



FESTIVALS

When you hear the word festival, we think of good food, new clothes, visiting places and meeting relatives. We celebrate national, religious and seasonal festivals in our country. All these festivals bring joy and happiness to our lives. We share good food and greet everyone with enthusiasm.



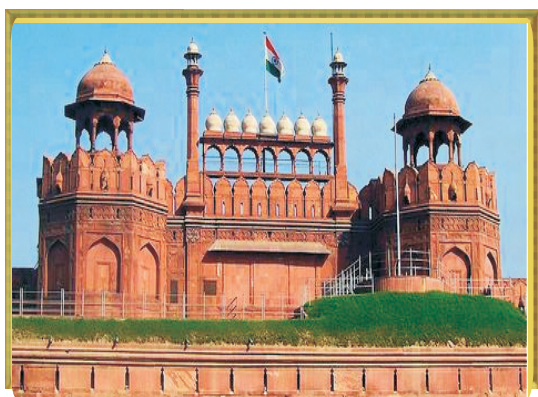
NATIONAL FESTIVALS



Festivals of national importance are called **National Festivals**. These festivals are celebrated in memory of great leaders and historical events. They spread the message of love, peace, brotherhood and humanity. It is celebrated with great patriotism in all parts of our country. On such occasions the capital, New Delhi is the centre of national celebrations.

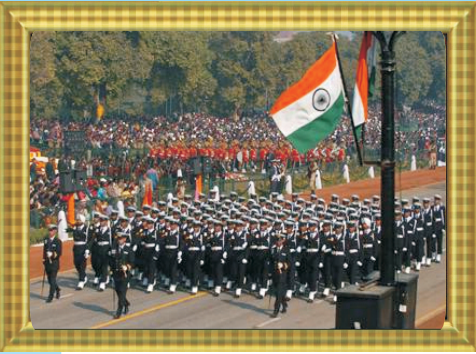
INDEPENDENCE DAY

On 15th of August 1947, India won her independence from the British. We celebrate the day every year as Independence Day.



On this day our Prime Minister hoists the National Flag at the Red Fort and the Chief Ministers hoists the flag in their state capitals. Every one wears a small Indian flag on this day. All institutions across the country, including your school, hoist the national flag and salute it with pride.

On this day we remember all the Indians who laid their lives for the country.



REPUBLIC DAY

We celebrate the Republic Day on the 26th of January. On this day our President hoists our National flag. The most majestic parade is conducted on this day.

Apart from the Armed Forces, school children also participate in this parade. The states exhibit their resources and recent achievements through tableaux.

GANDHI JAYANTHI

We celebrate Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd of October and our leaders pay homage to the **Father of our Nation**.



On this day, the nation as a whole rededicates itself to the ideals and principles for which Gandhiji worked.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Since India has many religions and faiths, we celebrate a number of festivals.

DIWALI

Diwali the Festival of Lights is the most popular Hindu festival. This festival is filled with a lot of fun and is celebrated in most parts of the country with great enthusiasm. People in the Northern part of India celebrate Diwali to signify the home coming of Rama and Sita after 14 years of exile.



Huge effigies of Ravana are burnt to symbolise the killing of evil. They worship Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and then light lamps to welcome prosperity and well-being. This day is celebrated with lights, crackers and merriment.

Diwali is known as **Deepavali** in the Southern part of India. It is believed that the evil demon Narakasura was killed on this day.



To celebrate the triumph of good over evil, people wake up before dawn, have an oil bath and wear new clothes. It is believed that taking a bath before sunrise is equal to taking a holy bath in the Ganges. After the puja, children burst firecrackers to celebrate the defeat of the demon. It is a day of rejoicing. So, people meet family, relatives and friends and exchange sweets and greetings.



Ramzan

There are a number of Muslim festivals like Muharram, Bakrid Id, Ramzan, Id-I-Milad and others. Ramzan is the most enjoyable festival among them. During the Ramzan month they fast during the day and eat after sun set.

It is celebrated at the first day of **Arabi Shavval** month when the crescent moon appears.



