

DHARMIC DAYS AND HINDU HOLIDAYS

A Guide to Religious Accommodation

2023–2026



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Dharmic Days and Hindu Holidays

A Guide to Religious Accommodation

Hindu holidays commemorate a particular deity, season or event in history, but do not necessarily fall on a specific day every year as the Hindu calendar is lunar. Many Hindu Americans belong to different sampradaya (sect) and/or parampara (lineage), or regional/state community, which may determine specific days of spiritual importance not included in this list. In addition, **observers may request specific accommodations or time off** to complete sacred rites of passages or celebrate. Some may also have specific dietary restrictions.

Below is a list of some of the more widely celebrated Hindu holidays and days of significance to Dharma traditions for accommodation, observation, and celebration.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to us at education@hinduamerican.org.

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<https://www.drikpanchang.com/>

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA JAYANTI

Observance

JANUARY 12, 2023

Swami Vivekananda Jayanti
is celebrated annually on
January 12th.

The birthday of Swami Vivekananda, known as **Swami Vivekananda Jayanti**, is honored as a regional holiday in the Indian state of West Bengal and as National Youth Day by the Government of India on January 12th each year. The day commemorates and recognizes his contributions as a modern Hindu monk and respected guru of the Vedanta philosophy of Hinduism. The day that Swami Vivekananda delivered his speech at the Parliament of Religions is known as ‘World Brotherhood Day.’ Swami Vivekananda brought Hindu teachings and practices—such as yoga and transcendental meditation—to Western audiences.

READ

Countless Americans Have Been Influenced by Swami Vivekananda, Even If Many Don’t Know Who He Is

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/swami-vivekananda-influenced-countless-americans

PARTICIPATE

Read/listen to Swami Vivekananda’s speech to the Parliament of World Religions on September 11, 1893, in Chicago, IL

www.artic.edu/swami-vivekananda-and-his-1893-speech



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LOHRI

Festival

JANUARY 13, 2023

2024: January 13

2025: January 13

2026: January 13

Used to mark the coldest day of the year, **Lohri (LOH-ree)** signifies the start of winter solstice and is followed by the longest night and shortest day of the year. Often referred to as the ‘Bonfire Festival’ or the ‘Festival of Farmers,’ Lohri is a time to express gratitude and socialize with festive songs and dances to mark the arrival of longer days. During Lohri, the significance of a fire represents energy, spiritual strength, and renewal. For some, Lohri is also known as Lohadi or Lal Loi.

DOWNLOAD

**HAF’s educational reading primer
on the Winter Solstice**

www.hinduamerican.org/hafn_20_075-wintersolstice-final/

PARTICIPATE

Plant a tree or sapling as Lohri celebrates harvest, soil fertility, and agricultural sustainment.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Lohri!



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MAKAR SANKRANTI

Festival

JANUARY 14, 2023

2024: January 14

2025: January 14

2026: January 14

Makar Sankranti (muh-KUR sun-KRAN-thee) is a Hindu solar holiday that marks the transition of the sun into Capricorn (Makar) on its celestial path and honors Surya (the sun god) and Goddess Saraswati. In some parts of India and Nepal, this holiday is referred to as Maghi. This holiday is noted as the Hindu New Year for many, and is considered to be an auspicious time to pursue new goals and new endeavors. Charity on this day is also a common practice. Celebrations often involve flying kites—the spiritual metaphor explains that as one soars through life, they remain grounded by their connection to a higher power.

DOWNLOAD

HAF's educational reading primer on the Winter Solstice

https://www.hinduamerican.org/hafn_20_075-wintersolstice-final/

PARTICIPATE

Participate in kite flying community events or competitions.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Makar Sankranti!



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PONGAL

Festival

JANUARY 14, 2023

2024: January 14

2025: January 14

2026: January 14

Pongal (PONG-uhl) is a four-day harvest festival corresponding with Makar Sankranti and Lohri. It is celebrated in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry in India, as well as in Sri Lanka and the Hindu diaspora. During Pongal, many offer prayers to Surya (the sun god) for a good harvest with newly gathered produce cooked for the first time. As Pongal translates to “spilling over,” there is a tradition of boiling rice in a pot until it starts to overflow as well as consuming a sweet dish made of rice and lentils.

