

HAKUNA MATATA

BY THE STUDENTS OF MODERN HIGH SCHOOL, IGCSE



WHAT'S INSIDE?

DIWALI!

DURGA PUJA!

HALLOWEEN!



EDITORIAL



Et Lux in Tenebris Lucet - And Light shines in the Darkness

Pujo is finally here!!!! The festivities have begun! In the “normal” situation, we would all be cleaning our houses, preparing for Maa to come, buying fireworks, deciding costumes for Halloween and making endless plans for pandal hopping. The current circumstances have changed the usual way of celebration.

We were all heartbroken when we found out that we could no longer go out and burst crackers or go trick or treating. We all look forward to this time of year and eagerly await to spend time with our loved ones. However, do not be disheartened. With all the new technology, you can easily keep in touch and virtually enjoy with your family and friends. You could have a Halloween costume party or a good online “adda” session with your best friends!

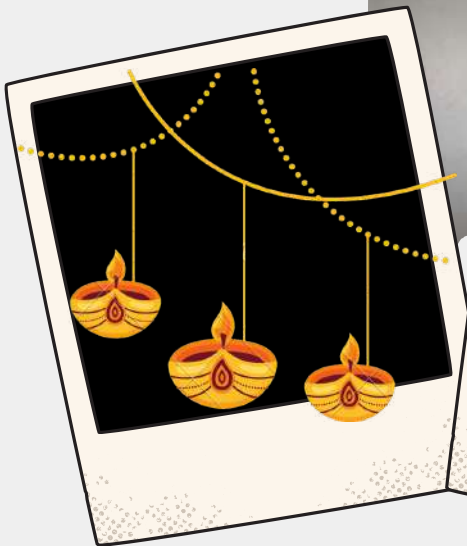
It is the ethos of fun and love that is the most important, especially during this season. The festive times really do bring out the best in people. The amount of love and celebration that is in the air is unparalleled. In these dark hours, this time is just what people need to get their spirits up. So enjoy yourself to the fullest, get into the merry-making spirit, and celebrate these festivities like you do every year. If Covid 19 has taught us anything, it is to live in the moment and cherish each second of life. Life is short so let’s make the most of each day, each minute and each second.

**So in light of this festive season, from our little IGCSE family to yours,
HAPPY PUJO, HAPPY DIWALI AND HAPPY HALLOWEEN!**

**- SANJANA C MITTRA
Chief Editor**



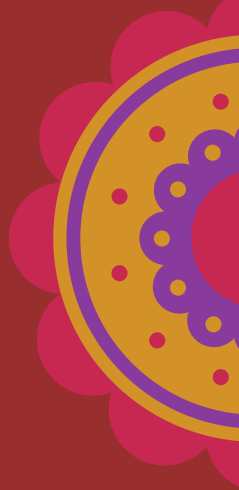
PHOTOGRAPHY



DURGA PUJA

Durga Puja in West Bengal celebrates the most powerful female goddess in Indian mythology and all the many women around us. However, Durga Puja is no longer just a saga of tradition and rituals strictly religious in nature. Over time, this particular Puja has escalated, gaining social, cultural, even political status to such an extent that it is now a tradition that is enjoyed by millions.

Goddess Durga defeating the demon king Mahishashur is not just an inspiration but also a metaphor. The very name “Durga” has come to symbolize power, strength and bravery— Durga is also a nurturer, a caregiver and most importantly a symbol of homeliness as she fiercely protects us from evil but also takes care of her family with utmost love. Today, the involvement of the masses and the overall hype around Durga Puja is majorly fuelled by the media and the advertisement industry which often broadcasts the so-called ‘progressive’ idea of women empowerment. In recent times, Maa Durga has successfully become the metaphor for the modern woman, handling both her home and work effortlessly. Newspaper advertisements and magazine covers started the trend of portraying regular, ordinary women with ten hands holding kitchen utensils and technological gadgets instead of weapons.





Durga Puja is supposed to be that time of the year where society acknowledges and embraces its daughters with a free mind and open arms but often proves to be quite the opposite. Instead of celebrating female liberty, power and strength, what we end up celebrating is the orthodox idea of an independent woman - someone who can handle all elements of her own life and that of her family's without requiring a helping hand from a single soul. Be it the lack of female event organizers, priests and shilpokars who bring this event of joy together to the harassment many women endure while out on the streets in the evening, it is safe to say that bright and shiny on the outside, the festival of Durga Puja promises to truly worship female power or Nari Shakti but ends up being a dichotomy between modern celebration womanhood and our same old regressive ideologies of a patriarchal society.

