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THE SACRED DIWALI GUIDE

2026

A Practical Guide to Lakshmi Puja, Sacred Mantras, Lakshmi Potli & the Five-Day Festival

VEDANSHU VASHISTHA

AstroVedanshu | Vashistha Gurukul

Complimentary educational edition • Traditions vary by region and family.

Welcome to the Festival of Light

Diwali is not merely a single night of lamps. Across many Hindu households, it is a sequence of observances expressing gratitude, purification, worship, generosity and renewal. This guide brings together accessible home practices without presenting any one regional custom as mandatory.

How to use this guide

• Read the calendar first. Festival dates depend on local sunrise, lunar tithi and regional practice.

• Prepare a clean, peaceful space; keep the puja simple if time or resources are limited.

• Use the Lakshmi potli as a symbolic family tradition, not a promise of financial gain.

• For Vedic recitation, follow a teacher for precise pronunciation and svara.

The five observances at a glance

Observance	Theme
Dhanteras	Dhanvantari, wellbeing, gratitude and auspicious beginnings
Naraka Chaturdashi	Abhyanga snana, cleansing and the victory of light
Lakshmi Puja / Diwali	Ganesh–Lakshmi worship, lamps, hospitality and charity
Govardhan Puja / Annakut	Gratitude for nature, food and Krishna traditions
Bhai Dooj	Affection, family bonds and blessings

A note on dates

This edition is oriented to Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. Always confirm the exact muhurta for your own city and sampradaya.

2026 Diwali Calendar & Preparation

Date (2026)	Festival / planning note
Fri, 6 Nov	Dhanteras (Dhantrayodashi)
Sat, 7 Nov	Kali Chaudas observances in some traditions
Sun, 8 Nov	Naraka Chaturdashi and main Diwali / Lakshmi Puja
Mon, 9 Nov	Govardhan Puja according to Drik Panchang for Jaipur
Tue, 10 Nov	Some communities observe related Pratipada customs
Wed, 11 Nov	Bhai Dooj

Practical shopping and setup checklist

• Cotton wicks, clean diyas, suitable oil or ghee, matches and a stable heat-safe tray.

• Fresh flowers, clean water, rice (akshata), turmeric, kumkum, sandal paste if used, and seasonal fruits.

• Images or murtis of Shri Ganesh and Shri Lakshmi, clean cloth, incense if appropriate, and a simple offering.

• A small red or yellow cloth, thread, a clean coin, uncooked rice, turmeric and optional cowries for the potli.

• A notebook to record household spending, gratitude and a charitable intention for the new season.

Local muhurta reference

Jaipur Dhanteras: 6 November. Main Lakshmi Puja: 8 November. Published puja-time estimates vary slightly by source and method; verify the latest local panchang before sharing a precise time.

Dhanteras: A Simple Home Practice

Dhanteras is traditionally associated with Bhagavan Dhanvantari, health, healing and auspicious preparation. Many families also honour Lakshmi and Kubera. Buying metal utensils, a useful household item or precious metal is a custom, not a compulsory religious expense.

Suggested sequence

1. Clean the entrance and puja area; arrange a stable lamp and fresh water.

2. Offer flowers, a little akshata and a simple food offering to Dhanvantari.

3. Remember the importance of wellbeing and make one practical health commitment.

4. If part of your family tradition, worship Lakshmi and Kubera with gratitude rather than anxiety about wealth.

5. Light a lamp safely. For Yamadeepdaan, follow your household tradition regarding direction and placement.

Short devotional mantra

Om Shri Dhanvantaraye Namah

Meaning: Reverent salutations to Shri Dhanvantari. Repeat calmly, for example 11 times, if this suits your practice.

Meaningful alternatives to expensive purchases

• A useful steel or brass utensil, an account book, a donation or a commitment to responsible saving.

• Avoid borrowing money or overspending solely to meet social expectations.

Dhan-Lakshmi Potli: Complete Materials

Updated from the Vashistha Gurukul reference supplied for this guide

1. Yellow cowries (5 or 15 pieces)

Traditionally used in Lakshmi-related household customs.

2. Gomati Chakra (5 or 11 pieces)

Used symbolically for protection and auspiciousness.

3. Kamal Gatta / lotus seeds (5 or 11)

Traditionally associated with the lotus and Mahalakshmi.

4. Black or yellow turmeric knot

Used in some regional prosperity traditions.

5. Pearl conch or small conch

An optional sacred object in regional practice.

6. Silver, copper or Ashtadhatu coin

A clean coin bearing Ganesh–Lakshmi if available.

7. Red or yellow silk cloth

To wrap and securely tie the potli.

8. Unbroken rice, white sesame and coriander seeds

Small quantities as customary symbolic offerings.

9. Red chirami / gunja seeds

Traditional item; use only enclosed and never handle as food.

Simple preparation and placement

- Clean your hands and prepare a clean, dry cloth. Arrange the items in small, safe quantities.
- Place the ingredients at the centre, fold the cloth and tie the bundle securely.
- Keep it respectfully near the Lakshmi puja setting, away from lamps, children and pets.
- After puja, store it in a clean, dry place as followed in your household tradition.

Safety: Red gunja/chirami seeds can be highly toxic if chewed or damaged. Prefer a symbolic substitute or omit them, especially where children or pets are present. Do not ingest any ritual materials.

This potli is a regional devotional custom, not a guaranteed method of obtaining wealth.

Diwali Night: Lakshmi–Ganesh Puja

Before beginning

Choose a clean, uncluttered area. Place a stable lamp, water, flowers, rice, kumkum, seasonal fruits and an offering. If using a kalash, follow your own family practice; a simplified puja is acceptable for an introductory household observance.

A clear, beginner-friendly sequence

1. Sit quietly, remember your teachers and family deities, and set a sincere sankalpa for wisdom, wellbeing and ethical prosperity.

2. Invoke Shri Ganesh first and offer flowers or akshata.

3. Invoke Shri Mahalakshmi respectfully with flowers, light and a simple offering.

4. Offer water symbolically, kumkum or sandal paste as customary, flowers and naivedya.

5. Recite a familiar Lakshmi mantra, selected verses of Shri Suktam, or a prayer you already know.

6. Perform a short aarti while maintaining fire safety.

7. Conclude with gratitude, share prasad and consider an act of generosity.

Simple mantras for home recitation

Om Gam Ganapataye Namah — salutations to Shri Ganesh.

Om Shrim Mahalakshmyai Namah — salutations to Shri Mahalakshmi.

If you do not know formal Vedic chanting, a simple name-mantra or heartfelt prayer is a sound starting point. Do not improvise complex tantric procedures from social media.

Mahalakshmi Puja: 36-Item Checklist

Complete traditional materials list from your Vashistha Gurukul reference

1. Kumkum
2. Kesar (saffron)
3. Gulal (coloured powder)
4. Mauli / raksha sutra
5. Akshat (unbroken rice)
6. Coconut
7. Cloves
8. Cardamom
9. Sindoor
10. Incense sticks and dhoop
11. Oil or ghee lamp
12. Rui cotton wicks
13. Matches
14. Panchamrit ingredients: milk, curd, ghee, honey, sugar
15. Yajnopavita (sacred thread)
16. Panchmeva (mixed dry fruits)
17. Seasonal fruits
18. Kalash (ritual vessel)

Prepare ingredients in advance. Family traditions may vary, and not every item is essential for a simple home puja.

Mahalakshmi Puja: 36-Item Checklist (cont.)

Complete traditional materials list from your Vashistha Gurukul reference

19. Pure water
20. Ganga water
21. White sandalwood paste
22. Betel leaves
23. Panchapallava (five leaves)
24. Lotus flower; red rose if unavailable
25. Kheer
26. Mishri (rock sugar)
27. Mustard seeds
28. Camphor
29. Yellow cloth
30. New cloth to offer to Mahalakshmi
31. Supari (betel nut)
32. Tulsi leaves (for Bhagavan Vishnu, not as an offering to Lakshmi)
33. Black pepper
34. Guggal resin
35. Shringar items
36. Durva grass or other sattvic naivedya

Tulsi is traditionally offered to Vishnu, not directly to Mahalakshmi. Use a clean, stable setup and keep fire and camphor away from fabrics.

Shri Suktam: Meaning & Chanting

Shri Suktam is a revered hymn to Shri, commonly associated with Mahalakshmi and the Rigvedic Khila tradition. Many editions preserve a fifteen-verse core, while additional verses and recitation conventions differ.

A beginner-friendly way to approach it

1. Sit in a clean, quiet place after preparing the lamp and offering.
2. Begin with a short Ganesh invocation if that is your family practice.
3. Listen to a trained reciter and read from a reliable edition.
4. Recite only the verses you know correctly; avoid rushing or guessing Vedic accents.
5. Finish with a quiet prayer for clarity, gratitude and the wellbeing of all.

Opening verse — readable transliteration

Hiranyavarnam harinim suvarna-rajata-srajam
Chandram hiranmayim Lakshmim Jatavedo ma avaha.

