

Cultural News

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What is Ganesh Chaturthi? Why is it celebrated?

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We celebrate this 10-day-long festival every year. But how many of us know what Ganesh Chaturthi is and why it is celebrated?

Ganesh Chaturthi is a ten-day Hindu festival celebrated to honour the elephant-headed God Ganesha's birthday. He is the younger son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

Ganesh is known by 108 different names and is the Lord of arts and sciences and the deva of wisdom. He is honoured at the start of rituals and ceremonies as he's considered the God of beginnings. He's widely and dearly referred to as Ganapati or Vinayaka.

There are two different versions about Ganesh's birth. One has it that Goddess Parvati created Ganesh out of dirt off her body while having a bath and set him to guard her door while she finishes her bath. Shiva who has gone out, returned at that time, but as Ganesh didn't know of him, stopped him from entering. An angry Shiva severed the head of Ganesh after a combat between the two. Parvati was enraged and Shiva promised Ganesh will live again. The devas who went in search of a head facing north of a dead person could manage only the head of an elephant. Shiva fixed the elephant's head on the child and brought him back to life.

The other legend has it that Ganesh was created by Shiva and Parvati on request of the Devas, to be a vighnakartaa (obstacle-creator) in the path of rakshasas (demonic beings), and a vighnahartaa (obstacle-averter) to help the Devas.

Here are some quick facts about the festival:

- The festival begins on Shukla Chaturthi which is the fourth day of the waxing moon period, and ends on the 14th day of the waxing moon period known as Anant Chaturdashi.

- Maharashtra is the state known for grand scale Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations.
- During the festival, colourful pandals (temporary shrines) are setup and the Lord is worshiped for ten days.
- There are four main rituals during the festival - Pranapratishtha - the process of infusing the deity into a murti or idol, Shhodashopachara - 16 forms of paying tribute to Ganesh, Uttarpuja - Puja after which the idol could be shifted after it's infusion, Ganpati Visarjan - immersion of the idol in the river.
- Foodies wait for Modak, a sweet dish prepared using rice or flour stuffed with grated jaggery, coconuts and dry fruits. The plate containing the Modak is supposed to be filled with twenty-one pieces of the sweet.
- The festival was celebrated as a public event since the time of Maratha King Shivaji, but a Sarvajanik (Public) Ganesh idol was installed first by Bhausheb Laxman Javale.
- Lokmanya Tilak changed the festival from a private celebration to a grand public event "to bridge the gap between Brahmins and non-Brahmins and find an appropriate context in which to build a new grassroots unity between them".
- Lord Ganesh is also worshiped in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Nepal and China.



OCTOBER 2017 CALENDAR

BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH

LGBT HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING THE BILINGUAL CHILD MONTH

- 1-4- Eid al Adha (Islam)
- 2-6- Drive Safely Work Week (US)
- 6- National German-American Day (US)
- 9- Columbus Day (US)
- 11- Emergency Nurses Day (US)
- 12- Spanish Language Day (US)
- 13- English Language Day (US)
- 16-22- Freedom of Speech Week (US)
- 17- Black Poetry Day (US)
- 21-22- Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
- 21-29- Navaratri (Hindu)
- 25- Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)
- 27- Meskel (Ethiopian Christian)
- 29- Michael and All Angels (Christian)
- 30- Yom Kippur (Jewish)



OCTOBER

31 Days. 31 Icons.

October is LGBT History Month

“LGBT History Month sends an important message to our nation’s teachers, school boards, community leaders, and youth about the vital importance of recognizing and exploring the role of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in American history.”

George Chauncey, Samuel Knight Professor of American History
and Chair of the History Department, Yale University

About LGBT History Month

LGBT History Month celebrates the achievements of 31 lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender Icons. Each day in October, a new LGBT Icon is featured with a video, bio, bibliography, downloadable images and other resources.

Background

In 1994, Rodney Wilson, a Missouri high school teacher, believed a month should be dedicated to the celebration and teaching of gay and lesbian history, and gathered other teachers and community leaders. They selected October because public schools are in session and existing traditions, such as Coming Out Day (October 11), occur that month.

Gay and Lesbian History Month was endorsed by GLAAD, the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the National Education Association and other national organizations. In 2006 Equality Forum assumed responsibility for providing content, promotion and resources for LGBT History Month.

The LGBT community is the only community worldwide that is not taught its history at home, in public schools or in religious institutions. LGBT History Month provides role models, builds community and makes the civil rights statement of our extraordinary national and international contributions.

Source: <http://lgbthistorymonth.com>

2017 International Interpreter Day

On September 29th Medical Interpreting Services department held its annual celebration of the International Interpreter/Translator Day.

Interpreters and translators are honored every year on the last day of September - the feast of St. Jerome, the Bible translator who is considered to be the patron saint of translators. The celebrations have been promoted by IFT (the International Federation of Translators) ever since the professional holiday was set up in 1953. In 1991 IFT launched the idea of an officially recognized International Translation Day to show solidarity of the worldwide translation community in an effort to promote the profession in different countries.

This day is an opportunity to display pride in a profession that is becoming increasingly essential in the era of progressing globalization. Medical Interpreting Services promotes the health system’s goal to provide person- and family-centered care. We also support the health system’s goal of the strategic use of technology. Notably, UC Davis Medical Center is the first medical facility in the Sacramento region to use video technology to provide language services to our patients and their families. It speaks volumes to the visionary leadership of the medical center that today MIS department is the regional and state leader in meeting patients’ language access needs.

