Ugadi/Gudi Padwa

In support of our staff, students, faculty and postdocs, this information is offered as a resource about the Hindu observance of Ugadi/Gudi Padwa.

APRIL 6, 2019

HISTORY AND MEANING

Gudi Padwa, or Samvatsar Padvo, is celebrated by Maharashtrians and Konkanis in India as the first day of the year. On this day, new Samvatsara, which is a cycle of 60 years, starts. All 60 Samvatsara are identified by a unique name. Gudi Padwa is celebrated as Ugadi by the people of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Both Gudi Padwa and Ugadi are celebrated on the same day. Gudi Padwa is the Marathi New Year, according to the lunisolar calendar. Lunisolar calendars consider the positions of the moon and sun to divide the year into months and days. The counterpart of the lunisolar calendar is the solar calendar, which considers only the position of the sun to divide the year into months and days. Because of that, Hindu New Year is celebrated twice in the year, with different names.¹

Ugadi is celebrated as a festival of prosperity. Along with the onset of the year, it signifies the vibrancy of nature and the spring. People string leaves from mango trees into garlands and tie them to the entryways to their homes. Ugadi is also a day of prayer, as Hindus pray for success in the new year.

Special Ugadi traditions include the naming of the year: people gather in temples as priests recite the almanac for the new year. In addition, Ugadi celebrations always contain Ugadi pachadi. This dish is prepared with the following six (6) flavors, symbolizing the range of emotions that the new year will bring.

- Jaggery (sweet): happiness
- Chili powder (spicy): anger
- Salt (salty): passion
- Tamarind (sour): challenge
- Neem flowers (bitter): hardship
- Raw mango (tangy): surprise


For more information, please contact Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at edi@vanderbilt.edu. For more information on the university’s policy on religious holy days and observances, contact the Office of the University Chaplain and Religious Life at religiouslife@vanderbilt.edu or Human Resources at human.resources@vanderbilt.edu.
Religious and Cultural Observances

Ugadi/Gudi Padwa

Typical Observances

• The day begins with a ritual oil bath followed by prayers.
• Eating neem leaves is suggested by scriptures.

Tips for Supporting the Vanderbilt Community.

• Community members in observance may want to share the New Year’s food, rituals or well wishes.
• While students are not automatically excused from class for this observance, they may work with their course instructors to make accommodations. Graduate and professional students must refer to their own school and departmental vacation policies and calendars for more specific information.
• Staff members may request paid time off for this observance. Support their preference to take leave for their religious observance.

Resources for Managing Well-being and Mental Health

People feel many types of emotions during the holidays—joy, peace, stress and depression, to name a few. Whatever you feel, know you are not alone, and Vanderbilt has resources to help you through these challenges.

Faculty, Staff and Postdocs
Work/Life Connections-EAP
(615) 936-1327
vumc.org/health-wellness/work-life

Students
Office of Student Care Coordination
(615) 343-9355
vanderbilt.edu/carecoordination/

This resource is part of a toolkit created by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to highlight religious and cultural observances that members of our community may practice. This toolkit is not meant to be exhaustive, but instead to provide a general overview of how we can support staff, faculty, students and postdocs. We continually refine this information and welcome your suggestions.

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