

A TRADITIONAL GUJARATI PATEL HINDU WEDDING

A Brief History of the Gujarati Hindu Patels:

It is believed that the Patel community shares a common ancestry with the Punjabi Jats and the term *Patidars* is also accorded to them. A prosperous race known for its willingness to work hard the *Patidars* are also very ambitious and excessive spenders on occasions like marriages.

The Kaira district in Gujarat owes its success to the hard work and enterprise put in by the *Patels* and gives a meaning to the 'green revolution' in the country. Nowhere else in the country has co-operation been so successful as in this region. The Amul Dairy – or in other words the Kaira District's Co-operative Milk Producers Union is the most successful one functioning in India today.

Outstanding in their pursuits of trade, commerce and industry the Patels have been pioneers in textiles, chemicals and engineering industries.

Great political leaders like Vallabhai Patel and his brother Vithalbhai Patel belonged to this community.

It is believed that the *Patidars* originated from the sons of Rama (Luv and Kush).

Patidar weddings are lavish and extravagant and the bride and groom receive huge amounts of clothes, jewellery and cash as gifts. The groom is given cash gifts after almost every ceremony, in fact after each 'parikrama' (circumvention around the sacred fire) his palms are crossed with gold!

Some Common Gujarati Hindu Patel Surnames:

Patel, Amin, Desai

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CEREMONIES

1. **Chandlo Maatli:** Acceptance of the alliance
2. **Ganesh Sthapan:** Commencement of all marriage rituals
3. **Mehendi:** The henna ceremony
4. **Garba & Dandia Raas:** Traditional Gujarati dances
5. **Prenuptial Ceremonies** –broken into following segments:
 - a) *Mandva Mahurat:* Constructing the canopy for the wedding rites
 - b) *Pithi:* Beautification rituals
 - c) *Griha Shanti:* Invoking harmony within the planets
6. **Mameru or Mosaalu:** The bride receives gifts from her maternal uncle
7. **Varghodo:** The groom's procession
8. **Var Ponke:** Welcoming the groom
9. **Lagna: The wedding ceremony – divided into following segments:**
 - a) *Varmala:* The couple exchanges garlands
 - b) *Kanyadaan:* Giving away the bride
 - c) *Mangal Pheras:* Circumventions around the sacred fire
 - d) *Saptapadi:* Seven steps around the sacred fire
10. **Vadava Vanu:** Bridal send off
11. **Var Ghodyu Pokvanu Che:** Welcoming the bride into her marital home
12. **Reception:** Post wedding celebrations

CEREMONIES IN DETAIL:

1. CHANDLO MATLI: Acceptance of the alliance

In modern times, the prospective bride and groom are introduced to each other, and after their horoscopes are matched, they are allowed to make the decision to marry. When they give their consent, the engagement is solemnized.

The bride's father and four other men from the family - always an uneven number - visit the groom's family. They carry as an offering a kilo and a quarter of unrefined sugar and some 'kesar' (saffron) in a decorated fabric pouch tied with 'nada chari' (sacred red thread). They also take boxes of 'mithai' (sweetmeats), which the groom's parents will distribute to their family and friends. . The 'chandlo' (applying the vermilion mark on the forehead) announces the acceptance of the alliance between the two families and the consent of the bride and groom to come together in holy matrimony.

'Chandlo' means 'tikka' and 'maatli' is the clay container, which was used to pack 'mithai' in the olden days. The bride's father puts a 'chandlo' with vermilion and rice on the groom's forehead and gives him a 'shakun' (blessing) with a nominal amount of money. His mother may send a sari or a ring back with them as a gift for his fiancée.

The groom's family consults an astrologer who gives them a choice of auspicious dates. Both families agree on a suitable date for the wedding.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

An engagement party is not a requirement, but many families have adopted this Western custom. A dinner party hosted by the groom's parents is held in the evening and the couple exchanges rings.

