Difference Between
Classical and Folk Dance

Basis of Difference	Classical Dance	Folk Dance
Nature	Classical dance is a formal dance form. The performer needs to meet the technicalities and learn postures and precision to give justice to this dance form.	Folk dance can be performed by anyone. This informal dance form can be performed anytime, anywhere, and any common man can choreograph the dance.
Complexities	Classical dance is complex and challenging to learn. It is often taught by professional gurus, who are masters of the art. The dance has many technical, rhythmic, spatial, lyrical, and emotional aspects involved. It takes years of rigorous training to be able to perform in front of an audience.	Unlike classical, folk dances are easy to learn. They are more about fun and merry-making than perfecting the art form.
Origin	Classical dance is believed to have originated from high society circles, like royal courts and temple complexes. The dance form started around 200 BCE in India. Many dancers improvised the dance form over the years to bring it to the present-day state.	Folk dances are common people's dances that originated locally. That is why they differ from place to place.
Performance	Classical dance can be performed solo or in groups.	Folk dances are usually performed in groups during gatherings.

Dance forms	Today, India has eight classical dances: Bharatanatyam - Tamil Nadu Kathak - Uttar Pradesh Odissi - Odisha Kathakali - Kerala Kuchipudi - Andhra Pradesh Sattriya - Assam Manipuri - Manipur Mohiniyattam - Kerala	Folk and tribal dances in India are numerous, originating from different states.

What is a Classical Dance?

Classical dance is a highly stylized dance form intended for performance by professionals. Their origin can be traced to the ancient Sanskrit text 'Natya Shastra,' written by Bharata Muni. Classical dances have well-developed techniques, grammar, and style of execution. They are characterized by grace, composition, precision of movement, and elaborate gestures. Many also include 'abhinaya,' the art of expression to evoke desired emotion in the spectators. Classical dance training is often rigorous and taught through Guru-Shisya tradition for centuries.

There are eight basic expressions that are performed in classical dance, namely
1. Shringar: Love
2. Hasya: Humorous
3. Karuna: Sorrow
4. Raudra: Anger
5. Veer: Heroism
6. Bhayanak: Fear
7. Bibhats: Disgust
8. Adbhoot: Wonder

India has 8 classical dance forms: Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu), Kathak (Uttar Pradesh), Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh), Odissi (Odisha), Kathakali (Kerala), Sattriya (Assam), Manipuri (Manipur), and Mohiniyattam (Kerala)

What is a Folk Dance?

Folk dance is a simpler dance form that reflects the lives of ordinary people. They are often performed in groups to the tune of local music. Folk dances defer from region to region. They are created for recreational or celebratory purposes and performed during weddings, festivals, or agricultural harvests. Since it's an informal dance form, it does not require any special training. All you need is energy and enthusiasm to perform this fun dance.

Some important folk dances of India are Vilasini Natyam, Dhimsa, Kolattam. Bihu, Bichhua, Natpuja, Bagurumba, Naga dance, Phag, Gugga, Khor, etc.
Dance, be it classical or folk, are our heritage and needs to be preserved. This can be done by encouraging and recognizing young talents and promoting the performance of rare dance forms time and again.