

Pongal Celebrations

In our Orphanages



Pongal Festival

Introduction:

People here in India will find numerous reasons to celebrate life! The diverse culture that exists here is probably the reason, the entire calendar is all packed with festivals. Falling in the first month of the year, Pongal essentially is the festival that gives a great start to a cheerful year ahead. Every part of the country has its own traditions and the Pongal festival belongs to the state of Tamil Nadu.

Pongal Festival:

The term 'Pongal' is derived from Tamil literature which means 'to boil'. It is an ancient festival of Tamils in India and it is celebrated by the Tamil diaspora all over the



world. It is basically a harvest festival that is celebrated for four days in the month of January (Thai) during the solar equinox after harvesting crops like rice, sugarcane, turmeric, etc. It is a celebration to thank the Sun, Mother Nature and the various farm animals that help to contribute to a bountiful

harvest. Pongal also marks the beginning of the Tamil month called Thai, which is considered an auspicious month. It usually falls on the 14th or 15th of January each year.

“Pongal” as a dish:

The preparation of the traditional "Pongal" dish is the festival's most important custom. Rice that has just been harvested is used, and it is cooked by boiling it with milk and raw cane sugar (jaggery). The sweet dish occasionally includes extra ingredients like cardamom, raisins, split green gramme, and



cashew nuts. Other components include ghee and coconut (clarified butter from cow milk). The dish is made in honour of the Sun god, Surya, and is prepared in the sunlight, typically in a courtyard or porch. The Pongal festival is a four-day celebration affair. Each day is marked by different festivities.

Bhogi festival:

On the first day, people praise Lord Indra, the God of Rain, to bless the land with rain to yield adequate crops. People clean and decorate their houses, get dressed in new clothes and dispose of their old stuff to signify a new beginning. People also light a bonfire, sing and dance around it to show their love to Lord Indra.



Thai Pongal:

The second day of the Pongal festival is celebrated as Thai Pongal or Surya Pongal, which is dedicated to Lord Sun. It is believed that the main Pongal is celebrated on this



day. People take an early bath in the morning and make a traditional "Kolam", at the house's entrance. They wear traditional dresses and worship the Lord Sun by offering a pot of milk & and boiled rice. Along with this "Sakkararai Pongal", various other recipes are prepared on this day.

As the milk boils freely over the pot, family members shout out happily "Pongalo Pongal"! After the Pongal is offered to the Sun God, they would feast on several Pongal dishes that are prepared especially for the day.

Mattu Pongal:

The third day of Pongal is called Maatu Pongal. This day is devoted to honouring and worshipping the cattle to remember the work they do – ploughing the land. Cows are bathed and adorned with multi-colored beads, flowers garlands, and bells. Jallikattu is celebrated on this day.



Kaanum Pongal:

The fourth day of Pongal is called Kaanum Pongal. On this day, importance is given



to the community and to strengthen ties. It is dedicated to relaxation and enjoyment. On this day, Families gather together to have a sumptuous meal. Younger members seek the blessings of the older members of their families. On this day, people meet their relatives and friends and exchange sweets and

well-being. It is also a day for traditional Indian folk dances such as Mayilattam and Kolattam.

Conclusion:

Pongal is a festival of happiness, peace and thankfulness. The festival highlights the predominant perception of the Tamil culture that God is supreme and should be thanked for the blessings he/she bestows on humankind. Pongal festival reminds us to be grateful towards all the blessings we receive from Mother Earth.



**HAPPY
PONGAL**

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