



With my Salaams

## YOUR 1965 CALENDAR

# FESTIVALS OF INDIA

For your 1965 calendar we bring to you twelve of India's most popular festivals as depicted by some of our well known Indian artists. The festivals of India are the spontaneous manifestation of a people's urge for gaiety and mirth, to celebrate the bringing in of the harvest, a change of season, the birthday of a God, or of a legendary hero. Whatever the occasion, it is a time for innocent merry-making and thanksgiving to be enjoyed by young and old, rich and poor, throughout the length and breadth of our country. We hope you will like them.

### 1. PONGAL—N. S. Bendre

This popular festival is celebrated in Southern India, particularly in Madras, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore. Like Onam, Pongal is a harvest festival and its highlight is the symbolic offering of 'Pongal' (rice cooked with dal) to cows and bullocks which are gaily painted for the occasion.

### 5. MOHARRAM—Mrs. P. V. Dongare

Moharram is observed by Muslims in India like Muslims everywhere to mark the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Mohammed. Muslims take out impressive processions of "Tazias" which represent the Imam's tomb at Karbala. Muslims all over the country observe this day in prayer and meditation.

### 2. SANKRANTI—Vinodray Patel

While the South celebrates Pongal, the West celebrates Sankranti. Sankranti is noted for its kite-flying in which almost entire cities take part. On Sankranti day, the sun barely filters through a sky that is clouded with kites. Some even tie currency notes to the kite and offer aerial battle. He who grabs the kite gets the money.

### 6. NAGPANCHAMI—Rasik Raval

The festival of Nagpanchami is dedicated to the great serpent 'Ananta' on whom Vishnu is believed to have rested during the intervals between the dissolution of one age and the creation of another. At the time of this festival, people go round the streets of towns and cities with snakes in wicker baskets, and hundreds of citizens make symbolic offering of milk to the snakes.

### 9. ONAM—Vinod Shah

Onam is the harvest festival celebrated mostly in Kerala. It marks the harvesting of the first 'paddy'. The highlight of the festival is the 'Vallam Kali' (snake boat race) which takes place in the palm-fringed lagoons which abound in Kerala. The participating boats are owned by various villages, and each village contributes towards the maintenance of the boats.

### 11. DIWALI—Mrs. B. Prabha

Diwali is India's famous "Festival of Lights". It is nationally celebrated and for the business community in Maharashtra and Gujarat. It is also the beginning of the financial year. Diwali, which is celebrated over three days, is mainly concerned with the worship of Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth. To be in an Indian city during Diwali is a fascinating experience. Every Hindu home is aglitter with the flicker of a thousand lamps.

### 3. MAHA SHIVARATRI—K. H. Hebbar

This festival is more religious in character than some of the others depicted here. Maha Shivaratri day is dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva. Devotees spend the entire night singing Bhajans in his praise. Anyone worshipping him on this night is believed to be released from the cycle of re-birth.

### 7. GOKUL ASHTAMI—Guntam Waghele

Gokul Ashtami celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna, the Shepherd God of Hindu mythology. In Bombay its celebration is marked by merry throngs of people going from street to street. The highlight of this festival are the human pyramids which are made by rival groups in order to reach an earthen pot filled with curds, coloured water and money, which is suspended across the street from balcony to balcony.

### 10. DASSERA—Feroz Khatipla

Dassera is another festival celebrated on an all-India basis. However, in every area of our vast country, there are slight differences in its observance. In Mysore Dassera is celebrated with its famous procession. In the North, it is celebrated by the presentation of the Ramilla plays. Basically Dassera celebrates the victory of light over darkness—good over evil. The painting on this calendar depicts Shami Puja, which is one aspect of Dassera.

### 12. CHRISTMAS—Badri Narayan

Christmas is observed in India as it is in most countries round the world. Its celebration is a combination of religious fervour and gaiety. In Bombay and other centres midnight services are held which are attended by people of many religions who participate in the colour and pageantry.

### 4. HOLI—S. N. Surti

Holi is one of the most popular festivals of Northern and Western India. This festival celebrates the coming of Spring. On the eve of the colourful festival big bonfires are lit. These symbolize the destruction of evil. On the next day riotously gay crowds fill the streets squirting coloured water on all passers-by.

### 8. GANESH CHATURTHI—Laxman Pai

This festival is in honour of the Elephant God of Hindu mythology, Ganes, son of Shiva and Parvati, symbol of wisdom and prosperity. This festival is celebrated over an extended period of nearly 10 days. During this period, clay figures of the Elephant God are installed in the houses of devotees. Here it is worshipped with offerings of flowers and fruits. After its sojourn, the statue of Ganes is taken out in procession, duly accompanied by dance and music for immersion.

## AIR-INDIA



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