

## *Diwali - A Festival of Lights*

Deepavali or Diwali is an Indian festival of lights. 'Deepa' means lamp or light and 'Vali' means string or row, and Deepavali means rows of lights. It celebrates the victory of good over the evil.



Diwali falls on the day of 'Amavasyaa' or no moon day, usually in the month of October or November. The date of celebrating Diwali is based on the movement of the moon and falls on different date every year.

For Hindus, Diwali is one of the most important festivals of the year and is celebrated in families by performing traditional activities together in their homes. It is one of the biggest festivals of India. Diwali is an official holiday in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Malaysia, Singapore and Fiji.

Diwali celebrates the return of Lord Rama, along with Sita and Lakshmana, from his 14-year-long exile after defeating the demon-king Ravana. In the joyous celebration of the return of their king, the people of Ayodhya illuminated the kingdom with earthen diyas and by bursting firecrackers.



Diwali involves the lighting of small clay lamps called diyas filled with oil to signify the triumph of good over evil. Lighting a lamp represents the destruction of all negative forces such as violence, anger, greed and injustice with knowledge. People decorate their home with beautiful diyas and make rangoli patterns in the courtyard and in front of the gate. They put flowers and mango leaves on their doors and windows. Firecrackers are burst in order to drive away evil spirits. During Diwali, all the celebrants wear new clothes, share sweets and snacks with family members and friends.

Diwali is a five day festival starts on Dhanteras. On Dhanteras people buy jewellery or utensils and worship to God.

The second day is called Naraka Chaturdashi. It marks the death of the demon king "Narakasura". It is also called Chhoti Diwali or Small Diwali. According to an interesting saying it is believed that those who do not bathe on this day go to the hell.

The third day of Diwali is the main day of the celebrations. People worship Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi on this day and offer prayers to bless them with wealth and prosperity. Lord Ganesha, the foremost of all Hindu Gods represents good luck and Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. On this day puja or prayer is done by installing the idols of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi. All the members of the family chant the mantras, offer auspicious items like flowers, sweet dishes, silver or gold coins and light diyas in front of the deities and seek their blessings.

The fourth day of Diwali is devoted to Govardhan Puja. Lord Shri Krishna once performed the Govardhan Puja to protect people from heavy rains. Since then it became a tradition to worship Govardhan Parvat (Mountain).

The fifth day is called *Bhai Dooj*. On this day, sisters pray for their brothers to have long and happy lives by performing the Tika ceremony, and brothers give gifts to their sisters.



## Diwali – A Festival of Lights

1. What does Deepavali means?

---

2. In which months does Diwali fall?

---

3. Is Diwali celebrated on one fixed date?

---

4. In how many countries Diwali is an official holiday?

---

5. Why is Diwali celebrated?

---

---

6. What does lighting a lamp represents?

---

---

7. How do people celebrate Diwali?

---

---

8. Diwali is the festival of how many days.

---

9. On Diwali prayers are offered to which two deities?

---

10. What is Bhai Dooj?

---

## Vocabulary Activity

**Write the synonyms for the vocabulary words from the article.**

1. Light \_\_\_\_\_
2. Celebrate \_\_\_\_\_
3. Victory \_\_\_\_\_
4. Biggest \_\_\_\_\_
5. Small \_\_\_\_\_
6. Joyous \_\_\_\_\_
7. Beautiful \_\_\_\_\_
8. Start \_\_\_\_\_
9. Protect \_\_\_\_\_
10. Heavy \_\_\_\_\_

**Write the antonyms for the vocabulary words from the article.**

1. Light \_\_\_\_\_
2. Good \_\_\_\_\_
3. Evil \_\_\_\_\_
4. Biggest \_\_\_\_\_
5. Small \_\_\_\_\_
6. Negative \_\_\_\_\_
7. Beautiful \_\_\_\_\_
8. New \_\_\_\_\_
9. Friend \_\_\_\_\_
10. Start \_\_\_\_\_