



# ONAM

## A Ten-Day Extravaganza Celebrating Harvest and Homecoming in Kerala

Onam is a vibrant celebration marking the homecoming of King Mahabali, a mythical king revered for his just and prosperous reign.



Onam is steeped in mythology. Legend has it that King Mahabali, known for his generosity and fairness, was banished to the underworld by Lord Vishnu, the preserver god in the Hindu trinity.

However, Lord Vishnu granted Mahabali a boon, allowing him to visit his people in Kerala every year during the harvest season. Onam commemorates this homecoming and the prosperity associated with King Mahabali's reign.



Devotees offer prayers to Lord Vishnu and King Mahabali, seeking blessings for prosperity and a good harvest in the coming year. Special offerings called "kaineetam" (money) are made to mark the homecoming of King Mahabali.

Onam is a visual and sensory explosion. Homes are adorned with intricate flower arrangements called "athappookkalam," creating a breathtaking display of colors and fragrance.

Kathakali performances are accompanied by a unique musical ensemble featuring instruments like the maddalam (drum), chenda (cylindrical drum), and the mizhavu (clay hourglass drum). Their rhythmic beats set the pace for the dance and create a captivating atmosphere.



The snake boat races are a captivating highlight of Onam, showcasing Kerala's rich maritime heritage, competitive spirit, and the unwavering dedication of its people to preserving their traditions.

The highlight of Onam is undoubtedly the Onasadhya, a spectacular feast served on a banana leaf. This elaborate vegetarian meal features over 25 dishes, each with its unique flavor and symbolism. From aromatic curries and sambar to sweet rice preparations and various accompaniments, the Onasadhya is a culinary journey showcasing Kerala's rich culinary heritage.



Assam ↻



Orissa ↻



Jharkhand ↻



Tamil Nadu ↻



# KARAM

## A Vibrant Celebration of Nature's Bounty and Youthful Spirit

At the heart of Karam lies the deep respect for nature's blessings. Villagers venture into the forests to collect branches from the Karam tree, a symbol of fertility and prosperity. These branches are adorned with flowers and leaves, then brought back to the village as a central focus for worship and celebration.

### KARAM

#### Karma

#### Food

- Jan
- Feb
- Mar
- Apr
- May
- Jun
- Jul
- Aug
- Sep
- Oct
- Nov
- Dec

Villagers offer prayers and make offerings to the Karam tree, seeking blessings for a prosperous harvest and the well-being of their families, particularly the youth of the community.



Unmarried girls often observe a short pre-festival fast, seeking blessings for good health and future happiness. The festival culminates in a communal feast, a joyous occasion to share the bounty of the harvest.



While the core essence of Karam remains consistent across regions, unique variations enrich the celebration. In some areas, girls decorate small baskets with germinating seeds, symbolizing fertility and the hope for future harvests. Young men may showcase their bravery and physical prowess through daring feats.

The vibrant sounds of drums and rhythmic clapping fill the air as villagers, especially young people, gather for energetic dances. Traditional songs and chants praising the Karam Devta and celebrating the harvest season add to the festive spirit.



Karam transcends religious boundaries, uniting people from all walks of life in a shared celebration. It's a time for families to come together, for young adults to express their joy and energy, and for the entire community to express gratitude for the blessings of nature and the promise of a bountiful future.



Assam ↻



Kerela ↻



Tamil Nadu ↻



Orissa ↻



# BIHU

## Assam's Joyous Festival of Harvest

Bihu has deep agricultural roots and is closely associated with the Assamese New Year and the cultivation cycle. Each Bihu festival corresponds to a particular phase of farming, marking the onset of sowing, growth, and harvesting seasons respectively.

**BIHU**  
To pray for blessings and prosperity

- Jan
- Feb
- Mar
- Apr**
- May
- Jun
- Jul
- Aug
- Sep
- Oct
- Nov
- Dec

The burning of the meji is a cherished tradition passed down through generations in Assam. It serves as a powerful symbol of letting go of the past, embracing new beginnings, and expressing gratitude for the harvest's bounty. As the flames dance in the night sky, they illuminate not just the physical world but also the enduring spirit of Assamese culture and its deep connection to the natural world.



During Bihu, people don traditional Assamese attire such as mekhela chador for women and dhoti kurta for men. Traditional musical instruments like the dhol, pepa (hornpipe), and taal (cymbals) are played during Bihu dances and cultural performances.

Bihu naas is an energetic folk dance performed by men and women in colorful attire is a captivating display of synchronized steps and joyous energy. The rhythmic beats of drums like the dhol and the pepa set the pace for the dance, creating a vibrant spectacle.

Following the burning of the meji, a grand feast takes center stage. Traditional delicacies like "pitha" (rice cakes) and "xo ron" (pork curry) are prepared and shared with loved ones. The joyous spirit continues with folk dances like Bihu Naas, vibrant music, and general merriment.



Orissa



Kerala

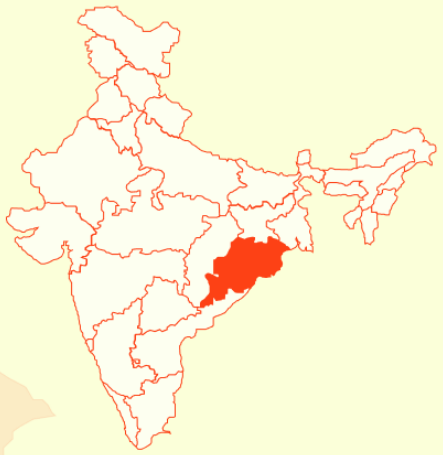


Jharkhand



Tamil Nadu





# NAUKHAI

## Celebrating the New Harvest

Naukhai, also known as Naukhai Parab or Naukhai Bhetghat, is a vibrant harvest festival celebrated primarily in Western Odisha, India. It's a joyous occasion marking the arrival of the new rice crop, signifying abundance and prosperity.

