

HINDU CALENDAR

MONTHS:

There are 12 months in the Hindu Calendar. Each month starts with the Sun aligning with the distant cluster of stars called **Rasi** (zodiac sign) when we look from our moving earth. Our orbit has twelve such **Rasis** – zodiac signs from **Aeries – Mesham** to **Piseces – meenam**. Sun's relative movement through each zodiac sign corresponds to one specific month in our Hindu Calendar.

SUN TRANSITS ZODIAC SIGN	HINDU/TAMIL MONTH	APPROXIMATE ENGLISH MONTH	NUMBER OF DAYS
Aries Mesham	Chittirai	14 April to 13 May	31 days
Taurus Vrishabha(m)/ Idapam	Vaikaasi	14 May to 14 June	32 days
Gemini Mithuna(m)	Aani	15 June to 15 July	31 days
Cancer Kataka(m)	Aadi	16 July to 16 August	32 days
Leo Simha/ Simma	AavaNi	17 August to 16 September	31 days
Virgo Kanya/kanni	Purattaasi	17 September to 16 October	30 days
Libra Tula(m)	Aippasi	17 October to 15 November	30 days
Scorpio	Kaartikai	16 November to	30 days

Vrishchika(m)		15 December	
Sagittarius Dhanu(s)	Maargazhi	16 December to 13 January	30 days
Capricorn Makara(m)	Thai	14 January to 12 February	29 days
Aquarius Kumbha(m)	Maasi	13 February to 13 March	30 days
Pisces Meena(m)	Panguni	14 March to 13 April	30 days

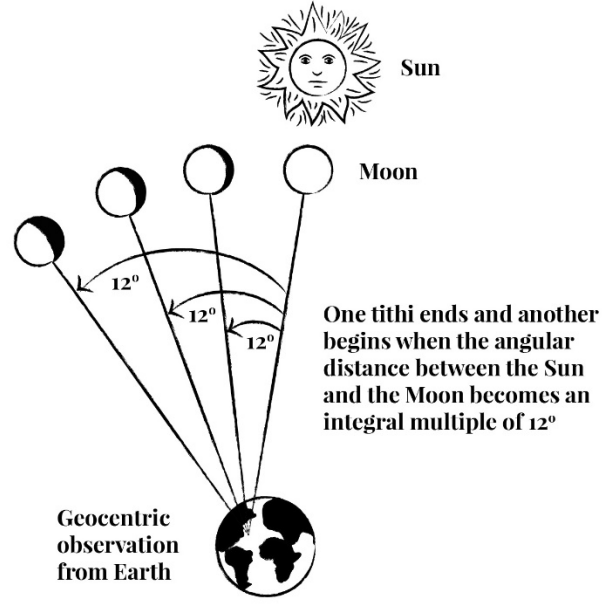
PAKSHA/ FORTNIGHTS

- Paksha refers to a fortnight or a lunar phase in a month.
- Each fortnight has fifteen days culminating in either a New-moon day **Amavasya** or a Full-moon day **Pournami**.
- **KP- Krishna Paksha** – the darker fortnight of the waning moon period of the month concluding on the new-moon day – **Amavasya**.
- **SP – Shukla Paksha** – the brighter fortnight of the waxing moon period of the month concluding on the full-moon day – **Pournami**.

TITHI/LUNAR DAY

Tithi denotes day. Every day of the Hindu calendar is called **Tithi**. From this originates the word *datus* in Latin, *date* in English and **thikathi/ திகதி** in Tamil. Each day/ **Tithi** has a name.

Tithi is actually the varying time durations to pass every 12 degrees between the longitudinal lines of the moon and the sun in the zodiac when we look from the earth. This time varies from 19 to 26 hours.



