

Makar Sankranti and Pongal at Home

Thursday 14 January 2027 (many regions also 15 January)

Sankranti marks the sun entering Capricorn and the start of its northward journey. It is a festival of thanks to the sun, the earth, the cattle and the farmers who grow our food.



What you need

- Sesame (ellu), jaggery, dry coconut, roasted peanuts and fried gram for ellu bella
- Sugar figures (sakkare acchu) if available
- Rice, moong dal, milk, jaggery and ghee for pongal
- Sugarcane pieces and a few bananas
- Turmeric, kumkum, flowers and a lamp
- A new pot or vessel for cooking pongal
- Rangoli colours or rice flour

Before the puja

- Draw a large rangoli at the entrance the evening before or early morning.
- Make the ellu bella mix and pack small portions to share.
- Have an oil bath (in Karnataka, often with sesame) and wear new clothes.

Food to offer

Sweet pongal (sakkare pongal), ven pongal or huggi, ellu bella, sugarcane and seasonal vegetables.

Simple puja, step by step

1. At sunrise, face the sun, offer water from cupped hands or a small vessel and say Om Suryaya Namah.
2. Light the lamp at the home altar and say the lamp prayer.
3. Pray to Ganesha.
4. Cook pongal in the new pot. When the milk boils over, everyone says "Pongalo Pongal!" for abundance.
5. Offer the pongal, ellu bella, sugarcane and bananas to the sun and the family deity.
6. Do arati and share the prasada.
7. Visit family and friends to exchange ellu bella, saying "Ellu bella thindu olle maathaadi" (eat sesame and jaggery, and speak sweetly).

Prayers to chant

Om Suryaya Namah. Om Mitraya Namah. Om Ravaye Namah.

Salutations to the sun, the friend of all, the shining one.

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.

Vakratunda mahakaya suryakoti samaprabha, nirvighnam kuru me deva sarva-karyeshu sarvada.

O Lord with the curved trunk and mighty body, shining like a million suns, remove the obstacles from all my work, always.

Om bhur bhuvah svah, tat savitur varenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.

The Gayatri mantra: we meditate on the radiant light of the sun; may it inspire our understanding.

With children

- Let children mix and pack the ellu bella and give it to friends and neighbours.
 - Fly a kite, or make paper kites if it is too cold outside.
 - Talk about where rice, sugarcane and sesame come from, and thank the farmers.
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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.