishna Jayanti is singing of Hindu Bhajans (devotional songs) during the Janmashtami festival. People involve in dance performances that portray the life of Lord Krishna. To commemorate the birth anniversary of the Lord, Rasa Lila or the dramatic performances of the life of Krishna are performed by devotees. Butter, buttermilk and sweets are offered to the Lord on the day.

On the Ashtami Rohini festival occasion Lord Krishna Temples are brilliantly decorated with oil lamps and festival celebration continues till early hours of morning. Thousands of devotees visit the temples on Krishna Janmashtami day to get a glimpse of their favorite God in full decoration. Special feasts will be arranged by temple authorities on Krishnashtami day for devotees.

Famous Krishna Temples in India

Besides celebrating at home, devotees throng to famous Krishna Temples during the day. Some of the famous Krishna Temples in India where Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated with much importance include Guruvayur Temple in Kerala, Ambalapuzha Sree Krishna Temple in Alappuzha, Udipi Sri Krishna Temple in Karnataka, ISKCON Temple in Tirupati, Srinath Temple in Rajasthan, Dwarkadhish Temple in Gujarat, Krishna Temple in Hampi, Krishna Janma Bhoomi Mandir in Mathura, and Banke Bihari Mandir in Vrindavan.

[Tripunithura Athachamayam Festival in Kerala](#)

Athachamayam Festival or Attachamayam Festival marks the beginning of the annual 10 days Onam Festival in Kerala, South India. Athachamayam (Atha Chamayam) is conducted on the Atham day (Attam) of the Malayalam month of Chingam (August – September). Athachamayam Festival takes place at Tripunithura (Thripoonithura) a suburb of Cochin City, which is renowned as the Land of temples, situated in Ernakulam District, Kerala. In 2011, the date of Tripunithura Athachamayam Festival 2011 is on 31st August 2011, Wednesday. And Onam Festival 2011 is on 9th September 2011.

Tourist Attractions of Athachamayam Festival Tripunithura, Kerala

Athachamayam is a very colourful festival with spectacular processions accompanied by decorated elephants and floats, group of musicians, and various traditional Kerala art forms. Some of the

beautiful traditional Kerala art forms which are seen during the Athachamayam Festival in Kochi include Chendamelam, Panchavadyam, Theyyam, Karakattam, Mayilattom, Pambamelam, Pulikali, Ammankudam, and Aattakavadi (Aatta Kavadi).



History of Athachamayam Festival in Cochin

In earlier times, Athachamayam Festival in Cochin was celebrated in memory of the legendary victory of the Raja of Kochi. On the Atha Chamayam festival day, the Maharaja of Kochi undertook the Attachamayam march from Tripunithura to the Vamanamoorthy Temple in Thrikkakara (also known as Thrikkakara Temple). Though the era of Kings had ended, the festival is still celebrated with all its glory to mark the beginning of state festival of Kerala, Onam or Thiruonam.

Tourist Attractions in Tripunithura, Ernakulam, Kerala

Sree Poornathrayeesa Temple - The ancient Sri Poornathrayeesa Temple, dedicated to Lord Santhana Gopalakrishna (an incarnation of Lord Krishna, is the major religious site located at Tripunithura. [More info on Tripunithura Sri Poornathrayeesa Temple](#)

Kali Kotta Palace - Kalikotta Palace, located near the Santhanagopala Murthy Poornathrayeesha Temple, is a major land mark which once served as the entertainment auditorium to the erstwhile Rajas of Cochin.

Tripunithura Palace Museum - Hill Palace Museum is an archeological museum situated on the Ernakulam -Chotanikkara route in Tripunithura. Ernakulam Archaeological Museum exhibits stone inscriptions, murals, oil paintings, palm-leaf manuscripts, coins, and other ancient belongings of the royal family.

How to reach Tripunithura?

The temple town of Tripunithura is located just 12 km south-east of Kochi city. Tripunithura is well connected by road with other major towns and cities in the state.

Railway Station

Tripunithura Railway Station, managed by the Southern Railways, lies on the Ernakulam – Trivandrum railway line. Some of the major trains passing through Tripunithura Railway Station are Mumbai - Kanyakumari Express, Thiruvananthapuram – Bilaspur Express, Malabar Express (Thiruvananthapuram - Mangalore), and Thiruvananthapuram - Shoranur (Venda Express).

Airport

Cochin International Airport is the nearest airport.

