

THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Ever wonder which part of the world celebrates light? It's Diwali(Di-val-lee)! This big holiday is celebrated in lots of places around the world! If you want to learn more about this holiday, then you should read this article.

Appa takes a match and picks up the jade-colored clay bowl to light the candle inside. He places it next to the other clay bowl that are lit. The lit bowls form a circle in our living room. "Arun, stop running around" my mother scolds, but she is smiling. This is the first night of Diwali, my favorite holiday.

Many religions celebrate festivals of light. In the Hindu religion, it's called Diwali (Di-val-lee)! This big holiday is celebrated in lots of places around the world! If you want to learn more about, this then you should read this article.



Tray of **deepas** with flowers to honor the gods



Left: a **deepa**, clay bowl with a candle inside

Diwali or Dipawali, is India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. Diwali gets its name from the rows of Deepa's, or lamps, which are lighted and put both inside and in front of people's houses. This symbolizes the inner light that protects us from spiritual darkness.



Fun Facts!

- More than 800 million people celebrate this festival in various ways.
- It is celebrated in honor of Lakshmi - the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity.
- The festival also marks the return of the Lord Rama and Sita after completing fourteen years in exile.
- Diwali is basically another new year but for India
- Rangoli is another thing that people do
- Rangoli is a type of art that people do on stone or rocks. Some times they do it on marble or granite
- On Diwali, farmers thank the deities for growing their fruits, vegetables, and wheat
- On Diwali villagers go to temples and pray to Rama, Lakshmi, and Sita

Who Celebrates Diwali?

It is celebrated by multiple different eastern religions including Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. The festival is celebrated in multiple countries including India, Fiji, Guyana, Pakistan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. In India, Diwali is celebrated for 5 days, while in other places you only celebrate it for one. Every year the White House actually celebrates Diwali!

Stories Associated with Diwali:

Diwali celebrates both the New Year and the story of King Rama who defeated the evil King Ravana in order to rescue his kidnapped wife, Sita. Another story involves Krishna's victory over the evil king Narakasura to save the people of the his kingdom.



Candles that are lit on ***Diwali***

The before Diwali

On the day before diwali night people renovate, clean, and decorate their houses. On Diwali night people dress up in new clothes or their best outfits. During this time people eat sweets from India they either made or bought. They eat indian food and sit and talk with family members.

The day of Diwali

When the celebration starts people light up diyas (lamps) outside their house and light firecrackers and sparklers. Neighbors and family give gifts of foods on Diwali. People celebrate this tradition with family and friends. Many people believe that Diwali began a way to honor the last harvest before winter. During the celebration there are a lot of dances around Diwali such as garba and dandia which are stick dances. Before the eating and dancing first people participate in family puja (prayers).



Picture of Indian sweets

Conclusion

So, now you know about what the festival of lights are. Eating, dancing, and having fun. You also know now about how the food is (if you ever go to an indian restaurant, but you should go because it is delicious).

Glossary-

Deepa(dee-paa)- Lamps or candles

Lakshmi(Lock-si-mii)- Goddess of wealth and prosperity

Sita(Sitt-ta)- Avatar for Lakshimi

King Rama(Raa-maa)-Avatar for Vishnu

Appa(up-pa)- Father in Indian

Garba(gar-baa)- Is a form of dance which was originated in the state of Gujarat in India, It also involves a stick dance

Hindus- A follower of Hinduism

Sikhs- An adherent of Sikhism

Buddhists- Is a religion and dharma that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs, and spiritual practices largely based on teachings attributed to the Buddha.

Go to this QR code to read more information about this holiday!



