Issue No: 1307
Established 1996
08 - 14 November 2026

THE TIMES
KUWAIT'S PREMIER WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
www.timeskuwait.com

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Diwali: Festival of Lights celebrates universal values that transcend borders

Diwali transcends borders and cultures, spreading a universal message of hope, unity and the triumph of light over darkness, while bringing communities together in a celebration of shared humanity.

The Times Kuwait Report

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, continues to illuminate lives across the world, bringing together communities through a shared message of hope, renewal and the triumph of good over evil.

From the vibrant streets of India to homes and public spaces across the globe, the festival has evolved beyond its traditional boundaries, becoming a celebration of cultural heritage, family bonds and universal human values.

Rooted in Hindu traditions, Diwali, also known as Deepavali, symbolizes the victory of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. Its message of kindness, compassion and unity resonates across cultures, making it one of the most widely celebrated festivals worldwide.



In India, the festival transforms cities and villages into colourful displays of lights and decorations. Families illuminate their homes with traditional oil lamps, create intricate rangoli designs and gather for prayers, festive meals and the exchange of sweets and gifts. Prayers to Goddess Lakshmi, associated with wealth and prosperity, form an important part of the celebrations.

The festival is equally significant across South Asia, where local traditions reflect its rich cultural diversity.

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A festive season blending tradition, culture and modernity

The Times Kuwait Report

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, continues to evolve with changing times, bringing together age-old traditions and modern celebrations while preserving the cultural and spiritual values that make it one of India's most cherished festivals.

From the glow of traditional oil lamps to dazzling LED displays, the festival reflects a harmonious blend of heritage, creativity and contemporary lifestyles. Celebrated across India and by Indian communities worldwide, Diwali symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance and good over evil.



At the heart of the festivities are family gatherings, where relatives come together to share meals, exchange gifts and participate in traditional rituals. Homes are cleaned and decorated with colourful rangoli designs, flowers, decorative lights and earthen lamps, creating an atmosphere of warmth and positivity.

The lighting of diyas remains one of the most meaningful traditions of Diwali, symbolizing the removal of darkness and the welcoming of prosperity, hope and happiness. Prayers, family gatherings and festive meals continue to reinforce the spiritual significance of the occasion.

Diwali stands as a celebration of continuity and change, demonstrating how cultural heritage can remain vibrant across generations.

Food is another integral part of the celebrations. Traditional sweets such as gulab jamun, barfi, jalebi, laddus and kaju katli are prepared and shared with family members, neighbours and friends. Savoury snacks and specially prepared festive meals add to the celebrations, while exchanging sweets and gifts strengthens bonds of friendship and goodwill.

Diwali shopping has also become an important part of the festive season. Markets and shopping centres come alive with colourful decorations, traditional clothing, gifts and festive merchandise. From handcrafted clay lamps to modern decorative lighting, families increasingly combine traditional elements with contemporary designs to create welcoming spaces for celebrations.

Cultural expression remains central to the festival. Rangoli, created using coloured powders, flowers and rice, adorns entrances and courtyards, reflecting creativity and symbolizing good fortune. Cultural performances, music, dance and community competitions provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate, while helping younger generations connect with their cultural heritage.





Beyond individual homes, Diwali has become a celebration of community engagement and social responsibility. Public gatherings, cultural programmes and collective prayers bring people together, strengthening social connections and promoting cultural understanding.



The spirit of generosity also extends to charitable activities, with families and communities sharing food, gifts and assistance with those in need. Corporate Diwali celebrations have similarly evolved, with businesses organizing festive gatherings and distributing gifts to employees, clients and partners as a gesture of appreciation and goodwill.





Technology has introduced new dimensions to the festival without diminishing its traditional significance. Digital greeting cards, video calls and social media allow families separated by distance to celebrate together. Online shopping and digital payments have made festive preparations more convenient, while contemporary lighting systems and modern decorations offer new ways to illuminate homes.

At the same time, growing awareness of environmental responsibility is encouraging families to adopt sustainable decorations, energy-efficient lighting and more environmentally conscious celebrations.

Despite these changes, the essence of Diwali remains unchanged. Family bonding, spiritual reflection, cultural expression and community participation continue to define the festival.

As tradition meets modernity, Diwali stands as a celebration of continuity and change, demonstrating how cultural heritage can remain vibrant across generations. Its enduring message of hope, generosity and unity continues to illuminate homes and hearts, bringing people together in a shared celebration of life and the triumph of good over evil.

