

## Folk Dances of Uttarakhand.

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*Pahadi dance of Uttarakhand*

*source: pahadiconnect*

The traditional dances of Uttarakhand are not difficult to learn and perform. This art form is executed in highly rhythmic synchronicity and is a sight to behold. Men and women gather to perform various dances to appease the gods and goddesses as a form of tribute, believing that if these dances are not performed properly, the gods would be displeased. Every state in India is recognised for its distinct customs and beliefs, and the highland state of Uttarakhand is no exception. Folk dance has its origins in the ancient eras and has evolved over time. Traditional dance in this region is noted for being distinct, bright, and vivid, and it is a regular event. They dance to commemorate anything from holy days and festivals to unique days of the year and weddings, among other important occasions. They do it while dressed in their traditional garb, which is eccentric and colourful in its own right and is famous for being exceedingly pleasant and appealing to the people of the plains. Garhwali is the primary language spoken here, although there are other dialects as well, including Jaunsari, Marchi, Jadhi, and Sailani. Garhwal is home to individuals from a variety of ethnic groups and castes. These include Rajputs, who are said to be of Aryan ancestry, Brahmins who moved after the Rajputs or later, and Garhwal tribals who live in the Northern regions and include Jaunsaris, Jadhs, Marchas, and Van Gujars.

### Bhotiya Tribal Dance



*Bhotiya-Dance*

*Source: pahadiconnect*

As the name implies, this rite is done by the Bhotiya tribes of Uttarakhand, which are one of the state's oldest tribes. They have managed to retain their rituals and customs over the years, which is an accomplishment in and of itself. The performance of this dance is linked to death-related rites. According to their beliefs, the departed spirit of a deceased individual takes up residence in the body of a goat or a sheep, and by performing this dance, their souls are released. The Bhotiya tribe's typical dances are 'Dhurang' and 'Dhuring.'

### **Pandav Nritya**



*Pandav-Nritya*

*source: pahadiconnect*

Devbhoomi is also known as "the country of the Pandavas," since they came to this hill state in pursuit of the staircase to heaven. This dance form is a testament to these well-known Mahabharat warriors, depicting the Pandav king's birth and death stages via diverse dance forms. People dressed up as various characters from Mahabharat portray various scenes from the epic. It's similar to Ram Lila in that it's managed to preserve local folklore alive among the locals. It is typically done in a huge area during the sacred eves of Diwali and Dussehra with a large number of dancers dancing together.

### Chholiya



*Choliya-dance*

*Source: pahadiconnect*

The origins of this ancient dance may be traced back approximately 1000 years to the warring Kshatriyas of the Kumaon areas, when weddings were performed at the tip of swords. It was also done to keep off bad spirits who were said to be following the baraati since they preyed on people's happiness. Anyone who performed the Chholiya dance at the period was said to be able to expel this energy. This performance, in which the dancers are costumed in colourful traditional clothing, is set to the rhythmic banging of the drums, which sounds like music describing warlike scenarios. Nowadays, it is also done in processions and is often classified as a sword dance.

## Jhumela



*Jhumela dance*

*source: uttarakhandnews1*

This famous folk tune is complemented by a traditional Jhumela dance. This dance form is done to commemorate all important and little occasions, fairs, and festivals such as Guru Purnima, Baisakhi, Maker Sankranti, wedding processions, or any other nature-related celebration, and so on. Although this dance is predominantly for women, males also participate. The steps and emotions or the message that is presented via this is the sensation of melancholy that is experienced by newly married ladies who misses her joyful moments that she had loved before to her marriage. Because it is a tribal song and dance combo, it is only found in the most distant areas.

## Jagar

This hill folk dance is classified as spiritual and ghost worship and is accompanied by a regional folk tune. A ritualistic dance is also conducted in the form of puja ritual folk songs and is sung to honour various gods and goddesses. This dance performance is based on 50 distinct melodies devoted to not just gods and goddesses, but also spirits, ghosts, and even fairies. This performance includes music, singing, and drumming on occasion. With all of these magnificent sounds playing at once, the listener feels as if they have been transported into a trance. Spirits are also called, and they usually require a goat or a bird sacrifice.

## Thali – Jadda – Jhainta

This elegant dance is performed mostly by the ladies of Uttarakhand and is subsequently joined by the men as well. According to the dance's customs, the dancer must balance a metal plate on top of their head while spinning. It also takes place mostly in the Kumaon areas and is performed in circles of men and women singing folk songs and playing folk music. This dance performance

is a symbol of pleasure and joy among the people, and it invites positivity into every occasion where it is performed.

### Mukhauta Dance



*Mukhauta dance*

*Source: ytimg*

Another amazing dance done at a fair held in the month of Vaishakha. The fair begins with Vaishakha Sankranti (the day the sun enters a new sign) and the devotion of Bhumiyal Devta. Every day during this festival, people present ground rice delicacies. Participants dress in traditional attire and wear masks depicting various deities and monsters. The folk dances mentioned above illustrate diverse folk stories and the culture of Uttarakhand. They are an important source of information about the area, its culture, history, and people.

Uttarakhand is known for its natural beauty as well as its rich cultural and religious legacy. The scenic grandeur of the Himalayas and the spiritual tranquillity of Rishikesh draw travellers from all over the world. The dance forms and rituals define the tribals and their society.