Karthika Deepam at Home

Tuesday 24 November 2026

Short puja: about 20 minutes



On the full moon of Karthika, homes in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala are lit with rows of clay lamps from the doorstep to the roof. At Tiruvannamalai a great flame is lit on top of the hill, and in Varanasi the same night is Dev Deepavali, when the ghats glow with lamps for the gods.

What you need

- Clay agal lamps or diyas
- Ghee or sesame oil, cotton wicks
- Puffed rice (pori) and jaggery
- Rice flour, ghee and banana for appam
- Flowers and a Tulsi plant if you have one
- Camphor and incense

Before the puja

- Clean the puja place and take a bath; wear fresh clothes.
- Set out a lamp, incense, flowers, turmeric, kumkum, rice and water.
- Read the story to the family before you begin.

Short puja, step by step

1. **Light the lamp** and say the lamp prayer, then pray to Ganesha.
2. **Clean and draw a kolam.** Clean the house and draw a kolam at the door and around the puja place.
3. **Puja at dusk.** At sunset, worship Shiva (or your family deity) with flowers and a lamp.
4. **Light the lamps.** From the altar lamp, light rows of agal lamps at the doorstep, windows and balcony.
5. **Offer appam and pori.** Offer karthigai appam, pori urundai and fruit.
6. **Float a lamp.** In the north, float a small lamp on a bowl of water as a Dev Deepavali offering.
7. **Arati.** Wave the lamp, ask forgiveness for anything missed and share the prasada.

Prayers to chant

शुभं करोति कल्याणम् आरोग्यं धनसम्पदः । शत्रुबुद्धिविनाशाय दीपज्योतिर्नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

I bow to the light of the lamp, which brings goodness, health and wealth, and removes harmful thoughts.

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

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

ॐ नमः शिवाय ॥

Salutations to Shiva.

ॐ प्राणाय स्वाहा । ॐ अपानाय स्वाहा । ॐ व्यानाय स्वाहा । ॐ उदानाय स्वाहा । ॐ समानाय स्वाहा ॥

Offering the food to the five breaths of life.

यानि कानि च पापानि जन्मान्तरकृतानि च । तानि तानि विनश्यन्ति प्रदक्षिण पदे पदे ॥

With every step around the altar, may all past wrongs fall away.

With children

- Make a lamp tray for the doorstep: Draw a simple kolam on the tray with rice flour.
- Tell the story of Karthika Deepam before the puja.

A simple home guide from VedaVidesh. Every family and region has its own customs, so follow yours where they differ, and check a local panchanga for the exact time in your city. Dates are for India; abroad they can differ by a day. Members also get the full puja with every mantra.