However, Kolkata has taken many steps towards changing the traditional Durga Puja narrative to a slightly more inclusive one.

Last year, the Tridhara Sammilani decided to bid adieu to Ma Durga with not only vermilion and sweets but also by ushering in the kind of change the city had never witnessed before. Breaking the tradition, they celebrated sindoor khela with widows, transwomen and other women, for whom the ritual is still taboo.

This beautiful gesture was part of the #NoConditionsApply campaign that celebrated the oneness of womanhood and we would wish for nothing more but to see change, similar to this, resonate in and even complement the festive spirit of Durga Puja for many years to come.



MUSIC

Festivals of India aren't just an integral part of our culture, they are emotions, and Durga Puja is the main one in Bengal. Streets are full of pandals and crowds thrumming to the maddening beats of the dhak. This vibrant mixture of lively actions and sounds creates the festive spirit of Durga puja. Of course, the booming beats of the dhak, dhol, and the "sur" of the shehnai are not to be forgotten, as they make up the auditory essence of Durga puja.

Fun fact: these instruments came before DJs and K- pop.

Let's look at some of them:

Dhak

Though the pulsing beat of this instrument might sound like the theme of Jumanji, the Dhak is a part of Durga Pujo and every Bangali's pride. Our hearts synchronize with it and beat to the rhythm of the dhak. The beat of the dhak signifies victory and the triumph of good over evil (which is odd because that is contrary to the theme of Jumanji) Hundreds of dhakis visit Kolkata for a bit of extra money during the festive season. It is a part-time profession for them as most are farmers from rural Bengal and have perfected the art of this instrument. The dhak is a Durga Pujo staple and is an age old tradition that has yet to see the beginning of many a century.

Conch shell

Remember the music in the beginning scene of Lion King? I'm pretty sure it could be recreated with a conch shell and the voice of that loud baboon, Rafiki. In the same way, the grand, amplified sound of the conch shell complements the grand celebrations of Durga Puja. The word "shonkho" means to purify. This is why the shonkho is blown at the beginning of any religious ritual, such as aarti on Ashtami. Its sound is also believed to be pure and invites freshness and rejuvenation of hope.



HALLOWEEN!

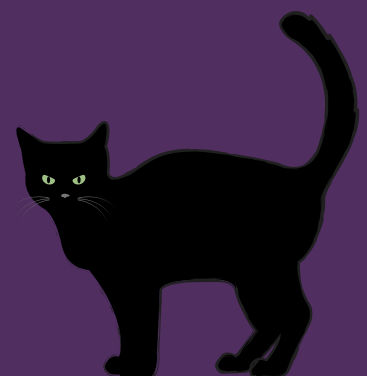


Halloween is right around the corner (Why are ghosts so happy when they're on an elevator? Well, because it lifts their spirits) and we all know what that means - amazing food, innovative costumes, wild celebration, impressive Jack-O-Lanterns and obviously, too much candy! But, how many people know about the diverse and spooky origin of it's customs? Frankly, not a lot of people. Today we hope to enlighten you about this 6,000 year old holiday.

The tradition of wearing scary costumes on Halloween comes from the ancient Celts. Back then, people believed impersonating demons would confuse or ward off the evil spirits who roamed the streets during Samhain (essentially the pagan version of Halloween). Then, in an effort to convert pagans, Christians changed Samhain to a three-day celebration in the 11th century, from October 31st to November 2nd. The first night of this holiday is called All Hallow's Eve, which is now known as Halloween.

Today, this holiday is associated with the colors orange and black: orange because of its link to the fall harvest, and black because of its connection to darkness and death. After all, Samhain was about celebrating the boundary between life and death.

Well, what about jack-o-lanterns?(Looking for a pun? Well, I'm a pun-king). People absolutely love carving pumpkins on Halloween, but few know the jack-o-lantern's dark history. According to Celtic lore, a miserly old man used to play tricks on the devil and was thus denied entrance to both Heaven and Hell. Instead, the old man was condemned to wander the Earth and used his lantern to lead people astray from their paths.





While Halloween is an extremely popular version, there are several others that are built around the same concept in other parts of the world. They too centre around the idea of the dead and live world reconciling every year for a short period of time.