LUNAR DAY	KRISHNA PAKSHA	SHUKLA PAKSHA
1.	Prathamai KP1	Prathamai SP1
2.	Dwitiya KP2	Dwitiya SP2
3.	Tritiya KP3	Tritiya SP3
4.	Chaturthi KP4	Chaturthi SP4
5.	Panchami KP5	Panchami SP5
6.	Shasti KP6	Shasti SP6
7.	Saptami KP7	Saptami SP7
8.	Ashtami KP8	Ashtami SP8
9.	Navami KP9	Navami SP9
10.	Dasami KP10	Dasami SP10
11.	Ekadasi KP11	Ekadasi SP11
12.	Dwadasi KP12	Dwadasi SP12
13.	Trayodasi KP13	Trayodasi SP13

14.	Chaturdasi KP14	Chadurdasi SP14
15.	New-Moon	Full-Moon

NOTE: Numbers in Sanskrit

1. Eka – one
2. Twi/Dwi – two
3. Tri – three (triangle/ trident)
4. Chatur – four
5. Pancha – five
6. Shasta – six (kanda sashti)
7. Sapta – seven (sapta swaram)
8. Ashta – eight (ashta Lakshmi)
9. Nava – nine (nava ratri/ nava dhanyam)
10. Dasa – ten (from this comes the decimal system contributed by Hindus)
11. Eka-dasa – eleven
12. Dwa-dasa – twelve
13. Trio-dasa – thirteen
14. Chatur-dasa – fourteen

NAKSHATRA / STAR

Nakshatra is a star or group of stars. Constellation – group of stars in the far distance of many light-years away. There are 27 such nakshatras traditionally named after its apparent form when we look from the earth and from mythological stories related to them.

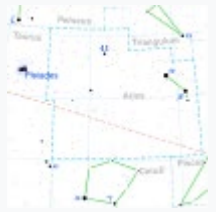
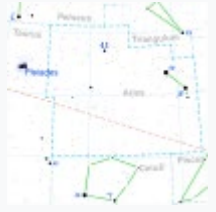


The closest star with the moon when we look from here is the star of the day in 27-day cycle.

But actually, the field of the distant star(s) through which the moon's passage is aligned when we look from the earth is the star of the day.

The stars are just markers of time, like numbers on a clock through which the minute and hour hands (moon) pass.







The 27 stars are considered as the daughters of **Daksha** (father of Uma) given in marriage to **Chandra** (moon). The wife he is with each day is the star of the day as per the mythology.

Let's see the names of these 27 stars and their astronomical names.

No.	Hindu Name of the STAR	Corresponding Astronomical STAR	Image
N1	Atchuvini / <u>Aśvini</u> Horse head	<u>β</u> and <u>γ Arietis</u>	
N2	<u>Bharani</u> Tripod the bearer	<u>35, 39, and 41 Arietis</u>	
N3	Kaarththigai/ <u>Krttikā</u> Personified as the six maidens who nursed Murugan . He got the name Kārttikeyan .	<u>Pleiades</u>	
N4	<u>Rohini</u> The red one, Favourite wife of Chandra the moon	<u>Aldebaran</u>	

N5	Mirugaseeridam/ <u>Mrgaśirā</u> The deer's (animal) head	<u>λ, φ Orionis</u>	
N6	Thiruvaathirai/ Ādrā The moist one	<u>Betelgeuse</u>	
N7	Punarpoosam/ <u>Punarvasu</u> Dual The two restorers of goods Two chariots	<u>Castor and Pollux</u>	
N8	Poosam/ <u>Puṣya</u>/Tishya The nourisher	<u>γ, δ and θ Cancri</u>	
N9	Ayiliyam/ <u>Āśleṣā</u> The embrace	<u>δ, ε, η, ρ, and σ Hydrae</u>	
N10	Makam/ <u>Maghā</u> The bountiful	<u>Regulus</u>	
N11	Pooram/ <u>Pūrva Phalgunī</u> First reddish one	<u>δ and θ Leonis</u>	
N12	Uththaram/ <u>Uttara Phalgunī</u> Second reddish one	<u>Denebola</u>	
N13	Aththgam/ <u>Hasta</u> The hand	<u>α, β, γ, δ and ε Corvi</u>	

