

DIWALI

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2022

Diwali (pronounced dhee-va-lee) is known as a festival of lights and is celebrated by many religions and people including Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists. Some also call it Deepavali.

Diwali originated in India and is mentioned in early Sanskrit texts. The date of Diwali is determined by the lunar calendar and differs slightly year to year, but it is usually between mid-October to mid-November.

SIGNIFICANCE

While each religion celebrates Diwali for different reasons and in different ways, it is a very important holiday. In Hinduism, Diwali is the day that the deity Rama defeated the demon King Ravana and returned to his kingdom, symbolizing the victory of good over evil. Diwali also celebrates the beginning of the Hindu New Year. In Jainism, Diwali commemorates the day that Lord Mahavir achieved liberation from the cycle of reincarnation in 527 BC. In Sikhism, Diwali (or Bandi Chhor Divas) celebrates the release from prison of the sixth Guru. Newar Buddhists of Nepal celebrate Diwali to honor their Emperor Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism.

CUSTOMS

Diwali rituals and preparations take place over five days. Those celebrating typically clean their home and wear new clothes. They create rangoli designs, art patterns made from colored powder or rice, as well as lighting candles called diyas and sometimes even fireworks. There also different prayers, or pujas. Overall, light or good conquers darkness or evil. Festive foods and great multigenerational family gatherings are common.

FOOD

Sweets and desserts, called Mithal, are a big part of Diwali celebrations. There are many kinds of sweets, such as round ladoos or crescent-shaped gujiya. There is always a lot of sweets!

While this fact sheet is meant to provide a high-level overview, there are many different perspectives and ways to celebrate each holiday or heritage month.



ACTIVATION SUGGESTIONS

1. *Display a sign saying "Happy Diwali!"*
2. *Place diyas at the hostess stand. You can order online.*
3. *Showcase music and art from famous Indian artists.*
4. *Create a Diwali word search or crossword puzzle, or a rangoli coloring activity for kids' menus.*
5. *Make and distribute a pamphlet with the stories of Diwali and its traditions.*
6. *Create a Social Media contest with a Diwali quiz. Winner gets dinner for 2 or another prize.*
7. *Come up with a unique menu with Indian dishes or a fusion Indian menu.*
8. *Make fusion Indian desserts using Indian ingredients and or techniques.*
9. *Promote a 10% discount on the food bill for anyone dressed in Indian attire on that day.*
10. *Ask guests to pick 3 cards from a deck when they come in. Anyone drawing a trail gets a prize or voucher for a return visit.*



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