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Go Green This Diwali

Celebrate the Festival of Lights Sustainably

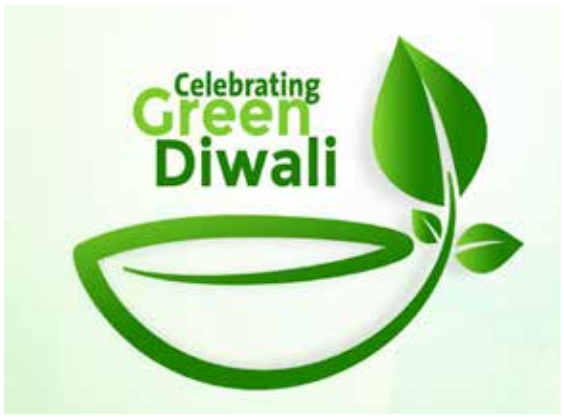
Special to The Times Kuwait

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is a time for joy, family gatherings and cherished traditions. As homes sparkle with colourful decorations and families come together to celebrate, the festival also offers an opportunity to reflect on the environmental impact of our celebrations and embrace more sustainable ways to mark the occasion.

From fireworks and disposable decorations to excessive packaging and food waste, conventional festivities can leave a considerable environmental footprint. Choosing eco-friendly alternatives, however, can help preserve the spirit of Diwali while making celebrations safer and more responsible.

Rethinking Fireworks and Firecrackers

Fireworks have long been associated with Diwali celebrations, but their impact on air quality and noise pollution has become a growing concern. Firecrackers release smoke, fine particulate matter and chemical pollutants into the atmosphere, contributing to deteriorating air quality in many Indian cities during the festive season. Particulate matter, particularly PM2.5, poses a significant health risk because these microscopic particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream. Exposure has been linked to respiratory irritation, aggravated asthma and cardiovascular complications. Children, older adults and people with existing heart or lung conditions are particularly vulnerable. Firecrackers also generate excessive noise, which can affect people, pets and wildlife. Infants and young children are especially sensitive to loud sounds, making quieter celebrations a more considerate choice.



For those who wish to retain the tradition of fireworks, certified green crackers offer a potentially less polluting alternative. Developed through research initiatives in India, these crackers are designed to reduce certain harmful emissions and noise levels compared with conventional fireworks.

However, green crackers are not pollution-free. Their environmental impact can vary, and reducing or avoiding fireworks altogether remains the more sustainable option.

Traditional Diyas for a Greener Glow

Traditional earthen diyas remain one of the most beautiful and meaningful ways to illuminate a home during Diwali. Made from clay, these lamps bring a warm, natural glow to festive spaces while preserving a centuries-old tradition.

Reusable clay diyas can be a more sustainable choice than disposable decorations, particularly when they are used year after year. Choosing locally made lamps and using them responsibly can also help reduce unnecessary consumption.

For those who prefer electric lighting, energy-efficient LED lamps and decorative lights offer an effective way to brighten homes while consuming less electricity than conventional incandescent bulbs. A combination of traditional diyas and energy-saving lights can create a festive atmosphere that is both elegant and environmentally conscious.

Natural Rangoli and Handmade Decorations

Rangoli is an integral part of Diwali celebrations, with colourful patterns traditionally created at entrances and courtyards to welcome prosperity and good fortune.

Instead of synthetic colours and plastic-based decorative materials, families can opt for natural alternatives such as rice flour, flower petals, turmeric and other plant-based colours. These materials offer a beautiful way to celebrate the tradition while reducing the use of artificial products.

Handcrafted torans, or decorative door hangings, can also add a distinctive touch to festive interiors. Reusing colourful fabrics, including old dupattas and sarees, offers a creative alternative to disposable plastic decorations. Fresh flowers, reusable fabric garlands and natural materials can further enhance the festive atmosphere while helping reduce household waste.

Celebrate Without the Waste

Sustainable Diwali celebrations extend beyond decorations and fireworks. Thoughtful choices in gift-giving, food preparation and everyday consumption can make a meaningful difference.

When exchanging gifts, consider wrapping them in reusable cloth, recycled paper or other sustainable materials instead of plastic-coated gift paper and disposable bags. Cloth bags can also be reused for shopping and future celebrations.

Preparing traditional sweets and delicacies at home is another way to celebrate sustainably. Homemade treats can be shared with neighbours and friends in reusable steel or glass containers, reducing the need for excessive packaging.