The most important part of Ramzan Id is the Community prayer. It is generally held in an open space. They give alms to the poor before attending the public prayer. Some give food and new clothes to the poor. When friends and relatives meet they greet each other "**Id Mubarak**". Thus Ramzan Id is a general expression of goodwill and friendship.

CHRISTMAS



Christians celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ on the **25th of December** every year as Christmas. It is a celebration that conveys humanity, mankind, love, tolerance and brotherhood.

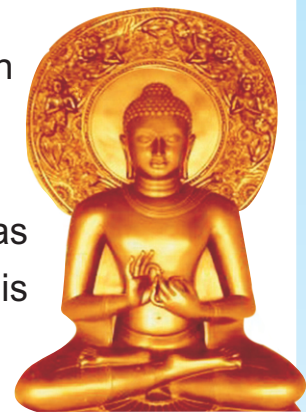


On that day children wait eagerly for Santa Claus to bring them gifts. Another most common feature of Christmas is the **decoration of the crib** (manger) the stable where Jesus Christ was born. People participate in special masses organized in churches. Celebrations of Christmas are marked by carols, cakes, candles and decoration of the Christmas tree. Christmas gifts are given to family members and friends. They help the poor especially during this season and spread the message of love and brotherhood.

BUDDHA POORNIMA

Buddha's birthday is celebrated on the full moon day of Tamil month Vaigasi (May-June) as **Buddha Poornima** by Buddhists.

Vardamana Mahaveera's birthday is celebrated as Mahaveer Jayanthi by Jains and Gurunanak's birthday is celebrated as **Gurunanak Jayanthi** by Sikhs



SEASONAL FESTIVALS

We celebrate festivals connected to seasons like spring or winter. Some of the seasonal festivals are thanksgiving to natural forces like the sun or the rain, as India's backbone is agriculture.

PONGAL OR UZHAVAR THIRUNAAL

Pongal is celebrated to thank the Sun God, Earth and cattle which help the farmers. Usually this festival is celebrated in the middle of January for four days.

This festival marks the end of winter. It is the time when people get ready to thank the **Sun God, Earth** and their **Cattle** for the wonderful harvest. Well ahead of the festival, people clean their houses and throughout Pongal days, women decorate their houses with colourful **Rangoli**.



THE FIRST DAY - BHOGI PONGAL



Bhogi Pongal is celebrated to thank the God of rains. On this day people wake up before sunrise and burn the unwanted things. Children enjoy singing and dancing around the bonfire.

THE SECOND DAY - PERUM PONGAL

The second day is the most important day of the entire festival. On this day, the **Sun God** is worshipped with great devotion. Members of the family gather outside their houses and cook '**Pongal**' in new earthen pots with newly harvested rice and fresh milk. When the rice boils and overflows, everybody shout 'Pongal O Pongal' and pray to the Sun.



It is believed that the overflow of rice symbolizes a prosperous farming season.

THE THIRD DAY - MATTU PONGAL



The third day is celebrated as Mattu Pongal. The cow which gives us milk and the bull which draws the plough in the fields are considered very sacred. So, the farmers honour them by celebrating the day as a day of thanksgiving to them. They clean their cattle; paint their horns and decorate them according to their taste.

Alanganallur Jallikattu is conducted with enthusiasm on this day. Jallikattu or taming of the bull is a traditional sport of **Tamilnadu**. The most famous village for this sport is Alanganallur near **Madurai**.

This day is also celebrated as '**Thiruvalluvar Day**', to honour the great Tamil author who composed 'Thirukkural' which explains all aspects of life.

THE FOURTH DAY - KAA NUM PONGAL

Ka anum Pongal is celebrated by sisters for the welfare of their brothers. On this day people meet their friends and relatives and greet each other. They go out on sightseeing and enjoy the day together.

ONAM

People of Kerala celebrate Onam with great gaiety and enthusiasm. It falls in the Tamil month of Aavani (August-September). Drawing **flower carpets** is the main attraction of this festival. This is also celebrated as the harvest festival in Kerala. Stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata are told through **Kathakali** dance.