N14	Chiththirai/ <u>Chitrā</u> The bright one	<u>Spica</u>	
N15	Swaathi/ <u>Svātī</u> Su-Ati (Sanskrit) - Very good	<u>Arcturus</u>	
N16	Visaakam/ <u>Viśākhā</u> Forked, having branches	<u>α, β, γ and ι Librae</u>	
N17	Anusham/ <u>Anurādhā</u> Following <i>rādhā</i>	<u>β, δ and π Scorpionis</u>	
N18	Kettai/ <u>Jyestha</u> The eldest, Most excellent	<u>α, σ, and τ Scorpionis</u>	
N19	Moolam/ <u>Mūlā</u> The root	<u>ε, ζ, η, θ, ι, κ, λ, μ and ν Scorpionis</u>	
N20	Pooradam/ <u>Pūrva Āśādhā</u> First of the <i>aśādhā</i> ", <i>aśādhā</i> -"the invincible one	<u>δ and ε Sagittarii</u>	
N21	Uththaraadam/ <u>Uttara Āśādhā</u> Later invincible	<u>ζ and σ Sagittarii</u>	

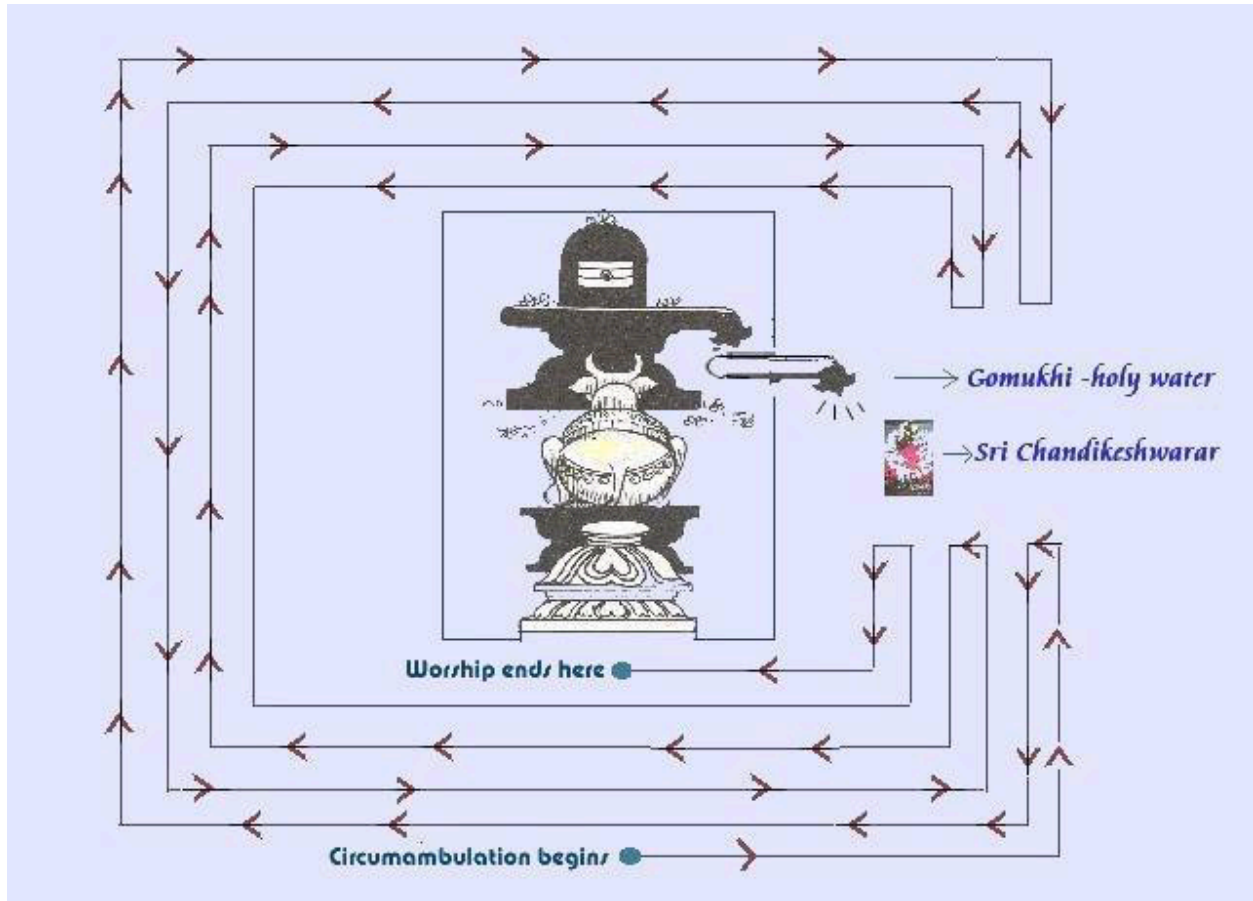
N23	Thiruvonam/ Śravana	α, β and γ Aquilae	
N24	Aviddam/ Dhanisthā Most famous, Swiftest	α, β, γ and δ Delphini	
N25	Chathayam/ Śatabhīṣa Comprising a hundred physicians (chatha – hundred)	Sadachbia	
N26	Poorattaathi/ Pūrva Bhādrapada The first of the blessed feet	α and β Pegasi	
N27	Uththarattaathi/ Uttara Bhādrapada The second of the blessed feet	γ Pegasi and α Andromedae	
28	Revatī Prosperous	ζ Piscium	