DOWNLOAD

**HAF’s educational reading primer
on the Winter Solstice**

[https://www.hinduamerican.org/
hafn_20_075-wintersolstice-final/](https://www.hinduamerican.org/hafn_20_075-wintersolstice-final/)

PARTICIPATE

Hold a potluck and encourage others to bring rice based dishes to share.

SUGGESTED GREETING

During Pongal festivities, a customary greeting is, “Has the rice boiled?” The reply back is, “It has boiled.” Happy Pongal!



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VASANT PANCHAMI

Deity Celebration

JANUARY 25, 2023

2024: February 13

2025: February 02

2026: January 23

Vasant Panchami (vuh-SUNTH punch-uh-mee), also known as Basant Panchami or Sri Panchami in southern India, is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati—goddess of knowledge, learning, music, and art. She represents enlightenment, and is the consort of Brahma, the Creator. Many celebrations include a shade of yellow to honor her favorite color and the agricultural mustard crops which are in bloom during the spring harvest. Often schools and universities in India will hold special rituals and prayers to the goddess for her blessings for academic and musical studies. This day is also considered to be auspicious for weddings.

READ

5 Things to Know About Vasant Panchami
www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-vasant-panchami

PARTICIPATE

Offer to share sweet treats and snacks with friends and colleagues.

SUGGESTED GREETING

May Goddess Saraswati bless you with great knowledge!
Happy Vasant Panchami!



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MAHA SHIVARATRI

Deity Celebration

FEBRUARY 18, 2023

2024: March 08

2025: February 25

2026: February 15

Maha Shivaratri (muh-HA shiv-RA-three), or the ‘Great Night of Shiva,’ occurs in either February or March, as winter ends and spring approaches. Maha Shivaratri is a time for new beginnings and endeavors, especially in regards to spiritual matters. It is celebrated with fasting, meditation, devotional songs, and worship of the physical representation of Lord Shiva—the god of transformation. During this time, it is customary to visit temples dedicated to Lord Shiva or to dedicate your prayers to him.

READ

What to do on Maha Shivaratri

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-maha-shivaratri

PARTICIPATE

This is a good day to donate food or clothing to the less fortunate.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Maha Shivaratri!



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HOLI

Festival

MARCH 07, 2023

2024: March 25

2025: March 14

2026: March 03

One of the largest festivals in the world, **Holi (HO-lee)** celebrates the start of spring, which is the season of hope and new beginnings. Often referred to as the ‘Festival of Colors,’ Holi is recognized as a national holiday in India and welcomes the arrival of spring and the harvests it brings. While Hindu legends connected to the origin of Holi vary, the messages of goodness, renewal, and love are always the same. Many will pay off old debts, renew broken relationships, and make new friends as the spirit of Holi encourages harmony and new beginnings.

READ

5 Things to Know About Holi

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-holi

DOWNLOAD

HAF's Holi Toolkit

www.hinduamerican.org/haf-holi-toolkit

PARTICIPATE

Celebrate by joining a Holi celebration at a park, a local temple, or community center.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Holi!

Holi Hai!



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UGADI (OR GUDI PADWA)

Festival

MARCH 22, 2023

2024: April 09

2025: March 29

2026: March 19

Ugadi (oo-GA-dee), also known as **Gudi Padwa (goo-dee puh-DWAH)**, is derived from the Sanskrit words yuga (age) and adi (starting)—‘the beginning of a new age.’ The legend behind this festival is that Lord Brahma created the universe on Ugadi. It is celebrated predominantly in the southern Indian states of Telangana, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Like most Hindu spring festivals, Ugadi is a time for new beginnings, as the longer and brighter days invigorate and inspire hope for prosperous growth in one’s work, relationships, and spiritual practices.

READ

5 Things to Know About Ugadi

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-ugadi

PARTICIPATE

Hold a rangoli (colored patterns of flowers, powder, rice, or sand made on the floor) making competition.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Ugadi!

Happy Ugadi Wishes!



