

## [Durga's Delight](#)

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In the fall of every year, Nepal's Kathmandu Valley revels in the colorful ten-day Dasain festival, celebrating the victory of the black, ten-armed Durga over Mahisasura, a fierce water buffalo demon who terrorized the Earth. Each night a group of dancers--Asta Matrikas, the eight Mother Earth Goddesses, protectors of ten directions and subduers of obstacles--weave through the dark streets of Patan, faces covered in jeweled masks representing eight faces of Goddess Durga. The dancers' bodies are believed to be inhabited by the Goddesses they portray, inspiring a frenzied dance to the beat of throbbing drums, while wood-carved images of Hindu Gods watch from above. A masked Ganesha dancer waits patiently in the crowd. Dasain is a prayer to Durga, a triumph of good over evil.