FASTS OF THE MONTH

Pradosham (KPT-13 and SPT-13)

Pradosham is a bimonthly observation observed on the thirteenth lunar day—**trayodasi** of every fortnight, both on the brighter and darker halves of each month. **Pradosham** on Saturdays is considered very special. It is called **Sani-Pradosham**. **Pradosha** worship is done in the

evening twilight 1.5 hours before and after sunset. This 3-hour period is called **pradosha kaalam**. This is the most suited optimal time for worship of Siva in Sivan temples. Siva devotees fast on this day (**Pradosha vrata**) until after this period and go to Sivan temple to worship Him by getting His view in between the two horns of the Nandi at the front. Special pujas are conducted in temples during this time. Devotees go round in the temple by **Soma-Sutra-PradakshiNa**, a special way of going round the temple during the **pradosha** time. It signifies the event of the celestials and demons running back and forth in chaos to escape from the effect of the **Haala-haalaa** poison that came when they churned the milky ocean to get the immortal nectar. Siva drank this deadly poison to save them and it stayed at his throat giving him a blue mark on his neck. And so he is called **Neelakandan**, meaning blue neck God. The poison didn't do any harm to Him as he is the only one without death. That why he is God. All other gods including **Brahma** and **VishNu** are subject to an end one day. Siva is the only one that is everlasting.



TRY IT YOURSELF

1. FIND THE PRADHOSHAM DAY OF THIS MONTH
2. TRY SOMA-SUTRA-PRADAKSHINA YOURSELF
3. NARRATE THE STORY OF CHURNING OF MILKY OCEAN

Chaturthi (KPT-4 and SPT-4)

Ganesha's special day Chaturthi is the bimonthly observation on the fourth lunar day of both the brighter and darker fortnights of each month.

Chaturthi on the **Krishna Paksha (KP)**, the darker fortnight of the month corresponding to the waning moon, is called **chankada-kara-chaturthi**, meaning the one who removes all obstacles.

Scutch Grass/ **Aruku** grass is very special for **Pillaiyar**. Devotees observe fasting during the day and worship **Pillaiyar** with **arukam** grass.



He is offered coconuts, fruits, **modakam** (sweet mung dhal pie), **Pongal** (sweet rice), **sundal** (boiled chick peas) and many more. Of course, all these tasty food items are distributed as **Prasadam (sanctified food)** at the end of the Puja.

Among all Chaturthi days, the one on the brighter fortnight in the month of **AavaNi** (Mid- August to Mid-September) is very special festival for **Ganesha**. This is called **Ganesha Chaturthi** or **AavaNi Chaturthi**. This is celebrated as a grand festival in many places. In addition to scutch/ **aruku** grass, devotees worship **Ganesha** with Milkweed/ **Erukku** flower.



TRY IT YOURSELF

1. TRY MAKING A MODEL OF PILLAIYAR OUT OF TUMERIC PASTE AND ARUKU GRASS.
2. TRY TO WORSHIP PILLAIYAR BY KNOCKING ON THE FOREHEAD AND MAKING THOPPUKARANAM (SUPER BRAIN YOGA) BY YOURSELF

FEASTS OF THE MONTH

Thai Pongal

Thai pongal is celebrated on the 1st day of the month of **Thai**. On this day, the sun God is honoured as the “giver of all good fortunes”. The **pongal** (sweet rice) is offered to the Sun at the times of sunrise. Thai Pongal is also celebrated as the festival of Farmers.



