

Celebrating Diwali

This year Diwali falls in the middle of Cook and Share Month, and the five-day festival culminates on 12th November. Also known as the Festival of Light, it is primarily a Hindu festival.

Did you know
that Diwali is also observed by Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists?

Dates change each year and are determined by the position of the moon, but Diwali usually falls between October and November.

Each of the five days have their own symbolism and celebration. Diwali symbolises the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. The festival is steeped in rich traditions and cultural practices that vary across different regions of India and around the world, but share common themes.

The first day of Diwali is called Dhanteras, which is considered an auspicious day for buying gold, silver, and other items.

On the second day, Naraka Chaturdashi, people take an early morning bath and light diyas to ward off evil spirits.

The third day is the main day of Diwali, when people wear new clothes, decorate their houses with rangolis and lights, and offer prayers to Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

The fourth day is Govardhan Puja, which is celebrated in honor of Lord Krishna. On this day, people make small mounds of cow dung which represent the Govardhan mountain, and offer prayers. The fifth day is called Bhai Dooj, which is dedicated to the bond between brothers and sisters.

It is also a time for families and friends to come together, share sweets and delicacies, and exchange gifts.

Many people visit their family and enjoy delicious feasts. Similar to many other celebrations, like Chinese New Year, Christmas, Eid and Thanksgiving, Diwali is a time for gathering and enjoying lots of delicious food! Indian sweets called 'mithai' are a traditional favourite. They are made using a vegetable or nut base and condensed with sugar and milk.

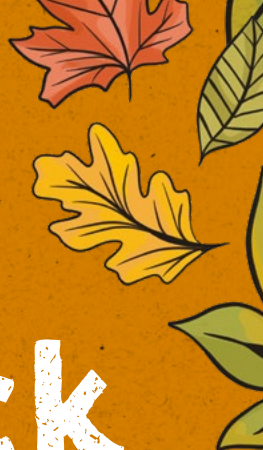
The word '**Diwali**' comes from the Sanskrit word Deepavali, which means row of lights. This is why people decorate their home with lights and small oil lamps. The lights and lamps are said to help Lakshmi find her way into peoples' homes, bringing prosperity in the year to come!

It isn't just Bonfire Night where you'll see fireworks, as fireworks are often used to celebrate Diwali.

Here in the UK, Leicester holds the largest Diwali celebrations outside of India. Every year, tens of thousands of people gather in the streets to enjoy vibrant shows of light, fireworks, music and dancing.



Bombay-style Chickpea Snack



Organisation and skill: ★★★ Cost: £££ Equipment:   

Community involvement: children under supervision, young adults, families, older people

Ingredients

- 2 x 400g tin of chickpeas
- 25ml rapeseed oil
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 6 tbsp unsalted peanuts
- 2 tbsp raisins

Equipment

- sieve or colander
- clean tea towel
- baking tray (with raised sides)
- spoons

Allergy aware:
This recipe contains
mustard seeds,
peanuts and
raisins.



Method

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to 200°C Gas 6
- 2 Drain the chickpeas and pat dry with a clean teatowel to remove as much moisture as possible. Tip them onto a baking tray, toss with oil, seeds and salt and roast for 15 minutes until golden brown
- 3 Sprinkle on the curry powder, peanuts and raisins, combine well then roast for another 10 minutes
- 4 Allow the mix to cool on the baking tray and then store in a clean jar with a lid

Recipe hints and tips

- Serve as a treat for Diwali, or just any time you want a spicy snack
- Dried cranberries or chopped dried apricots would work well instead of the raisins
- Leave out the peanuts if you have a nut allergy
- Add chilli flakes to spice it up a bit!

Storage wise: This recipe will keep in a sealed container for 1-2 days.

Portion wise: serves 8 as a snack.