

Festivals around the World



80 MP3 Diwali



Diwali is the festival of lights. It celebrates the Hindu New Year and it is India's most important festival, but it is also an official holiday in many other Asian countries.

It is usually in October or November and lasts for five days.

The Hindus pray to Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, fortune, love and beauty, so she can bring them luck¹ in the coming year.

The word Diwali means 'rows² of lighted lamps' and the Hindus believe that when they fill³ their homes with oil lamps the goddess will visit and bring them good fortune. People put lamps in their gardens, on walls and on roofs and decorate their homes with bright colours – reds, yellows and greens. They draw⁴ patterns on the ground outside with rice flour⁵, water and sometimes sand. Hindus prepare special food during Diwali and exchange gifts of food and candles.



Lakshmi

St Patrick's Day

St Patrick was a missionary who brought Christianity to Ireland. He is their patron saint and Catholics celebrate St Patrick's Day on 17th March. This is a festival which is also celebrated in many other countries around the world. There is a large Irish community in America, especially in Massachusetts and New York State. In the 1840s during the potato famine⁶, many Irish people sailed to America and took their traditions with them. On 17th March people wear

'the green' and the biggest

St Patrick's Day parade is on 5th Avenue in New York.

Sydney in Australia holds a St Patrick's Day parade every year because 10% of Australia's population is Irish.

Around the world city fountains are often dyed⁷ with green water, the beer is green coloured and there are green themed desserts and lots of Irish dancing in the pubs and clubs.

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Victoria Day

Queen Victoria was the Monarch when Canada became an independent country in 1867. She was a popular Monarch and on 24th May 1845 Canadians celebrated her birthday. These celebrations continued throughout⁸ her reign⁹. Following the death of the Queen in 1901, Victoria Day became the Monday preceding May 25. Nowadays there is the Victoria Day parade in the centre of Victoria and about 120,000 people watch marching bands, floats and clowns. To celebrate Victoria Day in Calgary, Heritage Park (a historical village) offers a relaxing afternoon tea and in Toronto there are fireworks on the beach. For Canadians it is the unofficial start to summer and most people have picnics or barbecues with friends.



Henley-on-Todd Regatta



Every year in the spring (usually September) there is a 'boat' race on the dry sandy bed¹⁰ of the Todd River in Alice Springs, Australia. The race began as a joke for the British settlers who often spoke about the Henley boat races on the River Thames near London. But this is the only boat race in the world that is cancelled when there is water in the river. Teams of 'rowers'¹¹ run carrying their boats. They race each other across the hot sand and at the end of the day there is a final battle where the 'rowers' throw bags of flour and have a water fight¹².

80-81 MP3

1 Ascolta e leggi i testi, poi rispondi alle domande.

- 1 What do Hindu people do during Diwali?
- 2 Where is the St Patrick's Day parade in New York?
- 3 How do people celebrate St Patrick's Day in Australia?
- 4 When and where do they celebrate Victoria Day?
- 5 What is unusual about the boat race in Alice Springs?

2 Scrivi un breve paragrafo (45-60 parole) su una festa insolita che si celebra nel tuo Paese.

- When is it?
- What does it celebrate?
- How do people celebrate it?
- Do you eat any special food?
- Do you give any gifts?

WORDS YOU NEED

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. luck | fortuna |
| 2. row | fila |
| 3. fill | riempire |
| 4. draw | disegnare |
| 5. rice flour | farina di riso |
| 6. famine | carestia |
| 7. dye | tingere, colorare |
| 8. throughout | durante tutto |
| 9. reign | regno |
| 10. bed | (qui) letto del fiume |
| 11. rower | vagatore |
| 12. water fight | battaglia con i gavettoni |



Festivals around the World



Magh Mela

India is a land of religion and Magh Mela is an annual Hindu festival which takes place in the month of Magh in the Hindu calendar – January or February in our calendar. Hundreds of thousands of Hindus make their way to Sangam in the northern city of Allahabad. They want to bathe⁴ in the waters at the confluence of three great rivers – the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Saraswati. The Magh Mela has great significance for Hindus and pilgrims⁵ gather⁶ at this sacred place for about 45 days. A holy bath clears sins⁷, purifies body and soul and improves life. Hindus believe that they become sacred and innocent as a new-born baby⁸.