People get up early in the morning, take a bath, draw decorative **kolam**, keep a **niraikudam**, betel leaves (**vettrilai**) and areca nuts (**paakku**), fruits, coconuts, flowers and a **Pillaiyaar** model (ball made out of turmeric powder paste and decorated with **aruku** grass) at the entrance.

The **chakkarai pongal** is then cooked in a pot at the entrance and offered to the Sun, and then **Thevaaram songs** are recited. If cooking at the entrance is not possible, then it can be cooked in the kitchen and offered to the sun.



The pot is decorated by tying turmeric leaves/ plants around it. The **pongali** pot is filled with milk and water and placed over the fire by the eldest member of the family. The overflow of the boiling milk is considered auspicious for the coming year.

The newly harvested rice and moong dhal mixture are taken by both hands and rotated over the pot three times, and then dropped into the pot. This process is repeated three times. Afterwards the remaining mixture is added. When the **pongali** is cooked it is served on banana leaves and offered to Sun God first. Then it is shared and ate with family and friends.

Each family has a slightly unique way of making Pongal influenced by family and regional traditions. So, they share their Pongal with neighbours and friends even though everyone is making Pongal on that day.

Mattu Pongal : People show their gratitude towards the cattle, especially the cow, by celebrating ‘**Mattu Pongal**’ on the next day. Cattle enjoy a good bath or shower on this day and are decorated with pieces of colourful cloths, turmeric, **kumkumam**, **chanthanam** and garlands. The **pongal** is cooked in the cowshed and then offered to the cows.

Jallikattu: An adventurous and dangerous sport of bull fighting called **Jallikattu** is celebrated in many parts of Tamil Nadu, India. Bullock Cart races are observed in Jaffna.



TRY IT YOURSELF:

- 1. TRY MAKING KOLAM BY YOURSELF**
- 2. TRY TO MAKE PONGAL AS A GROUP IN THE CLASS**

SPECIAL DAYS

Thai poosam (N-8)

This festival falls on the star **Poosam** after Pongal, and is celebrated for both Lord Siva and **Murugan**. As this is an auspicious day, people start new ventures on this day, like learning the alphabet – **Edu thodakkuthal** for kids, starting new business, feeding the child with their first solid food – **choru theethuthal**, piercing the child's ears for the first time, etc.

Murugan temples all over the world celebrate this as a big festival. Devotees carry **kaavadi** and go dancing to the temple.



Thai Amavaasai (New-moon)

New-moon day in the month of **Thai** is considered sacred and auspicious for personal spiritual sadhanas such as chanting

mantras, meditation in solitude and initiation into mantras etc. Doing these personal spiritual observances on these days will bestow rapid results and realization in their spiritual path.

Abhirami Pattar Day:

This is the day **Ambal** revealed herself to **Abirami Pattar** and made the full-moon appear on the sky on this new-moon day.



TRY IT YOURSELF:

- 1. READ THE HISTORY OF ABHIRAMI PATTAR**
- 2. TRY FEW SONGS FROM ABHIRAMI ANDHAADHI**
- 3. TRY WATCHING THE MOVIE SCENE “ABHIRAMI PATTAR”**

Guru Pujas

Thiruneelakanda Nayanaar:

Thiruneelakandar Nayanaar Guru Puja is on the Star of Visaakam (N-16) in the month of Thai.

Thiruneelakandar is one of the 63 Saiva saints. He was from **Chidamparam**, Tamil Nadu. His wife swore in the name of Siva, saying not to touch US, when she came to know he was cheating on her. From that day he led the life of complete celibacy in secret. Years passed, and one day a wandering mendicant ascetic came their way. They couldn't locate his begging bowl he entrusted with them before. He accused them of stealing it and refused any replacements or compensation. He took them to the local courts composed by local elders and demand that the couple should take a dip in the temple pond by holding their hands to prove they are not the thieves. When the couple tried to hold a stick between them, he refused. Ultimately the couple took a dip by holding the hands of each other and emerged to everyone's surprise with regained youth. They led a fresh happy life and at the end they attained the Holy feet of Lord Siva.

Kannappa Nayanaar Guru Puja:

Kannappa Nayanaar Guru Puja is on the star of Mirugaseeridam in the month of Thai.

