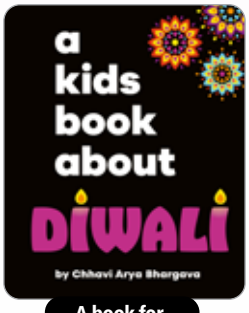


WORD ORIGIN
The name Diwali comes from the Sanskrit term Deepavali, meaning "row of lights."

Celebrate the spirit of Diwali

Explore the customs and traditions of a festival observed across the globe.

More than a billion people around the world celebrate the holiday known as Diwali (pronounced de-VAA-lee), which falls in October or November on the date of the new Moon of the Hindu lunisolar calendar. Diwali is one of the biggest and most important public holidays of the year in India and is celebrated in the US by millions of Indians and Indian Americans. "Diwali is like Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July all rolled into one," according to Chhavi Arya Bhargava, the author of *A Kids Book About Diwali*.



A book for young readers

Celebrated by Hindus and people of other faiths, including Jains and Sikhs, Diwali generally symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. Diwali, called the festival of lights, is a time for prayer, family bonding, and reflection. There are many differences in how the festival is observed across faiths and regions. Here are some of the ways Diwali is celebrated.

Meaningful moments

In many parts of India, Diwali is celebrated over five days. This year it will be from November 6–10. The first day is spent cleaning the home for guests. On the second day, lights may be placed in each room to symbolize that light is more powerful than darkness. The third day, which falls on November 8 this year, is the main day when people dress up, say a prayer, and exchange gifts. There is a large feast and fireworks. The fourth day is like the first day of a new year—people reflect and show gratitude for what they have and donate to those in need. On the fifth day, some families play games that honor the special bond between brothers and sisters. In parts of southern India, people celebrate Diwali for one day, waking before sunrise for an oil bath, prayers, festive foods, and fireworks.

Festive symbols

Families celebrating Diwali may traditionally place rows of small, shallow lamps called *diyas* in their homes. (If you'd like to make your own diyas using cupcake liners, check out the craft instructions on the opposite page.) To welcome guests for the holiday celebration, homes are also decorated with colorful patterns on the floor, an art form known as *rangoli*. Patterns are created using a combination of flower petals, bright powder, lentils, rice, or sand. Another popular tradition during the festival of lights is to apply mehndi (henna body art) to hands and feet.

Sweet treats

People who celebrate Diwali can look forward to enjoying a wide variety of delicious sweets during the festival. These may include *ladoo*, which are golden balls made with gram flour, sugar, and ghee (a type of clarified butter) and come in many different flavors, and *jalebi*, swirls of batter that are deep-fried until crispy, then soaked in sticky sugar syrup. One crunchy, sweet snack that many people enjoy at the holiday is *shakkarpara*. To make it, see Bhargava's recipe on the opposite page. You can find more information about her book, as well as other resources about Diwali, at bookaboutdiwali.com.



DID YOU KNOW?
In 2023, New York became the first major US city to make Diwali a school holiday.

Create paper flower diyas

What you need

- Cupcake liners
- Scissors
- Double-sided tape or adhesive dots
- Battery-operated tea lights

Instructions

1. If your cupcake liner is colored on only one side, turn it inside out so the colored side is on the inside of the cup.
2. To make a flower with eight petals: Fold a cupcake liner in half. Fold it in half again. Cut the ruffled edge in half, then cut each half into a rounded petal shape, leaving the folded, flat edge uncut.
3. To make a flower with six petals: Fold a cupcake liner in half, then fold it again into thirds. Cut the ruffled edge into a rounded petal shape, leaving the folded, flat edge uncut.
4. Unfold the cupcake paper flower. For a fuller flower, make more flowers to layer on top. The layers can be smaller or the same size. Use small pieces of double-sided tape or adhesive dots to attach the layers together.
5. Use the same folding and cutting techniques with green cupcake papers to make layers of thin leaves. Or cut out individual leaves. Use double-sided tape or adhesive dots to attach the leaves underneath the flower.
6. Place a battery-operated tea light in the center of each flower diya. (Never use a real candle or open flame.)

Make a batch of shakkarpara

Ingredients

- ⅓ cup milk, plus 1 to 2 tablespoons if needed
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ¼ cup ghee (or melted butter)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
- Pinch of salt

Instructions

1. Warm the milk, sugar, and ghee in a small pan over low heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Let mixture cool until just warm.
2. In a large bowl, mix the flour, cardamom, and salt.
3. Pour the milk mixture into the flour mixture. Mix with your hands into a firm, smooth dough. If it's crumbly, add milk 1 tablespoon at a time.
4. Cover and rest for 15 minutes.
5. Roll the dough out to about ¼ inch thick. Cut into strips about 1 inch wide, then cut across at an angle to make diamonds.
6. Cook them by baking or frying.
   To bake: Spread on a lined baking sheet. Bake at 350° F for 15 to 20 minutes, flipping halfway, until golden.
   To fry: Fry in batches in oil over medium-low heat for 4 to 5 minutes, until golden. Drain on paper towels.
7. Cool completely. Recipe makes about 4 cups of shakkarpara.



WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using the oven or stove.

JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKER!; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; BOOK: COURTESY OF PUBLISHER