

What does Lamp Lighting Signify?

In Hindu Culture, Light is a powerful metaphor for knowledge and consciousness. Lighting a lamp signifies the value Hindus attach to education, self-awareness, and improvement, bringing harmony to individuals and communities. The act of lighting the lamp affirms the fact that knowledge dispels ignorance like light dispels darkness.

असतोमा सद्गमय ।
तमसोमा ज्योतिर् गमय ।
मृत्योर्मा मृतं गमय ।

asato mā sad gamaya
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya
mrtyor mā amrtam gamaya

From ignorance, lead me to truth;
From darkness, lead me to light;
From death, lead me to immortality

Reference: (Brihadaranyaka upanishad 1.3.28)



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Celebrating
Deepawali
(Diwali)
the authentic way




A GUIDE
FOR OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS





Shubh
Deepawali


Guidelines for celebrating Deepawali (Diwali) in an authentic way


Whether an organization is having a public *Deepawali* Party or a quieter private celebration, below is a guide on how to celebrate it in an authentic spirit in a culturally appropriate way.


 *Deepawali* is a very pious and spiritual festival. More commonly known as *Diwali*, *Deepawali* is the Festival of Lights, a 5-day celebration to honor the triumph of good over evil and new beginnings.


 The spirit of *Deepawali* is enhanced by the festive decorations, lighting, and especially the rows of diya or small lamps lit around the house or venue. It adds an atmosphere of sanctity to the festivities.

 Sending *Deepawali* greetings to your family and friends, spending time with your loved ones, and enjoying delicious food together—all are meant to welcome the Hindu New Year and appreciate light and joy.

 Wearing an ethnic dress is welcome to make the occasion very colorful and vibrant.

 The purity of *Deepawali* is best honored in an environment where no alcohol is served, no tobacco is used and the food is strictly vegetarian. Poultry products, meat, and fish are strictly avoided.

 Usually, a group of people celebrating *Deepawali* together brings in a plate of sweets or other savories to the occasion.

 "Happy Diwali" or "Shubh Deepawali" are the most common greetings that are exchanged.

We wish you success in making this occasion a memorable, safe, healthy, and joyous celebration for all your friends and family.



Deepawali The Festival of Lights.

In an increasingly culturally diverse Australia, many organizations including workplaces - private and public institutions now celebrate multicultural festivals. *Deepawali* (*Diwali*) is one of the biggest and brightest festivals that Hindus celebrate. Thus it is an important community event that is organized every year. Here are some essential information about this festival and how to celebrate it in an authentic and culturally appropriate way – be it private, public, or at your workplace.

The Meaning of Deepawali

Deepawali is a Sanskrit word composed of 2 roots ('*deep*' and '*awali*') which mean "row of lights". The word is often contracted to "*Diwali*". On *Deepawali* day, rows of traditional small clay lamps (deep/ diya) are lit and placed in houses. Besides, fireworks brighten up the sky as they are let off by many, giving *Deepawali* its description – "The festival of lights"

The Deepawali Festival

Deepawali is one of the most significant festivals celebrated by Hindus around the world. The festival of *Deepawali* implies the victory of knowledge symbolized by light over the darkness of ignorance. In Hindu culture, removing ignorance and imparting knowledge is the primary goal of life. *Deepawali* is marked by five days of celebration. Each of these five days denotes a different tradition with a common theme of reverence towards goodness in the natural order and celebration of life.

Origins of Deepawali

Deepawali was the day thousands of years ago when the kingdom of Ayodhya erupted with joy on the homecoming of Lord Ram after victory over the tyrannical King Ravan. Also on this day, Devi Lakshmi, the goddess of peace and prosperity, incarnated. Hence the association of *Deepawali* with the worship of Goddess Lakshmi. *Deepawali* also marks the victory of Lord Krishna over the diabolical Narkasur and freeing 16,000 women from his captivity.

The 5 Day Gala Festival of



Deepawali



Day 1: Dhan-Teras

The "festival of wealth" (Dhan = Wealth/ Prosperity, Teras = Thirteenth Day) is celebrated on the thirteenth day of the fortnight of the waning moon (Krishna Paksha) in the Hindu month of Karthik (October-November); marking the arrival of Goddess Lakshmi.

Day 2: Chhoti Deepawali

Chhoti (mini) *Deepawali*, also called Narak Chaturdashi, is celebrated on the eve of *Deepawali*. The demonic Narakasur was slain on this day by Lord Krishna.

Day 3: Deepawali

Celebrating the triumphant return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after vanquishing the evil king Ravan. Ever since then, this day symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

Day 4: Govardhan Pooja/ Annakoot

Govardhan pooja follows the day of *Deepawali*. It commemorates Lord Krishna's feat of lifting the Govardhan mountain on his little finger to save the residents of Vrindavan from torrential rain.

Day 5: Bhai Duj

Bhai Duj is a celebration of the bond between brothers and sisters. Gifts are exchanged and the siblings pray together for the well-being of each other on this day.

