

# **MAKAR SANKRANTI**

**(a harvest festival reliant on a solar event)**

- 1. Solar Transition: It marks the transition of the Sun from Zodiac of Sagittarius (dhanu) to Capricorn (Makara). The Sun moves from south (Dakshinayana) to north (Uttarayana) indicating the end of the winter solstice. Hence the festival on this day is dedicated to solar deity (Surya) and is observed as a new beginning. Many multi-day festivals are organised on this occasion all over India.**
- 2. Harvest Celebration: Sankranti is primarily a harvest festival celebrated across India.**

- 3. Cultural Diversity: Celebrated under different names in various regions - Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Lohri in Punjab, and others.**
- 4. Auspicious Period: Considered an auspicious time for new beginnings and rituals.**
- 5. Festive Foods: Special dishes like sesame seeds and jaggery sweets are prepared during Sankranti.**
- 6. Kite Flying: In many regions, kite flying competitions are a popular tradition during this festival.**
- 7. Family Reunion: Sankranti is a time for families to come together, share meals, and celebrate.**

**8. Bonfires and Lohri: Lohri, celebrated in Punjab, involves lighting bonfires to mark the end of winter and the lengthening of days.**

**9. Ritual Baths: Devotees take holy dips in rivers, symbolizing the cleansing of sins.**

**10. Cattle Worship: In some areas, cattle are adorned and worshipped as they play a crucial role in agriculture.**

**11. Uttarayan and Dakshinayan: Sankranti marks the beginning of Uttarayan, the northern journey of the sun.**

**12. Traditional Attire: People often dress in vibrant traditional attire during Sankranti celebrations.**

**13. Exchange of Gifts: Gifting is a common practice during this festival, fostering goodwill and joy.**

**14. Cultural Performances: Folk dances, music, and cultural events are organized to celebrate the occasion.**

**15. Pongal Festival: In Tamil Nadu,**

**16. Pongal, a four-day harvest festival, is celebrated with much fervor.**

**17. Symbol of Unity: Sankranti highlights the unity in diversity, as it is celebrated with different names and customs across India.**

**18. Renewal of Life: The festival symbolizes the renewal of life, growth, and prosperity.**

**19. Agricultural Importance: Farmers express gratitude for the bountiful harvest and pray for a prosperous agricultural year.**

**20. Religious Significance: Many people perform puja and rituals to seek blessings during this auspicious time.**

**21. Joyful Atmosphere: Sankranti creates a joyful and vibrant atmosphere with a mix of cultural, religious, and social celebrations.**

**(Odisha**[\[edit\]](#)**)**

The festival is known as Makara Sankranti in [Odisha](#)<sup>[67]</sup> where people prepare *makara chaula* ([Odia](#): ମକର ଚାଉଳ): uncooked newly harvested rice, banana, [coconut](#), [jaggery](#), [sesame](#), [rasagola](#), Khai/Liaa and [chhena](#) puddings for naivedya to gods and goddesses. The withdrawing winter entails a change in food habits and intake of nourishing and rich food. Therefore, this festival holds traditional cultural significance. It is astronomically important for devotees who worship the sun god at the great Konark temple with fervour and enthusiasm as the sun starts its annual swing northwards.<sup>[68]</sup> According to various Indian calendars, the Sun's movement changes and the days from this day onwards become lengthier and warmer and so the Sun-God is worshiped on this day as a great benefactor. Many individuals at the start of the day perform a ritual bath while fasting.<sup>[68]</sup> Makara Mela (Fun fair) is observed at Dhabaleswar in [Cuttack](#), Hatakeswar at Atri in [Khordha](#), Makara Muni temple in [Balasore](#) and near deities in each district of Odisha. In [Puri](#) special rituals are carried out at the temple of Lord [Jagannath](#).<sup>[68]</sup> In Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Kalahandi, Koraput and Sundargarh where the tribal population is greater, the festival is celebrated with great joy. They celebrate this festival with great enthusiasm, singing, dancing and generally having an enjoyable time. This Makara Sankranti celebration is next to the Odia traditional new year [Maha Vishuva Sankranti](#) which falls in mid April. Tribal groups celebrate with traditional dancing, eating their particular dishes sitting together, and by lighting bonfires.)

From Wikipedia ^