



Nagara Style

- **Nagara Style** or **Nagara architectural style** is a style of temple architecture, which is popular in Northern, Western and Eastern India (except the Bengal region), especially in the regions around Malwa, Rajputana and Kalinga. Temples classified as Nagara Style are found in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (areas bordering Odisha) and West Bengal (southwest and Sundarbans areas).
- In fifth century, the use of simple curved *Shikhara* (spires) begins in the temples; the earliest such temples being classified as Early Nagara Style. The Early Nagara Style was transformed into the Mainstream Nagara Style in the seventh century.
- This architectural style is one of the two main styles of Hindu temple architecture, the other being the Dravidian architectural style. Nagara style has three sub-styles or schools, which differ slightly from each other. The sub-styles or schools are *Orissa school*, *Chandel school* and *Solanki school*.
- Developed in North India, this style of temple is built on a simple stone platform. One or more *Sikhara*s are observed in temples, but the earliest temples consist of only one *Sikhara*. The *garbhagriha* is always located directly below the highest *Sikhara*. Also, the Nagara Style is characterized by the absence of boundary walls, which are widely used in the Dravidian architectural style of Hindu temple architecture. Some temple complexes and individual structures in the Nagara Style are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



Design of a Shiva Temple belonging to the *Nagara Style*, drawn in 1915 AD.





History

Origin and formative stage

- The Nagara temple style evolved from the Gupta structural temples. From about the 5th century onwards, the development of Nagara temple style began, which passed through three classes of formative stage and got its present form.

Schools of Nagara Style

- Nagara architectural style are observed in northern, western and eastern parts of India. Since its origin, this style has gone through various changes to its present form. Variations within the style have developed over time from region to region, which have come to be recognized as sub-styles. Nagara architectural style has three sub-styles namely *Chandel*, *Solanki* and *Odisha* sub-styles.

Chandela School

- The *Chandela School* or *Chandela sub-style* of temple construction originated in Central India. It was developed by the Chandel dynasty, the rulers of the Bundelkhand region (then called *Jejakabhukti*). This school or sub-style of temple construction is also known as *Khajuraho School* or sub-style. Temples built in this style have intricate carvings, which adorn the inner and outer walls. The sculptures in the temple are known for sensual themes, which were inspired by Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra*. Sandstones are mainly used in the construction of temples.



Vamana Temple



Vishwanath temple



Chitragupta temple

Solanki School

- This *Solanki* school or sub-style originated in northwestern India, particularly in the present-day Indian states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. As this sub-style expanded and developed, the Solanki kings provided support and encouragement. The walls of the temple, built in the Solanki sub-style, were without sculptures. Inside and externally the *garbhagriha* and *mandapa* are interconnected. A terraced water tank, known as *Surya Kund*, is excavated next to temples of this sub-style. This sub-style has also come to be known as the *Māru-Gurjara* school or sub-style since the 20th century.





Rani ki vav, Patan, India



Taranga Jain temple



Front view of Navlakha Temple

Odisha School

- The *Odisha* school or sub-style originated in the coastal regions of eastern India, especially the present Indian state of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh bordering Odisha. This school or sub-style of temple construction is also known as *Kalinga* School or sub-style



Lingaraj Temple complex



Panorama view of Konark Sun Temple



Jagannath Temple, Puri

Notes

- The Khajuraho temple complex, and the Konark Sun Temple and Mahabodhi Temple built in *Nagara Style*, which are recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Ayodhya's Ram temple: Nagara style of temple architecture



Key features of the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya:

1. Constructed in the **traditional Nagara style** with a length of 380 feet, width of 250 feet, and height of 161 feet.
2. Houses the **childhood form of Bhagwan Shri Ram (Shri Ram Lalla)** in the main sanctum sanctorum and a Shri Ram Darbar on the first floor.
3. Includes **five mandaps (halls)**: Nritya Mandap, Rang Mandap, Sabha Mandap, Prathana Mandap, and Kirtan Mandap.





4. **The compound has four Mandirs dedicated** to Surya Dev, Devi Bhagwati, Ganesh Bhagwan, and Bhagwan Shiv, along with Mandirs for Maa Annapurna and Hanuman ji.
5. **Surrounded by a Parkota** (Rectangular compound wall) with a length of 732 meters and a width of 14 feet.
6. **Features a historic Well (Sita koop)** and a restored ancient Mandir of Bhagwan Shiv at Kuber Tila.
7. Utilizes traditional construction materials, **avoiding the use of steel or iron.**
8. **The main temple structure was built with Bansi Paharpur Pink Sandstone,** granite stones in the plinths, **and white Makrana marble** and coloured marble for inlay work.
9. Incorporates **special bricks known as "Ram Shilas"** with the inscription "Shri Ram" for symbolic significance.
10. Constructed entirely using **traditional and indigenous technology,** emphasizing **environmental conservation with 70% of the area left green.**



ARUL IAS ACADEMY

