10- Hindu Festivals & Rituals on UNESCO's Heritage List (2008 to 2025)

This report compiles **10 prominent Hindu festivals and rituals** from **2008 to 2025** that have been inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list, highlighting India's rich and timeless cultural traditions.

On August 8, 2025, the Union Ministry of Culture forwarded a proposal to the **Sangeet Natak Academy** to include Chhath Puja in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Celebrated over four days in Bihar, Jharkhand, and eastern Uttar Pradesh, Chhath Puja honors Surya Bhagwan. Devotees observe a 36-hour fast, offer prayers in rivers and lakes, and follow strict rituals using natural products.

S.No	Festival/ Ritual	Visual & Source
1.	**Chhath Puja: Bihar's Ancient Festival/ Ritual for UNESCO Recognition** **Date-** August 08, 2025 **Festival/ Ritual-** Chhath Puja ■ The **Union Ministry of Culture** wrote to the Sangeet Natak Academy, forwarding a proposal by Sandeep Kumar Dubey, Chairman of Chhathi Maiya Foundation, to include **Chhath Puja in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, giving it global recognition.** ■ Chhath Puja, celebrated on the 6th day of Diwali, is a four-day Festival/ Ritual mainly observed in Bihar, Jharkhand, and eastern Uttar Pradesh, dedicated to the Surya Bhagwan. Devotees fast for 36 hours, make offerings in rivers, ponds, and lakes, and follow strict rituals using only natural products. The Festival/ Ritual emphasizes social harmony, women empowerment, and environmental conservation.	 Centre Initiates Process To Nominate Chhath Puja For UNESCO Heritage List **ETV Bharat** **Anytimeastro**
2.	**UNESCO Listed Garba, Celebrated During Sharad Navratri in Gujrat** **Date-** December 06, 2023 **Festival/ Ritual-** Navratri, Garba ■ **Garba**, the famous **folk dance of Gujarat performed during Sharad Navratri (September–October), *was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on December 6, 2023.*** ■ Celebrated ***over nine nights in honor of Goddess Durga (Amba/Maa Shakti),*** it involves **swirling to the tunes of dhols and folk songs around a perforated earthen pot (Garbo) or an image of the goddess.** The dance promotes social equality, inclusiveness, and devotion to feminine energy (Shakti), showcasing Gujarat's rich cultural heritage and strengthening community bonds.	 THE TIMES OF INDIA Gujarat's garba gets Unesco's intangible cultural heritage tag **The Times of India** **The Hindu** **UNESCO**

3.	**Durga Puja of Kolkata Listed as UNESCO Heritage** **Date-** December 15, 2021 **Festival/ Ritual-** Durga Festival/ Ritual ■ Durga Puja of Kolkata, a grand annual celebration honoring Goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasura, **was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on December 15, 2021, during the 16th Committee meeting in Paris, making it Asia's first Festival to receive this honor.** ■ Held **every autumn, it blends devotion, elaborate artistry, music, dance, and community celebrations. The recognition highlights Bengal's rich traditions, vibrant artistic expression,** and the Festival/ Ritual's role as a unifying cultural, social, and creative event for people across communities.	 The Times of India The Hindu UNESCO
4.	**UNESCO Listed Kumbh Mela for Cultural Heritage** **Date-** December 07, 2017 **Festival/ Ritual-** Kumbh Mela ■ Kumbh Mela was inscribed on **UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** during its **12th session held from *December 4–9, 2017, in Jeju, South Korea.*** ■ Celebrated **every 12 years at Prayagraj (Allahabad), Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik, it is the world's largest peaceful gathering of pilgrims,** involving ritual worship and cleansing in holy rivers. Knowledge and rituals are passed through the Guru-Shishya tradition. **The Festival/ Ritual emphasizes inclusiveness, tolerance, and cultural diversity, preserving traditions, practices, and skills across generations while fostering identity and community.**	 The Economic Times The Hindu Architecturaldigest UNESCO
5.	**Nat-Sankirtana of Manipur Enters UNESCO Heritage List** **Date-** December 4, 2013 **Festival/ Ritual-** Nat-Sankirtana ■ **Manipuri Nat-Sankirtana,** conceived in the 18th century by King Bhagyachandra Singh, **was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on December 04, 2013.** *This ritual of singing, drumming, and dancing, central to Manipuri Vaishnavite traditions, narrates Krishna's life and reinforces social and spiritual unity.* ■ Performed in temples and courtyards, it involves drummers and singer-dancers surrounded by devotees. **Sankirtana fosters cultural identity, intergenerational transmission, and environmental harmony, with strong community participation ensuring its preservation.**	 Business Standard The Times of India UNESCO

