

Festivals of Uttar Pradesh 2026, Famous Fair and Festival List

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Festivals of Uttar Pradesh showcase the state's rich cultural heritage, deep-rooted traditions, and spiritual diversity. Celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm, these festivals bring together people from different communities and faiths. From the grand **Kumbh Mela** and vibrant **Barsana Holi** to the sacred celebrations of **Diwali**, **Janmashtami**, and **Ram Navami**, each festival has its own unique significance. These celebrations also promote tourism, preserve traditional customs, and reflect the cultural identity of Uttar Pradesh.

Top 10 Famous Festivals of Uttar Pradesh 2026

The festivals of Uttar Pradesh are celebrated with great enthusiasm across villages, towns, and cities. Many of these festivals are associated with important religious events, harvest seasons, mythological stories, and historical traditions. They not only strengthen spiritual beliefs but also promote social harmony, local arts, handicrafts, music, dance, and tourism.

1. Kumbh Mela

The **Kumbh Mela** is the largest religious gathering in the world and one of the most significant festivals celebrated in Uttar Pradesh.

According to Hindu mythology, the Kumbh Mela commemorates the celestial battle between gods and demons for the **Amrit Kalash (pot of nectar)**. During this battle, drops of nectar are believed to have fallen at four places, including Prayagraj. Taking a holy dip in the Sangam during the Kumbh is believed to cleanse sins and help attain spiritual liberation (**Moksha**).

- **Prayagraj** hosts the Kumbh Mela every **12 years**, while the **Ardh Kumbh** is celebrated every **6 years**.
- The festival takes place at the sacred **Triveni Sangam**, where three rivers meet.
- Millions of **Hindu devotees**, pilgrims, saints, and tourists participate in the event.
- The **Shahi Snan (Royal Bath)** performed by different **Akharas** is the main attraction.
- Pilgrims believe that taking a dip during auspicious dates washes away sins and grants spiritual purification.
- Religious discourses, **Bhajan-Kirtans**, meditation sessions, and cultural performances are organized throughout the festival.
- Temporary tent cities, medical camps, security arrangements, and public facilities are established to accommodate visitors.
- The festival significantly boosts **religious tourism**, local businesses, handicrafts, and employment.
- **UNESCO** has recognized the **Kumbh Mela** as an **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.
- The Kumbh Mela symbolizes India's rich spiritual traditions and cultural diversity.

2. Diwali

Diwali, also known as the **Festival of Lights**, is among the most widely celebrated festivals in Uttar Pradesh. It marks the return of **Lord Rama**, **Goddess Sita**, and **Lord Lakshmana** to **Ayodhya** after fourteen years of exile and the defeat of Ravana. The people of Ayodhya welcomed them by lighting thousands of oil lamps (**Diyas**), giving rise to the tradition of Diwali.

- Celebrated on the **Amavasya (new moon)** of the Hindu month of **Kartik**.
- Commemorates the return of **Lord Rama** to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana.
- Homes, temples, streets, and marketplaces are decorated with **earthen lamps, candles, and decorative lights**.
- Devotees perform **Lakshmi Puja** and worship **Lord Ganesha** for prosperity and wisdom.
- Families exchange sweets, gifts, and festive greetings.
- Colorful **Rangoli** designs are created at the entrances of homes.
- Ayodhya celebrates **Deepotsav**, where millions of diyas are lit, creating a spectacular world-famous event.
- Cultural performances based on the **Ramayana** are organized in many towns.
- Diwali promotes family bonding, generosity, and the triumph of **good over evil**.

3. Buddha Purnima

Buddha Purnima is one of the most important Buddhist festivals celebrated in Uttar Pradesh, especially in **Sarnath**, where **Lord Buddha** delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. The festival commemorates

the **birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana** of Gautama Buddha.

- Celebrated on the **full moon day (Purnima)** of the Hindu month of **Vaishakha**.
- Marks the **birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana** of **Gautama Buddha**.
- **Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Shravasti** are major celebration centers.
- Buddhist monasteries organize meditation sessions, prayer meetings, and sermons.
- Devotees offer flowers, candles, fruits, and incense before Buddha's statues.
- Acts of **charity**, donations, and community service are encouraged.
- Pilgrims visit important Buddhist archaeological sites across Uttar Pradesh.
- Cultural events highlight the teachings of **peace, compassion, and mindfulness**.
- International Buddhist pilgrims from many countries visit Uttar Pradesh during the festival.
- Buddha Purnima strengthens Uttar Pradesh's position as an important center of **Buddhist pilgrimage tourism**.

