



NEW

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Ugadi



There are several ways of commencing a new year. According to the Christian calendar 1st January marks the beginning of the year, the Hindu new year begins from the first day (Pratipada) of the month of Chaitra from the Hindu lunar calendar. Out of all the days of beginning a year the most ideal one is the first day of the month of Chaitra according to the Hindu lunar calendar. There are natural, historical and spiritual reasons to mark the commencement of the year on the first day of the month of Chaitra.

Towards the first day of the month of Chaitra, the sun assumes a position above the Vasant intersection (the point of intersection of the equator and the meridians) and the spring season commences. In Shrimadbhagavadgita (10.35) The Lord says, 'Among the seasons the exhilarating Vasant season (spring) is my manifestation'. In this season, the weather is pleasant and exhilarating. Towards the first day of the month, trees bear new foliage and appear fresh. Lord Rama slayed Vali on this day. Lord Ramachandra returned to Ayodhya after slaying the evil demons and Ravan on this very day. This day also commemorates the commencement of the Shalivahan calendar after Shalivahan vanquished his enemies.

Yugadi from yuga + aadi, yuga means era, aadi means start. The start of an era is the new year's day for the people of the Deccan region of India. While the people of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh use the term Yugadi/Ugadi for this festival, the people of Maharashtra term the same festival, observed on the same day, Gudi Padwa. Sindhis, people from Sindh, celebrate the same day as their New Year day Cheti Chand. It falls on a different day every year because the Indian calendar is a lunisolar calendar. The Saka calendar begins with the month of Chaitra (March/April) and Yugadi marks the first day of the new year.

Yugadi specifically refers to the start of the age we are living in now, Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga started the moment when Lord Krishna left the world. Maharshi Vedavyasa describes this event with the words '**Yesmin Krishno divamvyataha, Tasmad eeva pratipannam Kaliyugam**'. The festival marks the new year day for people between Vindhya and Kaveri river who follow the Dakshina Bhartha Lunar calendar, pervasively adhered to in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. This calendar reckons dates based on the Shalivahana era (Shalivahana Shaka), which begins its count from the supposed date of the founding of the Empire by the legendary hero Shalivahana. The Satavahana king Shalivahana (also identified as Gautamiputra Satakarni) is credited with the initiation of this era known as Shalivahana. The Salivahana era begins its count of years from the year corresponding to 78 AD of the Gregorian calendar. Thus, the year 2000 AD corresponds to the year 1922 of the Salivahana Era.

In the terminology used by this lunar calendar (also each year is identified as per Indian Calendar), Yugadi falls on Chaitra Shudhdha Paadyami or the first day of the bright half of the Indian month of Chaitra. This generally falls in the months of March or April of the Gregorian calendar. Lunar calendars have a sixty year cycle and starts the new year on Yugadi i.e., on Chaitra Sudhdha Paadyami. After the completion of sixty years, the calendar starts anew with the first year.

Yugadi (start of new year) is based on Bhaskara II lunar calculations in 12th century. It starts on the first new moon after Sun crosses equator from south to north on Spring Equinox. However, people celebrate Yugadi on the next morning as Indian day starts from sun rise.

Observance in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Ugadi

The Kannada and Telugu people celebrate the festival with great fanfare; gatherings of the extended family and a sumptuous feast are 'de rigeur'. The day, however, begins with ritual showers (oil bath) followed by prayers, and then the eating of a specific mixture of -

- Neem Buds/Flowers for bitterness
- Raw Mango for tang
- Tamarind Juice for sourness
- Green Chilli/Pepper for heat
- Jaggery and ripe banana pieces for sweetness
- Pinch of Salt for saltiness

This mixture with all six tastes called Yugadi Pachadi (Ugadi Chutney) in Telugu and Bevu-Bella in Kannada,

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symbolizes the fact that life is a mixture of different experiences (sadness, happiness, anger, fear, disgust, surprise) , which should be accepted together and with equanimity.



Ugadi Pachhadi or Bevu Bella

Later, people traditionally gather to listen to the recitation of the religious almanac (Panchangam) of the coming year, and to the general forecast of the year to come. This is the Panchanga Sravanam, an informal social function where an elderly and respected person refers to the new almanac pertaining to the coming year and makes a general benediction to all present.