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RAM NAVAMI

Deity Celebration



MARCH 30, 2023

2024: April 16

2025: April 05

2026: March 26

Ram Navami (RAM nuhv-uh-mee) celebrates the birth of Lord Ram who many know from the popular sacred text, Ramayana. This epic tells the life story of a noble prince. Hindus believe that Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (god of preservation) and is the embodiment of dharma (righteousness). On this day, it is common to offer special prayers to Lord Ram, participate in charitable giving, and offer community meals. Many may host community readings or retelling of the story in dance or drama form in the days leading up to the holiday.

READ

5 Essential Things To Know About Ram Navami

www.ndtv.com/india-news/ram-navami-2021-date-5-essential-things-to-know-about-ram-navami-241710

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Ram Navami!

Wishing you a happy and prosperous Ram Navami!



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MAHAVIR JAYANTI

Jain Observance



APRIL 03, 2023

2024: April 21

2025: April 10

2026: March 30

Mahavir Jayanti is the birth anniversary of philosopher Mahavir, who was the 24th and final Jain pandit. Born a prince named Vardhamana, he renounced everything for the path of enlightenment, earning the name Mahavir, meaning great hero. Mahavir believed in and preached ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (chastity), and aparigraha (non-attachment). Many will visit his temples, read scriptures, and ask for his blessings during this holiday.

READ

Learn more about Lord Mahavir and his teachings.

www.jaina.org/page/Mahavir

PARTICIPATE

Indulge in a day of meatless meals to honor the principle of ahimsa (non-violence).

SUGGESTED GREETING

Mahavir Jayanti! Happy Mahavir Jayanti!



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HANUMAN JAYANTI (OR HANUMAN JANMOTSAV)

Deity Celebration

APRIL 5, 2023

2024: April 23

2025: April 12

2026: April 01

Hanuman Jayanti (ha-NU-MAN jay-un-tee) honors Lord Hanuman, who is revered for his selfless devotion and ability to attain victory against evil. He is known to provide safety to those who need it as evident in the Ramayana. On this auspicious day, devotees of Lord Hanuman honor him and ask for his protection and blessings by visiting temples and making religious offerings. It is also common to recite the Hanuman Chalisa, a devotional hymn, in hopes of invoking his strength.

READ

5 Things to Know About Hanuman

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-hanuman

PARTICIPATE

Recognize those that have shown courage, loyalty, and compassion as these are qualities that Hanuman embodies.

SUGGESTED GREETING

May Lord Hanuman shower his blessings on you and your family.

Happy Hanuman Jayanti!



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VAISAKHI (OR BAISAKHI)

Festival

APRIL 14, 2023

2023: April 14

2024: April 14

2026: April 13

For many Hindus and Sikhs, April 13th and 14th mark the celebration **of Vaisakhi (vai-SAH-khee) or Baisakhi (bai-SAH-khee)**. It is believed that Vaisakhi originated when Goddess Ganga came to Earth to help rid humanity of its sins, so many Hindus will visit one of the sacred rivers to offer their prayers. Vaisakhi is also a time for charitable giving (dana), and to share food and resources with those less fortunate. This festival is held on almost the same day every year and is known as the solar new year for some Hindu communities.

DOWNLOAD

**HAF's educational reading primer
on Vaisakhi**

[www.hinduamerican.org/wp-content/
uploads/2020/04/HAFN_20_025-
VaisakhiEdDoc_r3-3.pdf](http://www.hinduamerican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/HAFN_20_025-VaisakhiEdDoc_r3-3.pdf)

SUGGESTED GREETING

Wishing you a fun-filled Vaisakhi and a prosperous new year ahead.

Happy Vaisakhi!



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VESAK

Buddhist Observance

MAY 05, 2023

2024: May 23

2025: May 12

2026: May 01

Vesak—also known as Buddha Jayanti, Buddha Purnima, and Buddha Day—is a holiday observed by Buddhists and some Hindus. It commemorates Siddhartha Gautama, known as Buddha, and the three key elements of his life: birth, death and enlightenment. It is believe that all three events happened on the same day throughout his lifetime. Vesak take places at the time of the first full moon of the ancient lunar month of Vesakha, which usually falls in May or early June. This is a colorful and happy celebration.

