Makar Sankranti and Pongal at Home

Thursday 14 January 2027 (many regions also 15 January)

Short puja: about 20 minutes



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.

Short 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

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

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

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

We meditate on the radiant light of the divine sun; may it inspire our minds.

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.

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.