

Pranaams, Namaste, Vanakkum, 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 **31st May (Wednesday)** is **Nirjala Ekadashi**
Please have your last grain meal on **Tuesday** night.
The times to **break your fast** with grains is on **Thursday** morning.

Break fast 1st June

@ 06:43 to 08:47 (Durban)

@ 06:47 to 08:55 (Gauteng)

@ 06:43 to 09:43 (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.

During the hottest season (in the northern hemisphere), if one can perform this great sacrifice without water one is performing a great feat. One may take only charanamrita (The bathing water from the Supreme Lord in the Morning Prayer) and Achaman (holy Ganga) water. Bhima the mighty warrior of the Pandava dynasty requested one vrat (fasting) day by which he could obtain the fruits of all the other days of vrat that he was incapable of observing. Vyasadeva advised him to follow this difficult vrat. Oh son, Lord Keshava, Who holds the club, disk, conch and lotus flower in His hand, personally told me that all of the merit achieved by fasting on whatever Ekadashis fall in one year can be attained by fasting on this one Ekadashi (Nirjal Ekadashi). Of this, there is no doubt. (HARI BHAKTI VILASA 15/25 from PADMA PURANA Vyasadeva speaks to Bhimasena)

Anyone who does not fast on this particular Ekadashi (Nirjal Ekadashi), they should be understood to be sinful, corrupted and suicidal person without a doubt. (HARI BHAKTI VILASA 15/33 from PADMA PURANA Vyasadeva speaks to Bhimasena).

The Katha of Pandava Nirjal Ekadashi (from Brahma-vaivarta Purana.)

Once Bhimasena, the younger brother of Maharaja Yudhisthira, asked the great sage Srila Vyasadeva, the grandfather of the Pandavas, if it is possible to return to the spiritual world without having observed all the rules and regulations of the Ekadashi fasts.

Bhimasena then spoke as follows, "Oh greatly intelligent and learned grandfather, my brother Yudhisthira, my dear mother Kunti, and my beloved wife Draupadi, as well as Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, fast completely on each Ekadashi and strictly follow all the rules, guidelines and regulative injunctions of that sacred day. Bring very religious, they always tell me that I should also fast on that day too. But, Oh learned grandfather; I tell them that I cannot live without eating, because as the son of Vayudeva - Samanaprana, (the digestive air) hunger is unbearable to me. I can give widely in charity and worship Lord Keshava properly with all manner of wonderful items, but I cannot be asked to fast on Ekadashi. Please tell me how I can obtain the same merits result without fasting."

Hearing these words, the grandsire of Bhima, Srila Vyasadeva said, "If you want to go to the heavenly planets and avoid the hellish planets, you should indeed observe a fast on both the light and dark Ekadashis."

Bhima replied, "Oh great saintly intelligent grandfather, please listen to my plea. Oh greatest of munis, since I cannot live if I eat only once in a day, how can I possibly live if I fast completely? Within my stomach burns a special fire named Vrika, the fire of digestion. Agni the fire-god, descends from Lord Vishnu through Brahma, from Brahma to Angirasa, from Angirasa to Brihaspati, and from Brihaspati to Samyu, who was Agni" father. He is the gatekeeper in charge of Nairritti, the southeastern direction. He is one of the eight material elements, and Parikshit Maharaja, he is very expert at examining things. He examined Maharaja Shibi once by turning into a dove (for further information on this incident see Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's Srimad Bhagavatam commentary to 1:12:20. Purport.)

Agni is divided into three categories; Davagni, the fire in wood, Jatharagni, the fire in the digestion in the stomach, and Vadavagni, the fire that creates fog when hot and cold streams mix in for example the ocean. Another name for the fire of digestion is Vrika. It is this powerful fire that resided in Bhima's stomach.

Only when I eat to my full satisfaction does the fire in my stomach become satisfied. Oh great sage, I might possibly be able to fast only once, so I beg that you tell me of an Ekadashi that is worthy of my fasting and that includes all other Ekadashis. I shall faithfully observe that fast and hopefully still become eligible for liberation's release."