[Onam Festival in Kerala - Thiruonam 29th August](#)

Onam, also spelled Thiru Onam or Thiruvonam festival, is a fascinating and spectacular festivity, is the biggest festivals in Kerala. Onam is a ten-day annual festival which falls during the Malayalam month of Chingam (August - September), starting from the day of lunar asterism Atham and concludes on asterism Thiruonam. Also known as the harvest festival, Onam Festival marks

the arrival of the legendary King Mahabali. The carnival of Onam invokes the Kerala culture and tradition with its traditional feasts (Onasadya), folk songs and dances, exquisitely decorated Onam Pookalam (Athapookalam), stunning Vallamkali (Snake Boat Race) and traditional Kerala games. The Keralites make fabulous arrangements to invite King Mahabali and celebrate in a grand manner.

Legend of Onam Festival in Kerala



One of the legends associated with this festival is the story of King Mahabali. He was a wise and generous asura (demon) king, highly revered by everyone in his kingdom. As the Gods could not tolerate his growing popularity, they sought the help of Lord Vishnu. This is because the king was an ardent devotee of the Lord. The Lord disguised himself as a poor and dwarf Brahmin, called Vamana (one of the dasavatars of Lord Vishnu) and visited the kingdom of Mahabali.

The generous king granted boons to the Brahmin. Lord Vishnu asked for the land to the extent that could be covered by his three steps, which was agreed by the king. At once, Vamana grew into a huge size and he covered the whole of the sky in his one step. The whole of earth was covered in another step. The Lord then asked for a

place for his third step. The king then realized that the Brahmin was not an ordinary man and is Lord Vishnu himself, and showed his head to put his third step. The Lord pushed Mahabali in the patala.

However, Lord Vishnu was pleased with the generosity of the king and granted him a boon. King Mahabali asked that he would like to visit Kerala and his people every year and his request was granted. Therefore the visit of King Mahabali is celebrated as Onam every year. The celebration is most prominent in Trikkakara which is about 10 km from Kochi (Cochin) on the Edapally - Pookattupadi road. This place is said to be the capital of the King Mahabali. Vamanamoorthy Temple dedicated to Trikkakara Appan or Vamanamurthy, who is Lord Vishnu himself in disguise, is located at this place.

Onam Rituals

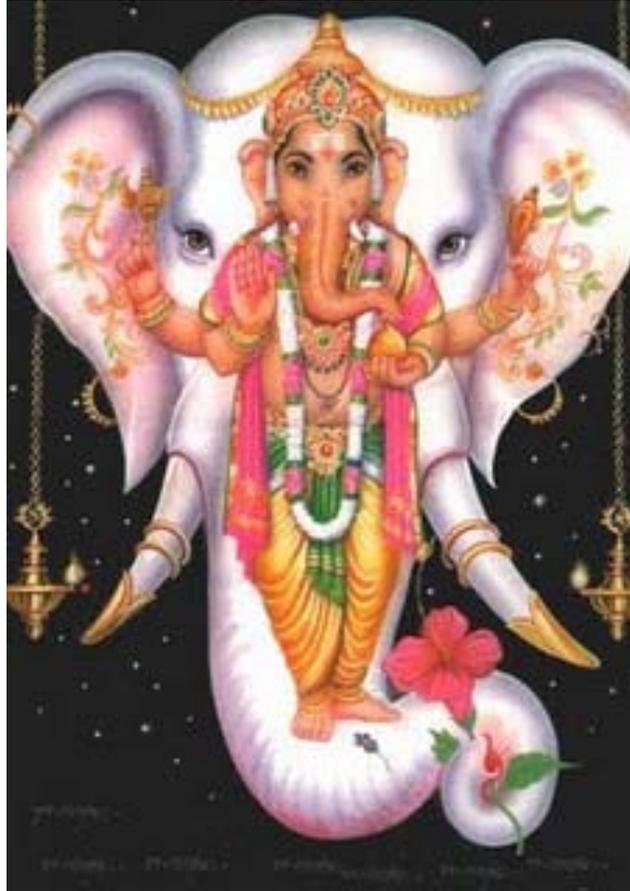
Though all the ten days are important, the first day, Atham, and the last or tenth day, Thiru Onam, are notable ones. An interesting feature is the Pookalam or the flower carpet which starts from the first day. The front courtyard of almost every house in Kerala is decorated with Attha Poo to welcome the king. The Pookalam increases in size on the subsequent days with the addition of more flowers into it. Steamed bananas and fried pappadam (pappad) are included in the food till the day of Thiruonam. You can see the youngsters enjoying themselves swinging and singing in the beautifully decorated swings which form an important part during Onam.

Onam Utradam and Thiruonam day, Customs of Onam festival, and the traditional Onam games and dance performance which adds the beauty of Onam celebration.