Families can also plan meals carefully to avoid food waste, use reusable plates and cutlery, and separate recyclable materials for appropriate disposal.



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Diwali Home Decor Essentials

Lighting Up Homes with Tradition and Creativity

The Times Kuwait Report

As Diwali approaches, homes come alive with the warmth of traditional oil lamps, the fragrance of incense and the vibrant colours of festive decorations. The Festival of Lights is a time to welcome prosperity, celebrate the triumph of good over evil and create cherished memories with family and friends.

From traditional diyas and colourful rangoli to floral garlands and decorative lighting, the right decor can transform any home into a welcoming festive space. Here are some essential decorations to help bring the spirit of Diwali into every corner of your home.





Diyas and Decorative Lights



Traditional diyas remain among the most cherished symbols of Diwali, representing the victory of light over darkness. Arranging oil lamps along windowsills, balconies and entrances creates a warm, inviting atmosphere while preserving the festival's traditional charm.

For a contemporary touch, LED string lights featuring hanging diya designs offer an attractive and convenient alternative. Available in different colours and lighting patterns, these decorative lights can be used to brighten doorways, walls and outdoor spaces. Their versatility makes them an ideal addition to both traditional and modern homes.

Rangoli: A Colourful Welcome

Rangoli is an integral part of Diwali celebrations, with intricate designs created on floors and at entrances using coloured powders, rice flour, flower petals or sand. Often decorated with diyas and candles, these colourful patterns are traditionally associated with good fortune, prosperity and an auspicious beginning.



Rangoli-making is also a wonderful way for families to come together and express their creativity. Whether simple or elaborate, a thoughtfully designed rangoli adds a distinctive festive touch to the home.

For those looking for inspiration, geometric patterns using circles, squares and triangles offer a striking design. Floral motifs made with fresh petals or coloured powders are another popular choice, particularly for beginners.

Traditional symbols, including the lotus and the Om symbol, can also be incorporated into rangoli designs. For those who prefer a simpler approach, reusable stencils and templates make it easier to create neat and attractive patterns.

Artificial Marigold Garlands



Marigold garlands are another popular choice for Diwali decorations. Traditionally associated with auspicious occasions, their bright yellow, orange and red hues bring colour and vibrancy to festive interiors.

Artificial marigold garlands, available in fabric and synthetic materials, offer a convenient alternative to fresh flowers. They can be draped around doorways, windows, balconies and walls to create an inviting festive atmosphere. Some varieties also feature decorative beads, sequins or integrated lights for added visual appeal. These garlands can be used on their own or combined with traditional decorations to create a coordinated festive look.

Creating a Festive Atmosphere



Diwali decorations need not be elaborate to make a lasting impression. A thoughtful combination of traditional diyas, decorative lights, colourful rangoli and floral accents can bring warmth and character to any home.

The key is to create a space that reflects personal style while honouring the traditions and values of the festival. Whether embracing a traditional aesthetic or incorporating contemporary elements, these simple decor essentials can help make Diwali a celebration filled with light, colour and togetherness.

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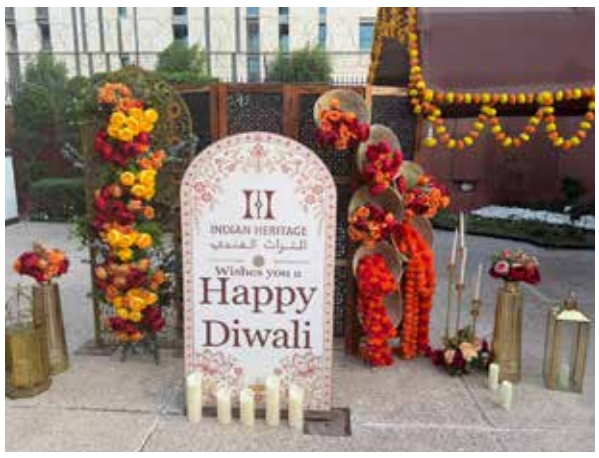
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Diwali and Diwaniya bring Kuwait and India closer through shared heritage













Indian Ambassador highlights cultural ties, educational opportunities and investment prospects at joint celebration.

Kuwait and India's longstanding friendship was celebrated through a unique cultural gathering that brought together two cherished traditions, Diwali and the Diwaniya, highlighting the shared values and deep-rooted historical connections between the two countries.

The Ambassador of India to Kuwait, H.E. Paramita Tripathi, stressed the importance of strengthening cultural communication through initiatives that celebrate the heritage of both nations and promote greater understanding between their peoples.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 'Diwali and Diwaniya' event, attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Nawaf Suleiman Al-Ahmad and several heads of diplomatic missions, the ambassador described the gathering as a distinctive example of cultural and human rapprochement between Kuwait and India.

Diwali, widely known as the Festival of Lights, is one of India's most important festivals, while the Diwaniya remains one of Kuwait's most prominent social traditions, providing a space for hospitality, dialogue and community interaction.

Tripathi explained that the idea of bringing the two traditions together was inspired by their recognition on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2025. Celebrating them together, she said, offers an opportunity to deepen cultural understanding and strengthen the friendship between the two countries.

The event combined the welcoming atmosphere of the Kuwaiti Diwaniya with the festive decorations associated with Diwali, reflecting the distinctive character of both cultures.

The ambassador also expressed appreciation for the warmth and hospitality she had experienced since arriving in Kuwait, particularly the openness of Kuwaiti society and its interest in learning about other cultures.

Tripathi said she had never felt like a stranger in Kuwait, describing the country as a second home. She noted that the Diwali celebration held in Kuwait carried a special significance for her because of the close connections she had developed with Kuwaiti society.

She pointed to the many values shared by Indian and Kuwaiti cultures, including hospitality, respect for elders and openness towards other communities. The two countries also share a longstanding commercial and historical heritage. Highlighting the close people-to-people connections, she observed that many Kuwaitis regularly visit India, sometimes spending a month or two there each year. Some have also developed a familiarity with Indian languages, including Malayalam.

Encouraging young people to explore India

The ambassador encouraged Kuwaiti youth to visit India, discover its cultural diversity and experience its rich heritage. She also highlighted the potential for greater cooperation between the business communities of the two countries, particularly by encouraging young entrepreneurs and business leaders to explore new opportunities for investment and exchange.

On education, Tripathi expressed her hope of welcoming more Kuwaiti students to Indian universities, noting that discussions with the relevant Kuwaiti authorities on the recognition of Indian universities are continuing. She expressed optimism that several institutions would receive accreditation in the near future, creating wider opportunities for Kuwaiti students to benefit from India's educational institutions.

Expanding investment opportunities

Turning to economic cooperation, Tripathi said Kuwaiti investors and companies had already established a presence in India and achieved positive results by taking advantage of available opportunities. Some Kuwaiti companies have offices in India, reflecting the growing commercial engagement between the two countries.

She said India looks forward to attracting further Kuwaiti investments and expanding its economic presence in Kuwait, building on the strength of bilateral relations and the potential for broader cooperation.

The ambassador's remarks underscored how cultural exchange, education and economic partnerships can reinforce the longstanding friendship between Kuwait and India, creating new opportunities for cooperation while preserving the traditions that connect their peoples.

Diwali: Festival of Lights celebrates universal values that transcend borders

CONTINUED ON PAGE 1

In Nepal, Diwali is celebrated as Tihar, a five-day festival honouring deities, animals and birds. In Sri Lanka, members of the Tamil community mark the occasion through temple rituals, family gatherings and the lighting of lamps, symbolizing the victory of good over evil.

Beyond the Indian subcontinent, Diwali has become an important cultural celebration in countries with significant Indian communities. In Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, the festival reflects the enduring cultural heritage of generations of Indian-origin communities. Singapore and Malaysia welcome the occasion with illuminated streets, festive markets and cultural performances, highlighting the harmony of their multicultural societies.

Mauritius and Fiji, where Indian traditions have become an integral part of national life, also celebrate Diwali with enthusiasm. Families decorate their homes, exchange sweets and participate in community gatherings, with the festival serving as a reminder of the values of peace, togetherness and mutual respect.

In Western countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia, Diwali has grown into a major cultural event. Public celebrations, temple gatherings and spectacular light displays attract people from diverse backgrounds, offering opportunities to experience Indian traditions and celebrate cultural inclusion. Across these different settings, the festival retains its central message: that light can overcome darkness, goodness can triumph over evil, and hope can emerge even in challenging times. For millions of people, Diwali is an occasion to strengthen family ties, renew spiritual commitments and reflect on the importance of generosity and compassion. Its celebrations also provide an opportunity for communities to share their traditions, fostering understanding and appreciation across cultural and religious boundaries.

As the festival continues to reach new audiences around the world, its significance extends beyond the lamps, decorations and festivities. Diwali serves as a reminder that the values of kindness, love, harmony and the triumph of good are universal, transcending borders and bringing people together in the spirit of shared humanity.

TIMES KUWAIT'S PREMIER WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
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Printed in: Al Khat Printing Press Co.

Celebrating the guiding light within us





Beyond the lights and festivities, Diwali reminds us that true enlightenment comes from within, inspiring humanity to overcome ignorance with knowledge, replace despair with hope and embrace wisdom, kindness and compassion.

The Times Kuwait Report

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is a celebration of hope, wisdom and the enduring triumph of good over evil. Observed across India and by Indian communities worldwide, the festival carries a message that transcends religious and cultural boundaries, reminding humanity of the guiding light that resides within each of us.

While Diwali holds distinct religious and historical significance for different communities, its universal message remains one of renewal, enlightenment and the victory of light over darkness.

The symbolism of light has long held a special place in human civilisation. Across cultures and religions, light represents knowledge, truth, wisdom and the promise of a brighter future. It is an enduring symbol of hope, guiding people through uncertainty and inspiring them to overcome challenges.

The word Diwali is derived from the Sanskrit term Deepavali, meaning a row of lights. The lighting of traditional earthen lamps, or diyas, remains one of the festival's most cherished customs, symbolizing the removal of darkness and the welcoming of positivity and prosperity.

The festival's origins can be traced to ancient India, where it was associated with the harvest season. Over time, religious traditions and legends from Hindu epics became intertwined with its celebrations, giving Diwali the rich cultural and spiritual significance it holds today.

Preparations for the festival begin days in advance, with families cleaning and decorating their homes, creating colourful rangoli designs and illuminating doorways with rows of lamps. New clothes, festive meals, sweets and gifts add to the celebrations, while prayers and traditional rituals bring families together.

Today, Diwali has also become a season of shopping, social gatherings and community celebrations. Markets and commercial centres are filled with festive decorations, while families and friends exchange gifts and sweets, strengthening bonds of affection and goodwill.

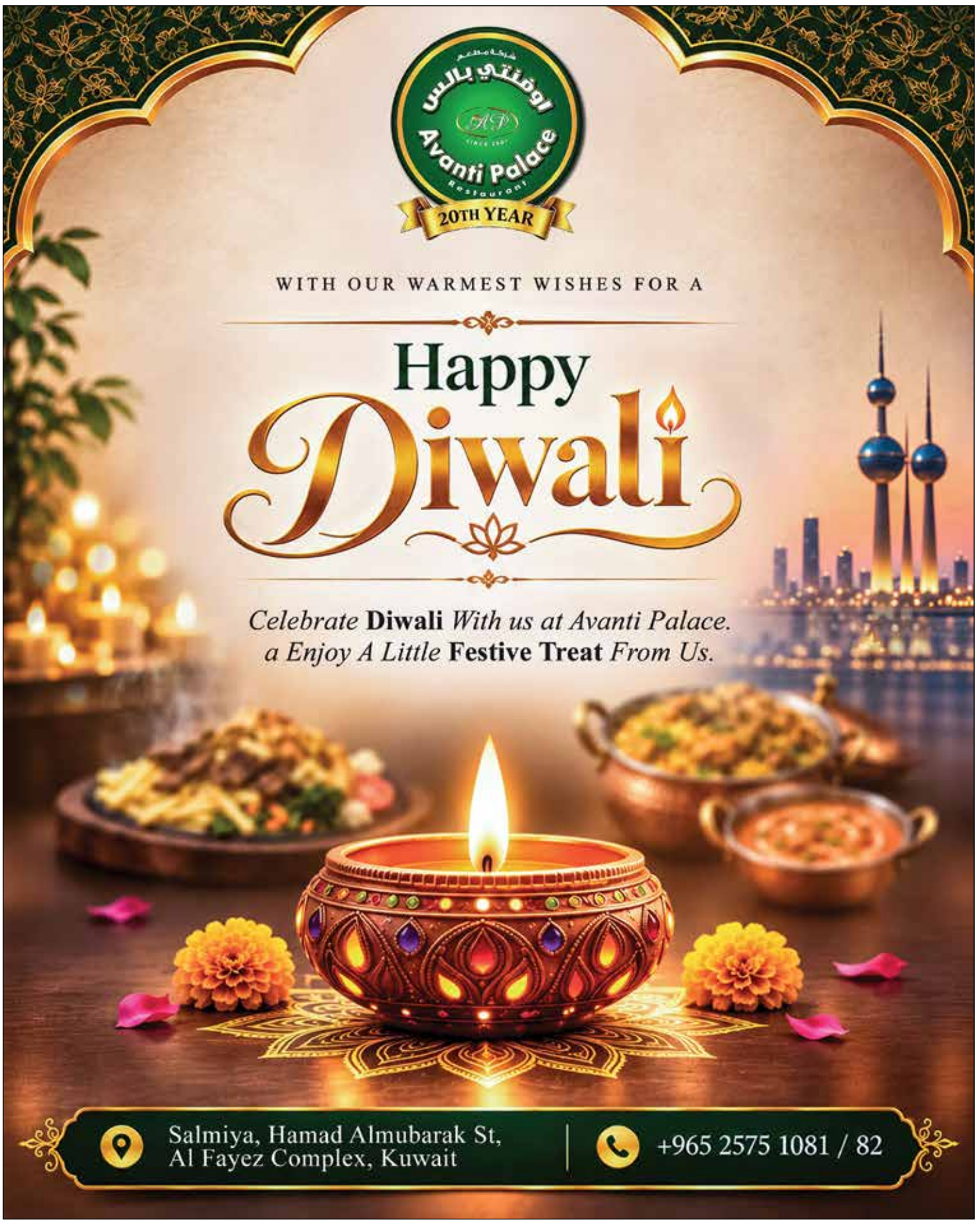
Despite the changing nature of the celebrations, the essence of Diwali remains deeply rooted in the celebration of life, goodness and the pursuit of inner peace.

For those living away from their homeland, the festival offers an opportunity to reconnect with their cultural heritage and share its traditions with friends and neighbours from different backgrounds. Its message of unity and mutual respect continues to bring communities together across geographical and cultural boundaries.

Beyond the festivities, Diwali invites us to pause and reflect on the light within ourselves. It encourages us to overcome ignorance with knowledge, replace despair with hope and allow kindness and compassion to guide our actions.

As the lamps of Diwali illuminate homes and streets, their deeper significance lies in the reminder that the most meaningful light is the one that guides our thoughts, decisions and actions.

This Diwali, amid the celebrations and gatherings, let us take a moment to reflect on the guiding light within us and renew our commitment to living with wisdom, goodness and compassion.

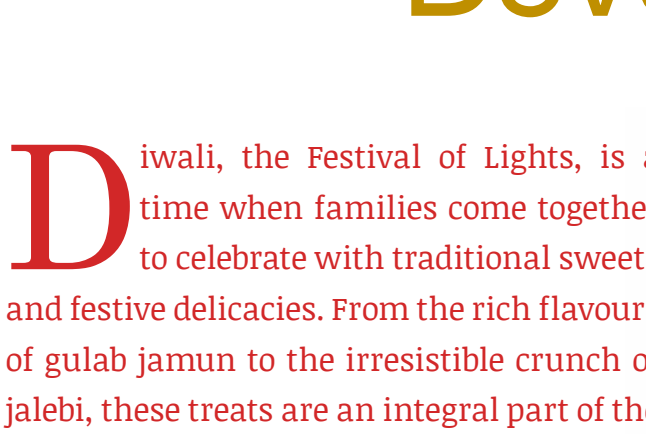


Devourable, Delicious *Diwali* Delicacies

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is a time when families come together to celebrate with traditional sweets and festive delicacies. From the rich flavours of gulab jamun to the irresistible crunch of jalebi, these treats are an integral part of the celebrations.

While it is tempting to indulge in store-bought sweets, preparing them at home allows you to choose fresh ingredients and adjust the sweetness to your liking.

Here are five traditional Diwali delicacies that you can prepare at home and enjoy with family and friends.



Gulab Jamun

Soft, golden-brown dumplings soaked in fragrant sugar syrup, gulab jamun is one of India's most beloved festive sweets.

Ingredients

- 1½ cups khoya (dried whole milk)
- ¼ cup chenna (fresh cheese curd)
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 3 tbsp refined flour
- ¼ tsp green cardamom powder
- 2 cups sugar
- Ghee or oil for deep-frying

Method

- Grate the khoya and mash the chenna until smooth.
- Combine with baking soda, flour and cardamom powder. Add a little water and knead into a soft dough.
- Divide into 16 equal portions and roll into smooth balls, ensuring there are no cracks.
- Prepare a sugar syrup using the sugar and 2 cups of water. Remove any impurities that rise to the surface.
- Heat ghee or oil in a deep pan. Fry the balls over low heat until evenly golden brown.
- Drain and immerse in the warm sugar syrup for 15–20 minutes before serving.



