Makar Sankranti and Pongal: Puja Vidhi

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. 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

- 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.

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 Surya, the sun, then let them fall on a plate.

> ಮಮ ಸಕುಟುಮ್ಬಸ್ಯ ಕ್ಷೇಮಸ್ಥೈರ್ಯ ಆಯುರಾರೋಗ್ಯ ಐಶ್ವರ್ಯಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧ್ಯರ್ಥಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ಪ್ರೀತ್ಯರ್ಥಂ ಯಥಾಶಕ್ತಿ ಧ್ಯಾನಾವಾಹನಾದಿ ಷೋಡಶೋಪಚಾರಪೂಜಾಂ ಕರಿಷ್ಯೇ ॥
>
> mama sakuṭumbasya kṣemasthairya āyurārogya aiśvaryābhivṛddhyarthaṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya 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 sūryanārāyaṇāya namah", then the line below, and make the offering.

The sixteen offerings

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಧ್ಯಾಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | dhyāyāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಆವಾಹಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | āvāhayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಆಸನಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | āsanaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಪಾದ್ಯಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | pādyaṃ samarpayāmi ||

5. Arghya: offer water for the hands.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಅರ್ಘ್ಯಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | arghyaṃ samarpayāmi ||

6. Achamana: offer water to sip.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಆಚಮನೀಯಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | ācamanīyaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಸ್ನಾನಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
>
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | snānaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ವಸ್ತ್ರಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | vastraṃ samarpayāmi ||

9. Yajnopavita: offer the sacred thread.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಯಜ್ಞೋಪವೀತಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | yajñopavītaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಗನ್ಧಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | gandhaṃ samarpayāmi ||

11. Pushpa: offer flowers.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಪುಷ್ಪಾಣಿ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | puṣpāṇi samarpayāmi ||

12. Dhupa: wave the incense.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಧೂಪಮ್ ಆಘ್ರಾಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | dhūpam āghrāpayāmi ||

13. Dipa: show the lamp.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ದೀಪಂ ದರ್ಶಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | dīpaṃ darśayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ನೈವೇದ್ಯಂ ನಿವೇದಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | naivedyaṃ nivedayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ತಾಮ್ಬೂಲಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | tāmbūlaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ನೀರಾಜನಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | nīrājanaṃ samarpayāmi ||

17. Mantrapushpa: offer flowers with folded hands.

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಮನ್ತ್ರಪುಷ್ಪಂ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | mantrapuṣpaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

> ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಸೂರ್ಯನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಪ್ರದಕ್ಷಿಣನಮಸ್ಕಾರಾನ್ ಸಮರ್ಪಯಾಮಿ ॥
> oṃ śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | pradakṣiṇanamaskārān samarpayāmi ||

Mantras for Makar Sankranti and Pongal

> ಓಂ ಸೂರ್ಯಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಓಂ ಮಿತ್ರಾಯ ನಮಃ । ಓಂ ರವಯೇ ನಮಃ ॥
>
> oṃ sūryāya namaḥ | oṃ mitrāya namaḥ | oṃ ravaye namaḥ ||
> Salutations to the sun, the friend of all, the shining one.

> ಓಂ ಭೂರ್ಭುವಃ ಸ್ವಃ । ತತ್ಸವಿತುರ್ವರೇಣ್ಯಂ ಭರ್ಗೋ ದೇವಸ್ಯ ಧೀಮಹಿ । ಧಿಯೋ ಯೋ ನಃ ಪ್ರಚೋದಯಾತ್ ॥
>
> oṃ bhūrbhuvaḥ svaḥ | tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ||
> The Gayatri mantra: we meditate on the radiant light of the sun; may it inspire our understanding.

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.