

Folk Dance of India, also known as *Lok Nritya*, beautifully reflects India's rich traditions, culture, and diversity. Each state has its own folk dance that celebrates festivals, harvests, and social events with energy and joy. From Punjab's vibrant Bhangra to Assam's rhythmic Bihu and Gujarat's colorful Garba, every dance form tells a story of its people and lifestyle. These *folk dances of India* not only preserve heritage but also unite communities across generations.

This topic is part of **General Studies Paper I (Indian Heritage and Culture)** in the **UPSC Examination**.

***Download the Statewise List of Folk Dance PDF Here!***

## List of Folk Dances of Different States in India

The following table on the list of 29 states and their dance forms gives the major folk dances practiced in the states of the nation. These vibrant forms are typically non-religious and are performed to celebrate seasons, harvest, or social events.

Folk Dance of India with States	
State	Folk Dance of India
Himachal Pradesh	Kinnauri, Thoda, Jhora, Jhali, Chharhi, Dhaman, Chhapeli, Mahasu, Dangi, Chamba, Thali, Jhainta, Daf, Stick dance
Uttarakhand	Chappeli, Gadhwali, Kumayuni, Kajari, Jhora, Raslila, etc
Punjab	Bhangra, Giddha, Daff, Dhaman, Bhand, Naqual
Haryana	Jhumar, Phag Dance, Daph, Dhamal, Loor, Gugga, Khor, Gagor
Uttar Pradesh	Nautanki, Raslila, Kajri, Jhora, Chappeli, Jaita
Rajasthan	Ghoomar, Suisini, Kalbeliya, Chakri, Ganagor, Jhulan Leela, Jhuma, Suisini, Ghapal, Panihari, Ginad, etc

<b>Gujarat</b>	Garba, Dandiya Ras, Bhavai, Tippani Juriun, Bhavai
<b>Maharashtra</b>	Lavani, Nakata, Koli, Lezim, Gafa, Dahikala Dasavtar or Bohada, Tamasha, Mauni, Powara, Gouricha
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	Tertali, Maanch, Matki, Aada, Khada Nach, Phulpati, Grida Dance, Selalarki, Selabhadoni, Jawara etc
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>	Gaur Maria, Panthi, Raut Nacha, Pandwani, Vedamati, Kapalik, Chandaini, Bharthari Charit, Goudi, Karma, Jhumar, Dagla, Pali, Tapali, Navrani, Diwari, Mundari, Jhumar
<b>Jharkhand</b>	Karma Munda, Karma, Agni, Jhumar, Janani Jhumar, Mardana Jhumar, Paika, Phagua, Chhanu, Sarahul, Jat-Jatin, Karma, Danga, Bidesia, Sohrai, Hunta Dance, Mundari Dance, Sarhul, Barao, Jhitka, Danga, Domkach, Ghora Naach
<b>Bihar</b>	Jata-Jatin, Bakho-Bakhain, Panwariya, Sama-Chakwa, Bidesia, Jatra
<b>West Bengal</b>	Purulia Chhau, Alkap, Kathi, Gambhira, Dhali, Jatra, Baul, Marasia, Mahal, Keertan, Santhali Dance, Mundari dance, Gambhira, Gajan, Chaibari Nritya
<b>Sikkim</b>	Chu Faat, Yak Chaam Sikkari, Singhi Chaam or the Snow Lion, Yak Chaam, Denzong Gnenha, Tashi Yangku, Khukuri Naach, Chutkey Naach, Maruni Dance
<b>Meghalaya</b>	Laho, Baala, Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem, Nongkrem
<b>Assam</b>	Bihu, Bichhua, Natpuja, Maharas, Kaligopal, Bagurumba, Naga dance, Khel Gopal, Tabal Chongli, Canoe, Jhumura Hobjanai, etc