[Ganesh Chaturthi - Vinayaka Chavithi Festival](#)

Ganesh Chaturthi or Vinayaka Chaturthi Festival is one of the most popular Hindu festivals celebrated in India. Also known as Vinayaka Chavithi, Ganesha Chaturthi is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Ganesh, and is observed in the month of Bhaadrapada. Vinayaka

Chaturthi celebrations starts on the Shukla Chaturthi (fourth day of the waxing moon period) and lasts for 10 days and ends on Anant Chaturdashi.



The elephant-headed Ganesha, considered as the supreme God of Wisdom, is worshipped for prosperity and good fortune. Lord Ganesh is the 'remover of obstacles' and therefore he is called 'Vigneswar'. His vehicle is Mooshak (rat). Lord Ganesha, who is the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, is believed to grant his presence on the earth on the auspicious occasion of Pillayar Chaturthi .

Though Vinayaka Chaturthi festival is celebrated throughout India, it is celebrated in a grand scale in Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Besides, Newars in Nepal and Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka also celebrate Ganesha Chaturthi in a grand manner.

Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations in India

It is the custom of the people to get clay models of Lord Ganesha, two to three months much in advance of Vinayak Chavithi festival. With the sizes ranging to over 25 feet, the beautifully decorated models portray the Lord in various poses. People install the statues in their homes. Rituals are performed throughout the ten days, from Bhadrapad Shukla Chaturthi to the Ananta Chaturdashi. Coconut, jaggery, 21 modakas (a sweet dish) and 21 durva (trefoil) blades of grass and red flowers are offered to the deity. A cream made of vermilion and sandalwood paste is smeared over the statue. The statues are taken out ceremoniously in procession around the streets on the 11th day. Accompanied by drum-beats, Ganesha devotional songs and dances, the figures of Lord Ganesh are then immersed in a river or the sea. Modak (modagam or modakam in South India) is the main sweet dish prepared on the day. Some people also make karanji (karjikai in Kannada) for the deity.

Legend of Vinayaka Chaturthi

It is not advisable to look at the moon on the Ganesh Chaturthi day. There is a legend behind this. Lord Ganesh, on one of his birthdays, consumed a number of sweets and started to move on his mouse. All of a sudden, the mouse got scared at a snake and so it slipped. Due to this, Ganesh who was on the mouse also fell down. His stomach burst out and the sweets came out. However, the Lord managed to fill the sweets again into his stomach. He caught the snake and tied around his belly. The moon (Lord Chandra), who was noticing all these, started laughing. The annoyed Lord pulled out one of his trunks and threw it against the moon. Ganesha cursed that no one should look at the moon on his birthday and if anyone does he will be punished with bad name or dishonor.

[Navratri Festival or Navaratri Festival .](#)

Navratri Festival or Navaratri Festival is one of the most important Hindu festivals of India celebrated with great religious fervor throughout India. Navratri means "Nine Nights in Sanskrit"; Nava

meaning Nine and Ratri meaning nights. The nine forms of Goddess Shakti are worshipped during these nine nights and ten days. Each of the three days is devoted to worship of Goddess Durga - the Goddess of courage, Goddess Lakshmi - the Goddess of Wealth and Goddess Saraswati - the Goddess of Knowledge.



Navratri Festival is celebrated twice a year. Chaitra Navratri is celebrated in March-April, and Sharad Navratri is celebrated in October-November. The day after Sharad Navratri, ie., on the tenth day, Dussehra or Vijayadasami is celebrated. While the tenth day festival is called as Dussehra in Northern India, in Southern India, it is called as Vijayadasami. According to the Hindu calendar, Sharadeya Navratri falls on the first day of the Shukla Paksha (waxing phase of moon) in the Hindu month of Ashwin (September-October).

Navaratri Traditions

Though there are five Navaratri devoted to Shakti, only three are in vogue. They are:

Sharad Navratri - Sharad Navaratri is the most important of the Navratris and is called as Navratri or Maha Navratri (the Great Navratri). Observed during the beginning of winter (September - October), this festival celebrates the killing of the demon, Mahishasura, by the Goddess Durga.

Vasant Navratri - Vasant Navaratri or Basant Navaratri is celebrated during Vasanta Ritu (spring season - March- April), this Navaratri is celebrated in North India. Vaishno Devi Temple in Jammu celebrates this Navaratri in a grand scale.