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS // MEXICO (Day of the dead, November 1 to November 2)

DAY OF DRACULA // ROMANIA

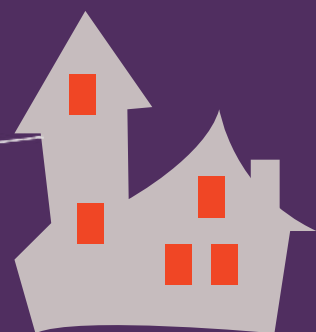
KAWASAKI HALLOWEEN PARADE // JAPAN (end of October)

PANGANGALULUWA // THE PHILIPPINES (October 31)

THE HUNGRY GHOST FESTIVAL // HONG KONG (Around mid-August to mid-September)

PITRU PAKSHA // INDIA (16 days during second Paksha of the Hindu lunar month, Bhadrapada, September 1-17, 2020)

Well, I would've ended this article with a vampire pun, but they suck. Hope you have a fang-tastic and eco-friendly Halloween!



SCIENCE



The Nobel Prizes, introduced in 1895, are annual prizes offered to distinguished individuals and organisations who have excelled in a particular field.

(Unpopular opinion: The inventor of the knock-knock joke should get a Nobel Prize. "No bell", get it?)

We have all heard of and are immensely grateful for the contributions of scientists like Isaac Newton, Galileo and Einstein. Yet most of us have never known Emma du Chatelet, a Mathematician and Physicist, and Caroline Herschel, a brilliant Astronomer. Let us honour the women who have broken all barriers, disregarded the injustice against them in society and achieved Nobel Prizes for Science.

In 1903, Marie Curie became the first woman to win a Nobel Prize along with her husband, Pierre Curie and Henri Becquerel for their limitless contributions in the field of radioactivity. Madame Curie again snagged away the coveted Nobel Prize in 1911 (and became the first person to win two prizes) for discovering the radioactive elements - Radium and Polonium. She was the first one to receive 2 Nobel Prizes, after which only three people have been able to do the same. Having been exposed to radioactive substances all the time (carrying some in her pocket as their effects were unknown), Madame got Aplastic Anemia. The story of her death is deeply disturbing. If that is not enough, she also happens to be the only woman and the first of only four individuals who have had the privilege of winning this award twice.



Marie Curie



Maria Goeppert Mayer



Gerty Theresa Cori

The second woman to win a Nobel Prize was Irène Joliot-Curie, daughter of Marie Curie, along with her husband, Jean Frédéric Joliot-Curie for discovering Artificial Radioactivity, by using alpha particles to bombard Boron, Aluminium and Magnesium to create radioactive isotopes. After receiving this award, the Curie family became the family which consisted of more Nobel Laureates than any other family!

Gerty Theresa Cori and her husband, Carl Cori were immigrants, who were medical doctors at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in New York. A large part of their research was carried out by Gerty, who studied Carbohydrate metabolism extensively, as her diabetic father had wished for a cure. In 1929, they proposed The Cori Cycle, a hypothetical model of how the body uses chemical reactions to break down carbohydrates. In 1947, Gerty became the first woman (along with her husband) to win a Nobel prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Maria Goeppert-Mayer was a Mathematics and Physics student who earned her Doctorate in Philosophy in 1930, after writing her dissertation on two-photon absorption in atoms. Unfortunately, at that time, her work was entirely theoretical. The laser was not invented yet, and thus there was no way of proving her theory. In 1961, her theory was proven through experiments, and the unit for the two-photon absorption cross-section was named the Goeppert-Mayer (GM) unit. She also developed the nuclear shell model, a mathematical model for the structure of atomic nuclei, for which she earned the Nobel Prize for Physics along with J. Hans D. Jensen and Eugene Paul Wigner. She became the first woman to earn this award in 60 years!

Dorothy Hodgkins was fascinated by science as a child and later earned her PhD at the University of Cambridge where she took an interest in X-ray crystallography and began studying the structure of proteins. She held the position of the university's first chemistry fellow, where she also taught future Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher! In those years, Hodgkins studied and discovered the three-dimensional structures of many biomolecules using X-ray crystallography, including Penicillin (in 1945). Her work on mapping vitamin B12 earned her the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1964. Five years later, she discovered the structure of Insulin. However, that was too futuristic for those times and technology that was available, barely helped her research.