4. Janmashtami

Janmashtami celebrates the birth of **Lord Krishna**, one of the most revered deities in Hinduism. Since **Mathura** is believed to be Krishna's birthplace and **Vrindavan** is associated with his childhood, Uttar Pradesh witnesses some of the most magnificent Janmashtami celebrations in the country.

- Celebrated on the **eighth day (Ashtami)** of **Krishna Paksha** in the month of **Bhadrapada**.
- **Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, and Govardhan** host grand celebrations.
- Devotees observe **day-long fasts** and perform prayers until midnight, believed to be Krishna's birth time.
- Temples organize **Jhankis**, depicting scenes from Krishna's childhood.
- **Bhajans, Raslila**, and devotional dances continue throughout the night.
- The idol of infant Krishna is placed in beautifully decorated cradles and ceremonially worshipped.
- Holy scriptures like the **Bhagavad Gita** and **Bhagavata Purana** are recited.
- Pilgrims from across India and abroad visit Krishna temples.
- Special sweets, especially **Makhan Mishri, Panjiri, and Pedas**, are prepared as offerings.
- Janmashtami symbolizes **love, devotion, righteousness, and divine joy**.

5. Barsana and Braj Holi

The **Barsana and Braj Holi** celebrations are among the most unique and internationally famous Holi festivals in India. Celebrated across **Barsana, Nandgaon, Mathura, Vrindavan**, and surrounding Braj villages, these festivities recreate the playful legends of **Lord Krishna and Radha**.

- Celebrated primarily in **Barsana, Nandgaon, Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, and Govardhan**.
- **Lathmar Holi** is the most famous event, where women playfully strike men with sticks while men protect themselves with shields.
- **Phoolon Ki Holi** is celebrated using flower petals instead of colors, especially at temples in Vrindavan.
- **Laddu Holi** involves showering devotees with laddus as part of traditional festivities.
- Temples organize **Raslila**, devotional singing, and Krishna-themed cultural performances.
- Natural colors (**Gulal**) are used during celebrations, symbolizing joy and togetherness.

- Thousands of pilgrims and international visitors participate every year.
- Local markets flourish with traditional sweets, handicrafts, festive clothing, and souvenirs.
- The celebrations preserve the centuries-old cultural traditions of the **Braj region**.

6. Navratri and Durga Puja

Navratri and Durga Puja are among the most significant Hindu festivals celebrated across Uttar Pradesh with immense devotion and cultural enthusiasm. While **Navratri** is dedicated to the worship of the nine forms of **Goddess Durga**, **Durga Puja** commemorates the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura, symbolizing the triumph of **good over evil**.

- Devotees observe **fasts (Vrat)** and offer fruits, milk, and sattvic food to the Goddess.
- Special prayers, **Durga Saptashati** recitations, and **Aarti** are performed daily.
- Beautifully decorated **Durga Pandals** attract thousands of visitors across the state.
- **Garba** and **Dandiya Raas** events are organized in many urban areas.
- **Kanya Puja**, where young girls are worshipped as forms of the Goddess, is performed on **Ashtami** or **Navami**.
- The festival concludes with **Vijayadashami (Dussehra)**, marking Lord Rama's victory over Ravana and Goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasura.
- Cultural performances based on the **Ramayana** and **Devi Mahatmya** are organized.

7. Ganga Dussehra

Ganga Dussehra is a sacred Hindu festival celebrated to commemorate the **descent of the holy River Ganga from heaven to Earth**. Since Uttar Pradesh is blessed with the sacred flow of the Ganga through cities such as **Varanasi, Prayagraj, Kanpur, and Garhmukteshwar**, the festival is observed with exceptional devotion.