What you need for Chandlo Matli:

- ❖ Cloth pouch
- ❖ 11/4 kg unrefined sugar
- ❖ Saffron
- ❖ Rice
- ❖ Sari or ring from the groom's mother for the bride
- ❖ Nada chari (sacred red thread)

2. GANESH STHAPAN / GANESH MATLI: Commencement of all marriage rituals

Kama Ganesha is the 'One Who Works'. Lord Ganesha is always the first deity to be propitiated at any significant event. His blessings are invoked before preparations begin for the wedding so that no obstacles present themselves and all goes well. In a charming tradition, the first wedding card is sent to Lord Ganesha at the temple, which makes him the first 'guest' to be invited.

This 'puja' is attended by close family members and is performed in both homes simultaneously on an auspicious day. After the 'puja' a vegetarian meal sans onion and garlic is served along with a sweet called '*kansaar*', made from whole-wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter.

What you need for Ganesh Sthapan:

- ❖ Kumkum
- ❖ Rice
- ❖ Abil (White Powder)
- ❖ Flowers
- ❖ Agarbattis (incense sticks)
- ❖ Gulal (pink powder)
- ❖ Deepak (lamp)
- ❖ Supari
- ❖ Harldar (turmeric)
- ❖ Shriphal (coconut)
- ❖ Kansaar

3. MEHENDI: The henna ceremony

This is an intimate gathering of the bride's female relatives and friends two days before the wedding. 'Mehendi' (henna) is ground into a paste and applied by professional '*mehendiwallis*' in fine patterns on the palms and feet of the bride. Adorning the bride with 'mehendi' can take hours as particularly intricate designs are drawn for her. The henna is washed off in a couple of hours leaving a deep red impression. The ladies dress up in bright colored traditional outfits and sing songs specific to the occasion while the 'mehendi' is being applied. This ritual is followed by a lunch.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

The 'mehendi ceremony is usually a simple blessing of the bride, but today some families choose to host an elaborate affair with caterers, 'shamianas' (decorative tents) and theme settings: e.g. a village with bangle sellers and 'chaat' (delicious street snacks) stalls creatively decorated.

What you need for Mehendi:

- ❖ Mehendi - which the 'mehendiwalli' can bring with her
- ❖ Mehendiwalli

4. GARBA & DANDIA RAAS: Traditional Gujarati dances

On the evening of the 'mehendi', family and friends gather together dressed in traditional finery: the 'chaniya choli' a long flared brightly-colored skirt, short top and long 'odhni' (veil) embellished with embroidery or 'gota' (gold or silver tape) and colourful patch work is the flavoured attire for the women. The men wear 'kurta pyjamas' - long tunic-like shirts and drawstring pants. A large drum, the 'dhol', is played and wedding songs are sung.

The women form a circle to dance the graceful 'garba'. The men join in later in an energetic 'dandia raas', danced in concentric circles with their 'dandia' batons connecting to the dancers' opposite, while the musicians rev up the tempo! 'Dandias' are wooden sticks painted in bright colours used specifically for this purpose.

What you need for Garba and Dandia

Raas:

- ❖ Dhol Player
- ❖ Singers
- ❖ Dandiya Sticks

5. PRENUPTIAL CEREMONIES – broken up into following segments

5a) MANDVA MAHURAT: *Constructing the canopy for the wedding rites*

A day before the wedding, Lord Ganesha is worshipped again - this time his blessings are sought for the ground on which the wedding canopy will be installed. Though family and close friends attend the 'mandva mahurat', only the women of the household observe the 'puja'. The family priest officiates at the ceremony.

Members of both families dress in special finery for these three ceremonies. The bride's 'kaaka and kaaki' (father's brother and his wife) carry a copper vessel with a coconut nestled on the top on which 'paan' (betel) leaves are tied with 'nada chari' (red thread). This is placed in front of the shrine, which has been set up in the house. The 'kaaki' puts flowers and 'kumkum' (vermilion) on the idol of Lord Ganesha.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

The priest performs a brief 'puja' at the shrine inside the house then puts a 'tikka' on the foreheads of five men from the family. He goes on to give them a small stick with 'nada chari' (red thread) wrapped around it.

