

# **Diwali Celebrations in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**

## **Introduction**

Diwali, the festival of lights, is celebrated with great devotion and fervor across India, but the northern states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, known as Devbhoomi (the land of gods), hold distinct cultural and spiritual significance for the festival. The celebrations in these states not only follow the usual customs but also reflect the ancient traditions of their people. This document explores how Diwali is celebrated uniquely in these two states, focusing on the rituals, customs, and the spiritual essence.

## **Diwali Celebrations in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**

### **Diwali in Himachal Pradesh**

In Himachal Pradesh, Diwali is celebrated with unique customs deeply rooted in the region's folk traditions. The festival is marked by the worship of local deities, folk dances, and special events that are unique to different parts of the state.

1. **Worship of Local Deities:** Himachal Pradesh is known for its numerous village deities, and on Diwali, special rituals are performed in their honor. The celebration includes processions where idols of these deities are carried around the villages.
2. **Traditional Bonfires:** In rural areas, large bonfires are lit as part of the Diwali celebration, symbolizing the victory of good over evil. People gather around these fires, singing and dancing.
3. **Kullu Valley:** While Kullu is famous for its Dussehra festival, Diwali is also celebrated with much enthusiasm. Villagers come together to organize fairs and local folklore performances.
4. **Five-Day Celebrations:** Diwali is a five-day festival, starting with Dhanteras and continuing till Bhai Dooj. However, in some remote villages, celebrations extend beyond five days, with local fairs lasting weeks.

## **Diwali Celebrations in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**

### **Diwali in Uttarakhand**

Uttarakhand, known as Devbhoomi, celebrates Diwali with deep spiritual significance. The festival blends local traditions, nature worship, and devotion to gods.

1. Bagwal of Almora: Almora is famous for the Bagwal festival, a ritualistic war dance performed during Diwali. People from different clans gather to reenact historical battles in honor of local deities.
2. Tradition of Aipan: Aipan, a traditional folk art, is prominently used during Diwali to decorate homes. The floors and walls are adorned with intricate designs using natural colors.
3. Dev Deepavali: Celebrated fifteen days after Diwali, Dev Deepavali is another major event in Uttarakhand, especially in places like Haridwar and Rishikesh. Thousands of diyas (lamps) are lit on the Ganges ghats.
4. Spiritual Rituals: In many parts of Uttarakhand, Diwali is more spiritual, with families lighting diyas to invite prosperity and worshipping Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

## **Diwali Celebrations in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**

### **Conclusion**

Diwali in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand is not just a festival of lights but a deep spiritual experience that blends nature worship, local traditions, and ancient rituals. The unique events like Almora's Bagwal and Dev Deepavali showcase the cultural richness of these northern states.