

Chapter- 8

Our Festivals

STUDY NOTES

- A festival is a time for fun, joy, and celebration. India is a land of festivals. Not a single month goes by without a festival.
- Some festivals are common to the whole country while others are celebrated only in some states.
- Festivals are mainly of three kinds. These are national days, religious festivals, and harvest festivals.

National Days

- National days are celebrated throughout the country, as these days are important to all Indians. On the three national days, we celebrate our Independence Day, Republic Day, and Gandhi Jayanti.



INDEPENDENCE DAY

- On 15 August, we celebrate our Independence Day. It was on this day, in 1947, that India won independence from British rule.
- Every year a function is held at the Red Fort in New Delhi.
- The Prime Minister hoists the National Flag and gives a speech.
- On this day, we remember the freedom fighters who gave their lives for the freedom of our country.

REPUBLIC DAY

- On 26 January, we celebrate Republic Day. A grand parade is held at Rajpath in New Delhi.
- The armed forces, police, folk dancers, and school children are some of those who take part in it.
- Children who win awards for bravery are part of the parade.

- Tableaux from different states make the parade lively. Parades take place in state capitals too.

GANDHI JAYANTI

- Who hasn't heard of Bapu? That is what we lovingly call Mahatma Gandhi. He led the Indians in their fight for freedom from the British. So, we also call him the 'Father of the Nation'.
- Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2 October. We celebrate this day as Gandhi Jayanti.
- A function is held at his samadhi at Raj Ghat in New Delhi.
- The President, Prime Minister, and others offer prayers at the samadhi.
- Prayer meetings are held all over the country. On this day, we pledge to follow Gandhiji's teachings of non-violence and truth.

Religious Festivals

- Religious festivals are celebrated throughout the country. People belonging to different religions have their own special festivals.



Diwali

- Diwali is called the 'festival of lights'. On this day people decorate their houses with diyas, lights, and candles. Many people burst firecrackers.
- Floor patterns called rangoli are made of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, worshipped.
- People wear new clothes and eat special food and sweets.
- They visit friends and relatives to greet them and give gifts. Diwali signals the onset of winter in North India.

Holi

- Holi is called the 'festival of colours'. It is celebrated mainly in North India.
- People throw coloured powder called gulal on each other.
- Holi signals the end of winter and is the time when the wheat crop is ready for harvesting.

Dussehra

- Dussehra celebrates the victory of good over evil. It is believed that on this day the god Rama killed Ravana, the ten-headed demon king.
- Ramlila, a dance-drama depicting the story of Rama's life is staged. In West Bengal and some other states, Dussehra is celebrated as Durga Puja.

Gurpurb

- Gurpurb means the festival of the guru.
- Huge processions are taken out in towns and cities.
- The Sikhs go to gurudwaras to offer prayers.
- Langars are held, where free meals are given to all. The holy book of the Sikhs called Guru Granth Sahib is read on this day.
- There is a big celebration in the Golden Temple at Amritsar.

Eid-ul-Fitr

- Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated to mark the end of a month-long period of fasting called Ramzan. Prayers or namaz are offered at mosques
- People wear new clothes. They embrace and wish each other 'Eid Mubarak'.
- A special sweet dish called 'sewain' is prepared.
- Money and clothes are donated to the poor.

Christmas

- Christmas is celebrated on 25 December every year as the birthday of Jesus Christ.
- On 24 December at midnight, special prayers take place in churches.
- Christmas trees are decorated and plum cakes are specially baked.
- Children love to receive gifts from Santa Claus.

Navroz

- Navroz celebrates the Parsi New Year. It is celebrated on March 21, marking the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

Harvest Festivals

- Harvest is the time when crops are ready for cutting and gathering.
- Farmers are happy that they have got the fruits of their hard work. It is a time for celebration.

- Harvest festivals are celebrated in all the states. Everyone participates in them.



Bihu

- Bihu is the harvest festival of Assam. Three Bihu's are celebrated in a year.
- Buffalo fights, big bonfires, singing, dancing, and feasting are part of the festival.
- Young girls wearing traditional Assamese clothes are seen performing special Bihu songs and dances.

