

Prem Namaste, Vanakum, Hare Krsna, Jai Shree Krsna, Jai Shree Raam

All glories to our eternal Parents Shree Shree Radha Krsna

All glories to the most merciful Shree Shree Lakshmi Nrsimhadeva

All glories to Srila Prabhupada, and the other wonderful and inspiring gurus.

All glories to the wonderful servants of the Supreme Lord.

On 26th February (Monday) is Amalaki Vrata Ekadashi

Please have your last grain meal on Sunday night.

The times to break your fast with grains is on Tuesday morning

27th February Break fast @ 05:45 to 10:00 (Durban)

@ 06:00 to 10:13 (Jhb)

@ 06:32 to 10:49 (Cape Town)



Please refrain from eating grains and meat on this most auspicious day.

(N.B I have included what to eat and what not to eat and 16 different meals to have on Ekadashi at the end of this email)

The benefits of fasting on this day are endless. This Ekadashi bestows upon that devotee eradication of the greatest sins that he has committed and is awarded passage to the spiritual abode. One is granted freedom from obstacles in his spiritual progress and grants him the perfection of life. This day of fasting removes all sins eternally. This is the most meritorious day for destroying all kinds of sins.

Please note that this auspicious day is not only for Hindus to observe. This fast can be observed by anyone. There's no catch here. One who is truly universal does not discriminate; rather he/she respects and embraces all cultures.

One very important point of note. Many perform different prayers like for example nullifying the negative effects of the planets and wonder why the prayer did not work – “What happened, I did the prayer as the priest said and yet I feel the same”. Well what you are not told that is that if you don't follow the Ekadashi fast and perform the planetary fast then its like bathing and then rubbing mud all over yourself again. So by fasting for a particular planet on a specific day you are removing the negative effects of that planet but when Ekadashi come and you have grains then the obstacles comes back since by eating grains on Ekadashi you are creating obstacles on your path and life. BUT by observing the Ekadashi fast you are removing all obstacles in your life.

The Katha of Amalaki Vrat Ekadashi (From the Brahmanda Purana)

King Mandhata once said to Vasishtha Muni, "O great sage, kindly be merciful to me and tell me of a holy fast that will benefit me eternally." Vasishtha Muni replied. "O king, kindly listen as I describe the best of all fast days, Amalaki Ekadashi. He who faithfully observes a fast on this Ekadashi obtains enormous wealth, gets free of the effects of all kinds of sins,

and attains liberation. Fasting on this Ekadashi is more purifying than donating one thousand cows in charity to a pure brahmana. So please hear me attentively as I tell you the story of a hunter who, though daily engaged in killing innocent animals for his living, achieved liberation by observing a fast on Amalaki Ekadashi and following the prescribed rules and regulations of worship.

"There was once a kingdom named Vaidisha, where all the brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas, and shudras were equally endowed with Vedic knowledge, great bodily strength, and fine intelligence. Oh lion among kings, the whole kingdom was full of Vedic sounds, not a single person was atheistic, and no one sinned. The ruler of this kingdom was King Pashabinduka, a member of the dynasty of Soma, the moon. He was also known as Chitraratha and was very religious and truthful. It is said that King Chitraratha had the strength of ten thousand elephants and that he was very wealthy and knew the six branches of Vedic wisdom perfectly.

"During the reign of Maharaja Chitraratha, not a single person in his kingdom attempted to practice another's dharma (duty) so perfectly engaged in their own dharmas were all the brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas, and shudras. Neither miser nor pauper was to be seen throughout the land, not was there every drought or flood. Indeed, the kingdom was free of disease, and everyone enjoyed good health. The people rendered loving devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vishnu, as did the king, who also rendered special service to Lord Shiva. Moreover, twice a month everyone fasted on Ekadashi.

"In this way, O best of kings, the citizens of Vaidisha lived many long years in great happiness and prosperity. Giving up all varieties of materialistic religion, they completely dedicated themselves to the loving service of the Supreme Lord Hari. "Once, in the month of Phalguna (February - March), the holy fast of Amalaki Ekadashi arrived. King Chitraratha realized that this particular fast would bestow especially great benefit, and thus he and all the citizens of Vaidisha observed this sacred Ekadashi very strictly, carefully following all the rules and regulations.

"After bathing in the river, the king and all his subjects went to the temple of Lord Vishnu, where an Amalaki tree grew. First the king and his leading sages offered the tree a pot filled with water and aromatic incense. Then they worshipped Lord Parashurama (another form of Lord Vishnu) with these prayers: 'Oh Lord Parashurama, Oh son of Renuka, Oh all-pleasing one, Oh liberator of the worlds, kindly come beneath this holy Amalaki tree and accept our humble obeisances.'

Then they prayed to the Amalaki tree: 'Oh Amalaki, Oh offspring of Lord Brahma, you can destroy all kinds of sinful reactions. Please accept our respectful obeisances and these humble gifts. O Amalaki, you are actually the form of Brahman, and Lord Ramachandra Himself once worshipped you. Whoever circumambulates you is therefore immediately freed of all his sins.'

