



# Ratha Yatra

## Chariot Festival of Jagannatha in Puri

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- A detailed exploration of a stunning festival, which is of great importance to Indian culture and heritage
- A comprehensive and holistic view of this celebration

*Ratha Yatra*, the ancient annual festival of the chariot and Jagannatha, the presiding deity of the great temple Srimandira at Puri, is one of the grandest spectacles on earth.

Jagannatha (along with siblings Balabhadra and Subhadra) ride three colorful chariots in their annual sojourn to their garden house and birthplace Gundicha Temple, where they stay for seven days before returning back. Full of drama, vitality, and a panoply of rituals and ceremonies, *Ratha Yatra* is rooted in ancient traditions, myths and legends. It embodies the most colorful elements of the classical folk cultures of the Indian subcontinent and the Odisha region, and is the most succinct manifestation of India's heritage today. Celebrating the Hindu faith, this festival keeps Jagannatha alive and vibrant in the great pilgrim town of Puri, one of India's four most sacred cities.

**Subas Pani** is an author, translator, composer and creative director. A retired civil servant with a PhD on Jayadeva's Geetagovinda, he has given running commentary on the Ratha Yatra for the national and international channels of Doordarshan, the national television broadcaster of India, for more than two decades. His publications include *Orissa: Her Monuments and Their Tales*, *Palm Leaf Paintings of Orissa: A Selection from the Orissa State Museum*, *Jagannatha Consciousness* (ed.), *Balasore, its Historical & Cultural Heritage* (ed.) and *Blue Hill: Hymns to Jagannatha* (English verse translations from Sanskrit and Odia). His travel articles have appeared in *Swagat* and *Namaskar*. He has authored two seminal works in Odia: *Sampoorna Geetagovinda* and *Daru Brahma: Sri Jagannatha Bhajana Sudhasindhu*, and composed music for two major compilations of the same name, as well as a single CD titled *Jagannathah Swami*.