The men link hands and carry this to the site of the 'mandva' (the wedding canopy) and embed this into the earth there and so consecrate it. This stick is symbolic of one of the poles of the 'mandva', which will support the canopy.

What you need for Mandva Mahurat:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ❖ Kumkum | ❖ Deepak |
| ❖ Rice | ❖ Supari (areca nuts) |
| ❖ Abil (White Powder) | ❖ Shriphal (coconut) |
| ❖ Flower | ❖ Paan (betel leaves) |
| ❖ Agarbattis (incense sticks) | ❖ Hardar (turmeric) |
| ❖ Gulal (pink powder) | ❖ Small stick with red thread wrapped around it |

5.b) PITHI: Beautification rituals

A shrine is arranged with a picture of Lord Ganesha set in it. The bride sits on a 'bajat' or low stool, palms upturned, in front of the picture of Lord Ganesha.

She is dressed in a new, but simple sari and wears red glass bangles symbolic of 'akhand sowbhagyavati' (lifelong marriage). A red cloth is placed on another 'bajat' in front of her on which is spread a kilo and a quarter of wheat. Five whole betel nuts with 'nada chari' (red thread) tied around each are blessed by the priest with 'kumkum' (vermilion) and rice and placed on the wheat on top of 'paan' (betel) leaves. Two coconuts with flowers and red thread tied around them are also placed on the wheat.

It is the prerogative of the 'kaaki' (paternal uncle's wife) to mix the 'pithi'. This is a paste of sandalwood, herbs, rosewater and 'German mogro' (an attar) and sometimes even 'French perfume! She arranges the 'pithi' on a decorated platter and has it blessed by the priest. The bride's mother puts a 'tikka' with 'kumkum' and rice on the bride's forehead. A 'lota' (vessel) containing water and five 'ashopalav' (Ashoka) leaves and tied at the neck with red thread is decorated with a Hindu swastika made with 'kumkum'. A coconut is placed on the neck of the 'lota'. The 'chachi' (father's brother's wife) and four 'akhand sowbhagyavatis' (women who have enjoyed a long marriage and whose husband's are alive) selected from both sides of the bride's family hold the 'lota' over the bride's head. The priest removes the coconut and chants 'shlokas' (verses from Vedic texts) while the five women dip the leaves into the water and sprinkle some drops behind them, after which the leaves are also thrown behind.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

The women of the household apply the 'pithi' on the bride's skin using their hands. This purifies and softens the skin. The bride keeps this on for a few hours until the next ceremony, (the 'griha shanti'), is completed. The Patels, Amins and Desais were traditionally landowners and had living on their properties a barber, washer man, tailor etc. who served the landlords exclusively. Their families would help the family when the need arose. For this ceremony, the 'varangand' (barber's wife) comes from the family's ancestral village and it is her sacred duty to assist the bride in washing off the 'pithi'. However, most modern brides now resist this and opt to look after themselves!

A small ceremony called the 'ookarhi nautarvi' is conducted after the 'pithi' wherein the 'kaaki' places an iron nail, a whole supari (betel nut) and a one-rupee coin in a shallow hole, dug by the 'pujari'. This is done to ensure that no evil spirits enter the venue of the wedding.

After the wedding it is taken out of the hole and submerged in a nearby stream.

What you need for the Pithi and 'Ookarhi

Nautarvi:

Bride's attire:

- ❖ Simple sari,
- ❖ Red glass bangles

For the puja:

- ❖ 1 1/4 kg. Wheat
- ❖ Rice
- ❖ Betel Nuts
- ❖ Nada Chadi
- ❖ Betel Leaves
- ❖ Kumkum
- ❖ Bajot
- ❖ Thali
- ❖ Flowers

Groom's attire:

- ❖ Kurta pyjama
- ❖ Mojhris (juttis)

- ❖ Coconut
- ❖ Lota
- ❖ Mango Leaves
- ❖ Iron Nail
- ❖ Rupee Coin
- ❖ Priest
- ❖ Barber's wife
- ❖ Asopalav (Ashoka leaves)

5.c) GRIHA SHANTI: Invoking harmony within the planets

This is a very important and profound religious ceremony. Both sets of parents are the primary figures in the invocation. On behalf of the parents, the officiating priests ask the deities to ensure stellar harmony and peace during the period of their son and daughter's wedding. This is a solemn occasion, and everyone participates with the respect due.