Srila Vyasadeva replied, Oh king, you have heard from me about the various kinds of occupational duties, such as elaborate Vedic ceremonies and pujas. In the Kali-yuga, however, no one will be able to observe all these occupational, functional duties properly. I shall therefore tell you how, at practically no expense, one can endure some small austerity and achieve the greatest benefit and resultant happiness. The essence of what is written in the Vedic literatures known as the Puranas is that one should not eat grains on either the dark or light fortnight Ekadashis." As stated in Srimad Bhagavatam 12:13:12 and 15.) The Bhagavat Purana is itself the essence of all Vedanta philosophy and the Srimad Bhagavatam's unequivocal message is that of full surrender to Lord Sri Krishna and the rendering of loving devotional service to Him. Observing Ekadashi strictly is a great aid in

that process, and here Srila Vyasadeva is simply stressing to Bhima the importance of the Ekadashi vrat. "...One who fasts on Ekadashi is saved from going to the hellish planets."

Hearing Srila Vyasadeva's words, the son of Vayu, Bhimasena, the strongest of all warriors, became frightened and began to shake like a leaf on a banyan tree in a strong wind. The frightened Bhimasena then said, "Oh grandfather, what should I do? I am completely unable and ill equipped to fast twice in a month throughout the year! Please tell me of the one fasting day that will bestow the greatest benefit upon me!"

Vyasadeva replied, "Without drinking even water, you should fast on the Ekadashi that occurs during the light fortnight of the month of Jyeshtha (May-June). "One must certainly not eat anything, for if he does so he breaks his fast. This rigid fast is in effect from sunrise on the Ekadashi day to sunrise on the Dwadashi day. If a person endeavors to observe this great fast very strictly, he easily achieves the result of observing all twenty-four other Ekadashi fasts throughout the entire year.

"On Dwadashi the devotee should bathe early in the morning. Then, according to the prescribed rules, guidelines and regulative injunctions, and of course depending on his ability, he should give some gold (please note that this is optional) and water to worthy brahmanas. Finally, he should cheerfully honour prasada with a brahmana. (If it is possible)

"Oh Bhimasena, one who can fast on this special Ekadashi in this manner reaps the benefit of having fasted on every Ekadashi during the year. There is no doubt of this, nor should there be. Oh Bhima, now hear the specific merit one gets by fasting on this Ekadashi. The Supreme Lord Keshava, who holds a conch, discus, club and lotus, personally told me, 'Everyone should take shelter of Me and follow My instructions.' Then He told me that one who fasts on this Ekadashi, without taking even drinking water or eating, becomes free of all sinful reactions, and that one who observes the difficult nirjal fast on that Ekadashi truly reaps the benefit of all other Ekadashi fasts.

"Oh Bhimasena, in the Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel and hypocrisy, when all the principles of the Vedas will have been destroyed or greatly minimized, and when there will be no proper charity or observance of the ancient Vedic principles and ceremonies, how will there be any means of purifying the self? But there is the opportunity to fast on Ekadashi and become free of all one's past sins.

"Oh son of Vayu, what more can I say to you? You should not eat during the Ekadashis that occur during the dark and light fortnights, and you should even give up drinking water (nir = no jal= water) on the particularly auspicious Ekadashi day of Nirjal Ekadashi. Oh Vrikodara (voracious eater), whoever fasts on this Ekadashi receives the merits of bathing in all the places of pilgrimage, giving all kinds of charities to worthy persons, and fasting on all the dark and light Ekadashis throughout the year, in one go. Of this there is no doubt.

Oh tiger among men, whoever fasts on this Ekadashi truly becomes a great person and achieves all manner of opulence and wealth, grains, strength, and health. And at the fearful moment of death, the terrible Yamadutas, whose complexions are yellow and black and who brandish huge maces and twirl mystic pasha ropes in the air for binding their victims, will refuse to approach him. Rather, such a faithful soul will at once be taken to the supreme abode of Lord Vishnu by the Vishnu-dutas, whose transcendently beautiful forms are clothed in gorgeous yellowish garments and who each hold a disk, club, conch and lotus in their four hands, resembling Lord Vishnu. It is to gain all these benefits that one should certainly fast on this very auspicious and important Ekadashi, even from water."

When the other Pandavas heard about the benefits to be gained by following Nirjal Ekadashi, they resolved to observe it exactly as their grandfather Srila Vyasadeva had

explained it to their brother, Bhimasena. All the Pandavas observed it by refraining from eating or drinking anything, and thus this day is also known as Pandava Nirjal Ekadashi.

Srila Vyasadeva continued, Oh Bhimasena, therefore you should observe this important fast to remove all your past sinful reactions. You should pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Shree Krishna in this way making your sankalpa declaration, 'Oh Lord of all the devas, Oh Supreme Personality of Godhead, today I shall observe Ekadashi without taking any water. Oh unlimited Anantadev, I shall break fast on the next day, Dwadashi.' Thereafter, to remove all his sins, the devotee should honour this Ekadashi fast with full faith in the Lord and with full control over his senses. Whether his sins are equal in volume to Mount Sumeru or to Mandarachala Hill, if he or she observes this Ekadashi, the sins that have been accumulated all become nullified and are burned to ashes. Such is the great power of this Ekadashi.

