

spice *route*

THE INFLIGHT MAGAZINE



FLY TO THE FESTIVITY

DIWALI

IN ALL ITS DIVERSITY

BINDU GOPAL RAO

Come October, and the most adored and anticipated festival of the year is here to light up your life. Yes, it's Diwali!





The stunningly illuminated Golden Temple

If there's anything that unites India, it's her festivals—especially Diwali. There's something about the Festival of Lights, and the joy with which Indians from across the land embrace it. What makes the country shine bright on this autumn night is the belief that light can prevail over dark, good can overcome evil, and most importantly, hope can conquer despair. North India celebrates with Lakshmi Puja and Bengal with Kali Puja, but everywhere, Diwali is all about family reunions, great food, and festive fervour.

Community Vibes in Punjab

On Diwali, Punjab celebrates Bandi Chhor Diwas, when the Golden Temple in Amritsar is lit up with the glow of thousands of earthen lamps, transforming this hallowed space and its surroundings into a magical panorama. Bandi Chhor Diwas, incidentally, commemorates the release of the sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind, and 52 other prisoners from Gwalior Fort. This is why Diwali is double the fun, and the night sees a spectacular

fireworks display, after which the *diyas* are lit. The serene waters of the sacred *sarovar* that encircles the temple are also illuminated with the reflection of the lights, lending the occasion an unforgettable ambience. The *langar* that is served here is a must-try, more so on a day such as this.



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TO **AMRITSAR** FROM DUBAI





A female dhaaki infusing magical rhythm at a Kali Puja pandal

A New Dawn in Goa

In a community celebration that unites the denizens of Goa, effigies are burnt on the eve of Diwali to celebrate the victory of Lord Krishna over the demon Narakasura. People come together to build Narakasura's effigy with papier-mâché, grass, and paper—so striking are these likenesses that they're hard to miss. Despite all the effort that goes into creating them, the effigies are always burnt at dawn, symbolising the victory of good over evil. The five-day festivities gather steam on Naraka Chaturdashi, when the effigies are set alight, following which lamps are lit and Goans get ready to rejoice with food and gifts. They also crush a bitter berry called *karit* under their feet, to signal the defeat of Narakasura.



**SPICEJET OFFERS
DIRECT FLIGHTS
TO GOA FROM
MUMBAI AND
PUNE**



**SPICEJET FLIES DIRECTLY
TO KOLKATA FROM DELHI,
GUWAHATI, MUMBAI,
JAIPUR AND BAGDOGRA**

Bengal's Ode to Kali

Make your way to Kolkata to experience the unique festivities of Kali Puja, which is how West Bengal celebrates Diwali. The city is decked out with decorative lights, and *rangolis* adorn the streets. While Goddess Lakshmi is serenaded elsewhere, Kolkata worships Goddess Kali, known to be the destroyer of evil. You'll come across temporary idols made with clay, and a public celebration where the goddess is offered red hibiscus flowers, rice, lentils, sweets, savouries—even fish and meat. The rituals come from ancient tantric rites that continue to be followed to this day. Step into the Kali temples to witness these elaborate ceremonies, alongside performances of devotional songs. And at the conclusion of Kali Puja, the idol of the goddess is immersed.



The effigy of the demon Narakasura before being burnt

*Magical stay at Evoke Dholavira
on the Khadir Bet island*

Festive Staycations

If you are looking for a Diwali with a difference, escape the ordinary and celebrate the Festival of Lights in a place where time stands still. Evoke Dholavira in Gujarat offers a unique retreat for travellers seeking serenity, history, and a sense of wonder. On the island of Khadir Bet in Kutch district, 44 thoughtfully designed cottages open onto vast salt plains and star-filled skies, while quiet gardens and a welcoming clubhouse provide space to unwind. During Diwali, the place comes alive with traditional décor, rows of flickering *diyas*, colourful *rangolis*, and festive lights casting a gentle glow across the grounds. Evenings feature special meals inspired by local flavours, served under moonlight.

You can also celebrate the month of Karthika the Kerala way, at the sublime Marari Beach Resort, near Alappuzha. Partake in the *diya* lighting ceremony and create a traditional *rangoli* on Diwali day. Guests also get to enjoy a specially crafted festive menu. It makes for a serene and elegant celebration of Karthika, while taking nothing away from the charm of the resort's white sandy beaches, lined with coconut trees, and its wonderful facilities.



**SPICEJET FLIES
DIRECTLY TO KOCHI
FROM MUMBAI**

*The very famous diya lighting
ceremony at Alappuzha*



A Deepavali Feast

Food is an integral part of any festival, and if you're planning an exclusive dinner date with family, enter the world of the Nizams for a truly memorable celebration at the Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad. Treat yourself to Hyderabad Biryani, Bagara Baingan, and Khubani ka Meetha (among delectable menu items), and experience the essence of a cuisine once favoured by the royals of yore.

In fact, destination dining is now a popular trend, as retreats make a conscious effort to present patrons a fine-dining experience to remember. For example, Sterling Holiday Resorts serves local cuisine at its properties, including at The Malabar at Sterling Wayanad. Here, Diwali guests can look forward to indulging in regional specialities such as Chemmeen Biryani, Erachi Puttu, Malabar Mango Cloud Fish, Chakka Pathiri, Nirachathu, Mathanga Erissery, and Cheera Parippu Curry.

It's a festival vacation that promises to satisfy your soul *and* satiate your appetite. Have a sparkling Diwali ●



Unique Rituals

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana celebrate Diwali with the recitation of Harikatha, a form of storytelling centred around the life of Vishnu. In Maharashtra, people design miniature mud forts and decorate them by displaying figurines of soldiers, in a nod to the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Tamil Nadu celebrates with a custom of making a herbal medicine called *marundhu* or *legiyam*, which includes traditional herbs and spices meant to improve digestion. Meanwhile, miniature *gharondas*, or mud houses, are built inside homes in Jharkhand, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, for the faithful believe that Goddess Lakshmi resides in them.

Budhi Diwali is celebrated in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh after 30 days, usually on Amavasya (moonless night), as it is believed that news of Rama's return to Ayodhya reached this area a month later.

In Odisha, as per the Kaunria Kathi ritual, jute stems (*kaunria*) are lit and waved to shower blessings on ancestors. And Karnataka celebrates Bali Padyami with stories of King Bali and forts made from cow dung, which are placed in front of homes along with the *rangoli*.

