

# Harvest Festivals of India

# Harvest Festival

- Harvesting is an important activity in our country.
- It's the time when a crop is sown by the farmers and is ready for reaping.
- Harvesting is a time of rejoice and celebrations for people. Each place in India has its own festival celebrating this time.



# Makar Sankranti

- It's the harvest festival celebrated in North India.
- Makar Sankranti marks the transition of the Sun into the zodiac sign of Makara rashi (Capricorn) on its celestial path.
- It is usually celebrated on January 14<sup>th</sup> to honor the god of the sun, Surya.
- Kite flying and Kumbha Mela are the major events.
- In Gujarat, this festival is known as Uttarayana.



Kumbha Mela



Kite flying

# Ladakh Harvest Festival

- Major event organized in Leh by the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism department.
- Held from 1st to 15th September every year, to promote and maintain the rich heritage of Ladakh's age-old culture.
- There is archery for males and dancing for females and mask dances by the lamas of sacred monasteries.
- Dramas or 'Chhams' are performed to display life and teachings of Buddha and different dance forms of Tibetan culture.
- A procession is also carried out through the streets of Leh on the last day.



Mask dance



Archery

# Baisakhi

- It's the harvest festival of Punjab.
- Also known as Vaishakhi, or Vasakhi.
- It is usually celebrated on April 13 or 14 every year
- It marks the time for harvest of the rabi crops and farmers express their gratitude to God for good yield.
- Punjabis celebrate by dancing Giddha and Bhangra in the fields.
- It's the New year for the Punjab.
- Sikhs visit Gurudwaras, read the holy Granth and pay their respects.



Bhangra



Gurudwaras

# Lohri

- Harvest festival of Punjab.
- It marks the end of the chilly winter and welcomes the arrival of spring and New year. Lohri is the longest night of the year.
- Celebrated on January 13<sup>th</sup> every year.
- In the morning, children go from door to door singing songs in praise of Dulha Bhatti, a Punjabi version of Robin Hood who robbed from the rich and helped the poor.
- In the evening, people gather around bonfires, throw sweets, puffed rice and popcorn into the flames sing popular folk songs and exchange greetings. This is symbolic of the homage to the Sun God for bringing in warmth.



Dance performance



Throwing puffed rice into flames

# Tokhu Emong

- It's a post harvest festival by the Lothas nagas in Nagaland.
- *Tokhu* means going out in groups from house to house, taking food and drinks. *Emong* means the Halt on the appointed time.
- Its celebrated to praise the Gods for their abundance.
- Celebrated in the first week of November every year and it lasts for 9 days.
- Its celebrated by folk dance and singing of old folk songs.
- The people rejuvenate themselves after a tremendous hard work on the fields and celebrate this post harvesting festival by making merry and rejoicing.
- Tokhu Emong is also a celebration about brotherhood, forgiveness and oneness. It is celebrated through sharing of food, gifts, folklore narration and a sumptuous community feast.



Dance by the Lothas nagas



Folk songs

# Bihu

- Bihu is the harvest festival of Assam.
- It refers to a set of three different festivals: Rongali or Bohag Bihu observed in April, Kongali or Kati Bihu observed in October, and Bhogali or Magh Bihu observed in January.
- The Rongali Bihu is the most important of the three celebrating the Assamese new year and the spring festival.
- The Kongali Bihu or the Kati Bihu is the sombre, thrifty one reflecting a season of short supplies and is an animistic festival.
- The Bhogali Bihu or the Magh Bihu is the one that is all about food.
- Special Bihu dances are performed across the state.



Bihu dance

# Wangala

- Celebrated by the Garo tribe, who live in Meghalaya and Assam.
- Sun God is worshiped with immense devotion and zeal.
- Women wear their traditional colorful clothes and dance while men rhythmically drum their fingers on the traditional drum pads.
- Wangala is celebrated in the months from September to December, with different villages setting different dates for the occasion.



Men playing drums



Traditional Clothes

# Chumpha

- It's a harvest festival of Manipur held with a lot of rejoicing and merriment by Tanghul Nagas of Manipur.
- Its celebrated every year after the harvest in December.
- Women have a special and a significant role to play in this festival.
- There are social gatherings that are held between friends and families and everyone rejoices and has a great time.
- The end of the Chumpha Festival in Manipur is marked by a procession that is carried out within the village premises.



Dance performance



Procession

# Kut(Festival of Kuki-Chin-Mizo)

- Post Harvest festival celebrate in the month of November by Kuki-Chin tribes.
- Celebrated on November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Also known as Chavang Kut or Khodou at different places by different tribes.
- Its celebrated to give thanks by cheerful dances and songs along with Miss Kut contest in the honor of the giver of a plentiful harvest.



Dance performance



Miss Kut

# Nuakhai

- Also known as Nabanna.
- Harvesting Festival of Orissa celebrated in the month of August–September. It is mostly celebrated in the western region of Orissa and a major social festival of Kosal.
- Observed to welcome the new rice of the season.
- Arisa pitha is prepared to celebrate this festival. It's a pancake from Orissa made of sugar and rice flour.



Dance performance



Arisa pitha

# Hareli

- Harvest festival of tribal Chhattisgarh state.
- The word ' Hareli ' is derived from the Hindi word ' Haryali ' meaning greenery.
- Celebrated during the holy month of Sawan (July-August).
- Tribes worship farm equipment, cows and pray Goddess "Kutki Dai" for good crops along with many social and cultural events.
- The Hareli festival of Chhattisgarh is also marked by playing ' Gedi '. It is a play where small children mount on bamboo sticks and walk round the fields. At some places they also take part in a "gedi" race.



