

Festival of Light

Chirag and Vedika introduce us to Diwali

Diwali is one of the greatest Hindu festivals, which Indians across the world celebrate with huge passion and enthusiasm. This year the festival of Diwali falls on **October 17th**. The exact day of the festival is decided by the position of the moon, a 'no moon day' is considered to be the perfect day to celebrate the festival.

'Diwali' means 'a row of lights', traditionally cotton wicks in small clay pots filled with oil. So Diwali is the festival of lights, good triumphs over evil, darkness gives way to light.



good excuse to buy new clothes) before prayers are said in the home. Houses are lit up with tiny oil lamps and candles. Families then go to the temple to receive the blessing of the god. This is a good time to buy anything you need. Houses are spotlessly cleaned and re-decorated as Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, will come to the cleanest house first. It is a time to 'forgive and forget'; businesses balance their books and start a new financial year, praying for success and prosperity.

Why Celebrate Diwali?

It's not just to get in the festive mood before winter! There are ten reasons for celebrating Diwali, depending on where you come from in India. Chirag and Vedika's roots are in Gujarat, the western most state of India, where it is the victory of Lord Rama which is celebrated. Lord Rama returns to his kingdom of Ayodhya after 14 years in exile. Rama is the embodiment of truth, morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband and the ideal King. His victorious return is joyously celebrated with flowers and lights and scents.

Diwali is spread over four days. The first day, Dhan-Teras, starts with showering and dressing in traditional costume (a

Light and Firecrackers!

Fireworks are central to the celebration - the bigger and noisier the better. They start at 4am and go on until daylight.

Then they start again as soon as it is dark and continue until the middle of the night. Vedika is always the first one up to set off the fireworks - a great blessing for health and spiritual advancement. Next year Diwali is on 5th November so the celebrations should be doubly good!

Two days after Diwali is the start of the New Year, Chirag breaks a coconut in front of his shop to ensure good luck. But as this New Year falls on a Monday, he will be too busy to take a day off!

We wish Chirag, Vedika and Rishi a very happy Diwali and a prosperous new year.

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