

Skanda Shashti

Introduction

Skanda Shashti is one of the most important festivals for devotees of **Lord Murugan** (also called Skanda, Subramanya, Kartikeya and Kumara). He is the son of *Lord Shiva* and *Goddess Parvati*, and is honoured as the god of war, wisdom, courage and victory.

The festival is observed with deep devotion across Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, parts of Kerala, and by Murugan devotees worldwide. It marks Lord Murugan’s victory over the demon Surapadman – a reminder that good ultimately overcomes evil.

Skanda Shashti is also seen as a time for spiritual renewal. Devotees commonly take vows, fast, chant sacred hymns and join in temple rituals. One of the best-known celebrations takes place at the Tiruchendur Murugan Temple in Tamil Nadu.

Dates for Skanda Shashti — October 2025

The festival in 2025 is observed during the bright fortnight (Shukla Paksha) of Aippasi. Below is the day-by-day schedule for the October 2025 observance.

Date	Day	Significance & Observances
22 October 2025 (Wednesday)	Day 1	Fasting begins — Kaapu kattuthal (vow taking) and Lord Murugan Abhishegam to start the festival.
23 October 2025 (Thursday)	Day 2	Daily Abhishegam and poojas for Lord Murugan continue with hymns and offerings.
24 October 2025 (Friday)	Day 3	Continued Abhishegam and devotional poojas; devotees maintain spiritual discipline.
25 October 2025 (Saturday)	Day 4	Continued Abhishegam , poojas and devotional singing as temples prepare for the final days.
26 October 2025 (Sunday)	Day 5	Special Abhishegam and poojas. This day also marks <i>Goddess Parvati</i> presenting the Vel (spear) to Lord Murugan.
27 October 2025 (Monday)	Day 6 — Soorasamharam	Soorasamharam enactment (Murugan’s victory over Surapadman). Perform parayanam and 36 times Skantha Sashti solgams. Devotees end their fasting after the rituals.

Date	Day	Significance & Observances
28 October 2025 (Tuesday)	Day 7 – Thirukalyanam / Theerthavari	Festival conclusion with the Thirukalyanam (symbolic divine wedding).

The story behind Skanda Shashti

In Hindu tradition, the demon brothers Surapadman, Tarakasura and Simhamukha caused turmoil after receiving powerful boons. They began to trouble gods and people. In response, the devas prayed to Lord Shiva. From the divine sparks of Shiva's third eye, Lord Murugan was born. Armed with the Vel given by Goddess Parvati, Murugan led the celestial forces and, after six days of battle, defeated Surapadman on the final day – remembered as Soorasamharam.

The following day, Theerthavari or Thirukalyanam, symbolises peace and the divine union after victory.

The Kavadi ritual

The Kavadi – meaning "burden" – is an act of devotion where a devotee symbolically hands over their burdens to Lord Murugan. Common forms include:

- **Paalkavadi:** Pots of milk carried to the temple.
- **Pushpa Kavadi:** A flower-decorated frame carried in procession.
- **Alagu Kavadi:** Extreme penance involving body piercing (only for experienced devotees).

Fasting during Skanda Shashti

Fasting is central to the festival and may be chosen according to personal capacity:

- **Nirjala Viratham/Vrat:** Full fast without food or water (for seasoned devotees).
- **Phalahar Viratham/Vrat:** Fruits, milk and water only.
- **One time meal/Ek Bhojan Viratham/Vrat:** One simple vegetarian meal a day.

Avoid non-vegetarian food, alcohol, tobacco, onion, garlic and harsh words. Maintain calm and compassion throughout.

Important Murugan mantras

Om Saravanabhavaya Namah — Basic mantra.

Om Velayuthaya Namah — Vel mantra.

Skanda Shashti Kavacham — A protective hymn by Devaraya Swamigal.

Benefits of observing Skanda Shashti

Spiritual Benefit	Everyday Benefit
Removes past karmic effects	Brings peace of mind
Gives courage and strength	Helps face personal challenges
Improves focus and clarity	Aids studies and work
Promotes family harmony	Reduces conflicts at home
Protection for children	Keeps them safe and healthy

Pooja & Ubhayam

Annadhanam Offering (any day) — £101.

Abhishegam Offering (for Day 1 to 6) — £101.

Murugan Valli-Deivanai Thirukalyanam Offering — £251.