

# A TRADITIONAL DEEPAVALI

Festival customs and traditions you should know

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Deepavali, or Diwali, is known as the Hindu festival of lights and lasts up to five days. Deepavali is celebrated during Kartika, the Hindu Lunisolar month, and symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Similar to the various festivals celebrated in Malaysia, Deepavali is one filled with unique customs and traditions of its own. Here, we list some of which you should know:



### #1 CLEANING YOUR HOME

Deep cleaning one's home before Deepavali is an old custom that continues until today. This is because the Indians believe that the Goddess Lakshmi will only step inside your home if it's clean. Therefore, those celebrating would tend to clean their homes before Deepavali. This means sweeping the floor, wiping down racks and dusting. Some even declutter their homes, redecorate it and even repaint it, though these are dependent on the person's budget.

### #2 SHOPPING

Just like Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Aidilfitri, it's a custom to wear new clothes during Deepavali. Wearing new clothes signifies respect and excitement for the festivity, which is why women in traditional families would tend to go out shopping even long before Deepavali arrives. Grand sarees are worn by the women during the festival, while men sport attractive kurtas and dhotis.

### #3 SERVING OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN SWEETS

Traditional Indian cuisine plays an important role during the Deepavali festival. After all, food is something everyone bonds over. However, traditional Indian sweets tend to take the limelight during the festival. From jalebi and karanji to peda and laddoo, these sugary treats are also given as gifts to family and friends throughout the celebration.

### #4 RANGOLI

During the celebration, people tend to decorate their homes with rangoli, also more commonly known as 'kolam' here in Malaysia. Patterns are drawn on the floor of a family's home using coloured rice. Deepavali is also a time where many rangoli competitions will be held in shopping malls, displaying a burst of colourful artworks by talented rangoli artists.



### #5 DIYA OIL LAMPS

It is common for oil lamps to light up a home during the festival, as this symbolises prosperity and optimism. Diyas are typically made of clay and often painted in bright colours. Because Deepavali takes place on the darkest night of the year, people tend to light diyas to cancel out the darkness. Deepavali also means a row of lights, which is why lighting up oil lamps is one of the most significant traditions during the festival.