

The HOLI, Festival of COLORS

"Basanta Utsav" and "Holli"

Holi is a popular ancient Hindu festival, also known as the "festival of colors", and the "festival of spring".

Holi celebrates the arrival of spring, the end of winter, the blossoming of love, and for many it is a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair broken relationships. The festival also celebrates the beginning of a good spring harvest season. It lasts for a night and a day, starting on the evening of the Purnima (Full Moon day) falling in the Hindu calendar month of Phalgun, which falls around middle of March in the Gregorian calendar. The first evening is known as **Holika Dahan** (burning of holy fire) or **Chhoti Holi** and the following day as Holi, **Rangwali Holi**, **Dhuleti**, **Dhulandi**, or **Phawgh**.



Holi is an ancient Hindu religious, cultural and harvest festival which has become popular among non-Hindus as well. Holi celebrations start on the night before Holi with a Holika Dahan where people gather, perform religious rituals in front of the bonfire, and pray that their internal evil be destroyed the way Holika.



The next morning is celebrated as Rangwali Holi (Dhuleti) – a free-for-all festival of colors, where people smear each other with colors and drench each other. Water guns and water-filled balloons are also used to play and color each other. Anyone and everyone is fair game, friend or stranger, rich or poor, man or woman, children, and elders.

The frolic and fight with colors occurs in the open streets, parks, outside temples and buildings. Groups carry drums and other musical instruments, go from place to place, sing and dance. People visit family, friends and foes come together to throw colored powders on each other, laugh and gossip, then share Holi delicacies, food and drinks. In the evening, people dress up and visit friends and family.



Related to Agriculture and harvest (Barley, Wheat and Gram/chana)

In Uttar Pradesh State, India, Holi festival goes for weeks, people use Drum & Nagada (Naand a big drum) goes all around the village while singing Holi songs and Drumming on the streets.



This time, Wheat, Barley, Gram/Chana will be getting ready to rip. People celebrate with happiness, colors and joy.

On Holi-Dahan day, farmers take Wheat, Barley and Hole (Chana) from their farms to Holi-fire and roast them for good luck.

Next day, all mingle and play, celebrate with colors and joy.

Some regions, there's tradition, if there was any misunderstanding or arguments, in past year, end of the day, these families reach out to face each-other and say to each-other "Ho-li", हो ली means whatever happened let's leave in past and start new relationship.



You should know: the whole Chana/Garbanzo called HOLE. On Holi day roasting these called "Hole roasting" "Hole bhunanaa" होले भनना 'Holika' came from the Sanskrit word 'Holka'. It stands for grains of chanaa.

The festival has many purposes; most prominently, it celebrates the beginning of spring. In 17th century literature, it was identified as a festival that celebrated agriculture, commemorated good spring harvests and the fertile land. Hindus believe it is a time of enjoying spring's abundant colors and saying farewell to winter. To many Hindus, Holi festivities mark an occasion to reset and renew ruptured relationships, end conflicts and rid themselves of accumulated emotional impurities from the past.

Holika Dahan, The Story (Hindu Mythology)

For several days leading up to the Holi festival, people gather wood to make large bonfires that are lit on the eve of Holi known as **Holika Dahan**. Holi Dahan happens every year on the evening of Purnima in the Hindu calendar month of Phalguna. (aka The full moon in March and night before Holi) Holika Dahan celebrates the death of the Hindu Demon, Holika, and the victory of good over evil.

In Hinduism, the demon Holika was the sister of the Demon King, Hiranyakashipu (Hiranyakashyap) who was given immunity to fire by the Gods. Hiranyakashipu asked Holika

to kill his son Prahlada by burning him alive. He hated Prahlada because of his devotion to the Hindu God, Lord Vishnu and made several attempts to murder him. But Prahlada survived.

Since the Gods had given Holika immunity to fire, she tried to kill Prahalada by sitting in a fire holding him, trying to burn him to death. Instead, the Gods punished Holika for using her powers for evil. She burned to death instead while Prahalada lived to rule as a wise king.

During the evening of the Holika Dahan festival people gather to light the fires to celebrate the triumph of good over evil. The fires burn late into the night and people are out dancing and celebrating to the wee hours of the morning. The entire country of India is alive with energy.

Later in the day

After a day of play with colors, people clean up, wash and bathe, sober up and dress up in the evening and greet friends and relatives by visiting them and exchanging sweets. Holi is also a festival of forgiveness and new starts, which ritually aims to generate harmony in society.

