

## Durga Pooja Preparation Guidelines

- Check all the Durga Pooja samagri again as per list.
- Tie the door hanging (Toran) to the main door. Decorate your main entrance with colorful Rangoli.
- Play some divine instrumental music like Sitar, Shehnai, Santoor, Flute etc... to create a holy atmosphere.
- Check if your camera and camcorder are in working conditions; batteries charged. This is a precious moment in your life and you should capture it, preserve it, cherish it and share with your relatives & friends.
- Prepare the Prasad (offerings to the God like food, sweets etc...) well in time. If possible call 2-3 families of friends/relatives for help from beginning.
- Before starting the Pooja the host couple should wear dress suitable and appropriate for the Pooja as per the family tradition. Typically the husband should wear Indian silk Dhoti and the silk kurta or regular Kurta Pajama. Wife of the host should wear a sari or salwar kamiz dupatta etc...
- If there are kids at home call their friends as much in advance as possible so that they will not get bored and trouble during the Pooja. Ask the kids to participate in the Pooja as they like, do not force them. Engage them in their favorite activities like comic books, story books, favorite TV Programs, Cartoon/Comedy TV Programs or DVDs etc...Without taking care of them properly expecting them to behave through out the Pooja is not correct. ☺
- Follow the steps & diagrams below for preparing the Pooja Dais (raised square or rectangular platform for performing Pooja).

### || Pooja Dais Arrangement ||

- As far as possible do not set up Pooja near kitchen so that strong smell of spices will not cause problem during the Pooja and also chatting in the kitchen will not create distraction during Pooja ☺.
- Chaurang is to be used as a Pooja Dais on which all the Pooja is performed. Place the Chaurang against a wall in such way that the deities on the Chaurang are facing East (If not possible West is also OK). Place a nice decorative cloth on it.
- Keep all the Pooja samagri in different plates on the right side of the Chaurang. Prepare a bowl full of Panchamrut by adding 2-3 tea spoon curd, 1 spoon honey, 1-2 spoons pure ghee & 1 spoon sugar to about 1 cup milk. If required prepare more pamchamrut enough for all the guests invited for the Pooja.
- Place 2 flowerpots at the 2 back corners of the Chaurang.
- In the center of the Chaurang put handful of rice grains and place silver or copper Kalash.
- Fill the Kalash with water, just a little over half. Put 1 Beatle nut, 1 Quarter coin, 1 flower & a little akshata in the Kalash.
- Place 5 Beatle nut leaves on the edge of the silver or copper Kalash with the stems inside the kalash & the ends outside the kalash. Place a Tamhan (copper or silver plate) on the Kalash. Fill the tamhan with rice grains till the inner rim. Draw a "Swastik" symbol with kumkum in the middle on the rice and place one Beatle nut at the center of the swastika.
- Place the Bell (Ghanta) at the front left corner of the Chaurang and place the Conch (Shankha) on the front right corner of the Chaurang. Keep some rice grains below the conch to make a proper base for it.
- Keep the Lord Ganesh Murti in front of the Kalash at the center and keep murti or coin or photo of Lakshmi to the right side of Lord Ganesh. Place Murti or Photo of Durga also.
- Keep all other deities as per your family tradition e.g. Kuladevata on the Chaurang at a suitable place. Photos can be also placed on the wall if needed.

**Arrangement around the Chaurang:**

- Place sufficient aluminum foil (about 2 feet wide strip) on all the 3 sides of Chaurang (front, left & right side) so that the floor will not get spoiled due to Pooja material.
- Keep one oil lamp (Samai) and one Ghee Lamp (Niranjan) on the right hand side of the Chaurang on the foil. Use a small plate below Samai or niranjan so that the oil or ghee will not spill outside.
- Keep the incense stick (Agarbatti) in a proper holder next to the ghee lamp on the right side of Chaurang.
- Keep 5 coconuts with water in front of the Chaurang on the aluminum foil. Keep one Beatle Leaf in front of each coconut. Keep one dollar note folded on each leaf, keep one quarter coin on each dollar note, keep one Beatle Nut on each coin. Keep one peace of dry coconut on each Beatle Leaf and keep a small piece of "Deshi Gud" i.e. Jaggery on each piece of dry coconut. Keep small quantity of 5 types of dry fruits like cashes nuts, almonds, resins, pistachio, dry dates etc...
- Keep one Jug full of water near the Chaurang. Keep a big utensil or big bowl to keep the used water.
- Keep two mattresses one each for the husband and wife performing Pooja in front of the Chaurang about 2 feet away from the Chaurang. Husband will seat facing the Chaurang and the wife will seat on the right side of the husband. The Chaurang should be in the center for both to perform Pooja comfortably.
- Keep one mattress on the left side of the Chaurang for Panditji who will be facing the couple performing the Pooja. If the host is facing East Panditji should be facing West and if host is facing West Panditji should be facing East.
- Keep all other Pooja material on the right side of the Chaurang duly arranged in different plates as per the samagri list without fail (Please do not keep the Pooja samagri in the plastic carry bags). Double check all the material as per the list is available. (Do not misplace Pooja Samagri and very important; do not fight with each other over keeping Samagri.) 😊

All the above preparation should be done before arrival of Panditji so that Pooja can be finished in time. 😊

