



NOVEMBER 2024

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What Is Diwali?

Diwali, or Deepavali, is one of the most important Hindu festivals, celebrated as the "Festival of Lights."

Symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil, Diwali marks the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after 14 years in exile and celebrates Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, who is believed to have emerged from the cosmic ocean on this day. Traditionally held on the darkest night of the Hindu month of Kartik, the festival spans four to five days, with families gathering for rituals (pujas) and lighting rows of lamps, or diyas, around their homes.

While Diwali is celebrated privately in India, it has become a public and inclusive event in the global Indian diaspora, with cities like London, Sydney, and Toronto hosting large cultural showcases of music, dance, food, and fireworks. However, in India, growing concerns over air quality and noise have led to calls for balancing the festive tradition with environmental care. Diwali remains a cherished festival, uniting communities in celebration and hope.

<https://www.learnreligions.com/when-is-diwali-1770209>

November Celebrations



Native American Heritage Month
National Family Caregivers Month

10/31-11/4 Diwali

2nd Day Of the Dead

11th Veterans Day

19th International Men's Day

20th Transgender Day of Remembrance

25th International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

28th Thanksgiving



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How to do Diwali Puja in 2024?

A guide on how to perform Lakshmi Puja during Diwali in 2024 is available for those interested in the ceremony's significance and rituals

Before the Puja (Preparations):

1. **Cleanliness:** Diwali is a time for fresh starts, so thoroughly clean your puja area and home a day or two before the puja.
2. **Puja Items:** Gather the necessary puja items like a puja thali (plate), diyas (oil lamps), incense sticks, flowers (especially lotus), fruits, sweets, roli (vermilion), rice, Kalash (pot), and murtis (idols) or pictures of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi. Business owners can also include their account books.
3. **Muhurat:** As mentioned earlier, Diwali falls on November 1st, 2024. The preferred puja timings are during Pradosh Kaal (between 5:36 PM and 8:11 PM) or Vrishabha Kaal (between 6:20 PM and 8:15 PM). You can consult a priest or use online resources for the exact timings in your location.

The Puja Ceremony:

1. **Setting Up:** On the day of, take a bath and wear clean clothes. Place the kalash filled with water and mango leaves on the puja thali. If using murtis, place Ganesha on the left and Lakshmi on the right.
2. **Sankalp (Resolution):** Light an incense stick and perform the puja with devotion and purity.
3. **Aasana (Offering Seat):** Invite the deities by chanting mantras and offering them aasana (seat) on the puja thali with roli and rice.
4. **Panchamrut:** Prepare Panchamruta, a sacred mixture of milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, and sugar, and offer it to the deities.
5. **Archana (Offering):** Offer flowers, fruits, sweets, and other items to the deities, and chant Ganesha and Lakshmi mantras for their blessings.
6. **Aarti:** Perform aarti (offering of light) by circling lit diyas around the murtis or pictures.
7. **Prayer:** Conclude the puja with prayers for prosperity, good fortune, and well-being.

<https://www.homes247.in/blogs/diwali-puja-vidhi-for-home-1762>

History of Diwali

The Diwali festival dates back to ancient times in India. It is mentioned in Sanskrit texts dating from the fourth century CE but was likely practiced for many hundreds of years before that. Although most important for Hindus, the festival is also observed by Jains, Sikhs, and some [Buddhists](#). While different historical events are observed in different regions and by different faiths, Diwali represents the triumph of light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance for all the cultures that celebrate it.





5-Days of Diwali 2024

Celebrations in India

Day 1: Dhanteras (October 29th, Tuesday)

Dhanteras is the start of the Diwali celebrations and is seen as a lucky day to buy new items like utensils and jewelry to symbolize prosperity. Many people visit markets to purchase metals such as gold and silver in the belief that it will bring good luck.

Day 2: Choti Diwali or Naraka Chaturdashi (October 31st, Thursday)

The second day of Diwali, called Choti Diwali or Naraka Chaturdashi, involves cleaning homes to welcome Goddess Lakshmi. A special evening puja wards off evil spirits, and people take an oil bath before sunrise for purification.

Day 3: Diwali or Lakshmi Puja (November 1st, Friday)

The main day of Diwali, Lakshmi Puja, falls on November 1st this year. People worship Goddess Lakshmi, decorate their homes with diyas and rangolis, and wear new clothes. Evening puja includes sweets and fireworks, filling the night with celebration.

Day 4: Govardhan Puja or Padwa (November 2nd, Saturday)

The fourth day of Diwali is Govardhan Puja in North India, honoring Lord Krishna's lifting of Mount Govardhan to protect Vrindavan. In Maharashtra, it's celebrated as Padwa, focusing on marital happiness with couples exchanging gifts and sweets.

Day 5: Bhai Dooj (November 3rd, Sunday)

Bhai Dooj, the final day of Diwali, celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters. Sisters apply tilak on their brothers' foreheads, wishing them health and prosperity, while brothers give gifts in return. Diwali as a whole brings families and communities together to celebrate light's victory over darkness with dazzling displays, rituals, and unity.



Shankarpali Recipe

<https://ministryofcurry.com/shankarpali-recipe/>

A crispy, lightly sweetened snack made with just six simple pantry ingredients! Often prepared for Diwali, these Shakkappara are perfect as make-ahead snacks or tea-time treats. Makes 3 cups.

Prep Time: 20 Minutes	Cook Time: 20 Minutes	Resting Time: 20 Minutes	Total Time: 1 Hour
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Instructions

- 1. Combine Ingredients:** In a saucepan, add ghee, milk, and sugar. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar fully dissolves. Once dissolved, let the mixture cool.
- 2. Make the Dough:** In a mixing bowl, combine all-purpose flour, salt, and vanilla. Gradually add the cooled milk mixture to form a soft dough. Let the dough rest for 20 minutes. Note: The dough will continue to firm up as the ghee solidifies.
- 3. Shape the Dough into Shankarpali:** Divide the dough into four equal parts and knead each portion into a round ball. Take one ball at a time and roll it into an 8 to 10-inch circle. Use a knife, pizza cutter, or pastry wheel to cut the circle into 1-inch squares or diamonds. Gently separate the cut Shankarpali with a silicone or flat spatula and place them on a tray.
- 4. Heat the Oil:** In a frying pan, heat oil over medium heat. Before adding the Shankarpali, ensure the oil is hot enough.
- 5. Fry the Shankarpali:** Maintain the heat at medium-high. Using a slotted stainless steel spatula, gently add some of the cut Shankarpali to the hot oil. Depending on the size of your frying pan, you can add another handful. Wait about a minute, then lower the heat to medium-low. Fry the Shankarpali on medium-low for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring carefully in the oil. Once they turn golden brown on both sides, remove them using a slotted spoon to allow excess oil to drain.
- 6. Repeat the Process:** After removing the first batch, increase the heat back to medium to let the oil temperature rise again. Then, add the next batch of Shankarpali and repeat until all the rolled and cut pieces are fried.
- 7. Cool and Store:** Allow the Shankarpali to cool completely on a large baking tray. Once cooled, store them in an airtight container. They will stay fresh for at least a month at room temperature and freeze well, too!

Equipment:

- Pastry Wheel
- Stainless Steel Frying Pan
- Slotted Spatula

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup ghee
- ⅓ cup milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract optional
- Oil for frying 1 to 1.5 cups (see notes for air frying)

Extra Tips:

Can be found on the recipe website listed above!