

## Thai Pongal

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*Pongal* is the **Thanks Giving festival** of Tamils celebrated on the very first day of the Tamil month of *Thai*. People start to celebrate this even before this day and continued to celebrate for few more days following. During this festival, families get together and exchange gifts.



Crops like rice, sugarcane, turmeric, etc are harvested during this month. The term *Pongal* in Tamil means overflowing. It signifies abundance of everything. This is the only Hindu festival which follows a solar calendar. In this festival, special offerings are made to the **sun God** to bestow his blessings.

People also regard *Pongal* as highly auspicious as it marks the beginning of *Uttarayana*/ Summer solstice - the journey of the sun towards northwards in the orbit. It is also called *Magara Sankranti* as the Sun enters the zodiac sign *Magara*/ **Capricorn**.

The first day of Pongal is observed the day before the actual *Pongal* known as *Bhogi Pongal*. It is celebrated to worship Lord Indra who bestows good harvest. On this day, people clean their houses, discard their old clothes and utensils and buy new clothes and new vessels.

The actual day of the *Pongal* festival is known *Thai Pongal*. This day is dedicated to honour **the sun God, Surya**.

The third day of *Pongal* is known as *Mattu Pongal*. On this day, cattle used for agricultural purposes are bathed, decorated and honored with stumpy meals.



The following days are called as *Kaanum Pongal*. On these days Friends and family members visit each other and exchange gifts.