

What is Diwali?

Diwali is a yearly festival celebrated by millions of people around the world. Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and other religions come together for five days in Autumn to take part in the 'festival of light.'

The festival originated in India and it marks the beginning of the New Year. It's an official holiday for multiple countries, including India, Fiji, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Singapore.

The five-day celebrations fall on different days every year, because Diwali coincides with the Hindu lunar calendar. Traditionally, it takes place in either October or November, although some people prepare weeks in advance.

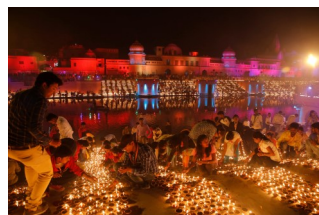
Diwali is known as the 'Festival of Light' because millions of people light small oil lamps and place them in houses, gardens, roofs and more. These are called diyas and light the way for the Lakshmi - an Indian god - to enter people's homes.

How do kids celebrate Diwali?

Diwali isn't just celebrated by adults - children get involved in the fun too! The whole family helps out to clean the house, cook food and exchange gifts to celebrate new beginnings.

Although it does include some chores, these are important to make a good impression for any family members and to encourage the god of wealth, Lakshmi, to visit. Kids also get involved in drawing colourful Rangoli patterns using vibrant coloured powder.

They can also help out to light some lamps, as long as they're careful. Then, the fun begins! Kids get to see fireworks displays and go out to celebrate with millions of other children.



Top 10 Interesting Diwali Facts for Kids

1. Diwali isn't just a festival for Hindus - it's also celebrated by Sikhs and Jains too.
2. More than 800 million people celebrate the festival.
3. Diwali means 'row of lights' in Sanskrit, which is an ancient Indian language.
4. The festival is about light (or good) triumphing over dark (or evil), which is one reason why people light oil lamps.
5. Different countries celebrate Diwali differently. For example, people in Bengal celebrate the god Kali.
6. As well as lights, people draw colourful patterns on the floor to invite the gods into their homes, which is known as Rangoli.
7. In the United Kingdom, the city of Leicester hosts the largest Diwali celebration outside of India.
8. Another way they attract Lakshmi is through vibrant fireworks displays.
9. People exchange gifts and cook food during the festival.
10. The total cost of firecrackers every year amounts to over one billion dollars!

Your task is to create your own Rangoli pattern to celebrate Diwali. Ideas on how to do this:

- Follow the instructions below to make coloured rice patterns
- Use objects from around your house to make the colourful patterns
- Colour in the pattern using felt pens or colouring pencils
- Cut up brightly coloured fruits and vegetables to make a healthy Rangoli pattern snack

Don't forget to email us photographs of your amazing creations!

Colourful Rice Rangoli

You will need:

- **Rangoli Pattern Templates** (optional)
- Brightly coloured food colouring (yellow, red, green, pink, orange, etc.)
- 225g uncooked plain rice (per colour)
- 60ml white vinegar (per colour)
- Sealable sandwich bags (one per colour)
- Plastic tray/baking tray
- Baking paper



Instructions

1. Put 225g of rice into the sealable sandwich bag.
2. Add the vinegar and a few drops of one of the food colourings. A little will go a long way!
3. Tightly seal the sandwich bag and squash the rice inside so that it mixes with the vinegar and food colouring. Make sure the rice is evenly coated.
4. Pour the rice in a thin layer onto a tray lined with baking paper. Allow to dry for an hour or two.
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 for each colour you would like to make.
6. Sprinkle your coloured rice onto the Rangoli Pattern Templates, following the lines. Alternatively, you could use plain sugar paper and make up your own design!



