

Diwali: The Festival of Lights

Learning objective: To understand the origins, symbolism, and significance of Diwali within Hindu, Sikh, and Jain traditions.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of Diwali. Read the front, attempt to recall the answer, then check the back to verify your understanding.

What is the core spiritual significance of Diwali?

It is known as the 'Festival of Lights' and symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

What are 'Diyas' and why are they used?

Diyas are small clay oil lamps. They are lit to represent the inner light that protects from spiritual darkness.

Which ancient epic is often associated with Diwali in Hindu tradition?

The Ramayana, which tells the story of the return of Lord Rama and his wife Sita to their kingdom after 14 years of exile.

What is the purpose of a Rangoli?

A Rangoli is an intricate, colourful pattern created on the floor near an entrance to welcome guests and, traditionally, to invite the goddess Lakshmi into the home.

How do Sikhs celebrate this time of year?

Sikhs celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas, which commemorates the release of Guru Hargobind Ji from imprisonment and his arrival at the Golden Temple.

What does Diwali represent for the Jain community?

For Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of Lord Mahavira attaining Moksha, or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

How does the concept of 'Ahimsa' relate to the festivities?

Ahimsa, meaning non-violence, is a core value in Jainism and influences how the festival is celebrated with peaceful prayer and kindness to all living beings.

Why is the goddess Lakshmi central to many Diwali celebrations?

Lakshmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity, many families pray to her for blessings and a successful year ahead.

Compare and contrast: How might a celebration in a city differ from a traditional rural celebration?

While both involve diyas and family gatherings, rural celebrations may use locally sourced natural materials for decorations, whereas city celebrations might incorporate modern public displays and fireworks.

Explain why light is such a powerful symbol in many world religions.

Light is universally associated with clarity, hope, guidance, and truth, providing a direct contrast to the fear and uncertainty often represented by darkness.