

History and Fun facts about Pongal

Some Information about Pongal:-

- Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated by the Tamil community.
- It is a celebration to thank the Sun, Mother Nature and the various farm animals that help to contribute to a bountiful harvest.
- They cook the newly harvested rice to make Pongal(food).
- The 4 types of Pongal are:
 - Bhogi Pongal
 - Thai Pongal
 - Mattu Pongal
 - Kaanum Pongal
- Other Harvest festivals are also celebrated during this time.
 - Makar Sankranti (in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat)
 - Kite Festival (in Gujarat)
 - Lohri (in Punjab)

History of Pongal:-

- Pongal is considered to be an ancient celebration, dating to the Sangam Age from 200 BC to 300 AD.
- It's originally a Dravidian harvest festival but finds mention in Sanskrit Puranas too.
- In the Sangam Age, Pongal was celebrated as Thai Niradal in the month of Margazhi.
- The festival was marked by the worship of goddess Katyayani through fasts and rituals.
- These festivities paved the way to today's Pongal.
- Food and cattle are a vital part of this celebration.
- Pongal welcomes new beginnings.
- The festival is significant as it marks the end of a six-month-long night, according to Hindu mythology.
- With Pongal begins the day of the Gods, according to mythology.
- The first day of the four-day festival is marked by the cutting of paddy.

Facts about Pongal:

- Mattu Pongal is the day celebrated in the name of cows.
- Pongal marks the beginning of the Tamil month called Thai, which is considered an auspicious month.
- It usually falls on the 14th or 15th of January each year.
- According to a legend, it all started when Shiva's bull, Basava, delivered a wrong message to humans.
- Instead of directing humans to have an oil massage and bath every day and to eat once a month, Basava told everyone that they should eat every day and have an oil bath once a month.
- Thereafter, Shiva sent his bull to Earth to help humans to produce more food.

How is Pongal performed:-

- The first day of Pongal is dedicated to Lord Indra, the lord of rain.
- The ritual of Bhogi Mantalu is also observed this day.
- On this day, all the items of the household which are useless are thrown in a bonfire.
- The bonfire is made of cow dung cakes and wood.
- This day is dedicated to the Lord of Sun.
- On this day, families cook a dish, known as Pongal.
- In a clay pot, rice, milk, green gram (mung) jaggery, spices, nuts and dry fruits.
- It is first served to the Lord of Sun then the families and neighbours sit together and share their Pongal with each other.
- Kolam for Pongal is another important aspect of this day.
- On this day, hand-drawn traditional designs are drawn at the entrance of houses with lime powder.
- Kolum is an auspicious drawing that must be done early in the morning and only after a bath.
- The third day, Mattu Pongal is dedicated to cows.
- Cows and cattle are adorned with bells, sheaves of corn, and garlands and worshipped.
- The last day of Pongal is marked as Kaanum (or Kanu).
- On this day, the women of the household carry out a ritual in the name of their brothers and pray for their prosperity.

- There the leftover sweets of Pongal and other food are put out in the courtyard.
- They are set on a washed turmeric leaf along with betel leaves, betel nuts, and sugar cane.

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