Ashada Navratri – Ashada Navaratri is significant for the devotees of Goddess Varahi, this is celebrated in July-August. This Navaratri is called Guhya Navaratri in Himachal Pradesh. Varahi is one of the saptha mathrukas (seven mothers) who helped the Goddess Shakti in her fight against the demons, Shumbha and Nishumbha.

Mythology

The most popular legend associated with Navaratri is the slaying of the demon king, Mahishasura, by Goddess Durga.

According to legends, Mahishasura was a powerful demon king who obtained a boon from the almighty that his death should be at the hands of a woman and by no other human being or any form of living being. His boon was granted and consequently he started doing violence on all human beings on the earth.

Unable to bear his cruelty, people prayed to Goddess Shakti, the consort of Lord Shiva, to save them from the demon. Shakti then took the form of Durga and entered a war with him, which lasted for nine days. The Goddess Durga killed Mahishasura on the tenth day. The nine nights of Navratri denote the nine nights of the war between Goddess Durga and Mahishasura.

Navratri Rituals

The first three days of Navratri are devoted to the worship of Goddess Durga. Each day is dedicated to her appearances, namely Kumari, Parvati and Kali.

In some places, there is a custom of planting barley seeds in a small bed of mud on the first day of puja. After the puja, the shoots when grown are distributed.

The fourth, fifth and sixth days of Navratri are dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity.

The seventh day is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati. A yagna is also performed during the day.

Ayudha Pooja

The eighth or ninth day is celebrated as Ayudha Pooja by commercial organizations, business houses, shops and establishments. Machines, equipments and tools that are used in the organization are cleaned and smeared with sandalwood paste (Chandanam) and vermilion (KumKum) and adorned with flowers.

Saraswathi Puja

During the eighth day, prayers are offered to Goddess Saraswathi. People place books of children and musical instruments before the goddess. Pujas are performed on the day.

Mahanavami

The ninth day of Navratri celebrations is also known as Mahanavami or Maha Navami. Kanya puja is performed during the day. Nine young girls, who have not yet reached the stage of puberty, are worshipped as these nine girls are said to symbolize the nine forms of Goddess Durga. The feet of the girls are washed and the girls are offered food and a set of new clothes.

During the Sharad Navaratri, that is the September - October Navratri celebrations, the tenth day is celebrated as Dussehra.



Dussehra or Dasara Festival in India

Dussehra festival, also known as Dasara or Vijayadashami, is an Indian festival that celebrates good forces over evil forces. It spans for 10 days and is celebrated in varied traditions across India. According to Hindu calendar, Dussehra is marked on the 10th day of the bright half (Shukla Paksha) of the month of Ashvin (Ashwayuja).

History of Dussehra Festival

Dussehra celebrates the Hindu god Rama's victory over the demon king, Ravana and the triumph of good over evil. The epic Ramayana tells the story of Lord Rama who wins the lovely Sita for his wife, only to have her carried off by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. Ravan kidnapped Sita to avenge his sister's injuries. Rama and Lakshmana later fought a battle and killed Ravana to rescue Sita. The monkey god Hanuman and a huge army of monkeys helped them.



Picture of Dussehra Festival or Dasara Festival in India

Mahabharata, another Hindu epic is also commemorated during Dussehra. The five brothers Pandavas abandoned their weapons which they hid in a Shami tree when they went to exile for a year. When they returned they found the weapons at the same place and so they worshipped the tree before going to the battle which they won.

Customs

In most of the Hindu communities people keep fast and eat only one meal a day at sunset. It is mandatory to eat vegetarian courses and onion and garlic are not included as ingredients in dishes. Dairy products, fruits and nuts form the staple diet of this occasion.

Victory of Good over Evil

Dussehra is one of the major Hindu festivals of India. It is celebrated throughout the country with great zeal and enthusiasm. People all over the country participate in the occasion in their own way. The day of Vijayadashami is considered to be auspicious and festive by the people of India and is celebrated as the day that symbolizes the victory of 'Good over Evil'.

Karwa Chauth Festival

Karwa Chauth or Karva Chauth is a ritual of fasting observed by married Hindu women for the well-being, prosperity and longevity of their husbands. The word Karwa (Karva) means a clay pot and chauth means the fourth, as the festival is commemorated on the fourth day after the full moon in Kartik month of Hindu calendar.



Karvachauth festival is celebrated by North Indians, with great enthusiasm and is supposed to be the most propitious day for any married women in India. On the day of Karwa Chauth, women receive beautiful gifts from their husbands and relatives as a gesture of their love and care. The festival of Karva Chauth is popular amongst married women especially in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan,

Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. It is symbolic of the unflagging loyalty of a wife towards her husband. On this special occasion, things that reflect the marital status of a woman like jewelry, bangles, henna, and bindi are of high demand.