READ

Read more about the UN’s resolution internationally recognizing the Day of Vesak.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/vesak-day>

PARTICIPATE

Take a moment to be mindful and present, whether through a meditation practice or through a nature walk.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Vesak!



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GURU PUARNIMA

Observance

JULY 02, 2023

2024: July 20

2025: July 10

2026: July 28

Guru Purnima (goo-ruh pur-nee-MA) is traditionally celebrated by Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists, to pay their respects to their teachers (gurus) and express their gratitude. For Hindus, they honor Sage Vyasa who is honored as the compiler of the Vedic literatures. Buddhists honor Lord Buddha; Jains acknowledge it as the day Mahavir made his first follower, Gautam Swami. This is the day to recognize the many teachers who have enlightened you in some way or another.

READ

Guru Purnima: The Day to Pay Respects to the Guru

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/guru-purnima-the-day-to-pay-respects-to-the-guru

PARTICIPATE

Honor teachers and leaders that have made a difference in your life.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Guru Purnima! Thank you for all you have taught me!



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ASALHA PUJA (DHARMA DAY)

Buddhist Observance

JULY 03, 2023

2024: July 23

2025: July 21

2026: July 26

Asalha Puja (a-SAHL-ha poo-jah) or Dharma Day is recognized as the day in which Buddha delivered the first sermon after his enlightenment and shared his core teachings. As this occurrence eventually led to the spread of Buddhism, many honor this day as the beginning of the Buddhist tradition. Buddha’s sermon was described as “setting into motion the wheel of dharma” and the four noble truths were shared. The teachings and practices that the Buddha revealed as well as his description of reality are called Dharma. Observers may participate by making offerings to monks.

READ

Read about the sermon of the Buddha.

<https://tricycle.org/magazine/the-first-sermon-of-the-buddha/>

PARTICIPATE

Dharma Day is a chance to express gratitude to those who have shared their knowledge with others.

SUGGESTED GREETING

With palms pressed together, bow and say, “Namaste.”



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ONAM

Festival

AUGUST 28, 2023

2024: September 14

2025: September 04

2026: August 26

Onam (OH-num) is an annual Hindu festival, which usually falls between August and September, and is celebrated for ten days. In India's southern state of Kerala, Onam is considered a state festival. It commemorates New Year's Day and is also recognized as a harvest festival with celebrations centered around devotion and selflessness. Keralities celebrate with athletic competitions, colorful flower arrangements, artistic performances, and elephant processions.

READ

HAF's educational primer on Onam

[www.hinduamerican.org/
wp-content/uploads/2020/08/
HAFN_20_049-OnamExplainer.pdf](http://www.hinduamerican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HAFN_20_049-OnamExplainer.pdf)

PARTICIPATE

Create a rangoli (colored patterns of flowers, powder, rice, or sand made on the floor) adding one layer for each of the ten days of Onam.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Onam! Wishing you and your family a festive Onam!



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RAKSHA BANDHAN (OR RAKHI)

Observance

AUGUST 30, 2023

2024: August 19

2025: August 08

2026: August 27

Raksha Bandhan (ruk-SHA-bun-dhun) is a holiday which celebrates sibling bonds. Sisters tie a decorative, sacred thread on the right wrist of their brothers, cousins, and other close male friends, followed by prayers for their protection and well-being while sweets are exchanged. In return, brothers give their sisters small tokens or gifts of appreciation. Today, Raksha Bandhan has evolved into a holiday empowering significant relationships between cousins, same-sex siblings, and friends.

READ

5 Things to Know About Raksha Bandhan

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-raksha-bandhan

PARTICIPATE

Express gratitude to a colleague or classmate.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Rakhi (or Rakhri)!

Happy Raksha Bandhan!



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KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

Deity Celebration

SEPTEMBER 06, 2023

2024: August 26

2025: August 15

2026: September 03-04

Krishna Janmashtami (krish-NAH jun-MASH-ta-mee)

honors the life of Lord Krishna and often falls between August and September. Lord Krishna is one of the most endeared incarnations of Vishnu and has played various roles during his manifestation in the world, including deliverer of the Bhagavad Gita (a sacred spiritual and philosophical text). Lord Krishna is regarded by many as the embodiment of Bhakti or spiritual yoga. Many will sing songs or read scriptures till midnight to remember the lessons of his life.