The bride's 'foi' (father's sister) picks up the 'shriphal' (coconut) and hands it to the bride. The bride takes the coconut with 'aasopalav' leaves and sacred red thread tied around it to her parents who are seated on 'patlas' flat low seats in front of the 'homa' (sacred fire) which burns in a 'chawri' (earthen container) and sits down beside them.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

The bride's mother wears a '*modh*' (headpiece woven with beads) on her head. The priest performs the 'puja', which can take up to two hours. The bride hands over the '*shriphal*' (coconut) she has been holding to her parents who in turn hand it over to the priest for '*ahuti*' (sacrifice). The priest consigns the coconut to the flames, thus propitiating the planets for peace and harmony for all the ceremonies connected to the wedding.

The parents then stand on the '*patlas*'. The priest ties the corner of the mother's sari '*pallav*' to the corner of the hem of the father's *kurta* ". This is called the '*cheda ghunthvana*'. The '*foi*' unties it and is given a gift by her brother. The '*purohit*' (priest) ties a red string with betel nuts to the bride's right wrist - symbolic of her willingness to prepare herself for the wedding ceremony. The bride then has another bath.

Similar ceremonies are conducted in the same sequence in the groom's home.

What you need for Griha Shanti:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ❖ Coconuts | ❖ Sari |
| ❖ Aasopalav leaves (Ashoka leaves) | ❖ Gift for 'bua' |
| ❖ Red thread | ❖ Red string with betel nuts |
| ❖ Patlas | ❖ Betel nuts |
| ❖ Maad | ❖ Betel leaves |
| ❖ Chawri | ❖ Pujari (priest) |
| ❖ Shripal | |

6. Mameru or Mosaalu: The bride receives gifts from her maternal uncle

The custom of '*mameru*' originated centuries ago when there were no legal rights existing for daughters. It was customary for the parents to start making provisions for their daughter by gifting her with things on occasions like '*rakshabandhan*' or '*bhaibeej*'. This accumulated as '*streedhan*' (daughter's wealth). On getting married, the daughter would be given jewellery, clothes, and vessels. The parents would also bear all the expenses during her pregnancy and would continue up to the time of delivery. Her newborn child would also be gifted with jewellery / clothes.

When her child grew up and got married, the '*mama*' (maternal uncle) came with the '*mameru*' and thus this process of giving to sister / daughter and their children became a lifelong practice of sharing the family wealth with the female child of the family

'*Mameru*' is a significant part of the wedding ceremony. The bride gets the '*choodo*' (ivory bangle – now replaced with acrylic or plastic) and '*paanetar*' (silk wedding sari- usually white with a red border) from her mama, which she wears as part of her wedding ensemble.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

The 'mameru' is brought on the previous day by the 'mama' and 'mami' in a decorated basket. The bride's mother warmly welcomes it and rejoices that her brother is also ready to participate in the joyous occasion of the marriage of her son / daughter. 'Mameru' stands as an eternal bond between the brother and sister and women continue to draw upon it for a feeling of security and support.

What you need for Mameru:

- ❖ Choodo
- ❖ Decorated basket (filled with the gifts to be given to the bride (this has to later filled with sweets and returned to the 'mama' and 'mami'))
- ❖ Paanetar

7. VARGHODO: The groom's procession

On the evening of the wedding, the groom looks regal in a silk 'lehngo jhabbo' (waist-to-ankle wrapped length of silk, and loose tunic-like shirt), a turban with a 'kalgi' (jeweled piece) on top and 'mojris' (hand-made traditional shoes). He may choose to wear a long pearl and gold necklace. He carries a 'katar' (small dagger) in an engraved scabbard in his hands: this goes back to old times when the groom and his party traveled to the wedding from one village to another on horseback or in carriages, and carried weapons for self defence.

