

## Float Festival

In the month of January/ February,(Tamil month of Thai), on full moon day, idols of Goddess Meenakshi and her consort Lord Sundareswarar are brought from Meenakshi Amman temple to the Mariamman Tank in the morning and placed on a float. The float is pulled around the tank twice during the day and once at night by devotees. At night, large crowd gathers around the tank and witnesses the function. Some time, display of fireworks is also seen. Pilgrims across India come to Madurai to participate in the mesmerizing festival.

The Float festival is scheduled to take place on  
February 10, 2017

Tamil Nadu Tourism department, Police Department, and Travel Club – Madurai have jointly been making special arrangements for foreign visitors. Members of Travel Club and Tamilnadu Tourism Department(TTD) escort the visitors from TTD office to the venue. Foreigners can sit and watch the entire program from a distance. They will be dropped at the TTD office after the program. There is no charge for this facility.

The temple will remain closed on this occasion and Pujas and offering will not be made on that day at the Sree Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple. This festival is called the "Float Festival" (in Tamil: Theppa Thiruvizha, Theppotsavam).

Vandiyur Mariamman Teppakulam is the pond located near to Vandiyur Mariamman Temple and is situated at a distance of about 5 km from the Meenakshi Amman Temple. This tank was said to have been dug by Tirumala Nayakar. It is the biggest tank of its kind in Tamil Nadu and one of the most imposing sights of Madurai when it is full of water. The Ganesh idol was found when the earth was being dug out from here to build the Thirumalai Nayakkar Palace. Therefore, the place attained sanctity and was converted into a teppakulam (tank). The 7 feet Ganesh statue is now installed in Meenakshi Amman Temple.

King Thirumalai Nayak was born in 'Poosa' Star and so in commemorating the birth of the king, float festival is conducted in Tamil Month of 'Thai' (Jan/Feb) in the tank in a colourful way. The festival attracts thousands of tourists. Literally, Teppakulam means temple pond mainly used for festivals. The tank is connected to Vaigai River through an ingenious system of underground Channels. It has total of 12 long stairs (steps) made of granite on all four sides. The temple as well as the stairs were built by the King Thirumalai Nayak. In the centre of the tank, there is a Madapam called Maiya Mandapam (Central Mandapam) with Ganesh temple and garden.