Navaratri and Dasara: Puja Vidhi

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. This guide gives the full home puja step by step. Instructions are in English; every mantra is printed in Kannada script with a Roman transliteration below it.

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.

Opening

1. Sit facing east or north. Light the lamp and say the lamp prayer.

> ಶುಭಂ ಕರೋತಿ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಮ್ ಆರೋಗ್ಯಂ ಧನಸಮ್ಪದಃ । ಶತ್ರುಬುದ್ಧಿವಿನಾಶಾಯ ದೀಪಜ್ಯೋತಿರ್ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು ತೇ ॥
>
> śubhaṃ karoti kalyāṇam ārogyaṃ dhanasampadaḥ | śatrubuddhivināśāya dīpajyotirnamo'stu te ||
> I bow to the light of the lamp, which brings goodness, health and wealth, and removes harmful thoughts.

2. Achamana: sip a few drops of water from the right palm three times, once with each name.

> ಓಂ ಕೇಶವಾಯ ಸ್ವಾಹಾ । ಓಂ ನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ಸ್ವಾಹಾ । ಓಂ ಮಾಧವಾಯ ಸ್ವಾಹಾ ॥
>
> oṃ keśavāya svāhā | oṃ nārāyaṇāya svāhā | oṃ mādhavāya svāhā ||

3. Pray to Ganesha first, to remove obstacles.

> ವಕ್ರತುಣ್ಡ ಮಹಾಕಾಯ ಸೂರ್ಯಕೋಟಿ ಸಮಪ್ರಭ । ನಿರ್ವಿಘ್ನಂ ಕುರು ಮೇ ದೇವ ಸರ್ವಕಾರ್ಯೇಷು ಸರ್ವದಾ ॥
>
> vakratuṇḍa mahākāya sūryakoṭi samaprabha | nirvighnaṃ kuru me deva sarvakāryeṣu sarvadā ||
> O Lord with the curved trunk and mighty body, shining like a million suns, remove the obstacles from all my work, always.

4. Sankalpa: hold a little water and akshate, say the resolve for worshipping the Goddess Durga, then let them fall on a plate.

> ಮಮ ಸಕುಟುಮ್ಬಸ್ಯ ಕ್ಷೇಮಸ್ಥೈರ್ಯ ಆಯುರಾರೋಗ್ಯ ಐಶ್ವರ್ಯಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧ್ಯರ್ಥಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ಪ್ರೀತ್ಯರ್ಥಂ ಯಥಾಶಕ್ತಿ ಧ್ಯಾನಾವಾಹನಾದಿ ಷೋಡಶೋಪಚಾರಪೂಜಾಂ ಕರಿಷ್ಯೇ ॥
>
> mama sakuṭumbasya kṣemasthairya āyurārogya aiśvaryābhivṛddhyarthaṃ śrī durgādevyai prītyarthaṃ yathāśakti dhyānāvāhanādi ṣoḍaśopacārapūjāṃ kariṣye ||
> For the safety, long life, health and prosperity of my family, and to please the deity, I perform this worship with the sixteen offerings, as well as I can.

5. The sixteen offerings (shodashopachara). Before each one say "Om Shri durgādevyai namah", then the line below, and make the offering.

The sixteen offerings

1. Dhyana: close your eyes and picture the deity.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಧ್ಯಾಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | dhyāyāmi ||

2. Avahana: invite the deity into the image or kalasha.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಆವಾಹಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | āvāhayāmi ||

3. Asana: offer a seat; place a few grains of akshate.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಆಸನಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | āsanaṃ samarpayāmi ||

4. Padya: offer water for the feet with a spoon.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಪಾದ್ಯಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | pādyaṃ samarpayāmi ||

5. Arghya: offer water for the hands.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಅರ್ಘ್ಯಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | arghyaṃ samarpayāmi ||

6. Achamana: offer water to sip.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಆಚಮನೀಯಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | ācamanīyaṃ samarpayāmi ||

7. Snana: bathe a metal image, or sprinkle water on a picture.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಸ್ನಾನಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | snānaṃ samarpayāmi ||