Karwa Chauth Rituals

There are some differences in Karwa Chauth rituals about starting and breaking the fast, and worshipping the moon within regions, groups, and communities in India. On the day of Karvachauth, married women get up early in the morning and perform their ablutions. Karwa Chauth is dedicated to Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati and their son Kartikeya (Lord Muruga). They are worshiped on this day along with the 10 'karwas' (earthen pots) filled with sweets.

Married women start observing fast before sunrise and ends only after offering prayers and worshipping the moon. They won't even take food or a drop of water till the moon is sighted. In the late afternoon women gather at a common place like temple, an elderly lady or the pujarin narrates the legend and history of Karwa Chauth.

Once the moon rises, the women see its reflection in a thali of water, or through a dupatta or a sieve. They pray for their husband's well-being and long life, and break their fast after offering water to the moon. Then they receive their first bite of food and water from their husbands. This marks the end of the day long Karwa Chauth fast.

Timing of the Karwa Chauth Festival

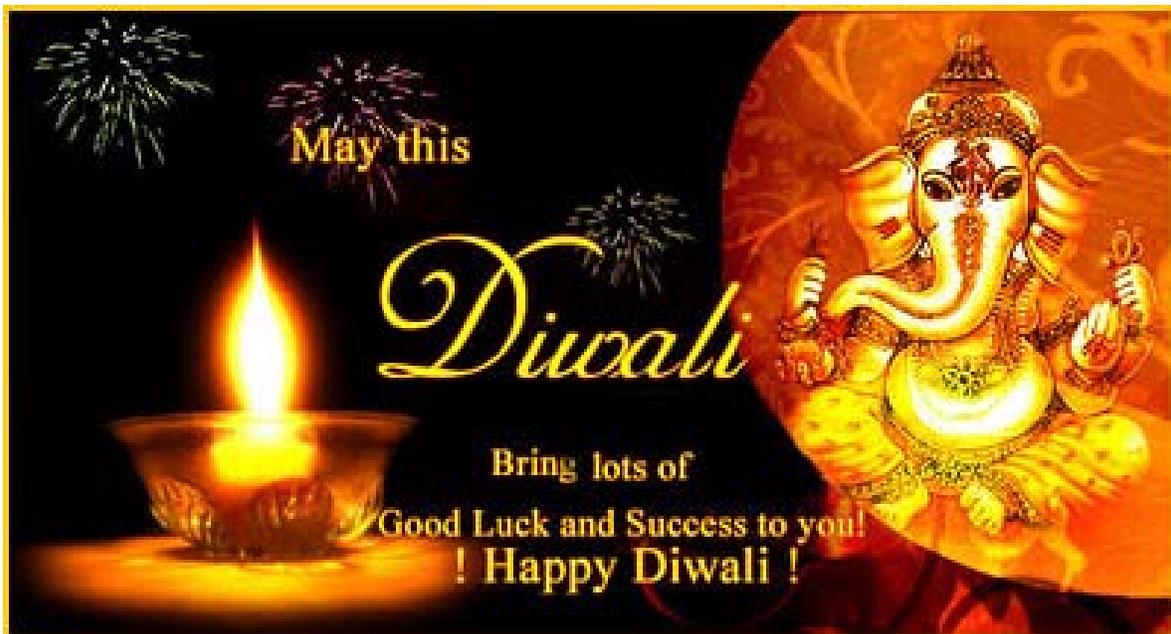
Usually, this Hindu festival comes 9 days before the festival of Diwali on 'kartik ki chauth'. To be more precise, it comes on the fourth day of the full moon in the month of 'Karthik' (October-November).

In short, it is believed that the married women, who prays and observes the Karwa Chauth Vrat for the well-being of husband, acquire saubhagya, progeny and lasting prosperity.

Diwali Festival – Deepavali

Diwali or Deepavali, the Festival of Lights, is one of the biggest and popular festivals of India. Celebrated with great enthusiasm, the festival is marked by multi-colored Rangoli designs, special rituals, lighting of lamps, floral decorations, fireworks, exchange of Diwali sweets and gifts. As per Hindu calendar, this five day festival is celebrated after 20 days of Dussehra. Diwali celebrations begin on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Ashwin (October/ November) and falls on the Amavasya -the 15th day of the dark fortnight of Ashwin. The festival of lights concludes on the 2nd day of the bright half of Kartika.