Snake boat races are held during Onam. Scores of long snake boats and other smaller crafts participate in these events. Colourful water parades are conducted before the snake boat races. It is the largest team sport in the world.



The people of Kerala look forward to The **Nehru Trophy** Boat Race with excitement. Thousands of men, women and children come to the watersides of **Alappuzha** to witness the race. There are separate races for women too.



HOLI

The colourful festival of Holi is celebrated in March, to welcome spring [flowering season]. There are many folk tales about the celebration of **Holi**. The festival is seen as the victory of good over evil. People walk down their neighbourhoods to spray coloured water on one another. Earlier these colours were natural dyes. Plant and mineral colours were used to create pink, green, yellow and blue water.

Today, people use many chemicals to create these colours, but the spirit of fun and joy have remained the same for thousands of years! Holi signifies a feeling of **friendship, brotherhood and reunion**.



Holi is also celebrated as harvest festival besides being a spring festival. It marks the harvesting of the winter crop (Rabi) when wheat and corns ripened and turn golden brown. Farmers celebrate Holi by offering a small portion of their first crop to the **Fire God, Agni**. If you had a chance to celebrate the spring, what would you do?

RAKHI OR RAKSHA BANDHAN



Rakhi is celebrated on the full moon day known as the Shravan Poornima in the month of July-August. It is celebrated to strengthen the emotional bond of affection between brother and sister. On this day sisters tie a holy thread around their brothers' wrist. The brothers in return promise to protect their sisters from harm. Both offer sweets to each other. One does not have to be a blood brother, to build this bond. Anyone whom a woman accepts as her brother or well-wisher can receive a rakhi.



In history, Rani Karnavati of Chittor sent a rakhi to the Mughal Emperor Humayun and he accepted it! This thread is tied with sisterly love and is called '**Rakhi**' which means "**a bond of protection**".

AADI PERUKKU

Aadi perukku or Padinettam Perukku is a unique celebration in all the *perennial* [where water flows all through the year] river basins in Tamil Nadu. It is celebrated on the 18th day of the Tamil lunar month Aadi, to welcome the onset of the much-awaited monsoon.

People living along the river banks (especially on the banks of Cauvery) in Tamil Nadu celebrate this day with great enthusiasm to pay their tribute to water, which is essential for all life.



CAR FESTIVAL

This is an important part of temple festival in India. During this festival the idols of God are kept in the temple car which is elaborately decorated with flowers, lights etc. People pull the temple car with great devotion. Various forms of dance and music are an essential part of this procession. The most interesting feature of this festival is the



make shift shops set on either side of the street preceding the temple. The largest temple car festivals are hosted by the temples in Thiruvavarur (Thanjavur district), Puri (Odisha), Srivilliputhur (Virudunagar District) and Tirunelveli.

OTHER IMPORTANT DAYS

CHILDREN'S DAY

14th November, the birth day of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is celebrated as Children's Day. He was the first Prime Minister of India. This day refers to his love for children.



TEACHER'S DAY



We celebrate Teacher's day the on 5th of September every year. This Day is dedicated to Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. He was the first Vice President and the second President of India. He was a great scholar and teacher. As a mark of respect, we celebrate his birthday as Teacher's Day. Teacher's Day is celebrated to pay tribute to the hard work and devotion of the teachers to educate children.

EARTH DAY

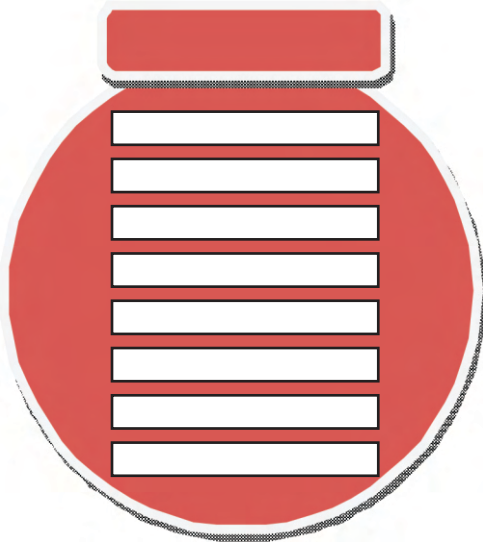
Gaylord Nelson of the United States first celebrated Earth Day on the 22nd April 1970 in the USA. On this day we celebrate the unique place of earth in the universe. People all over the world celebrate to protect plants and animals and to clean up the world we live in. Every year we celebrate Earth Day on 22nd April.