"Oh best of human beings, although a person should also give water and cows in charity during this Ekadashi, if for some reason or other he cannot, then he should give a qualified brahmana some cloth or a pot filled with water. Indeed, the merit achieved by giving water alone equals that gained by giving gold ten million times a day.

"Oh Bhima, Lord Shree Krishna has said that whoever observes this Ekadashi should take a Holy bath, give charity to a worthy person, chant the Lord's Holy names on a japa-mala, and perform some kind of recommended sacrifice, for by doing these things on this day one receives imperishable benefits. There is no need to perform any other kind of religious duty. Observance of this Ekadashi fast alone promotes one to the supreme abode of Shree Vishnu. Oh best of the Kurus, if one donates gold, cloth, or anything else on this day, the merit one obtains is imperishable.

"Remember, whosoever eats any grains on Ekadashi becomes contaminated by sin and verily eats only sin. In effect, he has already become a dog-eater, and after death he suffers a hellish existence. But he who observes this sacred Nirjal Ekadashi and gives something in charity certainly achieves liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death and attains to the supreme abode. Observing this Ekadashi, frees one from the horrible sin of killing a brahmana, drinking liquor and wine, becoming envious of one's spiritual master and ignoring his instructions, and continually telling lies.

"Furthermore, Oh best of beings any man or woman who observes this fast properly and worships the Supreme Lord Vishnu, and who on the next day satisfies a qualified brahmana with nice sweets and a donation of cows (one can donate an ornament cow) and money - such a person certainly pleases the Supreme Lord Vaasudeva, so much so that one hundred previous generations in his family undoubtedly go to the Supreme Lord's abode, even though they may have been very sinful, of bad character, and guilty of suicide, etc. Indeed, one who observes this amazing Ekadashi rides on a glorious celestial airplane to the Lord's abode."

"One who on this day gives a brahmana a water pot, an umbrella, or shoes surely goes to the heavenly planets. Indeed, he who simply hears these glories also attains to the transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord, Shri Vishnu. Whoever performs the Shraddha ceremony to the forefathers on the dark-moon day called Amavasya, particularly if it occurs at the time of a solar eclipse undoubtedly achieves great merit, but **this same merit** is achieved by him who simply hears this sacred narration - so powerful and so dear to the Lord is this Ekadashi.

"One should clean his teeth properly and, without eating or drinking, observe this Ekadashi to please the Supreme Lord, Keshava. On the day after Ekadashi one should worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His form as Trivikrama by offering Him water, flowers, incense, and a brightly burning lamp. Then the devotee should pray from the heart, 'Oh

God of gods, Oh deliverer of everyone, Oh Hrishikesh, master of the senses, kindly bestow upon me the gift of liberation, though I can offer you nothing greater than this humble pot filled with water.' Then the devotee should donate the water pot to a brahmana.

"Oh Bhimasena, after this Ekadashi fast and donating the recommended items according to his ability, the devotee should feed brahmanas and thereafter honour prasad silently."

Srila Vyasadeva concluded, "I strongly urge you to fast on this auspicious, purifying, sin-devouring day in just the way I have outlined. Thus you will be completely freed of all sins and reach the supreme abode."

Thus ends the narration of the glories of Nirjal Ekadashi,
from the Brahma-vaivarta 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 Ekadashi's in each month. Thus there are twenty-four Ekadashi's in one full year, and in a leap year (like this year) there are two extra Ekadashi's. O great sages, please listen attentively as I declare to you the names of these auspicious Ekadashi's.

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 Ekadashi’s 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, dhania, 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 dhania. 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, origanum 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 dhania.

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.

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

DISCLAIMER: Do note that Dipika is not affiliated to any Hindu group or organization. We at Dipika choose to remain an independent repository of spiritual advice. We appreciate that there are variances between organisations and humbly request that if our views differ from yours that you respect our decision not to conform to the prescripts of your particular organisation. We remain committed to spiritual advice which is based on scripture.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. Jai Ekadashi devi. Jai Shree Radha Krsna.



Please do visit our Website to receive more
free information about our beautiful culture

www.dipika.org.za

Compiled for the upliftment of Sanatan Dharma
Narottam Das & Arjun Nandlal
T.N.

E-mail info@dipika.org.za

#Team-Dipika