He was one of the 63 Saiva Saints who has record of attaining **mukti**, the liberation within just six days of his spiritual

practice.

He was born as a prince in a hunter tribe in a small village, **Uduppur**, which is in **Andra Pradesh**. When he went on a hunting expedition with his group of friends, he accidentally found the Sivalingam on the top of **Kalahasti** hill and fell in love at first sight. He ignored his friend's request to return, instead he started taking care of the deity in his own way. He hunted for meat and barbequed them before offering. He even tasted the pieces for himself to see if they were well-done and tasty before offering. He carried water in his mouth and spit it on the deity to wash it. He brought the flowers in his hair tuft to decorate the deity. He was guarding the deity at night time in full vigil. On the sixth day he noticed blood oozing from the eyes of the deity. Applying various medicinal herbs of his knowledge didn't work. At last, he dug up his own eye with his knife and applied it to the deity to arrest the bleeding. When he tried to do the same for the other eye lord Siva appeared and stopped him. This may be the first attempt of an organ transplant in the medical history. He attained Mukti on the same day.

TRY IT YOURSELF:

1. TRY WATCHING THE SCEANES FROM KANNAPPAR

Apputhiyadigal Nayanaar :

Apputhi adikaL Guru Puja is on the star of **Sathayam** (N-24) in the month of **Thai**.

He was a Brahmin living in **Thingalur**, Tamil Nadu. He was totally devoted to **Thirunavukkarasa nayanar**, who was living

at his time, and fell in love with him without even seeing him personally. He named all his charities in the name of **Thirunavukarasu** and named his kids also as **Thirunavukarasu - elder** and **Thirunavukarasu - younger**. One day when the **Thirunavukarasu nayanar** himself came to his house, his son died from snake bite. He hid this information to the visiting saint and invited him to eat. When the saint came to know about the death of his son, he prayed to Siva and resurrected the son to life.

TRY IT YOURSELF:

1. TRY WATCHING THE SCENE OF “APPUTHI ADIKAL” FROM THE MOVIE.

Chandeswara Nayanaar:

Chandesa Nayanaar Guru puja is on the star of **Uththaram (N-12)** in the month of **Thai**.

He was a Brahmin boy from **Thirucheingnalur**, in Tamil Nadu. His real name is **Visaara Sharma**. He was tending to the cows out of love. His father, hearing that he was wasting the milk from the cows by playing, went there. He was doing Siva Puja for the Lingam he made out of sand and pouring milk on that as **abishegam**, the ablution. His father got angry seeing this, intervened in his puja and started smashing the things by his foot. **Visaara Sharma**, who was completely absorbed into worship, took a near by stick and threw it at him. It transformed into an axe and cut of his father’s leg. Siva appeared before him and bestowed him with the post of **Candesa**, the deity who is the

head of his devotees with the exclusive right of ownership for any thing already offered to Siva, including **abishegam** (bathing water), food, garland, flowers etc.

We worship **Candesar** at the end of our worship in Temples and at home before taking **prasadam** – the sanctified items of **thiruneeru**, food etc. Getting these without worshipping **Candesar** is equal to theft of Siva's belongings.

Arivattaaya Nayanaar:

Arivattaaya Nayanaar Guru puja is on the star of Thiruvaathirai (N-6) in the month of Thai.

Arivattaaya Nayanaar was an agriculturist from the village of **Ganamangalam** in Tamil Nadu. He had the routine of taking food items to the temple to offer to the God. He continued this even when he was hit by extreme poverty. One day he was walking hungry with the collected food items to the temple and he got dizzy and fell. All the food items were scattered on the ground. Seeing this and thinking of his inability to replace them with new food, he tried to kill himself by cutting off his throat. The hand of Siva appeared piercing the ground and stopped him. He even heard the crunching noise of Siva eating his mango pickle.

Kalikamba Nayanaar:

Kalikamba Nayanaar Guru puja is on the star of Revathi(N-27) in the month of Thai.

He hailed from a merchant family and lived in a village **Pennakadam** in Tamil Nadu. One of his previous servants came as a devotee when he hosted a feast for devotees. Seeing him among the devotees his wife hesitated to wash off his feet as they did for other devotees. He got angry and cut off the hands of his wife, who humiliated the devotee. .