ACTIVITIES



I. Choose the correct ingredients given below and write them on the pot to make sweet Pongal .



Wheat

Rice

fruits

sugar cane

Jaggery

dal

milk

ghee

cardamom

banana

cashew nuts

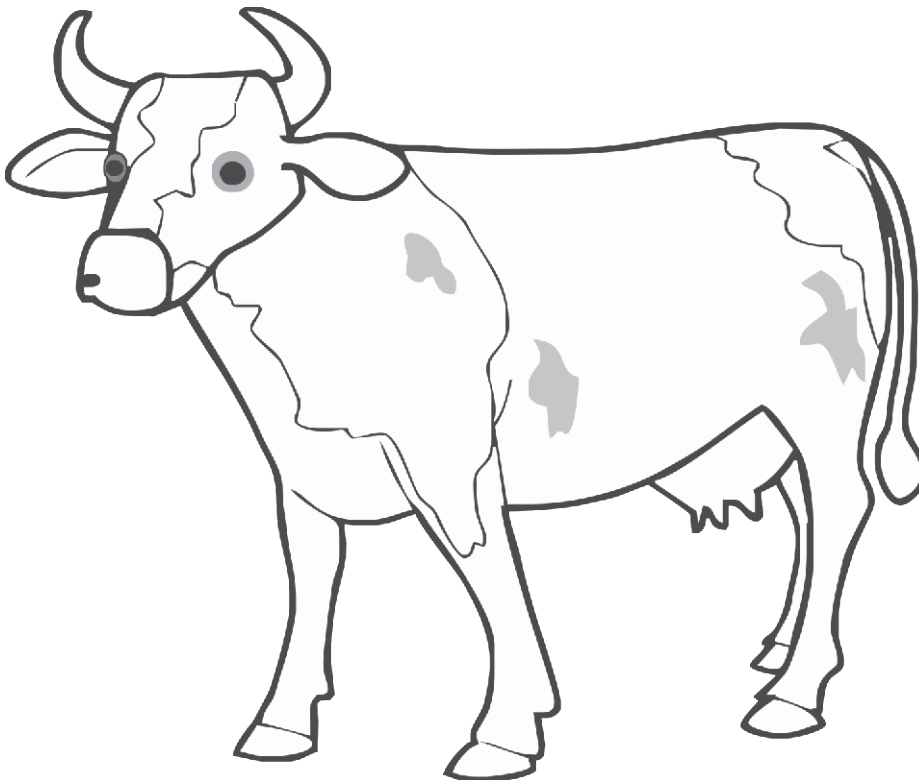
coriander

driedgrapes

pepper

atta

II. Decorate the cow and get it ready for Mattu Pongal .



III. Unscramble and find out the answer

1.Regional name for bull fight _____ (kattujalli)

2.The place which is famous for bull fight in Tamil Nadu
_____ (nallalanganur)

IV. Name a Local Festival and Fill the word web.

Region _____ _____	Month/Period _____ _____	No. of Days _____ _____
Special food items _____ _____	Name of the Festival _____ _____	God Worshipped / Events Remembered _____ _____
Crafts/Arts _____ _____		Cultural Activities _____ _____

EXERCISE

I. COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES

1. Festivals of national importance are called _____.
2. On Diwali day we welcome prosperity and well-being by _____.
3. Brothers promise to protect their sisters on _____.
4. Community prayer is the most important part of _____.
5. Christmas is celebrated to convey the message of love and _____.

II. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?

1. Crib
2. Carol
3. Id Mubarak
4. Onam
5. Agni

III. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING

1. Why is 26th January important?
2. Why is Holi important to the farmers?
3. What is Alappuzha known for?
4. When is Earth Day celebrated?
5. How do we honour Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan the first Vice President of India?