



The Raas Garba and Dandiya are folk dances from the state of Gujarat, popular at the festivals of Navratri and Sharad Purnima.

Navratri is a nine day festival dedicated to the female goddesses of Hinduism. The first three days are dedicated to the Goddess Durga, the next three to the Goddess Lakshmi and the final three days to Goddess Saraswati. The tenth day, Dusshera, commemorates both the killing of the demon Mahihasura by Durga Ma as well as the killing of the demon Ravana by Lord Ram, incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Sharad Purnima is a full moon night which falls 10 days after the end of Navratri. As well as being a Harvest festival, it is believed that Lord Krishna, another incarnation of Lord Vishnu, began his Raas Leela dance with Radha and the other gopis (milkmaidens) of Vraj on this night.

The Garba is danced around a centre altar. It consists of simple movements usually ending in a clap repeated as the dancers move in a circle around the centre. The music begins slow and gets faster and faster throughout the dance.

Dandiya is danced with a pair of sticks, usually made of wood or bamboo. Partners stand in a line opposite each other and at the end of a sequence of steps partners are switched. Again the music tends to speed up throughout the dance and dancers add their own movements and steps as the dance develops.

So tonight don't be shy! Raas Garba is easy and lots of fun so don't hesitate to get involved! You won't be able to stop dancing by the end!



*CUHCS committee 09/10*



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