



Diwali Traditions

Diwali, or Festival of Lights, honors the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. In India, people still prepare for Diwali in traditional ways and observe long-standing customs.

Diwali is celebrated in the fall, after the harvest season. It is observed for five days. Indians believe that buying gold or silver jewelry on the first day, called Dhanteras, will bring them good luck. On the second day, Narak Chaturdasi, 14 diyas (clay lamps) are lighted to ward off evil. The third day is when Diwali is actually celebrated with the lighting of 21 diyas. On the fourth day, Govardhan pooja (translated as "mountain of food") is celebrated in remembrance of Lord Krishna. The festival ends on the fifth day with the observance of Bhai Dooj, when women pray to the gods that their brothers will have long and prosperous lives.

Indians believe that the goddess Lakshmi who brings good fortune, will only enter a clean house, so it is traditional for Indians to clean their homes in preparation for Diwali. This housecleaning can range from decluttering to painting and redecoration.

Diwali is also a time for new clothes, as a sign of respect and excitement for the holiday. Men wear traditional kutas, and sometimes dhoti, but women typically purchase and wear new wardrobes.

Traditional Diwali sweets, or mithai, are made with bean and grain flours, spices, and dried fruits. Popular mithai include Chakli, peda, barfi, and laddoo.

A popular Diwali decoration is Rangoli, a colorful pattern artwork made with rice powder on the floor or ground. It is also traditional for family members to visit one another, play cards, and exchange gifts.

Questions : find answers in the text and reformulate in your own words when possible.

1. What is the other name of Diwali ?

2. What does it celebrate ?

3. When is it celebrated ?

Is it the same date each year ?

4. How many days does it last ?

5. What is a « diya » ?

6. What is the tradition about the celebration of Lakshmi ?

7. Why do people buy new clothes ?

8. What are « mithai » ?

9. What is a rangoli ?

10. What other traditions do families do ?