NAU + KHAI

New

Food

- Jan
- Feb
- Mar
- Apr
- May
- Jun
- Jul
- Aug
- Sep
- Oct
- Nov
- Dec

At the heart of the Naukhai festival in Western Odisha stands Maa Samaleswari, the revered deity who embodies the spirit of fertility, prosperity, and abundance. As the presiding goddess of agriculture and the patron deity of the region, Maa Samaleswari holds a central place in the hearts and minds of the indigenous communities who celebrate Naukhai.



### Rituals of the nine colors of Naukhai



1. Beheren (announcement of a meeting to set the date)



2. Lagna dekha (setting the exact date for partaking of new rice)



3. Daka haka (invitation)



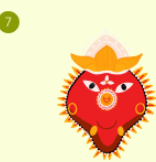
4. Sapha sutura and lipa puchha (cleanliness)



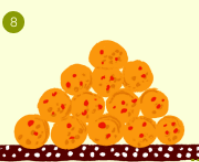
5. Ghina bika (purchasing)



6. Nua dhan khuja (looking for the new crop)



7. Bali paka (final resolve for Naukhai by taking the Prasad (the offering) to the deity)



8. Naukhai (eating the new crop as Prasad after offering it to the deity, followed by dancing and singing)



9. Juhar bhet (respect to elders & gift transfers)



Naukhai Dance is accompanied by traditional musical instruments such as dhol (drums), mohuri (a wind instrument), and tamak (cymbals), which create a rhythmic and energetic ambiance. Dancers adorn themselves in vibrant attire, often featuring colorful sarees, turbans, and elaborate jewelry, adding to the visual spectacle of the performance.



Naukhai Food features a plethora of seasonal ingredients freshly harvested from the fields. Staple grains such as rice, wheat, and millets form the basis of many dishes, are offered to Maa Samaleswari, the presiding deity of the festival, as part of the ritualistic worship.



Assam



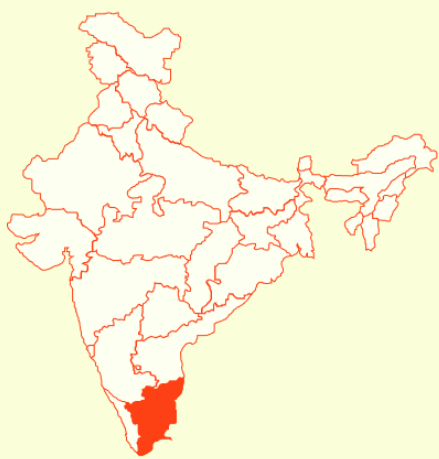
Kerala



Jharkhand



Tamil Nadu



# PONGAL

## A South Indian Extravaganza Celebrating Harvest and Renewal

Pongal is a joyous celebration that marks the end of the harvest season, expresses gratitude for nature's bounty, and welcomes the beginning of the auspicious Tamil month of Thai.



- Jan
- Feb
- Mar
- Apr
- May
- Jun
- Jul
- Aug
- Sep
- Oct
- Nov
- Dec

Though facing controversy and restrictions in recent times, Jallikattu, a traditional sport involving the taming of bulls, was once a prominent feature of Pongal celebrations in some regions, showcasing courage and agility.



Day 1  
**BHOGI PONGAL**

Day 2  
**SURYA PONGAL**

Day 3  
**MAITU PONGAL**

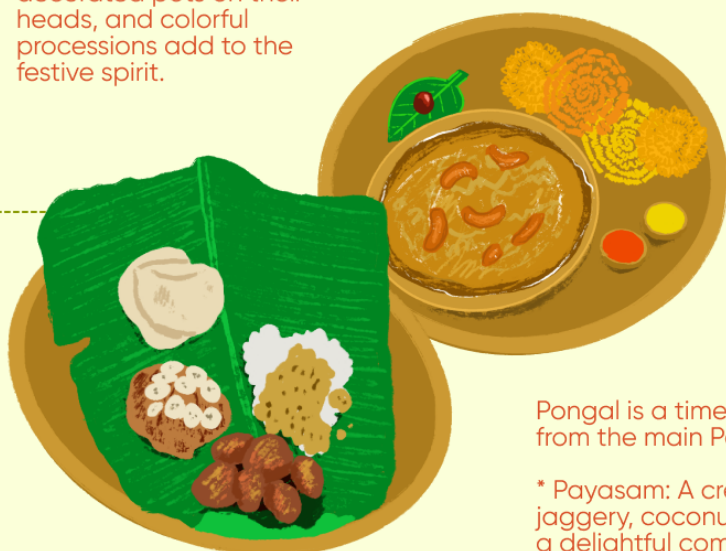
Day 4  
**KAANUM PONGAL**



Homes are adorned with intricate floor decorations called "kolams" using colored rice flour or powders. These beautiful patterns are believed to bring good luck and prosperity.



Energetic folk dances like Karagattam, featuring dancers balancing decorated pots on their heads, and colorful processions add to the festive spirit.



Pongal is a time for indulging in sweet treats. Apart from the main Pongal dish, other delicacies like:

- \* Payasam: A creamy rice pudding flavored with jaggery, coconut milk, and sometimes nuts, offering a delightful combination of textures and flavors.
- \* Sesame Laddoos: These sweet balls made with roasted sesame seeds, jaggery, and ghee provide a delicious and healthy option.
- \* Thengai Barfi: A melt-in-your-mouth barfi made with coconut and condensed milk, adding a touch of creamy sweetness to the festive spread.



Assam



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