6.	**Chhau - From Festival/ Ritual Grounds to UNESCO List** **Date-** November 19, 2010 Festival/ Ritual- Chhau dance ■ **On November 19, 2010, Chhau dance was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.** Originating from eastern India, **it blends martial movements, folk traditions, and episodes from the Mahabharata, Ramayana, and local legends.** ■ Performed in three styles Seraikella, Purulia, and Mayurbhanj **it is linked to Festival/ Rituals like Chaitra Parva. The dance uses masks, vibrant music, and powerful drumbeats, uniting communities across diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.**	 The Telegraph The Hindu UNESCO
7.	**Ramman Festival/ Ritual Listed in UNESCO's Intangible Heritage** **Date-** October 02, 2009 **Festival/ Ritual-** Ramman Festival ■ On October 2, 2009, **UNESCO recognized Ramman, a religious and cultural Festival/ Ritual of Saloor-Dungra in Uttarakhand.** Celebrated in late April for Bhumiyal Devta, it includes reciting the epic of Rama, narrating legends, singing folk songs, and masked dances. ■ Villagers ***play defined roles Brahmans lead prayers, Bhandaris wear the sacred Narasimha mask.*** The Festival **reflects environmental, spiritual, and cultural values, preserves founding myths, and works to sustain and promote its heritage beyond the region.**	 ETV Bharat Thestatesman UNESCO
8.	**Ramlila-From Dussehra Grounds to UNESCO List** **Date-** 2008 **Festival/ Ritual-** Ramlila ■ In 2008, **Ramlila was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, symbolizing cultural unity.** Literally meaning **"Rama's play,"** it is a dramatic retelling of the Ramayana through song, narration, recital, and dialogue. ■ Based on ***Tulsidas' Ramacharitmanas, Ramlila is performed across northern India during Dussehra, with prominent renditions in Ayodhya, Ramnagar, Varanasi, Vrindavan, Almora, Sattna, and Madhubani. While most last 10–12 days, the Ramnagar performance extends for an entire month.***	 Times of India UNESCO

9.	**Vedic Chanting – Ancient Oral Tradition Inscribed by UNESCO** **Date-**2008 **Festival/ Ritual-** Vedic Chanting ■ Inscribed on **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008,** the ***Vedic heritage is one of the world's oldest surviving cultural traditions, developed over 3,500 years ago by the Aryans.*** ■ Comprising Sanskrit poetry, philosophical dialogues, myths, and ritual chants, the **four Vedas Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva were preserved through complex oral recitation techniques. *Today, only 13 of over 1,000 recitation branches survive,*** with key schools in Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, and Odisha under imminent threat.	 Times of India UNESCO
10.	**Kutiyattam: UNESCO-Recognised Ancient Sanskrit Theatre of Kerala** **Date-** 2008 **Festival/ Ritual-** Kutiyattam ■ Inscribed **on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008,** *Kutiyattam is one of India's oldest living theatrical traditions, with origins over 2,000 years ago in Kerala.* Blending Sanskrit classicism with local traditions, **it features intricate eye expressions (neta abhinaya) and hand gestures (hasta abhinaya) to portray a character's emotions.**	 Times of India UNESCO