

Hindu Holidays

1. DIWALI

- a. What is it. Diwali is a five-day festival of lights, celebrated by millions of Hindus across the world. Diwali, which for some also coincides with harvest and new year celebrations. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/15451833>). The five-day holiday marks the triumph of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance and light over darkness as symbolized by the burning oil lamps called diyas. (<https://share.america.gov/americans-celebrate-hindu-festival-diwali/>).
- b. Rituals. Although rituals vary among the diverse Hindu population, many Diwali observers pray to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, both material and spiritual, and Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity who is widely revered as the god of beginnings and good fortune.
- c. Celebrations. On Diwali family gatherings are held, traditional sweets are offered to everyone who visits their homes. Families will decorate their homes with twinkle lights or diyas and rangolis are created (art form made from chalk powder, colored rice or sand). The purpose of rangoli is to feel strength, generosity, and it is thought to bring good luck. Families will shop for new clothes during this time of the year and it is customary that everyone in the family will wear “new” clothes on the fifth-day of Diwali for prayers (puja) and family gathering. On the fifth-night families will further celebrate by lighting fireworks and sparklers. This can be done at home or conducted through a temple for the entire community.
- d. Tentative Upcoming Dates. November 14, 2020; November 4, 2021; October 24, 2022; November 12, 2023

2. HOLI

- a. What is it. Holi is a festival of color and signifies the arrival of spring, the end of winter, the blossoming of love, and for many it's a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair broken relationships. The festival also celebrates the beginning of a good spring harvest season. This is the festival of color.
- b. Rituals. On the eve of Holi, Holika Dahan takes place. This is where a bonfire is created in order to chase away evil spirits and prayers are conducted. The next morning, is Holi.
- c. Celebrations. On the day of Holi, people play Holi where powders of colors including red, green and yellow are thrown into the air and splash onto others
- d. Tentative Upcoming Dates. March 28, 2021; March 18, 2022; March 8, 2023

3. RAKSHA BANDHAN

- a. What is it. in Sanskrit it means *the bond of protection, obligation or care*.
- b. Rituals. On this day, sisters tie rakhi (amulet) on the wrists of their brothers to protect them against evil influences, and pray for their long life and happiness. They in turn, give a gift which is a promise that they will protect their sisters from any harm. (<https://knowindia.gov.in/culture-and-heritage/festivals/rakshabandhan.php>)
- c. Tentative Upcoming Dates. August 22, 2021; August 11, 2022; August 30, 2023

Islamic Holidays

1. **EID**- Eid literally means a “festival” or “feast” in Arabic. There are two major eids in the Islamic calendar per year – Eid al-Fitr earlier in the year and Eid al-Adha later.
(<https://theconversation.com/what-is-eid-and-how-do-muslims-celebrate-it-6-questions-answered-118146>).
2. **EID AL-FITR**
 - a. What is it. Means “the feast of breaking the fast”. There is a special festival to mark the end of Ramadan, this is called Eid al-Fitr.
 - b. Rituals. there is a special morning prayer typically at the mosque.
 - c. Celebrations. People greet each other with “Eid Mubarak,” meaning “Blessed Eid” and with formal embraces. Sweet dishes are prepared at home and gifts are given to children and to those in need. In addition, Muslims are encouraged to forgive and seek forgiveness. Muslims decorate their homes with lanterns, twinkling lights or flowers. Special food is prepared and friends and family are invited over to celebrate.
(<https://theconversation.com/what-is-eid-and-how-do-muslims-celebrate-it-6-questions-answered-118146>).
 - d. Tentative Upcoming Dates. May 13, 2021; May 3, 2022; April 22, 2023
3. **EID AL-ADHA**
 - a. What is it. Means “the feast of the sacrifice”.
 - b. Rituals. there is a special morning prayer; Muslims slaughter an animal (typically a lamb or goat) to remind themselves of the need to submit to the will of God.
 - c. Celebrations. Many Muslims in the United States celebrate Eid al-Adha with prayers and social gatherings. It is a time for prayer, sharing meals, handing out gifts and wishing one another well. (<https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/eid-al-adha>).
 - d. Tentative Upcoming Dates. July 20, 2021; July 10, 2022; June 29, 2023;
4. **RAMADAN**
 - a. What is it. Ramadan is a very important month in the Islamic calendar. It is a 9th month of Islamic calendar and the month where the Quran was revealed.
 - b. Rituals. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims won't eat or drink between dawn and sunset. This is called fasting. Fasting is important during Ramadan as it allows Muslims to devote themselves to their faith and come closer to Allah, or God. Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, which form the basis of how Muslims live their lives.
 - c. Celebrations. Ramadan is a time for spiritual reflection, prayer, doing good deeds and spending time with family and friends. Normally, people will make a special effort to connect with their communities and reach out to people who need help. It is common to have a meal (known as the suhoor) just before dawn and another (known as the iftar) directly after sunset. At the end of the fast - when the sun has gone down - usually, families and friends will get together for iftar to break their fast.
 - d. Tentative Upcoming Dates. April 21, 2021; April 2, 2022; March 22, 2023