Pongal

- Pongal is the harvest festival of Tamil Nadu.
- It is celebrated for three days. 'Pongal', is prepared by cooking rice in milk and jaggery.
- People draw kolams to decorate their houses.
- Cattle are washed, painted, decorated with garlands, fed, and worshipped.
- In Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, the festival is called Sankranti.

Onam

- Onam is the harvest festival of Kerala. It is called the 'festival of flowers'.
- People wear new clothes and eat a special meal, which is served on banana leaves.
- This is called 'onam sadya'. Boat races are held at a number of places in Kerala. This is one of the main attractions of Onam.

Baisakhi

- Baisakhi is the harvest festival of North India.
- It is celebrated with great enthusiasm in Punjab.
- The men perform the bhangra to the beat of the dhols while the women do the gidda.

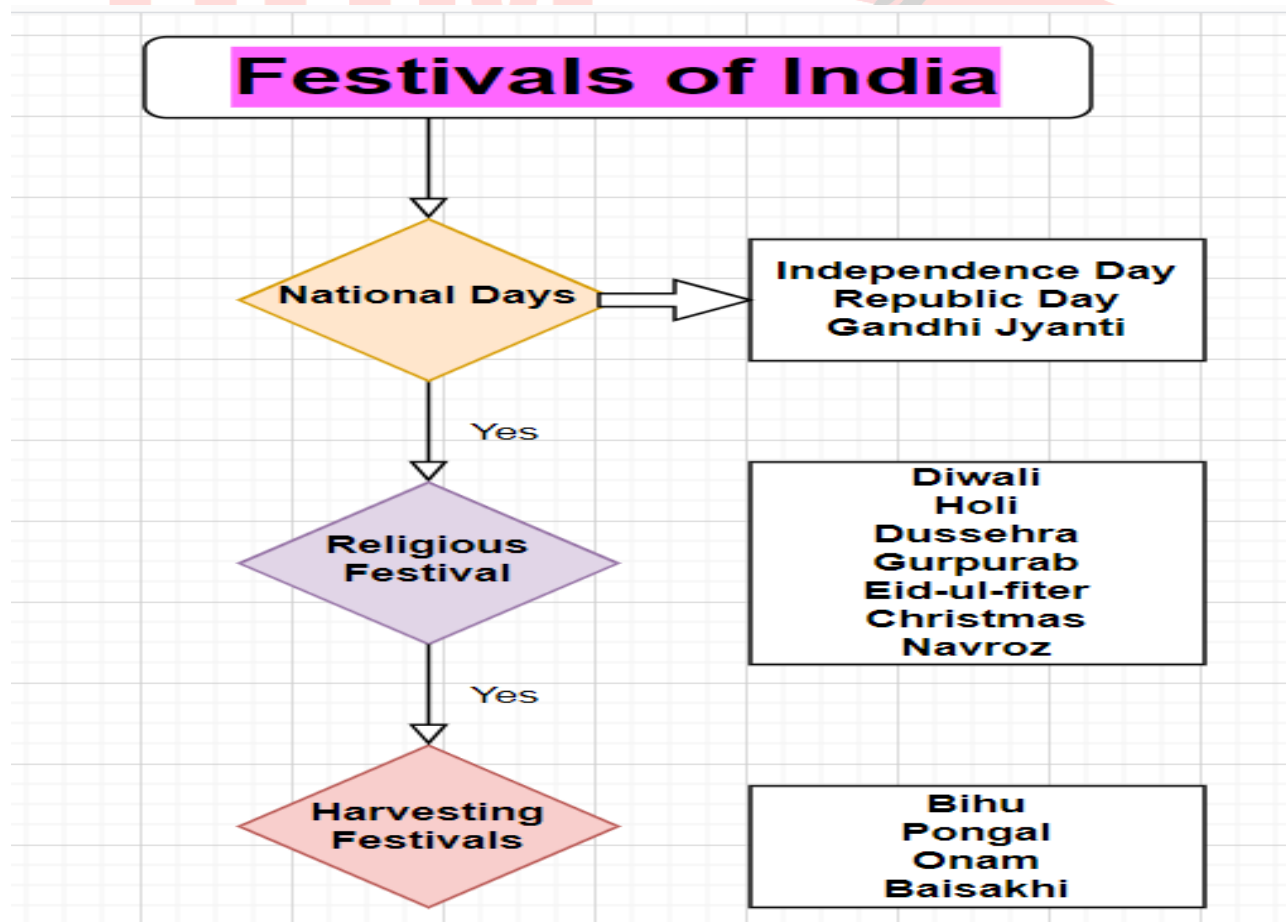
- On many of these festivals, huge fairs are held. Shops, stalls, rides, puppet shows and circuses form part of these fairs.