Jalebi

Crisp on the outside and syrupy within, jalebi is a festive favourite that is best enjoyed warm.

Ingredients

- 1½ cups refined flour
- 2 cups sugar
- ¼ tsp orange food colour
- Ghee or oil for frying

Method

- Combine the flour with approximately 1½ cups of water to make a smooth, light batter.
- Cover and leave in a warm place to ferment for approximately 20 hours.
- Mix the batter thoroughly. Add the food colour and 2 tbsp of refined flour, then beat until smooth.
- Prepare a sugar syrup using the sugar and 2 cups of water. Add 1 tbsp of milk, remove any scum and cook until the syrup reaches a one-string consistency.
- Allow the syrup to cool slightly, keeping it lukewarm.
- Heat ghee or oil in a frying pan. Transfer the batter to a squeeze bottle and pipe spiral shapes into the hot fat.
- Fry until golden and crisp, turning occasionally.
- Drain and immerse in the warm syrup for 2–3 minutes. Serve immediately.



Mysore Pak

A classic South Indian delicacy, Mysore Pak is known for its rich flavour and melt-in-the-mouth texture. Made with gram flour, sugar and ghee, it is a festive treat that requires patience and careful stirring.

Ingredients

- ¾ cup gram flour (besan)
- 2 cups sugar
- 2½ cups ghee

Method

- Sift the gram flour twice to remove any lumps.
- Heat the ghee in a pan and keep it warm over very low heat.
- In another pan, combine the sugar with 2½ cups of water. Stir over medium heat until the sugar dissolves.
- Bring the syrup to a boil and cook without stirring for approximately 5 minutes, or until it reaches a one-string consistency.
- Add ½ cup of hot ghee to the syrup and stir.
- Gradually add the gram flour, stirring continuously to prevent lumps.
- Continue stirring until the mixture begins to bubble.
- Add the remaining hot ghee, ½ cup at a time, stirring continuously after each addition.
- Once the mixture develops a pleasant roasted aroma and begins to leave the sides of the pan, pour it into a greased tray.
- Allow to cool slightly, cut into squares and leave to cool completely before separating.



Besan Ladoo

A popular Indian sweet dish made from besan (gram flour), ghee, sugar, and sometimes nuts, and flavored with cardamom, besan ladoos are often prepared for festive occasions, or as a sweet snack.



Ingredients:
- 1 cup besan flour (gram flour)
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 6 tbsp ghee (melted)
- 4 tbsp assorted chopped nuts (optional)
- ½ tsp cardamom powder
- 1 small pinch salt

Instructions:
- Heat a heavy bottom non-stick fry pan on medium heat. Add ghee and let it melt Add the gram flour and salt, and mix until the flour absorbs the ghee
- Keep stirring continuously till the mixture darkens to a medium golden color and the aroma of roasted besan arises
- Transfer besan to a mixing bowl to prevent over-roasting. Add chopped nuts (optional), and let it cool for 20-30 minutes
- When the mix is cool to the touch, add powdered sugar and mix well
- Take about a tablespoon of the mix in your palm and shape it like a ball
- Press the finely chopped or sliced nuts onto the ladoo surface and serve.

Kalakand

A sweet Indian fudge made with milk and often flavored with cardamom, Kalakand is a delicious sweet to make for special occasions such as Diwali.



Ingredients:
- 6 cups whole milk
- 2 tbsp + 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¾ can condensed milk
- 1 tsp rose water
- 3/4 tsp cardamom powder
- Chopped pistachios to garnish

Instructions
- Add the whole milk to a heavy-bottomed pan and place over medium-high heat
- Stir often and once the milk comes to a boil, turn off the heat.
- Add the lemon juice, 1 tablespoon at a time stirring gently after each addition
- Add and stir until the milk curdles completely and whey separates
- Line a strainer with muslin cloth and pour the curdled milk over it
- Wash the filtered 'chhena' (basic cheese) under a tap to get rid of the lemony flavor
- Bring the ends of the muslin cloth together and tie them in the center
- Squeeze out nearly all the water from the chhena
- Place the chhena in a pan and add the condensed milk and mix well
- Cook the mixture over low heat for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring often, until the mixture thickens and begins to leave the sides of the pan
- Add the rose water and cardamom powder, and mix well
- Remove from heat and transfer mixture to a greased pan
- Smooth out the mixture using a spatula, and sprinkle chopped nuts on top
- Let it set for 2 to 3 hours at room temperature.
- Once set, cut kalakand into pieces
- Keep refrigerated, if not serving immediately