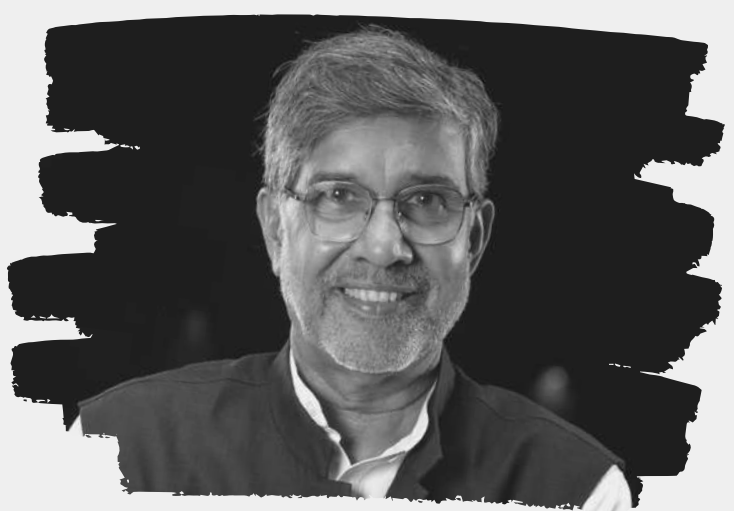
Since the Nobel Peace Prize was announced on 9th October, let's glance at the contribution of some of the winners of this coveted prize.

Kailash Satyarthi who advocated the universal right to education and campaigned against child labour in India. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea. And Juan Manuel Santos for his resolute efforts to bring the nation's more than 50-year-long civil war to an end.

Just like throughout the years, women have done us proud in various fields, we hope that more women will break the Nobel glass ceiling in the years to follow! We would like to conclude by saying that we are sorry for the terrible puns but don't worry, we only do it periodically!



Dorothy Hodgkins



Kailash Satyarthi

LESSER KNOWN FESTIVALS

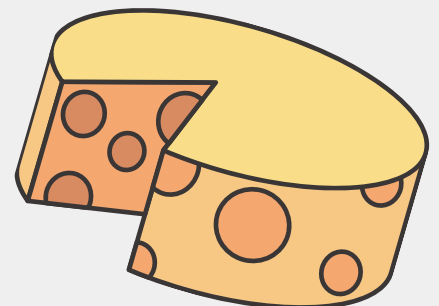
Every year, we celebrate so many festivals, all of them so famous and different. But do you know some of the weirdest and most unknown festivals? Let's take a look.

Cheese Rolling-United Kingdom:

Every year on a cool day at the top of May, grown adults in the village of Brockworth take to chasing a rolling nine-pound wheel of double Gloucester cheese down a steep hill. Before the race down Cooper's Hill begins, the fences are removed, the undergrowth is cut and the site is swept through for stones and other dangerous objects. However, the race is still dangerous for competitors and spectators. Over the years, many have been seriously injured thanks to the steepness and unevenness of Capitol Hill and therefore the bulk and speed of the cheese itself. This led to a loss of official management in 2010. But the locals are hugely pleased with their traditional event, and it carries on today unmanaged. In fact, in 2015, around 4,000 people came to observe the spectacle.

Air Guitar World Championship-Finland:

The Air Guitar World Championship has been held annually in Oulu, Finland, since 1996 as a part of the Oulu Music Video Festival. What started as a joke has become a significant attraction to the event. Participants must play air guitar on stage in two rounds with each lasting a minimum of one minute (one song is chosen by the participant and one by the organiser), they must play air guitar only (no drums, piano, etc.) and are scored out of 6.0. The ideology behind the event may be a simple one: 'Wars would end and every one the bad things would get away if everyone just played air guitar.'



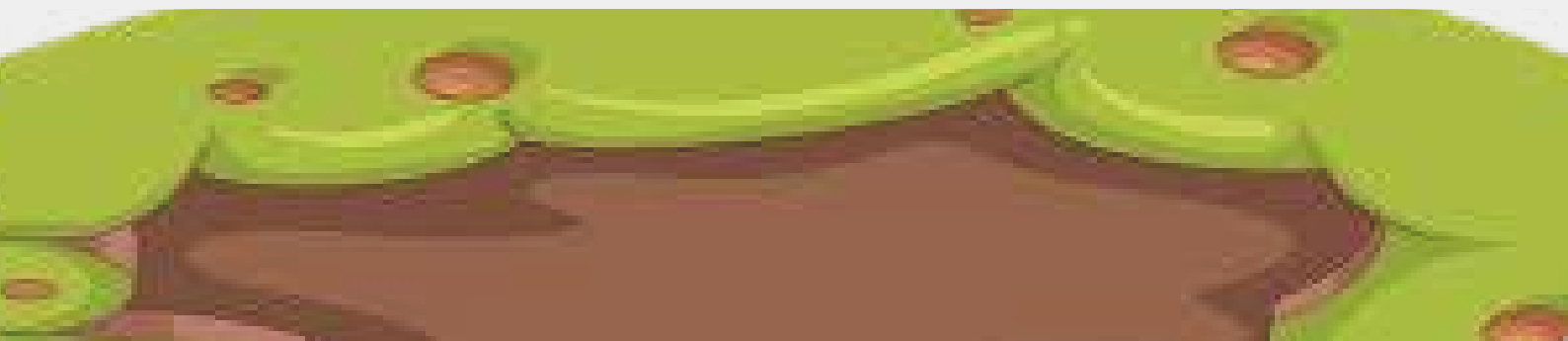
Boryeong Mud festival-South Korea:

Yes, you read it right. We're talking about a full-on muddy mud festival. Every year in South Korea, from 21st July to 30th July the Mud Festival is celebrated. For two weeks every July, thousands flock from around the Korean peninsula to Boryeong, a small town for the Boryeong Mud Festival, or Mudfest, as it's called. Even more people fly in from overseas, some travelling from as far as Europe and the Americas, to experience some good old fashioned mud wrestling, mud sliding and mud swimming - activities that constitute what has in recent years become the most popular Korean festival to go to. As this became a trend, it was marked as an official festival. Every year, various areas - some free, some requiring admission fees - are equipped with mud pits, mud fountains, mud pools, mud massage zones and even a mud prison, all of which are bound to have you ever looking like some sort of a mud monster by the day's end. A one-day pass will get you into all the ticketed events and areas, such as the inflatable playgrounds, obstacle courses, mudslides and races. Tickets are often purchased at the festival or beforehand online.



Baby Jumping-Spain:

The name speaks for itself. Jumping over babies is officially a festival. Celebrated annually within the village of Castrillo de Murcia, the Salto del Colacho is a week-long celebration which culminates with a person dressed as a devil scaring locals and jumping over babies. Controversial as far because the Catholic Church cares, the celebration is believed to cleanse the new-borns of their sin. The high-point of the festival is on the ultimate Sunday when the Salto del Colacho takes place. On this day, the Colacho - a man dressed as the Devil wearing a colourful outfit and a mask - runs through the town with a whip to terrorise locals who launch insults at him in return. But this is often just a warm-up for the most awaited event: the baby-jumping. No one knows what started this mania, but it is said to have started in the early 1600s.





When you think of Diwali, the first thing that pops up in your head is firecrackers; but the festival of lights is so much more than just that. As indicated by the Hindu calendar, in the period of the Kartik month, Diwali falls on the fifteenth day, therefore, it's date changes each year. Love, peace, a rejuvenated mind and unadulterated happiness, are some of the things people wish for on this auspicious occasion.

There are many myths and legends about the origins of Diwali. Some believe that Diwali is the celebration of the marriage of Goddess Laxmi (Goddess of Wealth) and Lord Vishnu. Others believe that it is the birth of Goddess Laxmi, born on the new moon day of Kartik that is celebrated. For Hindus, Diwali signifies the return of Lord Rama from Ayodhya, after fourteen long years. However, Diwali is not a festival which is limited to Hindus. Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs also celebrate this festival. More than a festival, Diwali has become a way of life, a culture that is everlasting in everyone's hearts and souls.

Diwali is also a time to reflect on one's life, past deeds and making the right changes for the upcoming year.

It is a common practice for people to forgive and forget the people who have done them any harm and get rid of grudges. Lights and diyas decorate people's houses as it is said to exterminate dark shadows and evil and bless their home with purity and peace. The Festival of Lights, not only fills our houses with positivity and peace but also our mind and soul.



MOVIES

In these difficult times, we are all confined to our homes, leaving little hope that we will be able to celebrate the festivities as we used to. This year instead of going pandal hopping or bursting crackers or going for trick or treating why not stay home and watch great movies and read good books and get to know more about the festivals!

As October 31st draws nearer, get ready to stream some of the scariest movies out there. So grab a tub of popcorn and your favorite Halloween candy for a movie night that will surely make you jump out of your skin. (You might want to sleep with your lights turned on!)

This Durga Puja spends time with your friends and family watching movies that celebrate this festival. Experience a superb way to partake in the festivities without setting foot outside your house!

Here are some movies you could watch!

- The Amityville Horror(1979)
- The Witch
- The Babadook
- Fright Night
- The 3rd Eye
- Kahani 1
- Uma
- Joy Baba Felunath
- Pather Panchali
- Shonar Kella



BOOKS

Others might be more interested in spending their hours reading some scary content that will send chills down their spine. Check out these books. When you have read them, you might begin to feel trepidation.