<b>Arunachal Pradesh</b>	Chham, Mask dance (Mukhauta Nritya), War dance, Buiya, Chalo, Wancho, Pasi Kongki, Ponung, Popir, Bardo
<b>Nagaland</b>	Chong, Khaiva, Lim, Nuralim, Bamboo Dance, Temangnetin, Hetaleulee. Rangma, Zeliang, Nsuirolians, Gethinglim
<b>Manipur</b>	Thang Ta, Lai Haraoba, Pung Cholom, Rakhai, Nat Rash, Maha Rash, Raukhat, Dol Cholam, Khamba Thaibi, Nupa Dance, Raslila, Khubak Ishei, Lhou Sha
<b>Mizoram</b>	Cheraw Dance, Khuallam, Chailam, Sawlakin, Chawnglaizawn, Zangtalam, Par Lam, Sarlam Kai/ Solakia, Tlanglam, Khanatm, Pakhupila, Cherokan
<b>Tripura</b>	Hozagiri
<b>Odisha</b>	Ghumara, Ranappa, Savari, Ghumara, Painka, Munari, Chhau, Chadya Dandanata
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Ghantamardala, Ottam Thedal, Mohiniattam, Kummi, Siddhi, Madhuri, Chhadi, Vilasini Natyam, Bhamakalpam, Veeranatyam, Dappu, Tappeta Gullu, Lambadi, Dhimsa, Kolattam, Butta Bommalu
<b>Karnataka</b>	Yakshagana, Huttari, Suggi, Kunitha, Karga, Lambi
<b>Goa</b>	Fugdi, Dhalo, Kunbi, Dhangar, Mandi, Jhagor, Khol, Dakni, Tarangamel, Shigmo, Ghode, Modni, Samayi nrutya, Jagar, Ranmale, amayi nrutya, Tonnya mell
<b>Telangana</b>	Perini Shivatandavam, Keisabadi

Kerala	Ottam Thulal, Kaikottikali, Tappatikali, Kali Auttam
Tamil Nadu	Karagam, Kumi, Kolattam, Kavadi

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## What is Folk Dance?

India has a rich cultural tapestry of various cultures and practices; thus, it is among the most distinguished. A relatively eminent feature of this diversity has been presented in dancing, with two significant and distinct forms of dancing, classical and folk dancing, which have been prominent in India. The critical distinction between classical and folk dances is their origins. The highly antique dances have a long origin based on the Natya Shastra, and these classical dances include eight forms with different aspects. Conversely, Folk Dances in India are local customs and are specific to the state, ethnicity or geographical region and thus the riotous existence of more than 30 folk dances nationwide.



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# What are the Folk Dances of India?

India is a land of diversity, and its folk dances reflect the cultural richness of every region. The folk dances of India are deeply rooted in traditions, festivals, and daily life, making them unique expressions of joy and identity. While dance forms of India include both classical and folk traditions, the folk dances of India remain closer to the people, performed during harvests, weddings, fairs, and religious occasions. These Indian dance forms also preserve local history and folklore through rhythm and movement.

## What are the Dance Forms of India?

The term "dance forms of India" includes two major and distinct categories: Classical Dances and Folk Dances. Understanding both types of Indian dance forms helps people appreciate the depth of India's cultural heritage.

### Classical Dances (Shastriya Nritya)

These are formal dance styles that are deeply rooted in ancient Indian history and religious tradition. They are often called 'Shastriya Nritya' because their rules and methods are based on sacred, scholarly texts like the *Natya Shastra* (the science of dramaturgy).

- **Origin and Rules:** Classical dances are not learned overnight. They require many years of rigorous training under a teacher (*Guru*) to master the precise hand gestures (*Mudras*), facial expressions (*Abhinaya*), and footwork (*Tala*). They follow a strict, classical framework.
- **The Goal:** The main goal is usually to tell a story (often from Hindu mythology, like the stories of gods and goddesses) or to express deep spiritual ideas.
- **Number of Forms:** India officially recognizes **eight** major classical dance forms:
  1. Bharatanatyam (Tamil Nadu)
  2. Kathak (North India)
  3. Kathakali (Kerala)
  4. Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh)
  5. Odissi (Odisha)
  6. Sattriya (Assam)
  7. Manipuri (Manipur)
  8. Mohiniyattam (Kerala)

### Folk Dances (Lok Nritya)

These are community-based dances that reflect the simple joy and daily life of the common people. Unlike classical dances, they do not follow ancient texts or need years of formal training.

- **Origin and Performance:** Folk dances grow out of local traditions, specific to a particular state, village, or ethnic group. They are spontaneous, energetic, and performed by ordinary people, often in large groups.
- **The Goal:** The purpose is social and celebratory, marking important community events like a good harvest (Bihu in Assam), a change of season (Giddha in Punjab), a wedding, or a religious fair (Garba in Gujarat).
- **Variety and Simplicity:** Because they are tied to local culture, there are hundreds of distinct folk dances across India. They use simple, repeating steps and basic clothing that reflects the region's environment. The focus is on group participation and spreading happiness.

## What is the National Dance of India?

There is **no official national dance** declared for India. The country's rich cultural heritage includes eight recognized classical dance forms and a vast number of folk dance styles. These forms collectively represent the diversity of India, but none is singularly designated as the 'National Dance.'

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