

INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

How did Indian temple architecture change over different historical periods?

Change Influenced by

dynasties

religious developments

regional variations

Early Temples (4th to 6th Century CE)

Rock-cut temples like those at Ajanta and Ellora were among the earliest, showcasing Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain architectural styles carved directly into rock. Gupta period temples, emerging later, featured free-standing structures with elegant designs, often characterized by flat roofs or low spires like the Dashavatara Temple in Deogarh.

Classical Period (6th to 13th Century CE)

The Dravidian style, prominent in South India, features pyramid-shaped vimanas and elaborate gopurams (gateway towers) in temples like Brihadeeswarar in Thanjavur and Meenakshi in Madurai. In the Deccan region, the Vesara style blends Dravidian vimanas with Nagara influences, creating a unique architectural fusion.

Medieval Period (13th to 18th Century CE)

Vijayanagara architecture, flourishing in Deccan and Southern India, is known for its elaborate gopurams, pillared halls, and extensive use of granite. The Virupaksha Temple at Hampi is a prime example of this distinctive style.

Late Medieval to Early Modern Period (18th Century Onwards)

Maratha Architecture: Under Maratha rule, temple architecture in regions like Maharashtra saw simpler and less ornate structures. "The Vitthal Temple at Pandharpur" is an example