"After offering these excellent prayers, King Chitraratha and his subjects remained awake throughout the night, praying and worshipping according to the regulations governing a sacred Ekadashi fast. It was during this auspicious time of fasting and prayer that a very irreligious man approached the assembly, a man who maintained himself and his family by killing animals. Burdened with both fatigue and sin, the hunter saw the king and the citizens of Vaidisha observing Amalaki Ekadashi by performing an all-night vigil, fasting,

and worshipping Lord Vishnu in the beautiful forest setting, which was brilliantly illuminated by many lamps. The hunter hid nearby, wondering what this extraordinary sight before him was.

'What is going on here?' he thought. What he saw in that lovely forest beneath the holy Amalaki tree was the Deity of Lord Damodara (Lord Krishna as a small baby) being worshipped upon the asana (seat) of a water pot, and what he heard were devotees singing sacred songs describing Lord Shree Krishna's transcendental forms and pastimes. Despite himself, that staunchly irreligious killer of innocent birds and animals spent the entire night in great amazement as he watched the Ekadashi celebration and listened to the glorification of the Lord. "Soon after sunrise, the king and his royal retinue - including the court sages and all the citizens - completed their observance of Ekadashi and returned to the city of Vaidisha. The hunter then returned to his hut and happily ate his meal. In due time the hunter died, but the merit he had gained by fasting on Amalaki Ekadashi and hearing the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as well as by being forced to stay awake all night, made him eligible to be reborn as a great king endowed with many chariots, elephants, horses, and soldiers. His name was Vasuratha, the son of King Viduratha, and he ruled over the kingdom of Jayanti.

"King Vasuratha was strong and fearless, as effulgent as the Sun, and as handsome as the Moon. In strength he was like Lord Vishnu, and in forgiveness like the Earth herself. Very charitable and every truthful, King Vasuratha always rendered loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord, Shree Vishnu. He therefore became very well versed in Vedic knowledge. Always active in the affairs of state, he enjoyed taking excellent care of his subjects, as though they were his own children. He disliked pride in anyone and would smash it when he saw it. He performed many kinds of sacrifices, and he always made certain that the needy in his kingdom received enough charity.

"One day, while hunting in the jungle, King Vasuratha strayed from the footpath and lost his way. Wandering for some time and eventually growing weary, he paused beneath a tree and, using his arms as a pillow, fell asleep. As he slept, some barbarian tribesmen came upon him and, remembering their longstanding enmity toward the king, began discussing among themselves various ways to kill him. 'It is because he killed our fathers, mothers, brothers-in-law, grandsons, nephews, and uncles that we are forced to aimlessly wander like so many madmen in the forest.' So saying, they prepared to kill King Vasuratha with various weapons, including spears, swords, arrows, and mystic ropes.

"But none of these deadly weapons could even touch the sleeping king, and soon the uncivilized, dog-eating tribesmen grew frightened. Their fear sapped their strength, and before long they lost what little intelligence they had and became almost unconscious with bewilderment and weakness. Suddenly a beautiful woman appeared from the king's body, startling them. Decorated with many ornaments, emitting a wonderful fragrance, wearing an excellent garland around her neck, her eyebrows drawn in a mood of fierce anger, and her fiery red eyes ablaze, she looked like death personified. With her blazing chakra discus she quickly killed all the tribal hunters, who had tried to slay the sleeping king.

"Just then the king awoke, and seeing all the dead tribesmen lying around him, he was astonished. He wondered, 'These are all great enemies of mine! Who has slain them so violently? Who is my great benefactor?' "At that very moment he heard a voice from the sky: 'You ask who helped you. Well, who is that person who alone can help anyone in distress? He

is none other than Lord Keshava (another name for Lord Krsna meaning Lord Krsna who has beautiful long hair), the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He who saves all who take shelter of Him without any selfish motive.'

"Upon hearing these words, King Vasuratha became over-whelmed with love for the Personality of Godhead Shree Keshava (Lord Krishna). He returned to his capital city and ruled there like a second Lord Indra (king of the heavenly regions), without any obstacles at all. "Therefore, Oh King Mandhata," the venerable Vasishtha Muni concluded, "...anyone who observes this holy Amalaki Ekadashi will undoubtedly attain the supreme abode of Lord Vishnu, so great is the religious merit earned from the observance of this most sacred fast day."

Thus ends the narration of the glories of Amalaki Ekadashi, From the sacred Brahmanda Purana.

Sometimes if you cannot fast due to circumstances then you can chant the names of all the Ekadashi and read the above true story and you will receive the same benefits.

Suta Goswami said: - There are twelve months in a year, and two Ekadashis in each month. Thus there are twenty-four Ekadashis in one full year, and in a leap year (like this year) there are two extra Ekadashis. O great sages, please listen attentively as I declare to you the names of these auspicious Ekadashis.

