

## [Home Puja](#)

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### INSIGHT

## Home Puja

A simple, traditional worship ceremony to Lord Ganesha that anyone can perform, with English translation, illustrations and Internet resources to facilitate learning the chants

### Introduction to Ganesha home puja

One could say that the Hindu form of home worship, known as puja, is unique in all the world. Quite fittingly, it arises from the magnanimous spirit of hospitality that Hindu people are famous for. All guests are received and treated as God in the Hindu home, and God is no exception. During this daily morning rite, family members gather in their well-appointed shrine room to honor God as their royal guest. They receive Him warmly, offer a seat, serve water to quench His thirst, bathe and dress Him in beautiful clothes, burn the finest incense for His enjoyment, honor Him with light and flowers and feed Him a sumptuous meal. It is an intimate, personal interaction with God. Throughout the puja, the officiant chants sweetly to the Deity in Sanskrit, describing these kindly acts and beseeching His blessings. Finally, he thanks the Deity for His presence, bids Him farewell and humbly apologizes for any errors he may have committed. It is a ritual performed daily in millions of homes. In a sense, each Hindu has a private temple right in the home, and invites God to abide there, close to the family. Mystically, it keeps open the channels to the superconscious, divine areas of the inner worlds, bringing peace, health, prosperity and happiness to family members. Intellectually, it keeps religious beliefs strong. Emotionally, it cultivates a burgeoning love of God, known as bhakti. Puja literally means "worship, adoration." Home puja is a personal version of the public puja performed in temples by priests. The forms of puja vary widely between Hinduism's four main denominations and its hundreds of lineages, but all puja finds its basis in sixteen offerings, shodasha upachara. These also vary somewhat, depending on the scriptural source that is followed, but one popular list is the following: 1) Avahanam, invoking; 2) Asanam, offering a seat; 3) Padyam, offering water for cleansing feet; 4) Argyam, offering water for cleansing the palms; 5) Achamanyam, sipping water; 6) Snanam, ceremonial bath; 7) Vastram, offering

vestments; 8) Yajnopavitam, offering sacred thread; 9) Chandanam, offering sandalwood paste; 10) Pushpam, offering flowers; 11) Dhupam, burning incense; 12) Dipam, waving lighted camphor; 13) Naivedyam, offering food; 14) Anjali, praying with folded hands; 15) Pradakshina, circumambulation; 16) Udvasanam, farewell. Lord Ganesha is the God honored and worshiped by all Hindus, so here we present a puja for this universally beloved, boon-giving Lord of Beginnings and Ruler of Obstacles, which can be performed by anyone, young and old, Hindu or non-Hindu, Vaishnava or Shakta, Saiva or Smarta. It is Lord Ganesha who bridges all distinctions and unifies all peoples, and it is through His worship that we ultimately come to know all the other Gods.

## PUJA INSTRUCTIONS

In performing the puja, preparation is of utmost importance--gathering flowers, cleaning the altar and puja tray, making ready the oil lamps and preparing the fruit and/or cooked food offering. It is common to chant a Ganesha mantra or softly sing devotional songs while performing these tasks. This quiets the mind and brings one's awareness close to Him. Indeed, all this preparation is an integral part of worship.

As you see in the photos, there are a number of traditional implements needed for the puja, such as a metal tray, holy water cups and spoons, ghee lamp, camphor lamp, as well as puja supplies, like holy ash and sandalwood paste. These are now available at Indian grocery stores, and online at [www.minimela.com](http://www.minimela.com) If you need help with setting up an altar, one source of information is our four-page Hinduism Today Educational Insight called "Hindu Home Sanctuary, " available at: