HAPPY Ugadi

FESTIVAL OF TASTES AND HAPPINESS

Ugadi

Ugadi ushers in a celebratory mood in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. For the people of these states, Ugadi symbolises the beginning of the New Year as per the Hindu calendar. It is an occasion that is traditionally celebrated with day-long festivities. People undertake new ventures during Ugadi as it is considered to be an auspicious time for doing so.

Origin of the term 'Ugadi'

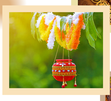
Ugadi is believed to have originated from the Sanskrit word Yugadi. The term Yugadi is the merger of two words, Yuga (meaning period or age) and Adi (meaning the beginning). So, Ugadi or Yugadi literally translates to 'the commencement of a new period or new age'.

Significance of 'Ugadi'

The occasion of Ugadi holds a lot of significance in the lives of the people, which stems from ancient beliefs and practices. The fact that Ugadi is still celebrated with so much fervour and enthusiasm goes on to show its relevance even in today's time and age.

Preparations for Ugadi

"A lot of preparations are carried out to celebrate the festival. The preparations generally begin a few days in advance. People clean and wash their houses for the occasion. New clothes are bought to be worn on that day. To celebrate the spirit of Ugadi, several other items are purchased and kept ready by the people. They make preparations for the special cuisines to be cooked on the day."



Ugadi

Gudi Padwa

The celebration of Ugadi is marked by enthusiasm and cheerfulness. On the special day, people wake up before sunrise and get ready after taking a ceremonial oil-bath, as it is a prevalent custom for Ugadi. Even the idols of gods and goddesses are given an oil-bath on this day.

Temples, homes, and shops are decorated with flowers and mango leaves, especially the entrances. Making colourful floral patterns or rangolis in front of the houses is a common practice on the day.

Family members dress up in new clothes and gather to worship and pray together on this day. Prayers are offered to the Sun God before consuming Bevu Bella, a dish that holds much significance in Ugadi celebrations. People visit temples to make offerings and seek blessings from the Almighty and start the New Year on a happy and positive note.

Special dishes are cooked for the occasion and enjoyed by families. Sweets and eatables are shared with friends and neighbours.
An important aspect of the occasion is the Panchanga Shravanam or hearing of the Panchanga. It is read by the priests at the temples or by the eldest member of the family at home. On this day, based on the moon sign, predictions and annual forecasts for the New Year are also made by the learned pundits and astrologers.

Starting of new ventures on the day

Many new ventures are started on Ugadi. People commence the construction of their new houses, undertake new business endeavours, make important purchases, and sign deals on this significant day.

Bevu Bella - A dish celebrating the six flavours of life

On the occasion of Ugadi, people lay emphasis on preparing a special dish that incorporates the six different and distinct flavours of life. This dish is called Bevu Bella or Ugadi Pachadi. Bevu means bitterness and Bella means sweetness. This dish is made from a mixture of neem flowers or buds, tamarind, Chilli powder, unripe mango, salt, and jaggery. It is the first dish to be had on the Ugadi day.
It is a symbolic dish that signifies the essence of life through its ingredients. Each ingredient in this dish signifies a different taste:

- Neem flowers are for a bitter taste that symbolizes the difficulties in life
- Chilli powder is for a spicy taste that symbolizes angry or upsetting moments
- Tamarind is for a sour taste that symbolizes challenges
- Unripe mango is for a tangy taste that symbolizes surprises
- Jaggery is for a sweet taste that symbolizes moments of happiness
- Salt denotes that life is a mixture of different experiences, adding in sweetness

Bevu Bella holds a lot of significance and is the first thing that devotees eat on Ugadi. Apart from Bevu Bella, several other dishes are prepared to mark the festivities of Ugadi.
Thus, the festival is celebrated to welcome a new start in life every year with the expectations of happiness, well-being, growth, and prosperity.