

Festivals of Kerala 2026, Top 12 Famous Festivals Name List

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Festivals of Kerala reflect the state's rich cultural heritage, religious diversity and traditional way of life. These festivals unite people across communities through rituals, music, dance, temple traditions, feasts, boat races and cultural performances. Harvest celebrations, temple festivals, religious observances and artistic events together preserve Kerala's historical identity while showcasing its vibrant customs, folklore and community participation.

Festivals of Kerala 2026

Festivals of Kerala celebrate agriculture, mythology, religion, nature and social harmony. While many festivals are rooted in Hindu traditions, several Christian and Islamic celebrations are equally important across the state. The 5 main Festivals of Kerala including Onam, Vishu, Thrissur Pooram, Sabarimala Temple Festival and the Nehru Trophy Boat Race have earned national and international recognition for their unique customs, traditional arts, music and public participation.

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List of Festivals of Kerala 2026

The Top 12 famous Festivals of Kerala has been listed below:

1. **Onam:** Kerala's grand harvest festival commemorates the annual visit of King Mahabali during the Malayalam month of Chingom (August-September).
2. **Vishu:** Celebrated as the Malayalam New Year, Vishu begins with the sacred Vishukkani, featuring Lord Krishna, gold ornaments, rice or paddy, Konna flowers, mirror, fruits, coconut and traditional lamps.
3. **Thiruvathira:** Observed in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (December-January), this women's festival honours Lord Shiva and commemorates the death of Kamadeva.
4. **Karthigai Deepam:** Kerala celebrates Karthigai as the festival of lights. Village temples organise ceremonial bonfires, from which families carry burning palm-leaf torches (Chootu) to their homes before lighting oil lamps, illuminating entire villages.
5. **Sabarimala Temple Festival:** Conducted at the Ayyappa Temple in the **Western Ghats**, the festival reaches its peak on Makkara Vilakku day, when a sacred light seen on a nearby hill symbolises the arrival of the deity.
6. **Thrissur Pooram:** This famous temple festival is celebrated during Medom (April-May) at Vadakkunathan Temple. Decorated elephant processions, Panchavadyam performances and spectacular fireworks make it Kerala's most celebrated temple festival.
7. **Kodungallur Bharani:** Celebrated at the Sree Kurumba Bhagavathi Temple in Kodungallur during Meenam (March-April). This ancient festival honours Goddess Bhadrakali's victory over the demon Daarika and attracts large gatherings of Velichappad (oracles).
8. **Guruvayoor Ekadesi:** Celebrated in the Malayalam month of Vrischikam at the Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple near Chavakkad. The festival includes temple rituals, processions, annual fairs and devotional gatherings attended by pilgrims from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore.
9. **Swathi Sangeethotsavam:** Organised annually from 6-12 January at Kuthiramalika Palace, Thiruvananthapuram, this week-long music festival honours Maharaja Swathi Thirunal (1813-1846) through Carnatic and Hindustani performances featuring his compositions.
10. **Vetta & Arattu:** Celebrated twice every year during October-November and March-April, the festival symbolises Lord Vishnu destroying evil. Idols of Lord Padmanabha, Lord Krishna and Lord Narasimha are ceremonially taken to Shangumugham Beach for ritual bathing before returning in grand processions accompanied by Kathakali performances.
11. **Nehru Trophy Boat Race:** Started in 1952 following **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's** visit to Alappuzha, this famous snake boat race is held on the second Saturday of August. Giant boats with nearly 100 rowers from different villages compete, while another race in January promotes tourism.
12. **Other Important Festivals:** Kerala also celebrates Attukal Pongala, Navaratri, Christmas, Eid-ul-Fitr, Pattambi Nercha, Guruvayoor Anayottam, Theyyam, Aranmula Uthrattathi, Ambalapuzha Arattu, Adoor Gajamela and Cochin Carnival, reflecting the state's remarkable religious harmony, artistic traditions and inclusive cultural heritage.

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