READ

Janmashtami: The Day to Celebrate Krishna's Birth

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/janmashtami-the-day-to-celebrate-krishnas-birth

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Janmasthami! I hope and pray that the blessings of Lord Krishna may always be with you!



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PARYUSHANA

Jain Observance

SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

2024: August 30

2025: August 21

2026: September 08

Considered one of the most important Jain holidays, **Paryushana (par-e-OO-shuh-nah)** is an eight-to-ten day observance used as an intense time for study, reflection, purification, confession, and forgiveness. Paryushan translates to “coming together” which is evident in daily meditations and prayers for guidance. These daily sessions may be conducted alone or with others. Many Jains will also follow a very simple diet. This time is also known as the ‘Festival of Forgiveness.’

WATCH

Watch a short video about Paryushana.

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2001/08/24/august-24-2001-paryushana-parva/19777/>

PARTICIPATE

Ask for forgiveness from a colleague or friend that you may have upset.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Paryushan Mahaparva!

Micchami Dukkadam! May all my errors be forgiven.



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GANESH CHATURTHI

Deity Celebration

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

2024: September 06

2025: September 26

2026: September 14

Ganesh Chaturthi (guh-NESH cha-TUR-thee) is a ten-day festival that pays homage to Lord Ganesh, the remover of obstacles, and celebrates the day of his birth. As the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, his name derives from ‘gana’ meaning the common people and so his name translates to ‘Lord of the People’ as well as ‘Lord of the Ganas.’ Many recognize that Lord Ganesh brings order in this universe and worship him before embarking on a new endeavor, intellectual journey, or business enterprise. Therefore, it is common to see images or statues of him in these places.

READ

Ganesha Chaturthi: The Day to Celebrate Ganesha’s Birth

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/ganesha-chaturthi-the-day-to-celebrate-ganeshas-birth

PARTICIPATE

Bring in doughnut holes as modaks (fried sweet dumplings) are Lord Ganesh’s favorite food.

SUGGESTED GREETINGS:

Happy Vinayak Chaturthi!

Om Gam Ganapataye Namoh Namah!



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PITRU PAKSHA (OR SHRADDHA)

Observance

**SEPTEMBER 28 –
OCTOBER 13, 2023**

2024: September 17 – October 01

2025: September 06 – 20

2026: September 25 – October 09

Pitru Paksha (PIT-ru puk-shuh) is a period of 15 days dedicated to ancestors who have left their physical bodies by offering respects and honoring their lives. This period tribute is also referred to as **Shraddha (shr-A-dh)** as shraddha translates to food offering and is one of the integral parts of the rituals. It is considered inauspicious to carry out any rituals—such as housewarming, engagement, marriage, etc.—during Pitru Paksha. Instead, Hindus use this time to remember and reflect.

READ

**Know All About Pitru Paksha And
Paying Homage To Ancestors**

www.ndtv.com/india-news/shradh-2020-day-and-dates-know-all-about-pitru-paksha-and-paying-homage-to-ancestors-2288454

PARTICIPATE

Set up a fundraiser for someone who is in need of health care.



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GANDHI JAYANTI

Observance

OCTOBER 02, 2023

Gandhi Jayanti is observed annually on October 2nd.

A national holiday celebrated across India, **Gandhi Jayanti (GAHN-dhee jay-UHN-tee)** marks the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the ‘Father of the Nation.’ To honor Gandhi’s message of ahimsa (non-violence), volunteer events, commemorative ceremonies, painting, and essay competitions are conducted. Statues of Gandhi are also decorated with flower garlands. The United Nations declared October 2 as the International Day of Non-Violence each year in honor of Gandhi, whose work continues to inspire civil rights movements across the world.

READ & DOWNLOAD

HAF’s educational reading primer and lesson plan on Mahatma Gandhi

www.hinduamerican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HAFN_19_050-GandhiLessonPlan_r4.pdf

PARTICIPATE

Watch a documentary on Gandhi’s life.