'Var ugra vano samay' - this literally means 'time for the bridegroom to leave for the wedding!' The priest gives the groom's sister a small bowl filled with coins and wrapped with cloth on which a Hindu swastika has been drawn. She rattles this over her brother's head to ward off the evil eye - and to warn her brother that even though he is about to get married, he must not forget his sister! For this she receives a gift from her brother.

The groom's father's sister-in-law garlands him when it is time to leave and gives him a cluster of flowers. According to tradition he mounts a richly caparisoned white horse to the venue of the wedding. Nobility use elephants and some prefer a horse-drawn carriage! Today modern grooms sometimes forsake tradition for a practical vehicle, and leave in a decorated car!

'Var Yatra': is the journey the groom makes to the bride's place. In the car there must be five people - always an uneven number - two of whom are his sisters. The rest of the party accompanying him in separate vehicles is called the 'baraat'. A colourful band enthusiastically playing Gujarati wedding songs and sometimes, popular film tunes precedes it!

What you need for Varghodo:

Groom's attire:

- ❖ Lehngo jhabbo'
- ❖ Mojhris
- ❖ Turban
- ❖ Katar
- ❖ Kalgi

Other items:

- ❖ Bowl and coins wrapped in fabric
- ❖ Gift for sister
- ❖ Live wedding band
- ❖ Decorated mare / Car

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

8. VAR PONKE: Welcoming the groom

The groom and the '*baraat*' arrive at the venue with the band announcing their arrival. The bride's mother receives the groom. She wears a '*modh*' (headpiece woven with beads) and has a '*khes*' (cotton stole) draped over one shoulder under which she has hidden two small clay pots filled with rice and vermilion and tied with red string, shielding them from '*najar*' (the evil eye).

Before he can enter the premises he is made to step onto a '*bajat*' (low stool). The bride's mother does a brief '*aarti*' for him, puts a '*tikka*' of 'kumkum' and rice on his forehead and exchanges the flowers he carries for a coconut, which has been decorated with red thread. Musicians play the '*shehnai*', a long wind instrument with evocative sound.

The bride wears the bridal sari called the '*paanetar*' which is a white silk sari with red and gold border presented to her by her '*mama*' (mother's brother). He also gifts her a '*nath*' (nose ring) and '*paayals*' (silver anklets), silver toe rings and the '*choodo*' (red-and-white 'ivory' wedding bangles). Most Indians do not wear gold on their feet. Under the sari she wears a satin slip with little gold bells attached to the hem. She wears the jewellery given to her by her uncle. The rest of the bridal jewellery includes, either, a '*bandhi*' (gold band with pendant worn on the head) or just a '*tikka*' (pendant worn on forehead), necklaces, earrings, '*paancha saankra*' (five rings connected to chains attached at the wrists). Along with gold bangles and the 'ivory' bangles, she wears green glass bangles: three on one wrist, two on the other - always an uneven number! The green glass bangles are a symbol of fertility. A unique piece of 'jewellery' is the ' *Kapoor na gajra*'. This is an aromatic necklace made of real camphor beads with red, green and gold thread wound intricately around them!

An aunt of the groom goes in to meet the bride who has been worshipping at the shrine of Lord Ganesha invoking his blessings. They present her with the '*kanya shelu*', her last gift as a maiden. This comprises a '*thaali*' (platter) on which there is a silk and gold sari, some jewellery, pretty slippers and a '*mangalsutra*' (necklace symbolizing marriage) made of black beads on red thread. The new sari is draped around her shoulders, the '*mangalsutra*' is tied around her neck, and she puts on the new slippers.

The aunts escort the bride out. She garlands the bridegroom, signaling her willingness to marry him. She is then led back to the shrine inside continuing her worship of Lord Ganesha.

