

## Pongal

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Art & Culture*

### Why in news?

The Social Justice Monitoring Committee of the Tamil Nadu government made a strong case for including Pongal in the list of festivals recognised by UNESCO.

- Pongal is a **harvest festival** celebrated by the **Tamil community** in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- It is a celebration to thank the Sun, Mother Nature and the various farm animals that help contribute to a bountiful harvest.
- Meaning** - The word Pongal comes from pongu ("to boil over"), symbolising prosperity.
- Dates** - It is celebrated annually from 13 to 16 January, aligning with the **Sun's northward journey (Uttarayan)**.
- 4 Days of Celebration** -

Name	Significance	Tradition
<b>Bhogi Pongal</b>	Old materials discarded, new items acquired	Symbolises renewal and fresh beginnings
<b>Thai / Surya Pongal</b>	Worship of the Sun God	Kolams (decorative patterns) are drawn at entrances. Marks the start of the Tamil month Thai (auspicious). Sweet Pongal dish prepared with rice, milk, and jaggery.
<b>Mattu Pongal</b>	Worship of cattle for their role in farming.	Cattle decorated with polished horns, garlands, beads, and bells. Symbol of gratitude for agricultural work.
<b>Kaanum Pongal</b>	Families gather for grand meals.	<b>Folk dances</b> - Mayilattam, Kolattam. <b>Games</b> - Jallikattu, Vazhukku Maram, Mallar Kambam, Uri Adithal, Kabaddi. <b>Pongal Mela</b> - fairs with sarees, jewellery, handicrafts, pottery

- It is also celebrated among the **Tamil diaspora** across the world, especially in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore.
- Celebrations in other states** - Thai Pongal coincides with harvest festivals celebrated across various states under different names, such as
  - **Makar Sankranti** - Andhra Pradesh & Telangana,

- **Lohri** - Punjab,
- **Sankranti** - Karnataka, and
- **Magh Bihu** - Assam, etc.
- **Cultural Significance** - It is a deeply cultural event, rooted in agriculture, but also emphasises community, familial bonds, and gratitude for nature's bounty.

*Various festivals of India recognised by UNESCO - Ramman (2009), religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas; Kumbh Mela (2017); Durga Puja (2021); Deepavali (2025).*

## References

1. [The Hindu | Book on fairs & festivals of Tamil Nadu](#)
2. [TN Tourism | Pongal](#)
3. [Indian Heritage Centre | Pongal](#)