Engage in protecting civil rights by donating your time or funds to a cause that you are inspired by.



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NAVARATRI

Deity Celebration

**OCTOBER 15 –
OCTOBER 23, 2023**

2024: October 03 – 12

2025: September 22 – October 01

2026: October 11 – 20

Navaratri (nuhv-uh-RA-three) is a nine night celebration of the feminine divine that occurs four times a year—the spring and fall celebrations being amongst the more widely celebrated. Some traditions honor the nine manifestations of Goddess Durga, while others celebrate the three goddesses (Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati) with three days dedicated to each. This is a time to recognize the role in which the loving, compassionate, and gentle—yet sometimes powerful and fierce—feminine energy plays in our lives.

READ

9 Things to Know About Navaratri

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/9-things-to-know-about-navaratri

PARTICIPATE

Recognize nine female leaders who have made a international, national, or local impact.

Dance the night away at a local Navaratri garba event.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Navaratri!



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DURGA PUJA

Deity Celebration

**OCTOBER 19 –
OCTOBER 23, 2023**

2024: October 08 – 12

2025: September 27 – October 01

2026: October 16 – 20

Durga Puja (duhr-GAH poo-jah) is a celebration of the Goddess Durga— who represents the embodiment of Shakti, the powerful feminine force that governs all cosmic creation, existence, and change—and her victory over a demon named Mahishasura. She is said to have descended from her home in Kailash with Lord Shiva to her maternal home on Earth. Durga Puja starts after the completion of Pitru Paksha and is celebrated during Navaratri. During this time, people will recite prayers, perform rituals, and sing songs dedicated to her. This celebration is especially significant in the Indian state of West Bengal, and Nepal.

READ

9 Things to Know About Navaratri

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/9-things-to-know-about-navaratri

PARTICIPATE

Recognize nine female leaders who have made a international, national, or local impact.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Greetings on Durga Puja.

Have a joyous Durga Puja!

Wishing you a Happy Durga Puja!



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DUSSEHRA (OR VIJAYADASHAMI)

Deity Celebration

OCTOBER 23, 2023

2024: October 12

2025: October 01

2026: October 20

Dussehra (duh-sheh-RAH) or Vijayadashmi (vi-juh-yuh-dushuh-mee) celebrates the victory of Lord Ram over the ten-headed demon King Ravana. This also marks the end of Ramalila—a brief retelling of Ram, Sita, and Lakshman’s story, which is often in the form of dramatic re-tellings or dance. It also signifies the end of negativity and evil within us (vices, biases, prejudices) for a fresh new beginning. Dusshera often coincides with the end of Navaratri and Durga Puja, and serves as a reminder that good always prevails over evil.

READ

**Dussehra or Vijayadashmi:
Why Do We Celebrate It?**

isha.sadhguru.org/us/en/wisdom/article/dussehra-vijayadashmi

PARTICIPATE

Hold friendly competitions to build stronger connection among colleagues team members, or groups of students.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Dussehra! May the truth always win and good triumph over evil!

Happy Vijayadashami!



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KARWA CHAUTH (OR KARVA CHAUTH)

Observance

OCTOBER 31, 2023

2024: October 19

2025: October 09

2026: October 28

Karwa Chauth (kuhr-wah-CHOATH), or Karva Chauth (kuhr-vah-CHOATH), is a North Indian holiday in which wives fast for the longevity and health of their husbands, however, many unmarried women celebrate in hopes of meeting their ideal life partner. Typically, wives spend the day preparing gifts to exchange, and fasting until the moon is visible. It is believed that the moon's light symbolizes love and blessings for a happy life. While there are varying legends behind this holiday's traditions and meaning, the message of honoring the relationships women form with their family and community prevails.

READ

Karwa Chauth: How Hindu Couples Honor Each Other on This Fall Holiday

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/karwa-chauth-symbolism-stories

PARTICIPATE

Thank the people in your life who wish you well.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Karwa Chauth!



