

Festivals of Tripura, Names, Cultural Significance, Traditions, Importance

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The festivals of Tripura reflect the state's rich tribal heritage, indigenous religious traditions, agricultural practices and cultural diversity. While some festivals are associated with specific tribal communities, others have developed into major religious and cultural events involving people from different communities.

List of Major Festivals of Tripura

The major festivals of Tripura are closely associated with traditional deities, the agricultural cycle, community welfare and the cultural heritage of the state.

Garia Puja

Garia Puja is one of the important festivals of Tripura, primarily associated with the Tripuri and other indigenous tribal communities.

- It is celebrated in Baisakh (April), with the main observance traditionally held on the seventh day of Baisakh. The festival is associated with a period of about seven days, beginning around the end of Chaitra.
- The festival is dedicated to **Lord Garia**, traditionally regarded as the deity associated with livestock, wealth, welfare and prosperity.
- A bamboo pole symbolising Lord Garia is worshipped as the central ritual object.
- Devotees offer flowers and garlands and perform traditional rituals to seek the well-being and prosperity of the community.
- Singing, drumming and dancing, including the traditional Garia dance, are important cultural features of the festival.
- Garia Puja reflects the close relationship between tribal religious traditions, livestock, agriculture and community life in Tripura.

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Kharchi Puja

Kharchi Puja is one of the most important religious festivals of Tripura and is associated with the **worship of the Fourteen Gods (Chaturdasha Devata)**.

- It is celebrated annually at the **Chaturdasha Devata Temple** in Khayerpur, near Agartala, during the month of Ashadha (June-July).
- The word Kharchi is derived from khar (sin) and chi (cleaning), and the festival is associated with the ritual purification of the land and the worship of the Earth.
- The festival is traditionally linked with **Ama Pechi**, a period associated with the symbolic menstruation of Mother Earth, after which the Earth is ritually purified.
- The Fourteen Gods, represented by traditional images, are worshipped during the festival. The deities are ceremonially taken for a ritual bath in the **Saidra (Howrah) River**.
- The festival is marked by religious rituals, offerings and a large fair, attracting devotees from different parts of Tripura.

Ker Puja

Ker Puja is a traditional protective ritual of Tripura.

- It is performed for the protection, welfare and prosperity of the community and the region.
- The distinctive feature of Ker Puja is the strict observance of restrictions within a designated boundary around the area of the ritual.
- Traditionally, this period lasts for about two and a half days. During this period, entry and exit are restricted and several activities are prohibited within the protected area.
- These restrictions are intended to preserve the sanctity of the ritual and provide spiritual protection to the community.

Buisu or Buisuk

Buisu, also known as Buisuk, is the **traditional New Year festival of the Tripuri community**.

- It is celebrated around mid-April and marks the beginning of a new seasonal and agricultural cycle.
- The festival is celebrated through traditional rituals, cultural performances and community gatherings.
- It is an important expression of Tripuri cultural identity.

Biju or Bizhu

Biju, also known as Bizhu, is the **traditional New Year festival of the Chakma community**.

- It is celebrated during the spring New Year period.
- The festival is marked by traditional customs, cultural activities and community participation. Biju is distinct from Buisu, which is associated with the Tripuri community, and reflects the cultural traditions of the Chakma people in Tripura.

Hojagiri Festival

- Hojagiri is a major cultural festival associated with the **Reang (Bru) community of Tripura**.
- Its most distinctive feature is the **Hojagiri dance**, traditionally performed by women.
- The performers display remarkable balance and controlled movements while dancing to traditional music.
- The festival plays an important role in preserving the unique cultural identity of the Reang community.

Diwali at Tripura Sundari Temple

- Diwali is celebrated with special religious significance at the **Tripura Sundari Temple** at Matabari in Udaipur.
- The temple is dedicated to **Goddess Tripura Sundari** and is an important centre of the Shakti tradition.
- During Diwali, devotees gather for worship and religious ceremonies, while a large fair is also organised around the temple.
- The festival therefore combines religious observance with a major regional cultural gathering.

Neermahal Water Festival

- The Neermahal Water Festival is held at Rudrasagar Lake near Melaghar.
- The festival is associated with Neermahal, the historic water palace built by **Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya**.
- Boat races on **Rudrasagar Lake** are a major attraction, along with cultural programmes and other water-based activities.

The festival connects Tripura's cultural traditions with its historical architecture and lake ecosystem.

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Pilak Festival

The Pilak Festival is associated with the archaeological site of Pilak in South Tripura.

- **Pilak** is known for its ancient Hindu and Buddhist archaeological remains, broadly dating to the 8th-9th centuries.
- The festival **highlights the archaeological and cultural heritage of the region** through cultural programmes and public participation.

Festivals of Tripura Significance

The festivals of Tripura are important because they preserve the cultural traditions of its diverse communities and connect religious practices with agriculture, ecology, history and community life.

- Garia Puja, Kharchi Puja and Ker Puja preserve the indigenous religious traditions of Tripura.
- Buisu and Biju reflect the distinct New Year traditions of the Tripuri and Chakma communities.
- Hojagiri represents the unique cultural heritage of the Reang (Bru) community.
- Kharchi Puja reflects the indigenous belief in the ritual purification and protection of the Earth.
- Diwali at the Tripura Sundari Temple highlights the state’s importance in the Shakti tradition.
- Neermahal Water Festival links cultural celebrations with Tripura’s architectural and natural heritage.
- Pilak Festival highlights the state’s ancient Hindu-Buddhist archaeological heritage.

Thus, the festivals of Tripura reflect the interaction of tribal traditions, indigenous beliefs, agriculture, religion and historical heritage, making them important for understanding the cultural diversity of Northeast India.

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