Pilgrims travel by bus to this area, stay in tents and the organisers provide free food. Sadhu, or Hindu holy men, perform prayers while sitting inside a circle of burning⁹ cow dung¹⁰ near the banks of the River Ganges. Hindu priests light traditional oil lamps before evening prayers start and Indian artists perform special dances. A much larger festival called Kumbh Mela takes place every twelve years. About 60 million people make their way to the Ganges and it is the biggest gathering of pilgrims in the world.

82 MP3

The Notting Hill Carnival

Every year, at the end of August, a flavour of the Caribbean comes to Notting Hill, in London. It is a two-day event and one of the largest street festivals in Europe. Notting Hill Carnival is calypso and soca music, delicious food, beautiful floats, steel bands¹, musicians and dancers with flamboyant² costumes and feather headdresses³. About a million people come to this part of London to experience the Caribbean culture, music and food. People dance to the West African drumming, hip-hop, reggae, salsa and house music.



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New Year in Cape Town

The Kaapse Klopse or Cape Town Minstrel Carnival dates back to the time when the Dutch founded the city of Cape Town in 1652. They brought slaves from Madagascar, India and from Dutch colonies in South-East Asia. About 63,000 slaves on the Cape mixed with the local Khoisan people and arranged¹¹ a day of festivities on New Year's Day, when Dutch masters went on vacation. They painted their faces and sang and danced. The carnival was also influenced by the African American minstrels¹² who arrived in Cape Town in the 1860s to entertain the crowds¹³.

Today this carnival takes place on the streets of Cape Town, on 2nd January. There are glittering¹⁴ jackets, pounding¹⁵ drums¹⁶ and faces covered in bright paints. About 10,000 banjo-playing minstrels wear colourful satin¹⁷ clothes, bow ties and hats.



The parade goes through the former District six, into the business area of Cape Town, to Green Point Stadium. Crowds of people come out to see the minstrels and the groups called Klopses. It is a celebration of New Year rather than a reflection on the years of slavery.



Waitangi Day

New Zealanders celebrate Waitangi Day each year on 6th February. It is a significant day in the history of New Zealand and commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. This was an agreement¹⁸ between the British and the Māori tribes over land and made New Zealand part of the British Empire. In Wellington there is a festival at the waterfront¹⁹ and in the park. There is a dawn ceremony for invited guests with storytelling and music. There are water sports and displays by Māori canoes and there is traditional Māori bread made with potatoes.

82-83 MP3

1 Ascolta e leggi i testi, poi completa le frasi.

- 1 About a million people come to this part of to experience Caribbean culture, calypso and soca
- 2 Hindus believe that a holy bath during Magh Mela clears, purifies and improves
- 3 The carnival in Cape Town is a celebration of
- 4 The Treaty of Waitangi was an agreement between the and the Māori tribes over

2 Scrivi una lettera (circa 45-60 parole) a un amico parlando di Magh Mela. Segui le seguenti tracce.

- The significance of this festival.
- How pilgrims travel.
- Where they stay.
- What happens.



3 And in your country?

- Do you have a National Day in your country?
- How do you celebrate?
- Do you eat special food?

WORDS YOU NEED

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. steel band | banda di strumenti metallici a percussione |
| 2. flamboyant | appariscente, vistoso |
| 3. headdress | copricapo |
| 4. bathe | immergersi |
| 5. pilgrim | pellegrino |
| 6. gather | riunirsi |
| 7. clear sin | purificare dal peccato |
| 8. new-born baby | neonato |
| 9. burn | bruciare |
| 10. dung | sterco |
| 11. arrange | organizzare |
| 12. minstrel | cantastorie |
| 13. crowd | folla |
| 14. glittering | luccicante |
| 15. pound | battere |
| 16. drum | tamburo |
| 17. satin | raso |
| 18. agreement | accordo |
| 19. waterfront | lungomare |