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DIWALI

Festival

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

2024: November 01

2025: October 20

2026: November 08

Diwali (dee-VAH-lee), or **Deepavali (dee-PAH-va-lee)**, commemorates the victory of good over evil during the course of five days, all of which have equal importance. The word refers to rows of diyas—or clay lamps—which are put all around homes and places of worship. The light from these lamps symbolizes the illumination within all of us, which can overcome ignorance, represented by darkness. Devotees gather in local temples, homes, or community centers, to spend time with loved ones, make positive goals, and appreciate life. For some Hindus, Diwali also marks the new year.

READ

5 Things to Know About Diwali

www.hinduamerican.org/blog/5-things-to-know-about-diwali

PARTICIPATE

Host a Diwali party or gathering. Have HAF do a presentation on Diwali to your workplace or school.

DOWNLOAD

HAF's Diwali Toolkit

www.hinduamerican.org/diwali-toolkit

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Diwali!

Shubh Deepavali! May your Diwali be lit!



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NANAK JAYANTI

Sikh Observance

NOVEMBER 26, 2023

2024: November 15

2025: November 04

2026: November 23

Nanak Jayanti honors the birthday of Guru Nanak—the first guru of Sikhism. Guru Nanak traveled across India and was deeply influenced by both the Bhakti and Sufi traditions. Sikhism shares Hindu concepts of karma, dharma, maya, and samsara (reincarnation). Nanak Jayanti is celebrated by Sikhs as well as Sindhi, Punjabi, and Afghan Hindus. Festivities include processions, food donation, and community service.

READ

Guru Nanak Jayanti

knowindia.gov.in/culture-and-heritage/festivals/guru-nanak-jayanti.php

PARTICIPATE

Use this day to promote community service or hold as a day of service.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Guru Nanak Jayanti!

Happy Gurburab!



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BODHI DAY

Buddhist Observance

DECEMBER 08, 2023

2024: January 18

2025: January 07

2026: January 26

Bodhi Day (bo-DHI day) marks the moment that Siddhartha Gautama achieved enlightenment and became Buddha, the Awakened One. The name Bodhi refers to the species of tree that Buddha meditated under in the town of Bodh Gaya, in India. It is also the Sanskrit word for enlightenment. It is believed that Buddha first experienced enlightenment after meditating under the Bodhi tree for 49 days. To commemorate, many will meditate, chant spiritual texts, and perform acts of kindness. Some may make the pilgrimage to the original Bodhi tree to pay respects directly to the source of enlightenment.

LEARN

Learn more about Buddhism and Buddha.

www.dalailama.com/videos/introduction-to-buddhism

PARTICIPATE

Plant a bodhi or ficus tree.

Share a fig with friends or colleagues.

SUGGESTED GREETING

Happy Bodhi Day!

Blessed Bodhi Day!



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GITA JAYANTI (OR GITA MAHOTSAV)

Deity Celebration

DECEMBER 22, 2023

2024: December 11

2025: November 30

2026: December 19

Gita Jayanti, or **Gita Mahotsav**, celebrates the day Lord Krishna began the recitation of the Bhagavad Gita to Prince Arjuna, in the historical epic, the Mahabharata. The Bhagavad Gita is a sacred and spiritual Hindu philosophical text which explains the truth of life and the philosophy of Yoga and Dharma. On this day, pujas are performed and devotional songs are sung to encourage people to lead brave and positive lives. Many will also recite the Gita Aarti (prayer) and read through key passages of the Bhagavad Gita.

READ

Significance Of Gita Jayanti And Its Celebration

www.ganeshaspeaks.com/festival-calendars/information/gita-jayanti/

PARTICIPATE

Read and reflect on passages from the Bhagavad Gita.

SUGGESTED GREETING

May Lord Krishna be with you during this Gita Jayanti!

Wishing you a happy Gita Jayanti!



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The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is an educational and advocacy organization established in 2003.

HAF focuses on educating the public and advocating for policies and practices that ensure the well-being of all people and the planet. We work directly with educators and journalists to ensure accurate understanding of Hindus and Hinduism. We also work with policymakers and key stakeholders to champion issues of concern to Hindu Americans, including defending civil and human rights and protecting all living beings. Inspired by our guiding principles and Hindu teachings, HAF promotes dignity, mutual respect, and pluralism.

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