Like all the other festivals, Diwali is about food, family, and about rediscovering faith and culture. What is a better way to do that than to fall into an inescapable story? Here are some books that might change your perspectives.

Revive the culture with books from the Feluda and Byomkesh series!

Here are some books you could read!

- **The Haunting of Hill House-Shirley Jackson**
- **It - Stephen King**
- **Frankenstein - Mary Shelley**
- **Ghost Story - Peter Straub**
- **The Ruins - Scott Smith**
- **Born Confused - Tanuja Desai Hidier**
- **An Isolated Incident - Soniah Kamal**
- **Diwali - Rina Singh**
- **Fire in the Heart - Deepak Chopra**
- **Hatyapuri - Badshahi Angti**
- **Bhuswargo Bhayankar- Satyajit Ray**
- **Chitrochor- Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay**



NEWS



NEET EXAMS :

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), is an entrance examination in India for students who wish to study undergraduate medical courses (MBBS) and dental courses (BDS) in government or private medical and dental colleges in India. Currently, the NEET exams of 2020 have been a huge topic of debate especially with the exams taking place in centres during Covid-19. This has led to a lot of questions of safety even though exam centres were told to be fully sanitised. It is said that all precautions had been followed but several students were not allowed into the examination centre due to high fever and around 28 MBBS aspirants had tested COVID positive and so could not give their examinations. There were also several issues with transport, with some aspirants having to travel 7-8 hours from their homes to reach the exam centres especially with lack of transport. This led to huge costs that had to be paid by middle-class families just so that their children could give the exam. Mental pressure is also a huge problem with these aspirants for in 2020, several NEET aspirants who failed this examination took their lives, specifically 4 youths in one week in Tamil Nadu. It shows us the immense pressure they went through and how it had terrible consequences as well. It shows us the reality of the Indian examination system and the great debate that followed with conducting these examinations during these times.

INDIA'S CRASHING ECONOMY :

While the global economy has suffered a lot due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, small and medium-sized businesses are the ones which have suffered the most. To cope with this huge problem, the central government had introduced the "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" in May, which aimed at making India's economy self-sufficient and stronger. It contained an economic package of Rs 20 Lakh Crores and was directed at helping India's businesses, especially MSMEs (Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises).

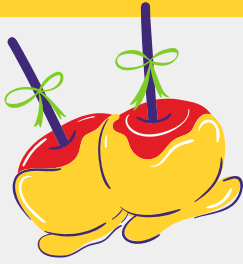


It also included free collateral loans for businesses and schemes for NBFCs (Non-Banking Financial Companies). One of the main reasons why everything is gradually reopening. However, at the same time COVID cases are spiking up. India has the second-highest number of cases in the world, with around 5.4 million cases. While several other countries have faced the peak of the outbreak already, we are still seeing rising cases every day. Thus, it might not be safe to reopen the economy, but as of now, it seems that there is no other option.



INDIAN SCHOOLS REOPENING :

While schools all across India had remained closed during the lockdown period, the central government has announced that the schools can reopen. However, the government has provided SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) on how the schools should function. The ultimate decision is left up to the states, and attendance of students is completely up to them. If they do attend, the students may need a letter or words of consent, signed by their parents. One of the reasons that schools, especially public and government schools may reopen is that a lot of children, especially from rural areas do not have access to online learning material, and, as a result, have missed out on over 5 months of school. The SOPs for starting schools include 6 feet distance between seating arrangements, wearing masks, only schools, only students and teachers living out of containment zones being allowed to attend, opening with lesser staff, suggestion include to conduct classes in open spaces within the school. Several countries have opened schools, but citizens are eagerly waiting to see if this decision will be viable for a large country like India.



RECIPES



HALLOWEEN!

'SPICED PUMPKIN CUPCAKES'

ABOUT THE DISH : Pumpkin Cupcakes bursting with warm Autumn spices, tangy cream cheese frosting adds just enough sweetness and creaminess to enhance the pumpkin spice flavour. These are a perfect classic Fall recipe for Halloween.

PREP TIME : 5 minutes.

COOK TIME : 20 minutes.

SERVINGS : 6.

INGREDIENTS :

- 1 cup All purpose flour.
- 1.5 tsp Baking powder.
- 1/8 tsp Baking soda.
- 1/4 tsp salt.
- 1/4 cup Pumpkin Puree.
- 1/4 cup Milk.
- 3/4 cup sugar.
- 1 tsp Vanilla essence.
- 1 tbsp Oil.
- 1 tsp Pumpkin spice/Cinnamon spice.
- 3/4 cup cream cheese frosting.