8. Vastra: offer a cloth or a cotton thread.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ವಸ್ತ್ರಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | vastraṃ samarpayāmi ||

9. Abharana: offer ornaments, bangles or a turmeric thread.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಆಭರಣಾನಿ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | ābharaṇāni samarpayāmi ||

10. Gandha: offer sandalwood paste, turmeric and kumkum.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಗನ್ಧಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | gandhaṃ samarpayāmi ||

11. Pushpa: offer flowers.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಪುಷ್ಪಾಣಿ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | puṣpāṇi samarpayāmi ||

12. Dhupa: wave the incense.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಧೂಪಮ್ ಆಘ್ರಾಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | dhūpam āghrāpayāmi ||

13. Dipa: show the lamp.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ದೀಪಂ ದರ್ಶಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | dīpaṃ darśayāmi ||

14. Naivedya: offer the food, sprinkling water around it.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ನೈವೇದ್ಯಂ ನಿವೇದಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | naivedyaṃ nivedayāmi ||

15. Tambula: offer betel leaves, nut and fruit.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ತಾಮ್ಬೂಲಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | tāmbūlaṃ samarpayāmi ||

16. Nirajana: do arati with camphor or ghee lamp.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ನೀರಾಜನಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | nīrājanaṃ samarpayāmi ||

17. Mantrapushpa: offer flowers with folded hands.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಮನ್ತ್ರಪುಷ್ಪಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | mantrapuṣpaṃ samarpayāmi ||

18. Pradakshina: turn around once clockwise and bow down.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ದುರ್ಗಾದೇವ್ಯೈ ನಮಃ । ಪ್ರದಕ್ಷಿಣನಮಸ್ಕಾರಾನ್ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī durgādevyai namaḥ | pradakṣiṇanamaskārān samarpayāmi ||

Mantras for Navaratri and Dasara

> ಸರ್ವಮಙ್ಗಲಮಾಙ್ಗಲ್ಯೇ ಶಿವೇ ಸರ್ವಾರ್ಥಸಾಧಿಕೇ । ಶರಣ್ಯೇ ತ್ರ್ಯಮ್ಬಕೇ ಗೌರಿ ನಾರಾಯಣಿ ನಮೋಽಸ್ತು ತೇ ॥
>
> sarvamaṅgalamāṅgalye śive sarvārthasādhike | śaraṇye tryambake gauri nārāyaṇi namo'stu te ||
> Salutations to the Goddess, the most auspicious one, who fulfils every good aim and protects all.

> ಸರಸ್ವತಿ ನಮಸ್ತುಭ್ಯಂ ವರದೇ ಕಾಮರೂಪಿಣಿ । ವಿದ್ಯಾರಮ್ಭಂ ಕರಿಷ್ಯಾಮಿ ಸಿದ್ಧಿರ್ಭವತು ಮೇ ಸದಾ ॥
>
> sarasvati namastubhyaṃ varade kāmarūpiṇi | vidyārambhaṃ kariṣyāmi siddhirbhavatu me sadā ||
> Salutations to Saraswati, giver of boons. I begin my learning; may it always succeed.

Closing

- Ask forgiveness for anything missed, then share the prasada with everyone.

> ಮನ್ತ್ರಹೀನಂ ಕ್ರಿಯಾಹೀನಂ ಭಕ್ತಿಹೀನಂ ಜನಾರ್ದನ । ಯತ್ಪೂಜಿತಂ ಮಯಾ ದೇವ ಪರಿಪೂರ್ಣಂ ತದಸ್ತು ಮೇ ॥
>
> mantrahīnaṃ kriyāhīnaṃ bhaktihīnaṃ janārdana | yatpūjitaṃ mayā deva paripūrṇaṃ tadastu me ||
> Whatever I have offered, without the right words, actions or devotion, please accept it as complete.

A home puja guide from VedVidesh. Mantras are given in their common short forms; families and regions vary, so follow your own tradition where it differs, and ask a priest or elder to check pronunciation if you are learning. Dates are for India.