The bride's mother sets the two clay pots with the rice on the ground before the groom. He steps down from the '*baja*' onto the pots, smashing them, and then enters. His sisters escort him to the '*mandva*' (the wedding canopy), which has been beautifully decorated with marigold and jasmine flowers. The bride's sisters and friends grab the groom's shoes

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

as he takes them off - in spite of resistance from his friends - and make off with them. He has to forget about the shoes for now and address himself to more important things! He is seated inside the 'mandva' to the left of the bride's parents, accompanied by his brother or a friend.

What you need for Var Ponke:

- ❖ Cotton khes
- ❖ Bajat
- ❖ 2 clay pots
- ❖ Rice

Bride's attire:

- ❖ Paanetar sari with satin petticoat
- ❖ Silver anklets & toe rings
- ❖ Footwear

Jewellery:

- ❖ Necklaces
- ❖ Earrings
- ❖ Bandhi or tikka
- ❖ Paancha saankara

Items for kanya shelu:

- ❖ Thaali
- ❖ Sar
- ❖ Jewellery

- ❖ Kumkum
- ❖ Shehnai players
- ❖ Coconuts
- ❖ Items for aarti

- ❖ Nath
- ❖ Choodo (red & white ivory bangles)

- ❖ Kapoor na gajra
- ❖ Gold bangles
- ❖ Green glass bangles

- ❖ Slippers
- ❖ Mangalsutra

9. LAGNA: The wedding ceremony – divided into following segments

9. a) Varmala: The couple exchanges garlands

The bride's 'mama' (maternal uncle) escorts her to the 'mandva', where she garlands the groom, and he reciprocates. She now sits facing him. The priest puts a 'tikka' of 'kumkum' and rice on both their foreheads and blesses them.

What you need for Varmala:

- ❖ Garlands
- ❖ Rice Confetti
- ❖ Kumkum

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

9.b) Kanyadaan: Giving away the bride

The bride's parents apply 'tikkas' on the couple and the bride's father performs the 'kanyadaan'. This is done by tying the hands of the bride and groom together in a marital knot known as the 'hast medap'. The bride's father places her right hand in the right hand of the groom and both reach out over the unlit fire below. With this gesture the father of the bride symbolizes this promise; 'I offer you this most precious gift of my daughter to take as your own, to cherish and to protect'.

The bride's mother then connects the couple by tying the 'varmaala' (a length of sacred red thread) across them and looping it like a garland over their hands. They are then made to sit together. The 'varmaala' is taken off their hands and made into a small garland, which is put around the bride's neck. The parents now leave the 'mandva'.

What you need for Kanyadaan:

- ❖ Puja items – same as for the other ❖ Varmaala or 'nada chari'
- ❖ 'pujas'
- ❖ Kumkum

9 c) Mangal Pheras: Seven steps around the sacred fire

The chanting and 'puja' continue. The 'pujari' lights the sacred fire amidst Vedic chants and the 'mangal pheras' begin. The couple circles the fire four times. Each time the bride's brother puts flowers and vermilion in his sister's right hand and places it in the groom's right hand. The bride and groom consign these to the fire.

The groom leads the bride the first three times and the fourth time he is led by her. These circumventions are called 'mangal pheras'. After the last 'phera' there is a slight tussle to see who gets back to the seat first! The one who returns first will have the upper hand in the marriage! At the end of each 'phera' or circumvention, the groom receives a gift of gold or money from his father-in-law ('posh bharave')!

What you need for the Mangal Pheras:

- ❖ Flowers ❖ Gifts of gold or money for the groom ('posh bharave')
- ❖ Kumkum

9.d) Saptapadi: Seven steps around the sacred fire

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

After the 'mangal pheras' the couple takes the seven steps around the fire and with each step a vow is taken.

