

Ganesh Chaturthi

Ganesh Chaturthi (Marathi: गणेश चतुर्थी, Konkani: चवथ, Hindi: गणेश चतुर्थी, Malayalam: വിനായക ചതുർത്ഥി, Tamil: விநாயகர் சதுர்த்தி, Kannada: ಗಣೇಶ ಚತುರ್ಥಿ, Telugu: వినాయక చవోత్), also known as **Vinayaka Chaturthi**, also called **Vinayagar** in Tamil Nadu, is the festival celebrated on the occasion of birthday of Lord Ganesha, the son of Shiva and Parvati, who is believed to bestow his presence on earth for all his devotees in the duration of this festival. It is the day Shiva declared his son Ganesha as superior to all the gods. Ganesha is widely worshipped as the god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune and traditionally invoked at the beginning of any new venture or at the start of travel.

The festival, also known as **Ganeshotsav** ("festival of Ganesha") is observed in the Hindu calendar month of Bhaadrapada, starting on the shuklachaturthi (fourth day of the waxing moon period). The date usually falls between 19 August and 15 September. The festival lasts for 10 days, ending on Anant Chaturdashi (fourteenth day of the waxing moon period).

While celebrated all over India, it is most elaborate in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Goa. Outside India, it is celebrated widely in Nepal and by Hindus in the Canada, Mauritius, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma and Fiji.



Ganesha image worshipped in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Legend

Traditional stories tell that Lord Ganesha was created by goddess Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva. Parvati created Ganesha out of sandalwood paste that she used for her bath and breathed life into the figure. She then set him to stand guard at her door while she bathed. Lord Shiva returned and, as Ganesha didn't know him, he didn't allow him to enter. Lord Shiva became enraged, severed the head of the child and entered his house. After realizing that he had beheaded his own son, Lord Shiva fixed the head of an elephant in place of Ganesha's head. In this way, Lord Ganesha came to be depicted as the elephant-headed God.



Ganesh Visarjan in Mumbai

Date

The festival is observed in the Hindu calendar month of Bhaadrapada, starting on the shukla chaturthi (fourth day of the waxing moon). The date usually falls between 19 August and 15 September. The festival lasts for 10 or 12 days, ending on Anant Chaturdashi. This festival is observed in the lunar month of *bhadrapada shukla paksha chaturthi madhyahana vyapini purvavidha*. If Chaturthi prevails on both days, the first day should be observed. Even if chaturthi prevails for the complete duration of *madhyahana* on the second day, if it prevails on the previous day's madhyahana period even for one *ghatika* (24 minutes), the previous day should be observed.