

Indian Festivals

Pongal

The Indian harvest festival known as Pongal (பொங்கல்) in Tamil, a celebration to thank the sun, Mother Nature and the various farm animals that help contribute to a bountiful harvest. Celebrated in Singapore, Pongal marks the beginning of the Tamil month called Thai, which is a lucky month. It is the month of new beginnings, good harvests, and having fun with family and friends. Pongal festival usually falls on the 14th or 15th of January each year. Did you know that Pongal also refers to the name of the sweet dish made and eaten during this festival?



Holi



Best known as the 'Festival of Colours', Holi is a Hindu festival which marks the arrival of spring. During this festival, celebrations include splashing coloured water with spray guns on family and friends and applying colourful powder on one another's faces! Did you know that the colours used in this festival symbolise equality, making everyone equal no matter their race or religion?

Onam



This festival of Kerala (India) state celebrates the return of the legendary demon King Mahabali, who is believed to return to earth on this day. Onam is not just a religious festival but also a time of communal harmony, where people of different communities participate in the celebrations.

Did you know that the highlight of Onam celebrations is the grand feast, Onasadya, consisting of 11 to 13 main dishes?

Thaipusam

A Hindu festival where devotees give thanks to the Hindu deity Murugan by carrying a milk pot or Kaavadi, a wooden or steel structure often decorated with peacock feathers, flowers, and images of deities. As it is not an easy task to carry a milk pot or wooden/steel structure, devotees are cheered on with prayer chants by family and friends, bringing much life, colour and spirit. Did you know that in Singapore devotees walk 4.5km during the Thaipusam procession from Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple at Serangoon Road to Sri Thendayuthapani temple at Tank Road? That's close to about 4 MRT stops!



Deepavali



The Festival of Lights, Deepavali or Diwali, is the grandest festival celebrated mainly by the Hindus, Sikhs and Jains. Deepavali is often referred to as the "Festival of Lights" and symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. The festival involves lighting lamps, decorating homes with rangoli and adorning new and colourful clothes. It is a time for family gatherings, renewal, and the celebration of hope and prosperity! Did you know that Deepavali was declared a public holiday in Singapore in 1929?