Gudi Padwa for Maharashtrians:



The festival is called "Gudi Padwa" in Maharashtra; it heralds the advent of new year and is one of the most auspicious days for Maharashtrians. **Hindu Konkani**s celebrate it as **Samvatsar Padwa**. It is customary to erect 'Gudis' on the first day (Padwa) of the Marathi New Year. 'Gudi' is a bamboo staff with a colored silk cloth and a garlanded goblet atop it, which symbolizes victory or achievement. Hence, this day is known as "Gudipadwa" in Maharashtra. The New Year is ushered in with the worship of the "Gudi" and the distribution of a specific "Prasad" comprising tender neem leaves, gram-pulse and jaggery. The symbolism of tastes is the same as the Ugadi Pachhadi.

The Gudi:



Gudi Padwa is especially dedicated to the worship of Lord Brahma. Many legend states that this festival is celebrated to commemorate the coronation of Rama after his return to Ayodhya from 14 years of exile. Some Maharashtrians see the gudi as a symbol of victory associated with the conquests of the Maratha forces lead by the great hero Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Gudi is also displayed as they are expected to ward off evil and invite prosperity and good luck into the house. Gudhi is also symbol of victory of Shalivahana over Shakas, which people hoisted when he returned to Paithan.

The gudi, Brahma's flag (Brahmadhvaj) is hoisted in every house as a symbolic representation of Rama's victory and happiness on returning to Ayodhya after slaying Ravan. Since a symbol of victory is always held high, so is the gudi (flag). A bright green or yellow cloth adorned with brocade (zari) is tied to the tip of a long bamboo over which gathi (a type of sweet), neem leaves, a twig of mango leaves and a garland of red flowers is tied. This is then hoisted by placing a silver or copper pot placed in the inverted position over it. Beautiful designs with special powder of soft, white stone (rangolis) are drawn on the floor in front of it. Everyone eagerly waits to usher in the new year. Then uttering meaning, 'I offer obeisance to the flag of Lord Brahma' one should ritualistically worship the gudi with a resolve. Since Lord Brahma created the universe on this day, this flag is called 'the flag of Brahma' (Brahmadhvaj) in the scriptures. Some also refer to it as 'the flag of Indra' (Indradhvaj). On Gudi Padwa, you will find gudi hanging out of window or

otherwise prominently displayed in traditional Maharashtrian households.

Cheti Chand for Sindhis: Cheti Chand is celebrated as New Year's Day by Sindhis. According to the Hindu calendar, Cheti Chand is celebrated on the second day of the Chaitra month known as Chet in Sindhi. Hence it is known as CHET-I-CHAND.



Jhulelal

It is the second day of month chaitra (i.e. a day after Ugadi and Gudi Padwa). The Sindhi community celebrates the festival of Cheti Chand in honour of the birth of Ishtadeva Uderolal, popularly known as Jhulelal, the Patron Saint of the Sindhis. This day is considered to be very auspicious and is celebrated with pompous and gaiety. On this day, people worship water - the elixir of life.

Followers of Jhulelal observed Chaliho Sahab. It suggests that for forty long days and nights they underwent rituals and vigil on the bank of Sindhu. They did not shave, nor did they wear new clothes or shoes. They did not use soap or oil or any opulent thing. They just washed their clothes, dried them and wore them again. In the evening, they worshipped God Varun, sang songs in his praise and prayed for their solace and salvation. After 40 days of Chaaliho, the followers of Jhulelal celebrated the occasion with festivity as 'Thanks Giving Day' which is done even today.

On this day, many Sindhis take Baharana Sahib to a nearby river or lake. Baharana Sahib consists of Jyot (Oil Lamp), Misiri (Crystal Sugar), Phota (Cardamom), Fal (Fruits), and Akha. Behind is Kalsh (Water jar) and a Nariyal (Coconut) in it, covered with cloth, phool (flowers) and patta (leaves). There is also a Murti (Idol) of Pujya Jhulelal Devta.

This is a time of the year when the sun's rays increase in intensity, going from mellow to hot. The crops have been harvested and the fruits of the harvest are making their way to the marketplaces. Mangoes, called "the king of fruit" in India, are in season once again. The ripe smell of jackfruit fills the air. Shrubs and trees are bursting into flower. Everything is fresh and new. It looks and smells like spring (or the best impersonation of quintessential springtime that the climate can do). Therefore people celebrate this festival with joy and happiness.

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