- ❖ With this 1st step be the giver of food
- ❖ With this 2nd step be my source of strength
- ❖ With this 3rd step be my prosperity
- ❖ With this 4th step be my source of happiness
- ❖ With this 5th step be the mother of our children
- ❖ With this 6th step be my companion in all seasons
- ❖ With this 7th step be my eternal friend

After the completion of all these ceremonies the couple is seated once more and blessed by all with the showering of rice.

Five to seven of the bride's married female relatives come to her and whisper in her ear "*Akhand sowbhagyavati*" (may you be a happily married woman forever). As each lady comes to the bride, the groom's parents give her a gift made of silver or steel. The newly wed couple, now steps out of the 'mandva' escorted by a member of each family. They touch the feet of all the family members older than themselves and receive blessings and a 'shakun' (a token of money) from each of them.

The 'Lagna' is followed by a dinner. This is always vegetarian, and in recent times varied cuisine like Chinese or Italian is also appearing on the wedding buffet along with traditional fare!

What you need for the Satapadi:

- ❖ Rice confetti
- ❖ Gifts for the married ladies who come to wish the couple from the groom's parents
- ❖ Four gifts for the groom from the bride's father

10. VADAVA VANU: Bridal send off

The time has come for the hilarious negotiations the groom and his friends must engage in to 'buy' his shoes back. The girls show no mercy and stand their ground until they extract the maximum possible. The bride and groom may leave together at the '*mahurat*' (auspicious time) determined by the priests. But they just may have to wait even if it is late. They may even have to wait a day or two if required! If the '*mahurat*' permits them to leave together on the wedding day, the couple first goes to the shrine in the house. In a '*thaali*' containing vermilion and water several coins are submerged. The couple scramble in the water for them - and legend has it that whichever one of the two gets the most coins will be the dominant partner!

'Thaapa': Outside the front door, the bride and the groom dip their hands into a '*thaali*' with 'kumkum' and water and leave an impression with their palms on the wall at five

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.

places each! In earlier days when families lived next door to each other, the couple would go to four other homes and leave their palm prints - this constituted proof of their marriage!

The bride bids a tearful farewell to her parents, family and friends. The priest performs a small 'puja' for the car and puts a 'tikka' on the hood! The bride's mother breaks a coconut in front of the car, invoking blessings for a safe journey. The bride's trousseau and jewellery are put into the car. The bride and groom leave accompanied by three others - there must be five people in the car. The bride's brother usually escorts her to her new home.

What you need for the Vadava Vanu:

- ❖ Basic 'puja' items
- ❖ Thaali with kumkum water
- ❖ Coconut

11. VAR GHODYU POKVANU CHE: Welcoming the bride into her marital home

If the 'mahurat' time is favourable for the bride and groom to leave together then the groom's mother and sisters who left the wedding ahead of them receive them. The groom's mother performs a small 'aarti' and puts a 'tikka' on their foreheads and something sweet into their mouths before they enter. She gifts the bride a piece of jewellery. The couple is blessed by the family and receives gifts from them. In the event the time is not auspicious for the bride to leave, the groom goes home with the 'baraat' and the bride is escorted to his home in a day or two by her family.

What you need for the Var Ghodyu Pokvanu Che:

- ❖ Items for the 'aarti'
- ❖ Jewellery for the bride
- ❖ Gifts for the couple

12. RECEPTION: Post wedding celebrations

This is an event borrowed from the West - and is not mandatory. The reception can be as simple or as elaborate an event as desired by the families, with a hotel venue, live band and gourmet food! At any rate, both serve the purpose of introducing the bride and groom as a married couple.

What you need for the Reception:

- ❖ Venue
- ❖ Caterer

A Gujarati Patel Hindu wedding is now complete.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.



Information supplied by Toral Patel, wife of the cricketer Brijesh Patel, with valuable inputs by her mother Mrs. Subhadra Amin and aunt Mrs. Sharda A Patel, age 76 years.
Document compiled by Biba Bhusri, Bangalore.

Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com

Shaadionline Pvt. Ltd.

16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065

Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783

© Saanyogg No part of this document may be reproduced without permission.