- Celebrated on the **Dashami (10th day)** of the bright fortnight of **Jyeshtha**.
- Marks the **descent of Goddess Ganga** to Earth.
- Holy bathing (**Snan**) in the **River Ganga** is considered highly auspicious.
- Major celebrations take place in **Varanasi, Prayagraj, Kanpur, and Garhmukteshwar**.
- Devotees offer **flowers, diyas, milk, and prayers** to the sacred river.
- Evening **Ganga Aarti** attracts thousands of devotees and tourists.
- Religious discourses and devotional singing are organized near riverbanks.
- The festival highlights the importance of **river conservation and environmental awareness**.

8. Kartik Purnima

Kartik Purnima is one of the holiest full moon festivals in Hinduism and is celebrated with great devotion throughout Uttar Pradesh. The festival falls in the Hindu month of **Kartik**, which is considered highly auspicious for worship, pilgrimage, and charity.

- Celebrated on the **full moon day of Kartik**.
- Holy bathing in sacred rivers is considered highly auspicious.

- **Dev Deepawali** in **Varanasi** is the festival's biggest attraction.
- Devotees light thousands of **earthen lamps (Diyas)** on river ghats and temple premises.
- Temples organize **special pujas, bhajans, and devotional processions**.
- Many pilgrims undertake visits to important temples and pilgrimage sites.
- Traditional fairs and cultural programs are organized in several districts.
- Kartik Purnima symbolizes **light, devotion, gratitude, and spiritual awakening**.

9. Eid-ul-Fitr

Eid-ul-Fitr is one of the most important Islamic festivals celebrated across Uttar Pradesh after the completion of the holy month of **Ramadan**. The festival marks the end of a month-long period of fasting, prayer, charity, and self-discipline observed by Muslims worldwide.

- Celebrated after the sighting of the **Shawwal crescent moon**.
- Marks the completion of the holy month of **Ramadan**.
- Muslims offer **special Eid prayers (Namaz)** in mosques and Eidgahs.
- **Zakat-ul-Fitr** (charitable donation) is given before the Eid prayer to help the needy.
- Families prepare traditional dishes such as **Sheer Khurma, Biryani**, and various sweets.
- People wear new clothes and exchange greetings of **"Eid Mubarak."**
- Friends and relatives visit each other and share festive meals.
- Markets witness high demand for clothes, perfumes, sweets, and gifts.
- The festival promotes **brotherhood, generosity, compassion, and unity**.

10. Ram Navami

Ram Navami celebrates the birth of **Lord Rama**, the seventh incarnation of **Lord Vishnu**, and is one of the most sacred festivals in Uttar Pradesh. Since **Ayodhya** is regarded as the birthplace of Lord Rama, the city becomes the focal point of grand religious celebrations attended by lakhs of devotees.

- Celebrated on the **ninth day (Navami)** of **Chaitra Navratri**.
- **Ayodhya** hosts the largest Ram Navami celebrations in Uttar Pradesh.
- Devotees observe fasts and perform special prayers.
- Temples organize continuous recitations of the **Ramayana** and **Ramcharitmanas**.
- Colorful religious processions carrying idols of Lord Rama are taken out.
- Bhajans, kirtans, and cultural performances continue throughout the day.
- Devotees visit important temples dedicated to Lord Rama and Lord Hanuman.
- Community feasts (**Bhandaras**) and charitable activities are organized.
- Pilgrims from across India visit Ayodhya to seek blessings.

Cultural Significance of Festivals in Uttar Pradesh

The festivals of Uttar Pradesh reflect the state's rich cultural heritage, spiritual traditions, and communal harmony, preserving age-old customs while strengthening social bonds and promoting cultural tourism.

- Celebrate the state's **diverse religious and cultural heritage**.
- Promote **unity, brotherhood, and communal harmony** among different communities.
- Preserve **ancient traditions, rituals, and folklore** for future generations.
- Strengthen **family values** and community participation through collective celebrations.
- Showcase **folk music, dance, theatre, and traditional art forms**.
- Boost **religious tourism** by attracting millions of pilgrims and visitors each year.
- Support local artisans, craftsmen, and businesses through increased festive demand.
- Encourage **charity, compassion, and social service** during religious occasions.
- Highlight the historical importance of sacred cities like **Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura, Prayagraj, and Sarnath**.
- Enhance Uttar Pradesh's identity as one of **India's leading cultural and spiritual destinations**.

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