Navaratri and Dasara at Home

Thursday 30 September to Saturday 9 October 2027

Nine nights honour the Goddess as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. In Karnataka, many homes set up a bombe habba, a display of dolls on steps, and invite friends to see it. Vijayadashami celebrates the victory of good over evil.

What you need

- Steps (3, 5, 7 or 9) made from boxes or shelves, covered with cloth
- Dolls: the pattada gombe (king and queen pair), gods, animals and everyday scenes
- A kalasha, lamp, flowers, turmeric and kumkum
- Books, notebooks and musical instruments for Saraswati Puja
- Tools, laptops and vehicles to clean for Ayudha Puja
- Sundal (chickpeas or lentils) and small gifts for visitors

Before the puja

- Set up the dolls on the first day, with the pattada gombe on the top step and gods above.
- Light a lamp near the display each evening.
- Plan which friends to invite on which evening.

Food to offer

Sundal, payasa, chitranna, kosambari and a different sweet each day.

Simple puja, step by step

1. Day 1: set up the dolls and the kalasha, light the lamp, pray to Ganesha and invite the Goddess.
2. Every evening: light the lamp, offer flowers, do arati, and offer sundal or a sweet.
3. Invite friends to see the dolls; give them sundal, turmeric and kumkum and a small gift.
4. Saraswati Puja: place books and instruments before the Goddess, offer flowers and rest from study for the day.
5. Ayudha Puja (8 Oct): clean tools, laptops and vehicles, mark them with turmeric and kumkum, and give thanks.
6. Vijayadashami (9 Oct): do a final puja, open the books again and write the first letters, then lay one doll down to close the display.

Prayers to chant

> *Shubham karoti kalyanam arogyam dhana sampadah, shatru buddhi vinashaya deepa jyotir namostute.*
>
> I bow to the light of the lamp, which brings goodness, health and wealth, and removes harmful thoughts.

> *Sarva-mangala-mangalye shive sarvartha-sadhike, sharanye tryambake gauri narayani namostute.*
>
> Salutations to the Goddess, the most auspicious one, who fulfils every good aim and protects all.

> *Saraswati namastubhyam varade kamarupini, vidyarambham karishyami siddhir bhavatu me sada.*
>
> Salutations to Saraswati, giver of boons. I begin my learning; may it always succeed.

> *Mantra-hinam kriya-hinam bhakti-hinam janardana, yat pujitam maya deva paripurnam tad astu me.*
>
> Whatever I have offered, without the right words, actions or devotion, please accept it as complete.

With children

- Let children choose and arrange one step of the doll display themselves.
- Have them make a park or village scene with clay, sand and small toys.
- Vijayadashami is a lucky day to start learning something new: music, a language or a craft.

A simple home guide from VedVidesh. Every family and region has its own customs, so follow yours where they differ, and check a local panchanga for the exact muhurta in your city. Dates are for India; abroad they can differ by a day.