

Festivals in Nepal

Nepal is a multireligious, multicultural, and multiethnic country where people from different ethnic backgrounds, castes, and religions live—having said that, Nepalese live in the Himalayas, Hilly, and the Terai regions from east to west. They celebrate different festivals according to their ethnic group and religion. Families come together to celebrate festivals in Nepal. Every year, Nepalese celebrate more than 50 festivals. The national festivals have specific dates and fall on the same day every year, while the religious festivals in Nepal are determined by astrologers using the lunar calendar.

Some Festivals in Nepal

Nepalese celebrate different festivals. Some of them are:

1. Dashain (October)

Dashain is Nepal's main festival which falls in October. It is also known as Vijayadashami, which means "the tenth day of victory." It is celebrated for ten days. The first day is known as Ghatasthapana, the seventh day is Fulpati, the eighth day is Maha Astami, the ninth day is Maha Navami, and the tenth is Vijaya Dashami. It is celebrated to honor the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon and good over evil. The festival is also associated with the harvest season. It is an occasion to thank the gods and goddesses for a good harvest and pray for a prosperous year. During Dashain, people visit their families, exchange gifts and blessings, and feast on traditional food.

2. Tihar (November)



Tihar is one of the most important festivals in Nepal, which falls in November. It is also known as the Festival of Lights. It is celebrated for five days. Kaag Tihar (worship of crows) and Kukur Tihar (worship of dogs) are Tihar's first and second days, respectively. Similarly, on the third day, cows are worshipped in the morning and goddess Laxmi in the evening. The fourth day is Gobardan Puja / Mha Puja, and the last is Bhai Tika (sister puts tika on their brother's forehead). Therefore, Tihar is celebrated not only to honor brother-sister relationships but also to celebrate wealth goddesses. People decorate their homes with lights and flowers. Similarly, on the third and fourth days, children and youth play Bhailo and Deusi and go door-to-door singing Bhailo and Deusi songs and receiving blessings. It comes after Dashain.

3. Holi (March)

Holi is the festival of the Hindu people. It falls in March and is also known as the Festival of Colors. This festival is celebrated by dancing, eating traditional food, and throwing one another

colored powder and water. Holi symbolizes the start of spring and the end of winter and is a chance for people to gather together, set aside conflicts, and enjoy one another's company.



4. Losar (January, February, December)

Lhosar is the festival of the Himalayan region of Nepal. The Losar comprises two words: 'Lo' means new, and 'sar' means year. So, the meaning of Losar is a new year. The Buddhist community of Nepal celebrates it. For Buddhists, Losar represents the start of the new year, and each year has a separate zodiac animal each year. The festival is known by several names and is celebrated on different days depending on the community.

The Gurung community celebrates Tamu Losar, or Lhochhar, which falls in December. Tamang communities celebrate Tamu Losar in January, and Sherpa communities celebrate Gyalpo Losar. During the Lhosar festival, families and communities gather to greet one another and

pray for a happy and healthy new year. On this day, people cook traditional dishes such as khapse (a deep-fried pastry), guthuk (a soup with dumplings), and changkol (a noodle dish and share those with their relatives. People also dress up in their traditional customs.

5. Buddha Jayanti (March)

It is the festival of Buddhism in Nepal, which falls in March. During this festival, Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, is honored for his birth, enlightenment, and death. People offer prayers, light candles, and pay respects at Buddhist shrines. It serves as a celebration of wisdom, compassion, and peace and a reminder of Buddhism's principles.

6. Janai Purnima (August)



Janai Purnima, one of the local festivals of Nepal, falls in August. On this day, Hindu males

purify their souls by changing their sacred thread on this day and bathing in the holy river.

7. Teej (August)

Hindu women celebrate Teej in August. The women fast to ensure the long life and well-being of their husbands. The festival is dedicated to the goddess Parvati, the wife of Lord Shiva. Teej is a three-day festival. Women fast on the first day and worship the goddess Parvati to receive her blessings for a happy and blissful marriage. Similarly, women make special meals on the second day and engage in many ceremonies with their friends and family. The third day is known as the Rishi Panchami.

8. Mahashivaratri (February) Festival



Mahashivaratri is a Hindu festival that is dedicated to Lord Shiva. This festival falls in February.

