**Dance in India**

**Dance in India** includes various styles of dances from different parts of the country. The dances developed according to the local traditions and also have elements from other parts of the country.[*Sangeet Natak Akademi*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangeet_Natak_Akademi), the national academy for performing arts, recognizes eight traditional dances as [Indian classical dances](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_classical_dance).

**Origin of Dance in India**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shiva_as_the_Lord_of_Dance_LACMA_edit.jpg)Shiva as [Nataraja](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nataraja) is worshipped as the Lord of Dance in Hinduism.

In Hindu mythology, dance is believed to have been created by the god [Brahma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahma). The best-known of [Hindu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) gods—[Shiva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiva), [Kali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kali) and [Krishna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna)—are usually represented in the dancing.

In ancient India, there were no theaters, and dance was usually an activity for worship, entertainment or leisure. Dancers usually performed in [temples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple), on festive occasions and seasonal harvests. Dance was performed on a regular basis before statues of gods as a form of worship. Even in modern India, classical dance forms such as [Bharata Natyam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharata_Natyam) use [*mudra*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mudra)s or hand gestures to retell mythological stories such as the slaying of [Kaliya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliya) by [Krishna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna).

Good dancer, particularly from [South India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_India), moved from performing in temples to houses of royal families where they performed only for royalty.

India offers a number of [classical Indian dance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_Indian_dance) forms, each of which can be traced to different parts of the country. There are many [Indian folk dances](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_folk_dances) such as [Bhangra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhangra_%28dance%29), [Bihu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bihu), [Ghumura Dance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghumura_Dance), [Sambalpuri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambalpuri), [Chhau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhau) and [Garba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garba_%28dance%29) and special dances observed in regional festivals such as [Lohri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lohri) and [Navratri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navratri).

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bollywood_dance_show_in_Bristol.jpg)

A Bollywood dance performance in [Bristol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol)

The presentation of Indian dance styles in film, [Hindi Cinema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi_Cinema), has exposed the range of dance in India to a global audience. For example, Bollywood dancing often seen in movies is a blend of Western dance styles ([MTV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MTV) or in [Broadway musicals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway_musical)) and traditional Indian dances. The dances can range from slow dancing, to a more upbeat hip hop style dance. The dancing itself is a fusion of all dance forms. It could be Indian classical, Indian folk dance, belly

dancing, jazz, hip hop and everything else you can imagine. This dance now appears in films throughout the world. For example, the award winning movie "Slum Dog Millionaire" featured a Bollywood dance.

**Classical dance**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:A_Kuchipudi_Dancer_from_Andhra_Pradesh.JPG)[Kuchipudi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuchipudi) Dancer

Classical dance in India has developed a type of dance-drama. The dancer acts out a story almost solely through gestures. Most of the classical dances enact stories from Hindu mythology. Each form represents the culture of a particular region or a group of people.

**Bharatanatyam**

Dating back to 1000 BCE, *Bharatanatyam* is a classical dance form the South Indian state of [Tamil Nadu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Nadu), practiced by women. The dance is usually accompanied by classical [Carnatic music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnatic_music). Its inspiration comes from the sculptures of the ancient [temple of Chidambaram](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chidambaram_Temple).

**Kathakali**

Kathakali is a highly stylized classical [dance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dance)-[drama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drama) form which originated from [Kerala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala) in the 17th century. This classical dance form is particularly noticed for dancer's elaborate costume, towering head gear, billowing skirts, and long silver nails. Recent developments in Kathakali over the years include improved looks, refined gestures and added themes besides more ornate singing and precise drumming. Kathakali is performed regularly at festivals in temples, at cultural shows and also at international events.

**Odissi**

Odissi, also known as Orissi, is one of the eight classical dance forms of India. It originates from the state of Orissa, in eastern India. It is the oldest surviving dance form of India. It is different from other classical Indian dance forms by the importance it places upon the Tribhangi- the independent movement of head, chest and pelvis and upon the basic square stance known as Chauka or Chouka that symbolizes Lord Jagannath. This dance is characterized by various Bhangas (Stance), which involves stamping of the foot and striking various postures as seen in Indian sculptures.