Gedi



Cultural event

# Onam

- It's the harvest festival of Kerala.
- Its called the Festival of flowers.
- It falls during the month of Chingam (August-September) the first month of the Malayalam Calendar (Kollavarsham).
- Celebrated to welcome mythical King Mahabali(a legendary ruler), whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at this time and to assure him that his people are happy and wish him well.
- Onam lasts from four to ten days.
  1. First day- Atham
  2. Tenth day- Thiruponam (most important day of all)
  3. Third and Forth Onam
- It's celebrated with many cultural events like Vallam Kali(boat races), Pulikkali(Tiger dance), Pookalam(floral carpet),Onnathappan(worship), Vadam Vali(Tug of War) and Thiruvathirakali other celebrations.



Vallam Kali



Pulikkali



Pookalam



Vadam Vali



Onnathappan



Thiruvathirakali

# First Day- Atham

- Starts with a grand procession at Thrippunithura, Kerala called Athachamayam.
- It has elephant processions, folk art presentations, music and dance.
- Athachamayam is a spectacular event and is a crowd puller.



Folk art presentation



Elephant procession



Chenda Melam

# Tenth day- Thiruvonam

- It's also called "Second Onam".
- It marks the return of King Mahabali to Kerala.
- A larger pookalam is created to welcome the King.
- The main event of Thiruvonam is "Thiruvonasadya" a sumptuous feast of 30 unique items.
- People wear traditional attire on this day.



Kerala men style



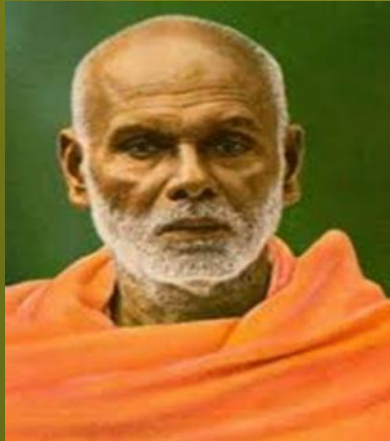
Thiruvonasadya



Kerala Saree

# Third and Forth Onam

- Third Onam also called as Avittom marks the preparation of King Mahabali back to heaven. On the same day, Onnathappan statue is immersed.
- Forth Onam also called as Chathayam is celebrated as Narayana Jayanthi( in honor of Sree Narayana Guru- a famous social reformer of Kerala).
- The ten days festival concludes with a splendid dance procession in Thrippunithura.



Sree Narayana Guru



Dance procession

# Pongal

- It's the harvest festival of Tamil Nadu.
- Meaning of word Pongal is “overflowing” signifying abundance and prosperity.
- It is a four-day festival which according to the Tamil calendar is usually celebrated from 14 January to 17 January.



Pongal( Overflowing)



Pongal (dish)

# First day- Bogi

- It's celebrated on the eve of Pongal in honor of Lord Indra (Lord of clouds and bring in rains ).
- This is the day when old things are discarded, house is cleaned, painted and decorated to give festive look.
- At dawn, a fire is lit, old and useless things are burnt. It also symbolizes burning of the society from bad and the evil.
- Girls dance around the bonfire, singing songs in praise of the Gods, the spring and the harvest.



Burning old things



Bonfire

# Second Day-Thai Pongal

- This is the most important day of the festival.
- During the festival, milk is cooked in a pot. When it starts to bubble and overflows out of the vessel, freshly harvested rice grains are added to the pot. At the same time other participants blow a conch called the *sanggu* and shout "Pongalo Pongal!". They also recite "Thai Pirandhal Vazhi Pirakkum" ("the commencement of Thai paves the way for new opportunities"). This is repeated frequently during the Pongal festival.
- The Pongal is then served to everyone in the house along with savories and sweets such as vadai, murukku, paayasam.



Decoration



Overflowing pot



blowing a conch

- Kolams/ rangolis are drawn on doorsteps. Kolam is an auspicious design which is traditionally traced in rice powder mixed with colors.
- People wear new clothes( traditional dresses) on this day.



Kolam/ Rangoli



Pongal



Traditional dresses

# Third Day- Mattu Pongal

- Third day is known as Mattu Pongal.
- Its celebrated by villagers to thank the cows for their favor in farming.
- Cows are decorated with manjalthanni (turmeric water) and oil. Apply kungumam (kumkum) to their foreheads, paint their horns and feed them a mixture of venn pongal, jaggery, honey, banana and other fruits.
- Features of the day include adventurous games such as the Jallikkattu or bull taming (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haLimnzibxY>).



Decorated Cow



Jallikkattu

# Fourth Day- Kaanum Pongal

- It marks the end of Pongal festivities for the year.
- Kaanum in Tamil means “to visit”.
- This day is for family reunions.
- Brothers pay special tribute to their married sisters by giving gifts as affirmation of their filial love. Landlords present gifts of food, clothes and money to their tenants.
- Villagers visit relatives and friends, while in the cities people flock to beaches and theme parks with their families.



View of a beach on Kaanum Pongal

# Conclusion

- Festivals are an important part of life of Indian people. The Indian men and women observe these festivals throughout the year.
- Every festival has a social, religious and mythological value. Festivals also teach us how to fight evil and falsehood and establish truth.
- People observe these festivals with great devotion as they believe that festivals purify their minds and inspire them to lead a better and purer life.
- All the people, irrespective of their social position, observe these festivals with their families and also socially with their friends with great enthusiasm.
- It is our sacred duty to celebrate these festivals with a sense of purity and sanctity. We should keep it free from communalism, narrowness and nasty politics.

*THANK YOU*