On this day, devotees of Lord Shiva fast for the whole day, perform puja, and participate in religious ceremonies and cultural events. They pray to God and request his blessings for success, joy, and accomplishing their goals. Most people visit Pashupatinath or the closest temple. We can witness the spectacular scenes at Pashupatinath Temple. Thousands of monks and devotees come to Pashupatinath to get blessings from Lord Shiva.

9. Bisket Jatra (April)

Bisket Jatra is a festival celebrated by the Newar community in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. The festival is usually held in April and marks the beginning of the Nepali New Year. It is celebrated for several days. One of the main features of Bisket Jatra is the chariot procession of the deity Bhairab, who is considered to be the protector of the city. A group of young men pulls the chariot through the streets while music plays and dances are performed.



10. Gai Jatra (August)

Gai Jatra is a Hindu festival that falls in August. In particular, the Newar community in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur celebrates it in memory of those who passed away the previous year. Gai Jatra is a celebration that helps people prepare for life beyond death and accept the truth of death. Observing the cow's possession and realizing that others also lose loved ones lessens their pain and sorrow. The festival is a time for loved ones to be remembered and for family and friends to get together.

11. Indra Jatra (September)



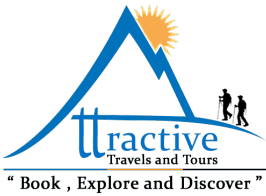
Indra Jatra is another biggest festival of the Newar community. This festival honors the day Indra descended from heaven in human form to search for a herb. On this day, Lakhey, a masked dancer, performed in front of the old Newa towns practically every evening, portraying

various gods and devils. We can also see the three chariots of Kumari, Bhairav, and Ganesh marching through the streets, pulled by joyful and enthusiastic crowds.

12. Ihi



Ihi, also known as Bel Bibaha, is a ceremony performed by the Newar Community of Nepal. It is celebrated for two days, the first day is Dusala Kriya, and the second is Kanyadaan. During this ceremony, a Newari girl between the ages of five and ten marries a statue of Lord Vishnu with the bel fruit (a wooden apple) acting as the official witness. The wedding has a lovely meaning. According to tradition, the girl would not be regarded as a widow if her future spouse died since she is still legally wed to God. So, this ceremony is carried out to protect the girl from evil and harmful spirits, but the main goal is to shield the girl from the humiliating experience of widowhood.



13. Chhath (November) Festival in Nepal

Chhath is the main festival of the people of the Terai region that takes place in November. Local people celebrate this festival for four days. On this day, people thank lord Surya (the sun) for supporting life on earth and praying to him for humanity's continued welfare. As part of the ritual, devotees take a holy bath, fast, and spend a long time standing before the sun and worshipping it.

14. Christmas (December)

Christians celebrate Christmas every year on 25th December. Christian communities in Nepal celebrate Christmas more than other communities. In addition, other communities also take part in the ceremony and celebrate it with their Christian friends. Like other festivals, Nepali people celebrate Christmas as a national festival. In general, people attend churches on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

15. Maghe Sankranti (January)



Maghe Sankranti is also known as Makar Sankranti. Sankranti means the first day of the month. This festival is called Maghe Sankranti because it is celebrated on the first day of the Nepalese month Magh. This festival marks the beginning of warmer days and says goodbye to the cold chilly weather. From this day on, the sun is thought to migrate toward the Northern hemisphere. People cook yummy dishes made from spinach, potato, and yam curry the day before the festival and devour it the next day. All the families gather together and bask under the sun during day time.

Conclusion on Festivals in Nepal

Nepal has a rich culture of festivals and festivities yearly because it is a varied country with various ethnic groups and religions. Nepal's festivals are vibrant and energetic and offer a look into the nation's history, culture, and religious beliefs.



Dashain is a 15-day festival that is among Nepal's most well-liked. The festival celebrates good triumphing over evil. Also, Christmas is a season of gatherings with family, dining, and giving gifts. In addition to being known as the Festival of Lights, Tihar is a five-day celebration honoring animals, sisters, and the goddess of riches. Tihar is a significant event.

Other celebrations in Nepal include the Festival of Colors (Holi), the New Year's celebration (Bisket Jatra), and the Women's Festival (Teej). These celebrations unite people, encourage peace and mutual understanding, and highlight Nepal's distinctive traditions and culture.

Overall, festivals in Nepal form a component of Nepal's cultural identity and are enthusiastically observed by people of all ages and backgrounds.

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