Diwali commemorates the return of Lord Ram after a 14-year exile in the forest and his victory over the Ravana. The word is taken out from the Sanskrit word Deepavali - 'Deep' means diya (small pots made from clay) or light and 'Avali' means a row - meaning a row of diyas or array of lamps. Thus the festival is celebrated by placing small diyas, candles and lamps all over the home.



Read a brief History of Diwali Festival in India

Traditions of Diwali

Diwali or the festival of lights, as it is better known, is celebrated over five days denoting five varied philosophies, with each day to a special belief.

Dhanteras – The first day

The first day festival, Dhanteras, is also called as Dhantrayodashi or Dhanwantari Triodasi. It falls on the thirteenth lunar day of Krishna Paksha in the Hindu month of Ashwin (October/November). Dhan means "wealth" and on this day, Goddess Lakshmi puja is performed for the prosperity and welfare. It is considered auspicious to purchase gold or silver articles or at least one or two new utensils.

Narak Chaturdasi – The second day

This is the second day before Diwali and is celebrated as Chhoti Diwali or small Diwali. Lights are lit in smaller numbers and fewer crackers burst. Colored rangoli are drawn in the doorway and courtyard. Special rituals are offered to Goddess Lakshmi and also to Rama in the evening.

Lakshmi Puja - The third day

This is the most important day of the five-day celebrations with colors of firecrackers, lighting of lamps, delicious sweets and new clothes. This day is devoted to the Goddess Lakshmi and offering puja to the Goddess is the main event on Diwali in North and West India. Goddess Lakshmi Puja is the combined puja of five deities: Lord Ganesh is worshiped at the beginning; Goddess Lakshmi is worshiped in her three forms - Mahalakshmi (the goddess of wealth and money), Goddess Saraswati (the goddess of learning), and Mahakali; Kubera (the treasurer of the gods) is also worshiped.

Govardhan Puja – The fourth day

This puja is performed in the north on this day. Govardhan is a small hillock in Braj, near Mathura. On this day, people of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar build cow dung and hillocks and adorn them with flowers and worship them. This festival commemorates the lifting of Mount Govardhan by Lord Krishna. This day is also observed as Annakoot which means 'mountain of food'. Certain people wake up for the whole night and cook fifty-six or 108 different types of food for the bhog (the offering of food) to Krishna.

Bhai Duj – The fifth day

Popularly known as Bhai Dooj, this day falls on Dooj, the second day after the new moon. This day commemorates the visit of Lord Yama (god of death) to the house of his sister who drew an auspicious mark on his forehead for his welfare. Accordingly, on this day, sisters perform puja for the safety of their brothers and well being.

Regional celebrations of Diwali

Diwali is celebrated through out India with much religious importance. However, Diwali celebrations varies from one place to another. Hindudevotionalblog.com had posted an article on the History of Diwali Festival [here](#).

[Mandala Kalam at Sabarimala Temple Kerala](#)

Mandala Kalam or Mandala Masam, the main pilgrim season of Sabarimala, commences from first day of the Malayalam month of Vrishchikam (November - December) and concludes on eleventh day of Dhanu (December - January). Mandalam Pilgrimage Season is this 41 days period when devotees make a pilgrimage to the famous Lord Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala.

Mandala Pooja implies 41 days of austerities which are strictly followed by the people. The main Mandala pooja is performed on the 41st day after the 1st of Vrichikam. In 2011, Mandala Masam Pilgrimage season begins on 17th November 2011 and the Mandala Pooja Festival Day is on 27th December 2011. The temple is then

closed for three days and is re-opened on 30th December 2011 for Makara Vilaku. The Makaravilakku Festival Day is on 15th January 2012.



Devotees take the Vrata (penance) before visiting Sabarimala many days before Manadala Masam starts. Some devotees observe strict penance for 41 days, while some others take less days of Vratam only. The pilgrims wear black dhotis and carry Irumudi (also called Ketunira) - a cloth bundle divided into two parts, containing holy coconut with ghee for offering Lord Ayyappa.

Female devotees between the age group of 10 - 50 are restricted from visiting the Sabarimala Temple. Some devotees also make a halt at Sree Krishna Temple at Guruvayur before visiting Lord Ayyappa of Sabarimala Sri Dharmasastha Temple.

Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa!!

[Skanda Sashti Festival - Kanda Shasti of Murugan](#)

Skanda Sashti, also known as Kanda Shashti, is a festival dedicated to Lord Muruga. Sashti, meaning sixth day, falls on the sixth day of the full moon and the sixth day of the new moon in the Hindu

calendar. However, Skanda Sashti is a six-day festival and is observed once in a year. It falls after Diwali in the Tamil month of 'Aippasi' (October - November), starting from the 'piratamai', the 1st phase of the brightening moon. The festival commemorates the slaying of the demon, Soorapadma, by Lord Subramanya, and is celebrated with great pomp and splendor.

