



Makar Sankranti

A festival celebrated
across India by many names



RELEVANCE

Makar Sankranti celebrates the harvest and the Sun's transition into a new phase essentially, the Sun's northward journey. Across India, this day marks the Sun entering Makara Rashi (Capricorn), the start of longer days, and a shift to a more prosperous agricultural season. It's spiritually seen as a positive turning point, symbolises a new cycle of growth, and a time for gratitude to nature.

Community bonding is very prevalent during this festival wherein many regions celebrate by setting up bonfires, feasts, kite flying, and traditional dances. It's a way of coming together after winter.

This day is also linked to donating food, offering prayers to the Sun, bathing in rivers, and letting go of negativity.

Essentially, it's a thanksgiving festival to the Sun, nature, and the harvest - marking new beginnings and the start of a brighter season.

Additionally, there is an element of sport attached to the festival as well - massive kite flying celebrations and competitions happen in Gujarat during the festival.

What Makar Sankranti is called in various regions



Punjab (Lohri 13th Jan & Maghi 14th Jan):

- Lohri: Celebrated by doing bonfires, eating Revdi & Gajak, and dancing to folk songs.
- Maghi: People go through holy dips and eat sarson ka saag with makki ki roti - a traditional local meal.

Tamil Nadu (Pongal - 4 day festival):

- Bhogi: Bonfire and discarding old things
- Thai Pongal: Cooking newly harvested rice as an offering to the Sun
- Mattu Pongal: Honouring cattle
- Kaanum Pongal: Family gatherings and outings



Gujarat (Uttarayan)

- Massive kite flying celebrations commence
- Rooftop parties, music, kite flying competitions
- They eat local dishes such as undhiyu and jalebi

What Makar Sankranti is called in various regions



Assam (Magh/Bhogali Bihu)

- Bonfires and community feasts
- Traditional games, night-long celebrations

Delhi Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and various states from the North (Makar Sankranti)

- People fly kites in some regions
- Loud music, friendly kite flying competitions
- Community gathering and sharing local foods like gajak
- Temples and gurudwaras see higher footfall



Kerala (Makara Vilakku)

- Linked to Sabarimala pilgrimage and is observed around the same period as Makar Sankranti
- Sacred light sighting at the temple
- Major religious observance



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Karnataka (Suggi/Sankranti)

- People exchange local foods like ellu-bella
- People decorate cattle
- Folk dances and fairs

Uttar Pradesh & Bihar

(Khichdi Parv)

- People cook and distribute Khichdi
- Holy dips in Prayagraj and other ghats
- Large religious gatherings



West Bengal (Poush sankranti)

- People prepare local foods like pithe, patishapta, and payesh
- Holy dips in rivers like Ganges
- Cultural fairs