

Diwali

The Festival of Lights

A Lights Festival from India, celebrated by Hindu families, occurs late October /early November and symbolises the triumph of light over darkness and goodness over evil. It is a special time for families, new clothes, visiting relatives, exchanging sweet gifts and sharing food.

Little clay lamps (*Dipas*) are lit to guide *Lakshmi* (Goddess of Luck and Prosperity) to all Hindu homes. Special home decorations include *Rangolis* (sand floor patterns), *Torans* (door decorations) and *Alpanas* (Good Luck paper cutout patterns).

Each year at the time of Diwali, Indian villages and cities are ablaze with light for this festival. Tiny lamps are everywhere. The occasion honours Lakshmi. The belief is that those that are honoured by a visit from the Goddess are blessed.

The festival takes place over five days and is also a Harvest festival to mark the end of the season. Houses are cleaned and prepared for the big event. New clothes, purchased or made, are worn during the festivities. Gifts and sweets are especially prepared and are exchanged between friends and family. Joy and happiness mark the beginning of the New Year, where good triumphs over evil. Fireworks are lit and holy places are decorated for the occasion.