Boondi Ladoo

Boondi ladoo is a festive classic made from tiny gram-flour pearls bound together with fragrant sugar syrup. With cashews, raisins and cardamom, these ladoos bring a touch of traditional sweetness to Diwali celebrations.

Ingredients
- 2 cups gram flour (besan)
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 10 cashew nuts
- 20 raisins
- 15 green cardamoms
- 4 saffron strands
- A few drops of milk
- 500g ghee

Method
- Shell and powder the cardamoms.
- Combine the sugar with ¼ cup of water and heat until it melts and forms a syrup.
- To check the consistency, drop a little syrup into water. If it remains intact without dissolving, it is ready.
- Add a few drops of milk to the syrup to remove impurities. Skim off the scum that rises to the surface.
- Add the saffron and cardamom powder.
- Mix the gram flour and baking powder with water to form a smooth batter without lumps.
- Heat the ghee in a deep frying pan. Pour the batter through a perforated ladle into the hot ghee to make small boondi pearls.
- Fry until lightly golden, then drain.
- Fry the cashews and raisins separately.
- Add the boondi, cashews and raisins to the sugar syrup and mix well.
- Allow the mixture to cool slightly. Grease your palms with a little ghee and shape into round ladoos.

Festive tip: Store the sweets in clean, airtight containers once completely cooled. Gulab jamun and jalebi are best enjoyed fresh, while Mysore Pak, peda and ladoo can be prepared ahead of time for festive gatherings.

Enjoy these traditional Diwali delicacies with family and friends, and let the sweetness of the season bring everyone together.

Malai Peda

Rich, creamy and delicately flavoured with cardamom, malai peda is a traditional milk-based sweet that makes an elegant addition to any festive platter.



Ingredients
- 1 litre whole milk
- A few strands of saffron
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 pinches of citric acid
- 1 tsp cornflour
- ¼ tsp green cardamom powder
- 4–5 chopped almonds
- 7–8 chopped pistachios



Method
- Bring the milk to a boil in a deep, heavy-bottomed pan.
- Reduce the heat and cook, stirring continuously, until the milk reduces to half its original volume.
- Soak the saffron in 2 tsp of warm milk and add it to the pan.
- Add the sugar and cook for another 4–5 minutes.
- Dissolve the citric acid in 1 tbsp of water and add gradually to the milk, allowing it to curdle slightly.
- Mix the cornflour with 2 tsp of milk and stir into the mixture.
- Continue cooking and stirring until the mixture thickens and resembles khoya.
- Add the cardamom powder, mix well and remove from the heat.
- Allow to cool, divide into 16 portions and shape into small rounds.
- Garnish with almonds and pistachios before serving.



Badam Halwa

Badam Halwa is a sweet Indian pudding made with ground almonds, milk, sugar and flavored with saffron and cardamom. Traditionally badam (almond) halwa is made with whole almonds that are first soaked and then peeled and ground to a paste to form the base of the halwa. Although this original process delivers a superb taste, it also involves slow tedious stirring and extreme care. Replacing the ground almonds with readily available almond flour speeds up the entire halwa making process without sacrificing much of the taste of the original.

Ingredients
- 1 cup almond flour
- 1 cup + 2 tbsp milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tsp ghee (clarified butter)
- Few strands of saffron
- 2 cardamom pods, crushed

Instructions
- Soak the saffron in two tablespoons of warm milk
- Heat one teaspoon of ghee in a pan.
- Once the ghee melts, reduce the heat to low and add the almond flour and saute for a minute, making sure to coat the flour with the ghee
- Add milk and sugar at room temperature to the flour and ghee mixture
- Mix well and cook for a few minutes till the halwa starts to thicken
- Stir often to avoid burning the bottom of the mixture
- Add the saffron milk and rest of the ghee and cook till the halwa comes together and no longer sticks to the pan
- Finally add some crushed cardamom powder and turn off the stove
- Serve the badam halwa warm.


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