Meaning (summary): The devotee invokes radiant Shri Lakshmi, described through images of gold, silver and moonlight.

Why this guide does not print an improvised full Vedic text

The complete fifteen-verse recitation should be learned from a vetted text with attention to recension and svara. For the complete selected text, see the source-linked reading edition on the final page. This guide provides the opening verse and practical recitation advice rather than presenting an unverified transcription as authoritative.

Mantras, Reflection & Sacred Conduct

A short daily Lakshmi practice

1. Clean the space and light a lamp safely.

2. Offer a flower or a moment of silence.

3. Recite “Om Shrim Mahalakshmyai Namah” 11 times, if comfortable.

4. Reflect on one way to practice generosity and one way to improve financial discipline.

5. Conclude by sharing a kind word, food or help with someone.

Prayers that complement the festival

Om Gam Ganapataye Namah — before beginning a task.

Om Shrim Mahalakshmyai Namah — a simple devotional salutation.

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya — for those observing Krishna-related traditions.

What “prosperity” can mean in daily life

• Maintaining honest accounts, avoiding unnecessary debt and paying people fairly.

• Keeping a peaceful home, showing gratitude and sharing resources.

• Giving priority to health, learning, skill development and steady work.

Respect for different traditions

Some families observe elaborate shodashopachara puja; others offer only flowers, light and prayer. This booklet presents an introductory sequence and does not replace your family priest, guru or established tradition.

Govardhan Puja, Annakut & Bhai Dooj

Govardhan Puja / Annakut

Govardhan Puja recalls Shri Krishna lifting Govardhan and is linked to gratitude for nature, food and protection. Annakut offerings may include a variety of cooked foods. Offer only what your household can prepare hygienically and without waste.

• Clean the puja space and prepare a simple food offering.

• Remember Krishna, Govardhan and the dependence of human life on nature.

• Offer the food with gratitude and share it respectfully.

Bhai Dooj

Bhai Dooj honours sibling affection and family bonds. Traditions may include a tilak, a meal, gifts and prayers for mutual wellbeing. Participation can be adapted to family circumstances and does not depend on costly gifts.

• Offer a respectful greeting and exchange blessings.

• If your custom includes tilak or aarti, perform it with care.

• Share a meal, call distant relatives or offer support to a sibling.

A thoughtful family activity

Ask each person to name one blessing from the past year and one act of service they wish to carry into the next. The festival becomes meaningful through conduct, not merely decoration.

Your Practical Diwali Checklist

One week before

• Confirm dates and local muhurta with a reliable panchang.

• Prepare reusable lamps, a safe fireproof surface and puja supplies.

• Set a realistic shopping and gifting budget.

• Plan a small charitable action.

On Dhanteras

• Remember Dhanvantari and wellbeing.

• Prepare the lamp and puja area.

• Make useful purchases only if needed.

On Diwali

• Complete cleaning and prepare offerings in advance.

• Place the Lakshmi potli away from flame.

• Offer Ganesh–Lakshmi worship, mantra and gratitude.

• Check all diyas and electrical decorations before sleeping.

After Diwali

• Share Annakut or a simple meal.

• Connect with siblings and relatives.

• Store ritual items respectfully and responsibly.

Common questions

Is a Lakshmi potli compulsory? No. It is a regional household custom, not a requirement for every family.

Must I chant all fifteen verses? No. Recite what you have learned correctly; listen or read devotionally while learning.

What if I cannot buy gold or silver? There is no need to overspend. Simplicity and sincerity are central to the approach in this guide.

A Closing Prayer & Next Steps

May the light of Diwali encourage wisdom in decisions, compassion in relationships, discipline in finances and gratitude in daily life. May prosperity be understood not only as possessions, but also as good conduct, learning and service.

Your five-day intention

Dhanteras: Care for health and household wellbeing.

Naraka Chaturdashi: Release one unhelpful habit.

Diwali: Cultivate gratitude and ethical prosperity.

Govardhan: Respect food, nature and community.

Bhai Dooj: Strengthen family bonds.

Personal guidance

For a personalized Vedic astrology consultation or information about traditional spiritual learning, contact:

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Selected reference reading

Drik Panchang — Diwali calendar and local observances

Shri Suktam — selected fifteen-verse core, text and translation

Editorial note: Festival dates and customs differ across regions. Sanskrit transliteration here is simplified for accessibility and is not a substitute for Vedic svara instruction. © 2026 Vedanshu Vashistha. For personal educational use.