METHOD :

- In a mixing bowl add pumpkin puree, vanilla essence, milk and pumpkin spice. Mix them using a hand whisk and ensure the ingredients are well incorporated. Then add the sugar and mix again. The puree mix will be watery like below. Then add the oil and mix.
- At this stage add the sieved all purpose flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda. Combine them together and if required add 1 tbsp of milk. (The cake mix is too thick) The batter should be smooth and moist like below. Now scoop out the cake mix using a cookie scoop or spoon and fill 2/3rd the cupcake liners. Bake this for 12 - 15 minutes in the preheated oven at 350 deg F. Start checking after 12 minutes. Insert a toothpick in the middle of the cupcake and if it comes out clean, let them cool.
- Once cooled, use your desired frosting and decorate the cakes. Enjoy!



'CHENNA JALEBI'

ABOUT THE DISH: Chenna Jalebi is a traditional Indian sweet which is made during the festival of Diwali. This sweet originates from the state of Odisha which is known for its dessert made out of chenna. It can be served hot or cold and is unique to different states of India since each state has its own variation.

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 30 minutes

SERVINGS: 6

INGREDIENTS:

- Chenna made out of 1kg milk
- Sugar - 250 grams
- Flour - 2 tbsp
- Saffron - few strands
- Milk - 60 grams
- Ghee for frying
- Water - 200 ml



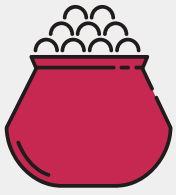
METHOD:

- To make the Sugar Syrup:

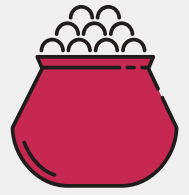
Heat 200 ml of water and 250 gms of sugar in a thick bottom pan. When the sugar melts and the mixture starts bubbling, add the milk and leave it for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, remove from the heat and strain the mixture. After straining, put it to heat again and remove when the sugar syrup is stringless. Grind saffron in 2 tsp of water and add to the sugar syrup, keep aside.

- To make the Chenna Jalebi:

Knead the Chenna in a big steel plate. Next, roll out long pencil-like strips of the chenna and make a shape of '8' for each. Heat the ghee on low flame and fry the '8' shaped chenna jalebi till golden brown. On cooling of sugar syrup, coat the jalebi in this mixture and leave it aside for two hours. Enjoy!



DURGA PUJA



'BONDE'

'Bondé', also known as 'Boondiya' or 'Boondi' (in other regions of India and also in Bangladesh), is a much loved sweet that has made its place in the heart of all Bengalis. Down the years, 'bondé' has played quite a significant role in the pujas of different states, especially in Bengal. On the auspicious day of 'Bijoya Dashami', Bengali families exchange sweets and celebrate the last day or the tenth day of Durga Puja after the immersion of Goddess Durga in the sacred waters of the Ganga. 'Bondé' is one of the sweets that is exchanged and loved by all Bengalis.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Besan (Gram Flour)
- 1½ cups Sugar
- Water (depending on quantity)
- 1 tsp Rosewater
- Clarified Butter (Ghee) (for frying)
- Saffron
- Food Colour (red) (optional)



Method:

For making 'Bonde :

- Take a bowl and add besan and 2 tsp of ghee. Mix well. Add water slowly and make it into a semi-liquid batter. Keep it aside for 10 mins. Separate ⅓ cup of batter and add red food coloring to it. Heat a deep frying pan (preferably a wok) and add an adequate amount of ghee to fry the 'bonde' Once the ghee is heated, take a skimmer (with round holes) and add a little bit of the batter with a spoon on the skimmer. Place the skimmer about 6cm above the hot ghee and fry the 'bonde'. See that the batter passes through the holes of the skimmer but is not very runny. (clean the skimmer every time you fry the 'bonde').

For Making the Sugar Syrup:

- Take 1½ cups of sugar in a pan and add 1½ cups of water. Add rose water and saffron to it. Bring it to a boil. (do not make the syrup too thick). Keep it aside.
- Once the syrup is at room temperature, add the 'bonde' to it and stir it. Then keep it aside for 2 hours (minimum). Stir it at intervals. Shubho Bijoya!