Legend behind Skanda Sashti



Kanda Shashti is associated with the birth of Lord Muruga who defeated the evil powers. According to legends, Soorapadma, a powerful demon, was harassing Devas and mankind. The helpless Devas pleased Lord Shiva to relieve them from the demon. As a result, Lord Shiva produced six powerful sparks of fire from His third eye called Netrikkan. This was carried by Lord Vayu (god of air) and Lord Agni (god of fire) to river Ganges who in turn took to Saravana Poygai, a holy pond. These sparks became six divine small male babies who were nursed by six Karthigai pengal. Goddess Parvati

hugged the kids and made them into a single child with six faces and twelve hands, called Shanmughan. Nine shaktis appeared from Goddess Parvati's anklets from where Veerabahu and numerous soldiers emerged. They became the warriors of Lord Murugan. Lord Shiva granted Lord Murugan, a vel (spear) called Vetrivel and also gifted him with eleven Rudras which were changed into eleven arms.

Lord Murugan came to Thiruchendur with group and pursued war against Soorapadman which lasted for six days. He defeated the demon on the sixth day and this day is called as Skanda Sashti. The Lord converted Soorapadma into a peacock and a cock. The peacock or Mayil became the vehicle of Lord Murugan and therefore He is also called Mayilvahanan (or Mayil Vahanan – which means the one who uses Peacock as his vehicle). Seval or cock adorned his flag. Lord Muruga then married Deivayanai or Devasena who is the daughter of Indra (the Lord of Devas).

Skanda Sashti Celebrations

Devotees usually fast during the six days of Kanda Sashti. It is considered auspicious to recite the Kanda Sashti Kavacham during the period. If it is not possible to observe fast during the six days, one can eat one time meal during the period. Some devotees consume only one meal which consists of fruit and milk in the evening. Few stay in the temples during these six days. It is believed that whoever fasts on these six days of Skanda Sashti and worship Lord Muruga would get the blessings of the Lord.

Skanda Sashti Festival at Murugan Temples

Skanda Sashti is celebrated in a grand scale at the Arupadai Veedu (six holy temples of Murugan). These 6 Murugan Temples are Palani Murugan Temple, Arulmigu Swaminatha Swami Temple (Swamimalai), Tiruchendur Subrahmanya Swami Devasthanam, Thiruthani Subramanya Swamy Temple, Pazhamudircholai Murugan Temple, and Tirupparamkunram Murugan Temple.

Notable one is the celebration held in Tiruchendur Temple of Muruga which draws the largest number of devotees. Kandan's Tiruvilaiyaadal (divine sport) and Soora Samharam (defeating the demon Soorapadman) are enacted during the sixth day of the festival. The Lord's marriage with Deivanai, commonly called as Tirukalyanam, is also performed during the Skanda Sashti Festival.

[Karthigai Deepam Festival - Karthikai Deepam](#)

Thiru Karthigai Deepam, the festival of lights, is celebrated every year in the Tamil month of Karthigai (mid November - mid December). Karthikai Deepam falls on the full moon day of the Karthigai month, coinciding with Krithikai star. Lamps are lit in front of the house in the morning and evening, throughout the month. On the Thirukarthikai day, the entire house is decorated with the oil lamps. This festival of lights indicates the removal of darkness (Ignorance) and enhancing of light (Intelligence).

Karthigai Deepam Festival or Thirukarthikai Deepam



The Ritual

On Thirukarthigai, people clean their houses and draw kolams (rangoli) in the front of the house. The lamps are then placed on it. Before that, the lamps (Agal) are placed in the pooja and lighted. Deeparathana is done and the lamps are kept in different places in the house. People of Tamil Nadu celebrate Karthigai Deepam for three days. Some people celebrate it, extending from the Deepavali festival. The number of lamps is doubled every day from the day of Diwali and they end up with numerous lamps on the day of Karthigai Deepam.

History of Karthigai Deepam

Karthigai Deepam brings to mind the legend of Lord Muruga who took the form of six babies in a lake called "Saravana Poigai". He was formed from the eyes of Lord Shiva as six flames. These six flames turned into six babies which were united by Goddess Parvati (his mother) on this day. Special rituals are performed to Lord Muruga on this day.