Birthdays

- Birthdays of great people are celebrated as festivals.
- The birthday of Gautama Buddha is celebrated as Buddha Purnima.
- We celebrate the birthday of Mahavir as Mahavir Jayanti.
- Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday on 14 November is celebrated as Children's Day.
- The birthday of Dr S Radhakrishnan, on 5 September, is celebrated as Teachers' Day.
- Dr Radhakrishnan, the second President of India, was a highly respected and much-loved teacher.

Though we may belong to different religions and celebrate different festivals, we share a common bond. We are all Indians. We must respect each other's religion. We must take part in each other's festivities and celebrations.

MEMORY MAP



Let's Know More-

1. Festival of light- _____
2. Festival of Gurus- _____
3. Festival of colours- _____
4. Muslim people go to pray- _____
5. Christians go to pray - _____
6. Hindus go to pray- _____

Let's Do**A. With whose birthday do you associate the following?**

7. Christmas
8. Children's day
9. Buddha Purnima
10. Mahavir Jayanti
11. Gandhi Jayanti
12. Teacher's Day

B. On which date do we celebrate the following?

1. Independence Day
2. Republic day
3. Teacher's Day
4. Children's Day
5. Navroz
6. Christmas

C. Write T for true and F for false sentences

1. Navroz is celebrated by the Parsi community.
2. Bihu is the harvest festival of Assam.
3. We got our independence from British rule in 1957.
4. In Andhra Pradesh the harvest festival is called Pongal.
5. The Golden Temple is at Ambala.

D. Answer the following questions.

1. Why do we call India a land of festivals?
2. Why do we celebrate Independence Day?
3. How do we celebrate Republic Day?
4. What were the teachings of Gandhiji?
5. Name the main festivals of your state.

E. Multiple-choice questions

1. _____ is prepared on Eid-ul-Fitr.
a. Srikhand b. Kheer c. Sewain
2. _____ is called the festivals of colours.

- a. Holi b. Diwali c. Bihu
3. Mahatma Gandhi is called the _____ of the nation.
a. Son b. father c. brother
4. During _____ people draw kolams to decorate their houses.
a. Pongal b. Holi c. Bihu
5. Teachers Day is celebrated on the birthday of _____.
a. Mahatma Gandhi b. Jawaharlal Nehru c. Dr. Radhakrishna

Teacher's Note

- Paste a collage of different types of festivals in India.

Improve Your GK

- **Raksha Bandhan/Rakhi:** It is a celebration commemorating the pure bond of love between a brother and a sister.
- **Janmashtami:** This day is to commemorate the holy birth of Lord Krishna and history says that Lord Krishna took birth to put an end to evil.
- **Rathayatra-** Known as the Chariot festival is a Hindu festival held in Puri.

Answer

A. With whose birthday do you associate the following?

1. Christmas- Jesus Christ
2. Children's day- Jawaharlal Nehru's
3. Buddha Purnima- Gautama Buddha
4. Mahavir Jayanti- Mahavir
5. Gandhi Jayanti- Mahatma Gandhi
6. Teacher's Day- Dr. Radhakrishnan

B. On which date do we celebrate the following?

1. Independence Day- 15th August
2. Republic day- 26th January
3. Teacher's Day- 5th September
4. Children's Day- 14th November
5. Navroz- 21st March
6. Christmas- 25th December

C. Write T for true and F for false sentences

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F

D. Answer the following questions.

1. Ans. India is called the land of festivals because it has many festivals of different religions which are celebrated by all Indians.

2. Ans. We remember the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country.
3. Ans. On 26th January we celebrate Republic Day every year. A grand parade is held at Rajpath. Tableaux from different states make the parade more attractive.
4. Ans. Non-violence and truth were the teachings of Gandhiji.
5. Ans. Rathayatra is main festival of Odisha.

F. Multiple choice questions

1. Sewain
2. Holi
3. Father
4. Pongal
5. Dr. Radhakrishna

