



10 Diwali Facts

1. Diwali is the most important religious festival celebrated by followers of Hinduism. It is also called *Divali*, *Deepavali* or *Deepawali* and is commonly referred to as the Festival of Lights.
2. The Festival of Lights celebrates the Hindu New Year. It is a celebration of the victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil.



Diwali Decorations in Mumbai

3. This festival can last up to five days. Diwali takes place every year in late October or early November depending on the cycle of the moon. The festival starts two days before the new moon comes up.

In 2022, the Diwali celebrations go from 23 October until 27 October. The main celebrations will take place on 24 October.



Deepavali Street Decorations in Singapore

4. The name *Deepavali* originates from the ancient Indian Sanskrit language and means 'row of lights'. '*Dipa*' means 'Light' and '*avali*' is the word for 'row'.

5. There are various legends that refer to the festival. They traditionally involve the Hindu gods Rama, Lakshmi or Krishna. They all celebrate the victory of the good over the evil and this festival is a celebration of hope, happiness and peace.



Family celebrating Diwali with sparklers

6. Originally Diwali was celebrated as a harvest festival in India, but today Diwali is celebrated as the Festival of Light by Hindus all over the world.

This festival is celebrated with sparklers, firecrackers and fireworks are held in many places.



Diwali Fireworks in Varanasi/India

7. At Diwali it is tradition to decorate and illuminate the homes, visit the local temple for prayers and share meals with families and friends. Children get small gifts and sweets. Traditional Diwali food includes sweets such as the delicious syrupy *gulab jamun* balls and other Indian sweets displayed below.



Diwali sweets (clockwise from top left): Gulab Jamun, Karanji, Bundi Ladoo, Rasgulla, and Kaju Katli

8. Lighting candles, oil lamps and sparklers are the main customs at this festival. Indians light *diyas* which are candleholders or clay lamps that are used for decoration.

Homes and buildings are also decorated with *rangoli* decorations made with flowers, coloured sand or even coloured rice, flour or spices.



Flower rangoli decorations in a home

9. Statues of Lakshmi, the four-armed Hindu goddess of prosperity, and of Ganesha, the Hindu lord of success usually referred to as the 'Elephant God', are also cherished and decorated with flowers in many homes.



Diyas are typically put up

10. Larger Diwali celebrations outside India take place in Singapore's Little India district as well as in London and Leicester/ UK, Sydney/ Australia and Toronto/ Canada where some main roads are decorated with lights and the Hindu community gathers and showcases Indian traditions, crafts and Indian food at fairs and festival grounds.

Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists also celebrate the new year with a festival of light on these dates but have different legends and traditions referring to the event.



Diwali celebrations in Leicester UK



Happy Chinese New Year - 2022 is the Year of the Tiger

Many countries celebrate the new year according to the Chinese Calendar and not only to our calendar which is the Gregorian calendar starting on the 1st of January.

Lunar New Year is an important public holiday for many countries including China, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. In many other countries, Chinese communities celebrate in the city's 'Chinatown' districts.