Significance of the Day

Special light is lit at the top of the hill at Thiruvannamalai which is the abode of Lord Shiva, called as Agni Shetram or Agni Sthalam (one of the five aspects called Panchaboothams). This festival is called as Tiruvannamalai Deepam.

[Karthigai Deepam at Arunachaleswarar Temple, Tiruvannamalai](#)

Karthigai Deepam Festival is one of the most popular Hindu festivals celebrated at the Arunachaleswarar Temple in Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu. Karthigai Deepam, also spelled Karthika Deepam, falls on the tenth day of the Brahmotsavam in the Tamil month of Karthikai (mid November to mid December). Widely known as Karthikai Brahmotsavam, the Thiruvannamalai Temple festival begins in the Uthiradam (star) day in Karthigai and concludes with the Bharani

Deepam lit in the early hours of the tenth day. In 2011, the Karthigai Deepam festival falls on 9th December 2011.



[Vaikunta Ekadasi Festival 2011 – 2012](#)

Vaikunta Ekadashi, also known as Swarga Vathil Ekadashi or Sorga Vasal Thirapu, falls on the Hindu calendar month of Marghazhi or Margashira or Margashirsha or Dhanu (mid December – mid January). Ekadashi is the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight, occurring twice a month- Sukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha. The Ekadashi in Margashira Sukla Paksh is known as Vaikunta Ekadasi or Mukkoti Ekadasi. Vaikunta Ekadasi is called as Swarga Vathil Ekadashi (Swargavathil Ekadasi) in Malayalam and Vaikunta Dwaram or Swargada Bagilu in Telugu. While in North Indian states, Vaikunta Ekadasi is known as Putrada Ekadasi.

Vaikunta is the abode of Lord Vishnu and as such, this Ekadashi is very significant to the Lord. Special poojas are performed in Lord Vishnu Temples in India where Vaikunta Dwaram or Vaikunta Vaasal (entry to Heaven) is opened for Darshan of Lord Vishnu. There is no Vaikunta Ekadasi in 2011 as the Shukla Paksha Ekadasi in Margazhi

month falls on January 2012 only. Hence the date of Vaikunta Ekadasi Festival 2011 is on 5th January 2012.

Festival Date in Previous Years

Vaikunta Ekadashi Festival was celebrated on 28th December 2009. In 2010, the date of Vaikunta Ekadasi is on 17th December 2010.

Importance of Vaikunta Ekadasi Festival

According to puranas, observing Vaikunta Ekadasi vrata and worshipping Lord Vishnu on Ekadasi day will help people to reach Vaikunta on the lotus feet of Mahavishnu. Hindu Devotional blog has posted a completed article on how to observe Vaikunta Ekadasi vrata and the Significance of Vaikunta Ekadasi [here](#).



Legend and History of Vaikunta Ekadashi

According to Padma Purana (a Vaishnavite text, considered second among the 18 Puranas) the female energy of Lord Vishnu was called as Ekadashi who killed the demon Muran and protected the `Devas'. Therefore, it is said that those who worship `Ekadashi' on the day would reach Vaikunta.

Legend also has it that Lord Vishnu opened the doors of his abode for two demons, though they were against the Lord. The demons asked for the boon that those who listen to their story and see the image of Lord coming out of an entrance called Vaikunta Dwara (Doors of Heaven), they reach Vaikunta. Vaikunta Dwara is seen on the north side of the temples.

[Vaikunta Ekadasi Festival in Lord Vishnu Temples](#)

In Tamil Nadu, Vaikunta Ekadasi festival is celebrated in a grand manner at Tirupati Thirumala Venkateswara Temple, Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple at Srirangam in Tamil Nadu, The Thiruvallikeni Parthasarathy Temple at Chennai and the temples where the presiding deity is Lord Vishnu.

In Kerala, Vaikunta Ekadasi Festival is celebrated with much religious fervor in Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Guruvayoor Temple, Tripunithura Sree Poornathrayeesa Temple, and Ananthapura Lake Temple in Kumbala, Kannankulangara Mahavishnu Temple, Edakkad Mahavishnu Temple, Udayamangalam Sree Mahavishnu Temple in Uduma, Kottacheri Kunnummel Sree Vishnumoorthy Temple in Kanjangad, Vayalil Thrikkovil Mahavishnu Temple, and Thrikodithanam Mahavishnu Temple.

In Andhra Pradesh, Vaikunta Ekadasi 2011 festival is observed with special importance at the Tirupati Tirumala Venkateswara Temple. Special poojas, yagnas, and bhajans will be held on this day. The special entrance called Vaikunta Dwaram will be opened at the Tirumala Venkateswara Swamy Temple on this day only.