Occurs in (Western month)

Utpan-naa	November-December
Moksha-daa	November-December
Saphalaa	December-January
Putra-daa	December-January
Shat-tilaa	January-February
Jayaa	January-February
Vijayaa	February-March
Aamalakee	February-March
Paapamo-chanee	March-April
Kaamadaa	March-April
Varoothinee	April-May
Mohinee	April-May
Aparaa	May-June
Nirjalaa	May-June
Yoginee	June-July
Padmaa	June-July
Kaamikaa	July-August
Putradaa	July-August
Ajaa	August-September
Parivartinee	August-September
Indiraa	September-October
Paapaankushaa	September-October
Ramaa	October-November
Haribodhinee	October-November

The two extra Ekadashis, which occur during leap year, are called,

Padminee

Paramaa

***Please note the **t** is pronounced as follows, place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth and say **t**.

***Please note the **n** is pronounced as follows, place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth and say **n**.

“O sages, one who hears about these Ekadashis will learn how to observe them properly. Each Ekadashi bestows particular benefits on the faithful observer.

One who is physically unable to fast on Ekadashi may read the glories of each Ekadashi when it occurs and recite all the names of the Ekadashis; thus he will achieve the same goal as the person who observes the full Ekadashi vow.”

Ekadashi preparations.

For a detailed what to eat or not and over 100 Ekadashi recipes please visit our website www.dipika.org.za. And look under the sub-menu called **EKADASHI – THE DAY OF LORD HARI**.

Abstain from: - grains (cereals, breads, wheat, flour, beans, rice, dhals, green beans, roti, coffee, etc) meat.

Do not cook with: - Powdered hing, shop turmeric (you can use whole turmeric), shop masala and shop chilli powder.

You can cook with the following: - Whole turmeric, clean salt, cinnamon sticks, clean oil, butter, ghee, ginger, chilli, curry leaves, maas (yogurt), cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, clean sugar, rooibos tea, spinach, dhanian, thyme, peppers, ground pepper, mint, green bananas, fresh cream, sour cream, bay leaves.

Potatoes, tomatoes, peanuts, cabbage, pumpkin, butternut, gem squash, carrots, lettuce, all kinds of fruits, paneer.

1) Make tomato chutney and then add scrambled paneer and dhanian. You can also add a little maas (yogurt) or fresh cream to it.

2) Cut eggplant into thin slices and deep fry. Keep aside. Prepare potato mash and keep aside. Now in a casserole dish and lay the eggplant on the bottom and then cover the eggplant with mash, thereafter sprinkle cheese on the mash, then place thin slices of tomato on the cheese. Place strips of peppers on tomato slices. Bake for a few minutes and serve.

3) Potato soup (add salt, thyme and black or white pepper)

4) Mixed vegetable stew example: (cabbage, carrots, peppers, zucchini, and potatoes). Add black pepper, thyme and little butter and fresh cream. Use liquid from the baked vegetables below.

5) Bake the following: Cut potato in large pieces, cut butternut in big pieces, carrots in thin strips, cauliflower into florets, cut sweet potato in rounds. Boil veg. for 15 minutes then drain the vegetables and save the liquid. Mix butter, black pepper, salt, organum and lots of thyme – rub well into boiled vegetables, bake in oven till crispy on outside.

6) Vaikuntha curry: (use curry leaves and ginger). Cabbage sliced finely, green peppers in strips, carrots in strips; add fried paneer cubes, thyme and dhanian.

7) Cut potato into rounds, deep fry and then drain to remove excess oil/ghee/butter.

Now place flat in baking tray and grate cheese and bake till cheese melts.

8) Cut potato into rounds and deep fry and then drain excess oil. Place in baking tray (spaces between each) mix scramble curds, tiny cubed tomatoes, green peppers, salt, grated cheese, black pepper, thyme and then place on the potato – add more cheese on top

and bake till cheese melts.

9) Bake whole potato with jacket in microwave till soft and make a cross in the top press open, dot butter and add tablespoon of sour cream, top with cheese and bake till cheese melts.

10) Cook cabbage and potato with tomatoes.

11) Cook mixed vegetables. For example, potato, cauliflower and zucchini in butter ghee or oil. When cooked add sour cream or fresh cream. Cook till it thickens.

12) Fry peanuts, fry green bananas

13) Make salads and fruit salads.

14) Chevda: Fry nuts, fry grated potatoes (coloured with red/green/yellow food colour). Also you can fry thin slices of green bananas.

15) Saigo milk:

Add 4 cups of water in a pot. Then add one cup of saigo and then bring to boil stirring continuously. Add sugar to taste (approx. 1 cup) and then add a few drops of vanilla essence. Cook on med heat for about 20 minutes until the saigo becomes clear. Add 2 cups of milk, and then boil until slightly thick.

16) Saigo patties.

Soak 1 cup of saigo in cold water for 20 minutes and then remove the excess water. Boil three medium size potatoes, and thereafter mash while mash is hot and add saigo. Cut 2 chillies finely, chop up some dhania and add salt to taste. You can add grated cheese. Make into patties, deep fry until golden brown, serve with tomato chutney.

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Reference: - "Ekadashi: The Day of Lord Hari" 1986. HH Krishna Balaram Swami. Bhaktivedanta Institute Press

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