

MEENABHARANI MAHOTSAVAM

SARKARA DEVI TEMPLE, CHIRAYINKEEZHU



LOCATION

Panchayat/
Municipality/
Corporation

Chirayinkeezhu Taluk

District

Thiruvananthapuram



ACCESSIBILITY

Nearest Town/
Landmark/ Junction

Chirayinkeezhu Town – 50 m

Nearest Bus Station

Chirayinkeezhu Bus Stand – 600 m

Nearest Railway
Station

Chirayinkeezhu Railway Station – 1 Km

Nearest Airport

Trivandrum International Airport – 31.2 Km



CONTACT

Sarkara Devi Temple
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Sarkara,
Chirayinkeezhu - 695304
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TIME

DATES

March-April (Meenam 18-27);

FREQUENCY

Annual

DURATION

10 Days

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL (Legend/History/Myth)

The Meenabharani Festival is the second annual festival at the Sarkara Devi Temple. The main deity at the temple is symbolic of Goddess Bhadrakali. This festival coincides with the special pooja of *Aattavishesham*. During the period of King Dharma Raja and his successor, King Marthanda Varma, orders were given to conduct the festival elaborately and expenses for the festival like that for paddy etc. were recorded. It is believed that once Vilwamangalam Swamiyar (an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu) was offering special prayers for Lord Vishnu and Goddess Bhadrakali. But Swamiyar failed to bring the divine presence to the place of worship and had to set off in search of them. In the forests of Ananthapuram, a Pulaya (a social group developed from the caste system that prevailed in Kerala) lady was singing lullaby for her child, and when the child started crying hard she said if he keeps crying he will be sent to Ananthapuram forests. Hearing this, Swamiyar came over there and to his surprise saw Lord Vishnu sitting up on a tree and below the big tree Goddess Kali was playing. On seeing Swamiyar, Goddess ran to hide from him, reached the grounds of Chakkiamma and joined the group of Pulayas who were playing. During those times, merchants used to carry huge jars of jaggery on their way to markets. On reaching the ground, they used to keep their jars down to take rest. Goddess found one such big jar to hide herself inside it when Vilwamangalam Swamiyar came searching. When the merchants decided to leave, surprisingly they could not lift the big jar in which Goddess hid. Swamiyar, realizing what could have happened, came over to the astounded people and declared that the place will be known for its divinity hereafter. Hence, a temple was built in which Goddess Bhadrakali and Goddess Durga are believed to be residing in the deity shaped like a *Valkannadi*.



RELEVANCE-
(Local / National /
International)

Local



NO. OF PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED

Over 20,000

EVENTS/PROGRAMS

Kodiyettu
Pallivetta
Aarattu
Utsavabali
Garudan Thookkam
Folk Songs
Ottanthullal
Chakyarkoothu
Kathakali
Percussion Music
Elephant Procession
Drama
Fireworks

DESCRIPTION (How festival is celebrated)

The *Meenabharani* Festival generally starts with *Kodiyettu* (flag hoisting), nine days before the asterism of *Bharani* which is considered as the birth star of *Sarkara Devi*. It ends on the tenth day with *Aarattu* (holy immersion) of the deity in the temple tank. On all days, recital of the exploits of the Goddess is staged by special teams of people. On the ninth day an important function is conducted in this temple known as *Pallivetta*. It is believed that during this function *Sarkara Devi* disappears from the temple and she went for hunting. The Goddess is taken in procession as for hunting with the accompaniment of five caparisoned elephants and fire torches. Through this hunting she tried to avoid powers of malice and maintain peace and security in the vicinity of the place. During earlier times, animal sacrifices were conducted. However, the practice has been stopped. Now the function ends with the return procession of the deity and the cutting of a coconut with a bow and arrow. After that the ceremonial *Aarattu* of the deity is conducted.

