



## Diwali – The Festival of Lights

### Story & Significance

Diwali, also known as Deepavali, is one of India's most celebrated festivals. It marks the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil, filling homes and hearts with warmth, hope, and togetherness.

The story of Diwali traces back to the ancient Hindu epic, the **Ramayana**. After a long exile of fourteen years and the victory over the demon king Ravana, **Lord Rama** returned to his kingdom, Ayodhya, with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana. The people of Ayodhya illuminated the entire city with earthen lamps (diyas) to celebrate their return — and thus began the tradition of lighting lamps during Diwali.

For many, Diwali also honours **Goddess Lakshmi**, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, who is believed to visit homes that are clean, pure, and brightly lit. The festival reminds everyone to let inner light shine, symbolizing truth, knowledge, and goodness.

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### Traditions & Customs

Diwali is celebrated over five days, each with special meaning and customs. Homes are thoroughly cleaned and decorated with colourful **Rangoli** designs, **Diyas** (Deepak), **Flowers**, and **Lamps**. On the main day, families perform the **Lakshmi Puja**, offering prayers for wealth, happiness, and peace.

Delicious sweets like **Ladoo** and **Barfi** are prepared and shared with neighbours and friends. Children burst crackers and sparklers, symbolizing joy and the victory of light. New clothes are worn, and gifts are exchanged to spread love and good wishes.

The festival ends with **Bhai Dooj**, celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters, similar to Raksha Bandhan. Altogether, Diwali inspires kindness, gratitude, and unity among all.

