

# होली

Holi is a festival that symbolizes the coming of Spring known as 'Vasant Ritu'. It is celebrated on the full moon day of Phalgun and is the most colorful festival in the year.

## The Stories

One of the stories behind Holi starts with a king who didn't accept his son, Prahlad, worshipping Lord Vishnu. The King tried to kill his son in many ways, but happened to fail every time. Then he thought about his sister, Holika. Holika was given a Chundari blessed by the god of fire (vardan). She wore this and sat herself in the middle of the fire, with Prahlad sitting on her lap. The wind blew the Chundari off her and placed itself onto Prahlad. Holika burnt to death - Good over Evil and Prahlad was saved, once again. Therefore, we light huge bonfires on the eve of Holi. In commemoration of the death of the demon goddess, Holika.

Other story behind the celebration of Holi is about the joyful Raas Leela of Krishna and the Gopis. A game called 'Phag' is played. Silk Cotton or Keseria trees are blooming with bunches of deep orange flowers. It is said that Lord Krishna used to shower the Gopis with the colored flowers.

## What happens on Holi?

The night before the full moon, all people gather to light a bonfire – burning all the dried leaves and twigs of the winter. They offer corn, new vegetables, coconut, butter, sweets, flowers and vermilion to the bonfire.

The next morning, when the sacred dust of the bonfire has settled, people throw colored water and powders (gulal) at each other - to symbolize the coming of spring. The streets go mad, as everyone begins to sip the traditional bhang – a drink consisting of Marujana.

Towards the afternoon, the noise calms down as people make their way to the rivers, to bathe.

Holi is also a time for feasting. Garlands of patashas or sugar discs in pink and white are given to friends. Vada, puranpolis, dhani, coconut and khajur are eaten on this occasion.

