



Diwali: About the Holiday



Diwali, also called Deepavali, is the festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists around the world. Families light rows of small oil lamps, decorate with colorful rangoli, share sweets, and gather together. The glowing lights are a joyful sign of light overcoming darkness.

In 2026, the main day of Diwali (Lakshmi Puja) falls on Sunday, November 8. The five-day festival follows the Hindu lunar calendar, so its dates change each year.

- The name Diwali comes from the Sanskrit word dipavali, meaning a row of lights.
- Diwali usually lasts five days and falls in October or November.
- The lamps of Diwali are traditionally lit on the new moon night of the Hindu month of Kartika (called Ashvin in some regional calendars).
- Small clay oil lamps called diyas are set in rows around homes, windows, and doorways.
- Rangoli are colorful patterns made on floors and doorsteps with colored powder, rice, sand, or petals.
- Many Hindus honor Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good fortune, during Diwali.
- Many families remember the story of Lord Rama returning home to the city of Ayodhya.
- Sikhs mark Bandi Chhor Divas at this time, remembering the release of Guru Hargobind from prison.
- Jains celebrate Diwali as the anniversary of Lord Mahavira reaching moksha, or spiritual liberation.
- Many families clean and decorate their homes before Diwali to welcome the festival.
- Sharing sweets called mithai, such as laddoo and barfi, with friends and neighbors is a favorite custom.
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