

Celebrate Holi in India

Pretend for a minute that you're walking down a street in India. Watch out! Someone is sneaking up on you. Before you know it, the air is filled with colored powders, and now you're a sticky mess of green and orange. But you don't mind at all. It's *Holi*!

Every year, the people of India look forward to Holi (pronounced "holy.") This is an exciting and sometimes wild celebration to welcome spring. The festival can last for days. On the last day, kids and adults alike throw neon-colored powder on anyone in sight! They throw dry powder by the fistful. Sometimes kids use sprayers and even throw balloons filled with colored water to get their targets.

This sounds like fun! But why do they do this? The colors signify that the world is bursting with brightness after the gloomy winter. By the time the fun is over, colored powder is *everywhere*, and people are covered in blue, yellow, pink and other bright shades. It's no wonder this celebration is also called the Festival of Colors!

The festival of Holi has been celebrated in India since ancient times. It takes place during the full moon in late February or early March. Huge bonfires are lit at night. Groups dance to traditional folk music, and people sing special Holi songs. Sweet foods and drinks prepared only during this time are eaten. People visit each other. If they have disagreements, they forgive and forget.

Holi is the only time Indian children have permission to get filthy! People from all over the world come to India to be part of Holi. Maybe someday you'll be there during Holi. Then YOU can walk around looking like a paint-splattered canvas!



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