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BRIEFING

Major Hindu Festivals and Calendar

There are numerous Hindu festivals throughout the year. They follow lunar, solar, and regional calendars. Dates change annually and may be observed differently across traditions and regions, while celebrations share a spiritual purpose.

FESTIVAL	WHAT IT IS AND WHAT TO KNOW
Makar Sankranti January	A solar observance marking the Sun's seasonal transition, celebrated with gratitude and regional harvest traditions. Greetings are welcome where it is locally observed.
Maha Shivaratri February or March	A night of prayer, fasting, meditation, and devotion to Lord Shiva. Be mindful of evening observances.
Holi March	A spring celebration of color, joy, renewal, and community, often held outdoors with colored powders. Wear clothes that can get colored; a white T-shirt is a popular choice.
Ram Navami March or April	Celebrates the birth of Shri Rama, an embodiment of righteous leadership and duty, a fitting theme for public messages.
Janmashtami August or September	Celebrates the birth of Shri Krishna, whose teachings are central to the Bhagavad Gita. Programs may continue late into the evening.
Ganesh Chaturthi August or September	Honors Ganesha, associated with wisdom, auspicious beginnings, and the removal of obstacles. Often marked by community worship and cultural programs.
Navaratri and Dussehra September or October	Nine nights honoring nine forms of the Divine Feminine, culminating in a celebration of the victory of dharma over destructive forces. Garba (circle dance) celebrations span many weekends and draw hundreds of people.
Diwali October or November	Often observed over several days, celebrating the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. A major occasion for greetings, proclamations, public lighting, and community visits; community events may fall before or after the religious date.

- Verify exact dates each year with a trusted Hindu calendar or local temple.
- Support time off from school and work for religious observances.
- Ask local communities which observances are most significant to them.
- Many other festivals are observed; consult local temples for dates and schedules.

FOR PUBLIC LEADERS

There are specific wishes for certain festivals. Connect greetings to each festival's meaning; a short, accurate message is more meaningful than a generic statement. **HinduAmericanBrief.org** can help with proclamation language.