

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 Devanagari 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

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

शुभं करोति कल्याणम् आरोग्यं धनसम्पदः । शत्रुबुद्धिविनाशाय दीपज्योतिर्नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

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.

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

ॐ केशवाय स्वाहा । ॐ नारायणाय स्वाहा । ॐ माधवाय स्वाहा ॥

oṃ keśavāya svāhā | oṃ nārāyaṇāya svāhā | oṃ mādhavāya svāhā ||

- Pray to Ganesha first, to remove obstacles.

वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभ । निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

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.

मम सकुटुम्बस्य क्षेमस्थैर्य आयुरारोग्य ऐश्वर्याभिवृद्धयर्थ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय प्रीत्यर्थ यथाशक्ति
ध्यानावाहनादि षोडशोपचारपूजां करिष्ये ॥

mama sakuṭumbasya kṣemasthairya āyurārogya aiśvaryābhivṛddhyartham śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya prītyartham
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 namaḥ", then the line below, and make the offering.

The sixteen offerings

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । ध्यायामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | dhyāyāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । आवाहयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | āvāhayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । आसनं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | āsanaṃ samarpayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । पाद्यं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | pādyam samarpayāmi ||

5. Arghya: offer water for the hands.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । अर्घ्यं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | arghyam samarpayāmi ||

6. Achamana: offer water to sip.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । आचमनीयं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | ācamanīyam samarpayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । स्नानं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | snānam samarpayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । वस्त्रं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | vastraṁ samarpayāmi ||

9. Yajnopavita: offer the sacred thread.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । यज्ञोपवीतं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | yajñopavītaṁ samarpayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । गन्धं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | gandhaṁ samarpayāmi ||

11. Pushpa: offer flowers.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । पुष्पाणि समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | puṣpāṇi samarpayāmi ||

12. Dhupa: wave the incense.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । धूपम् आघ्रापयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | dhūpam āghrāpayāmi ||

13. Dipa: show the lamp.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । दीपं दर्शयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | dīpaṁ darśayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । नैवेद्यं निवेदयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | naivedyaṁ nivedayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । ताम्बूलं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | tāmbūlaṁ samarpayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । नीराजनं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | nīrajanaṁ samarpayāmi ||

17. Mantrapushpa: offer flowers with folded hands.

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । मन्त्रपुष्पं समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | mantrapuṣpaṁ samarpayāmi ||

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

ॐ श्री सूर्यनारायणाय नमः । प्रदक्षिणमस्कारान् समर्पयामि ॥

om śrī sūryanārāyaṇāya namaḥ | pradakṣiṇanamaskārān samarpayāmi ||

Mantras for Makar Sankranti and Pongal

ॐ सूर्याय नमः । ॐ मित्राय नमः । ॐ रवये नमः ॥

om sūryāya namaḥ | om mitrāya namaḥ | om ravaye namaḥ ||
Salutations to the sun, the friend of all, the shining one.

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

om bhūrbhuvāḥ svaḥ | tatsaviturvareṇyaṁ 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.

मन्त्रहीनं क्रियाहीनं भक्तिहीनं जनार्दन । यत्पूजितं मया देव परिपूर्णं तदस्तु मे ॥

mantrahīnaṁ kriyāhīnaṁ bhaktihīnaṁ janārdana | yatpūjitaṁ mayā deva paripūrṇaṁ 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.