All About Diwali

Celebrating Diwali

Diwali is a very important religious celebration that takes place every year. Although it is traditionally celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs, it can be celebrated by people from other religions as well. The specific date of Diwali varies but it is between the months of October and November each year.

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The Goddess Lakshmi

The festival of Diwali welcomes the new year and honours the goddess Lakshmi. In Hinduism, many different gods and goddesses are worshipped. Each god or goddess is believed to be responsible for something — Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

She is often illustrated holding lotus flowers, coins and a coconut in her hands.

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Diya Lamps

The festival of Diwali means 'festival of light' and it celebrates the victory of light over darkness. During the celebration of Diwali, many homes light lots of special diya lamps.

These lamps were traditionally made from clay and are lit to help the goddess Lakshmi into people's homes.

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Rama and Sita

During Diwali, the traditional Hindu story of Rama and Sita is told. The story tells of a famous warrior, Prince Rama, and his beautiful wife, Sita, who were banished from their home by the King. Living nearby was a terrible demon king called Ravana. He had ten heads and twenty arms and was feared throughout the land. When Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, Prince Rama, with the help of many animals, searched for his wife. He fought a mighty battle and the whole world rejoiced when Rama eventually killed the evil Ravana, using a magic arrow.

This story helps people to remember that light triumphs over dark and good triumphs over evil. Rama and Sita are believed to be the god Vishnu and goddess Lakshmi in human form.

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Rangoli Patterns

Rangoli patterns are colourful and bright designs made on the floor by the entrance of a house to welcome visitors. During the Hindu festival of Diwali, people create these eye-catching patterns to encourage the goddess Lakshmi to enter their homes and to keep away evil spirits.

Traditionally, they are made using rice, grains, flour, sand or chalk. The most popular subject of rangoli designs is the lotus flower.

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Special Days of Diwali

Some people celebrate Diwali over three days while for others, the festival lasts for five days. The names of the five days of Diwali are:

- Dhanteras (day of fortune)
- Naraka Chaturdasi (day of knowledge)
- Diwali (day of light)
- Padwa (New Year)
- Bhai Dooj (day of love between siblings)

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