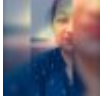


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KARTHIGAI DEEPAM: STORY BEHIND THE FESTIVAL

Karthigai Deepam is the festival of lights that is celebrated in Tamil Nadu, Andhrapradesh, Karnataka and Kerela during the month of Karthigai (Nov-Dec).

Tiruvannamalai Mandir is known for Karthigai Deepam festival.

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Legend says that once Sri Vishnu and Brahma had a fight to know who was the most powerful of the two. Shiva appeared before them in the form of an enormous pillar of fire. The two decided to find the top and bottom of the pillar. However, neither of them could find its end.



Shiva, then, appeared as a hill (Arunachala Hill) in Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu. The Shivalinga here is Agni linga. It is believed that small lamps lit during Karthigai are miniature replicas of the fire linga. Every year, thousands of people come to see the Karthigai Deepam.



Lamps called 'agal' are placed in front of Prabhu and in Kolams.

Different patterns of lamps are used - Lakshmi villaku shaped like a woman with folded hands, Kuthu villaku shaped like a five petal flower and the Gajalakshmi villaku—the elephant lamp.