ECO-FRIENDLY

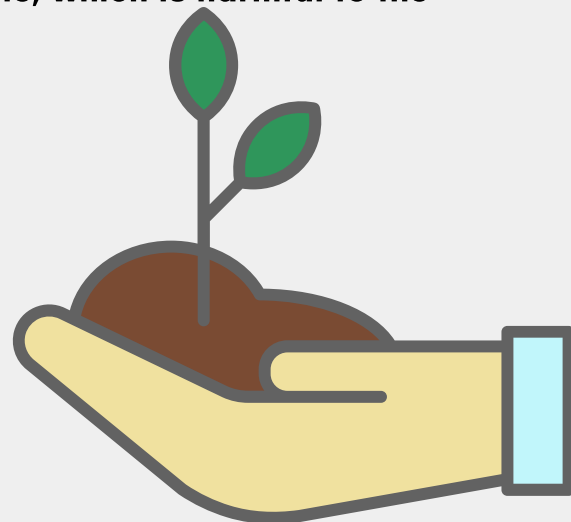
FESTIVALS

Festivals are undeniably, an important and exciting part of our culture. However, their environmental consequences often go unnoticed.

Diwali is undoubtedly a festival which lights up our houses, souls and minds, and it will slowly but surely become a solicitude for our environment due to the negligence of people celebrating the festival. Firecrackers are fun to play with for a little while, but they can do more harm to nature and the environment which might take centuries to replenish.

Here are a few things which we can do for our environment during Diwali

- Avoid bursting crackers as they give rise to excessive air and noise pollution
- Use traditional lighting like old diyas which are biodegradable
- Use recycled decor, as it not only benefits the environment but also makes us think creatively!
- Make eco-friendly rangolis by using colourful grains and natural colours, as rangolis were initially a way to feed birds and little animals during the days of the festivals .
- Avoid using plastic as plastic is not biodegradable, which is harmful to the environment.





Next up, Durga Puja. Durga Puja has always been an integral part of our culture, marking the victory of good over evil. Through the thousands of jobs it provides, it allows individuals to build a shelter and bring food to their home. But what we often fail to realize is the colossal wastage of materials and their severe environmental consequences. Finding eco-friendly ways of creating a brilliant idol not only protects the environment but fuels one's exquisite craftsmanship. 2019 saw pandals all across the country, made with scraps from junkyards, and idols embellished with fruits, seashells and various other eco-friendly products.

One pandal recycled plastic waste to spread awareness about pollution. Idol immersion has posed a severe threat to our prized rivers like Ganges and Yamuna due to the toxic paints, thermocol and plastic used. Over the last decade, the celebration of Durga Puja has seen a positive change as committees and workers are now interested in using eco-friendly paints, discarding the use of thermocol and plastic and turning towards hay, wood and more environmentally plausible ideas.

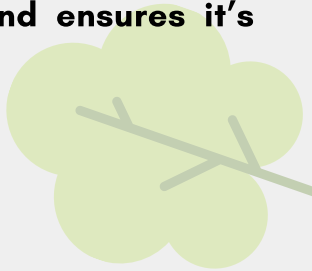




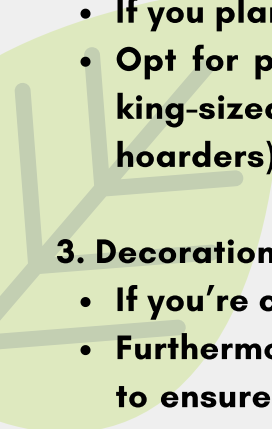
Moving on to Halloween. Here are ways in which you can make your holiday eco-friendly while creeping it real (HAHAHA.....see what I did there?)

1. Costumes

The fixed standard for Halloween costumes has become pre-packed plastic transported from halfway across the world. Two ways to reduce the harmful impacts are:

- **Get creative - experiment with biodegradable materials**
 - **Rent - This allows freedom to dress up differently each year and ensures it's available for reuse the following Halloween by somebody else!**
- 

2. Candy

- **Make treats yourself**
 - **Try an alternative to candy-like a small homemade gift!**
 - **If you plan on giving out candy, go for organic-based or fair trade brands**
 - **Opt for pillowcases instead of plastic bags/buckets (They are washable, and a king-sized one will hold way more candy, trust me, we're professional candy hoarders)**
- 

3. Decorations

- **If you're crafty, then this is your time to put that creativity to use!**
- **Furthermore, pumpkins are all the rage when the Halloween season falls. However, to ensure the fast growth of large-sized pumpkins, many farmers spritz them with heavy-duty pesticides. They are then shipped over long distances, making their carbon footprint exorbitantly high. What can we do about it? Well, invest in organic and locally grown pumpkins!**



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