

Festivals of Nepal



Overview

1. [Dashain](#)

Based on the religion, the biggest festival of **Dashain** is a celebration of Goddess Durga's victory over evil Mahisashur. It has a symbolic meaning deeply rooted in Nepalese society. **Dashain** is the longest (15-day-long) and the most auspicious festival in Nepal. Dashain festival falls in September or October, starting from the Shukla Paksha (bright lunar fortnight) of the month of Ashwin and ending on the full moon day (Purnima).

Among the 15 days (Ghatasthapana to Purnima) for which it is celebrated, the most important days are the first (Ghatasthapana), seventh (Saptami), eighth (Maha-Astami), ninth (Navami), and the tenth (**Vijaya Dasami/Tika**), but the tenth day is very important all over the country Shakti is worshiped in all her manifestations. Dashain festival is also known for its importance in family gatherings, as well as in the renewal of community relations and links. People return from all parts of the world and country to celebrate together. During the festival, all government offices, educational institutions, and other private offices remain closed for the holiday duration.

2. Tihar "Festival of Light"

Tihar, a Hindu festival is also known as the "**Festival of Light**" or Deepawali. All the houses and even the street corners are illuminated by colorful lights and bulbs. [Tihar](#), a celebration of lights and color dedicated to Goddess Laxmi, also reveals social joy all over the country. This festival is celebrated for 5 days at the end of October or at the beginning of November. Lights and colored decorations are used to decorate homes over a three to five-day period. The five days are called Yama-Panchaka because the whole period is dedicated to the worship of Yama (Yamaraj) the God of Death.

Tihar festival begins with the worship of a crow and completes with Bhai Tika (worshipping brothers). The first day of this festival also called **Kaag Tihar** is the day of the crow. Crow is believed to be the messenger of Yama. The second day of Tihar called "Kukur Tihar) day of the dog. The dog is worshipped according to the religious ritual. Tika is the mark of blessing on dogs' foreheads on the creature along with garlands and feeding them different varieties of foods.

The holy cow is worshipped on the morning of the third day. In the evening, Goddess Laxmi is worshipped. On the fourth day of Govardhan Puja was performed to honor Krishna's lifting the mountain Govardhan to protect his people from terrible rain and floods. The festival concludes **Bhai Tika**, the last day of Tihar is the day when sisters make offerings to their brothers. The ritual of breaking wall-nuts, putting on garlands of makhani flowers, and encircling brothers in rings of mustard oil protect them from Yama.

3. Buddha Jayanti

Buddha Jayanti is the birthday of Lord Gautam Buddha, a special day for both Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal. On this day people celebrate the life of Lord Buddha; his Birth, Enlightenment, and Death. **Buddha Jayanti** falls on the full moon night of either May or June. Peace lovers and Buddhist communities like to make their pilgrimage to Lumbini, Kapilvastu of Nepal birthplace of Lord Buddha on this day.

Gautam Buddha is also known as Shakyamuni. He was born on full moon day, reached nirvana on the same day, and left this world on the same day of Baishakh Sukla Purnima (Full moon day of Baishakh). People all over the world celebrate this day as Buddha Jayanti. Lumbini, Nepal has been listed by UNESCO as a world heritage site and the birthplace of Gautama Buddha.

4. Maha Shivaratri

Maha Shivaratri is known as one of the most celebrated religious festivals for Hindus. It is dedicated to the Lord Shiva falls in February or March. This is one of the main festivals of Nepal meaning "Night of Lord Shiva". People celebrate Shivaratri on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of the Magh (Nepali month). Every year, Hindus from all over the world throng many Shiva temples during this festival. Pashupatinath Temple is the place with the biggest crowd on this day. Indian tourists enjoy visiting during the most auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri.

Millions of followers visit **Pashupatinath Temple** in Kathmandu, one of the holiest temples of the Hindus. Hindus people who believe in Shiva chant *Om Namah Shivay* and *Maha Mritunjaya* all night praying for light over darkness. Visitors witness the vibrant atmosphere with keen interest as colorful and uncovered sadhus meditate, pose for photographs, and interact with disciples.

5. Janai Purnima

Hindus celebrate the most popular festival, Janai Purnima, all over the country. On this day people also celebrate **Raksha Bandhan**, and every Hindu ties a blessed thread ("Doro"-Nepali name of the thread). Janai Purnima maintains holy significance whereas Raksha Bandhan makes love and respect between or among sisters and brothers, with family get-togethers and feasts of **Kwati** (mixed bean soup).

On the occasion of this big day of Janai Purnima, Hindu men renew their [Janai](#) and people collect Janai from Shiva temples places like the Pashupatinath in Kathmandu, Kumbeshwar in Patan, Gosaikunda in Langtang region and Shiva and Ganesh temple in all over Nepal.

The community of Newar's of Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur, and neighboring

villages) call this festival Gunhi Punhi and they prepare a soup of a mixture of beans called Kwati as a special food for the day. People make a nutritious soup called Kwati from different types of beans.

6. [Gai Jatra](#)

Gai Jatra translates as the Cow Festival where Gai means 'Cow' and Jatra means 'festival'. It is a classic Nepalese festival. In Nepal Bhasa, it is called 'Sa Paru'. One of the most popular festivals Gai Jatra is generally celebrated in July or August based on the lunar Calendar. In the Newar Community of Kathmandu Valley, this festival holds great significance. The festival memorializes the death of family members during the year. During this festival, cows are marched in the streets.

The festivities of Gai Jatra, begin on the 1st day of the waning Moon in the month of Shukla Paksha of Bhadra (July or August). It is usually celebrated in the Nepalese month of Bhadra (August–September). People whose family members have died during the year, those families decorate the cows around the city together with their young ones dressed as cows or eremites. People also distribute food to others during the festival period.