Welcome to a Valaikappu!

A guide for guests who are new to this beautiful tradition

What is a valaikappu?

Valaikappu is the Tamil bangle ceremony, the South Indian baby shower. *Valai* means bangles and *kappu* means protection. The women of the family slide glass bangles onto the mom-to-be's arms to bless and protect her and the baby. It is held in the seventh or ninth month of pregnancy, usually in the morning.

What will happen?

1. The oil lamps are lit and a short prayer is said.
2. Each guest, one by one, applies turmeric and sandalwood paste to the mom-to-be's arms and face, slides on some glass bangles, then showers her with flowers and uncooked rice while blessing her out loud.
3. The father-to-be goes first, then family, then every guest in turn.
4. The ceremony closes with aarti, the waving of the lamp, and then everyone sits down to a vegetarian feast.

What should I bring?

A gift for the **mom-to-be**, not for the baby: a silk scarf, a spa hamper, jewelry, or something beautiful for her. The closest family gives her a saree or jewelry. Every guest goes home with a **tamboolam** return gift.

What should I wear?

Bright, festive clothes. A saree, a kurta, or any colorful outfit is perfect. Comfortable shoes help, because the ceremony lasts one to two hours.

Good to know

The whole family is invited, men, women, and children. The bangles stay on the mom-to-be's arms until she is ready to deliver. If you are unsure what to do at any moment, just follow the elder leading the ceremony. Enjoy the singing, the feast, and the dancing!