The Temples of Khajuraho
Introduction

Previewing this book?

Please check out our enhanced preview, which offers a deeper look at this guidebook.

Travel guidebooks for the ultra curious, Approach Guides reveal a destination’s essence by exploring a compelling aspect of its cultural heritage: art, architecture, history, food or wine.

The magnificent 10th-12th century Hindu temples of Khajuraho — with their soaring towers and engaging sculptures — represent the pinnacle of the North Indian temple style. Still infused with their historical magic, they are yours to discover.

What’s in this guidebook

- **Art and architecture review.** We provide an overview of Hindu architecture, isolating trademark features that you will see again and again while touring Khajuraho’s temples. To make things come alive, we have packed our review with high-resolution images.

- **The Khajuraho style.** We then turn our focus to the temples of Khajuraho, highlighting the architectural advancements that were undertaken to make them the culmination of the North Indian temple style. To help travelers understand the groundbreaking nature of these advancements, we compare the temples of Khajuraho with those in the neighboring state of Orissa.

- **Tour of the highlights.** Following our tradition of being the most valuable resource for culture-focused travelers, we offer a tour of Khajuraho’s premier temples: Lakshmana, Vishvanatha, Chitragupta, Devi Jagadambi, and Kandariya Mahadeva. For each, we reveal its most important architectural and decorative features and offer a discussion that ties it all together.

- **The reliefs.** Since the inevitable highlight of any visit to Khajuraho is seeing the famous erotic reliefs that adorn its temples’ walls, we reveal their stylistic features, their symbolism, and the religious philosophy of Tantra that likely inspired them.

- **Advice for getting the best cultural experience.** To help you plan your visit, this guidebook supplies logistical advice, maps and links to online resources. Plus, we give our personal tips for getting the most from your experience while on location.

- **Information the way you like it.** As with all of our guides, this book is optimized for intuitive, quick navigation; information is organized into bullet points to make absorption easy; and images are marked up with text that explains important features.
Contact us anytime
Our readers are our greatest inspiration. Email us at founders@approachguides.com to let us know about your experience with Approach Guides — many of our recent updates have been inspired by customers like you. We personally respond to every email.
We hope this cultural guidebook offers you fresh insights into Khajuraho’s Hindu temples and sets you on a path to making your own discoveries.
Enjoy your trip!

David and Jennifer Raezer
Founders, Approach Guides
www.approachguides.com
Continuing Travel in India
Are you continuing on to see the Islamic highlights of Delhi and Agra, the rock-cut caves of Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta or the Hindu temples in south India? See our India guidebooks.
The Hindu temples of Khajuraho are the culmination of an Indian architectural tradition that originated with Buddhist sanctuaries and monasteries carved into hillsides over 1000 years prior to their construction (see Fig. 1). This section provides an overview of the origins and development of the longstanding pre-Khajuraho temple building tradition.
Types of stone architecture

There are two types of stone architecture:

- **Rock cut.** Rock-cut architecture is made by carving into natural rock. Usually hewn into the sides of mountain ridges, rock-cut structures are made by excavating rock until the desired forms are achieved.

- **Stone built.** The focus of this guidebook, stone-built architecture, on the other hand, involves assembling cut stone pieces to form a whole.

Buddhism gets the ball rolling

The first stone architecture in India was rock cut and executed by Buddhist monks; prior to these structures, all architecture had been made of wood. The most impressive examples were rock-cut religious sanctuaries, excavated directly out of the basalt mountains lining the western edge of the **Deccan Plateau**, the elevated, v-shaped
landmass that comprises most of the Indian peninsula. The caves at Ajanta — as well as those at nearby Bedsa, Bhaja, Karla, Kondane, Nashik, and Pitalkhora — were part of this initial wave of excavations.

Inspiration for India’s rock-cut architecture

- Early Buddhist architecture was likely indirectly inspired by that of the Egyptians. The Egyptians were probably the first civilization in the world to construct stone architecture; they began with stone-built pyramids in the 27th century BCE (Djoser’s Step Pyramid in Saqqara) and continued with rock-cut tombs in the 16th century BCE (Valley of the Kings in Luxor).
- At the same time, similar stone-built pyramids, called ziggurats, were being built not too far away in Mesopotamia (modern day Iran and Iraq); the earliest probably date from the late part of Sumeria’s Early Dynastic period (2900-2350 BCE). The ziggurat pyramid design, however, was never transformed from stepped to smooth edged, as was the case in Egypt.
- Egyptian and Mesopotamian forms and building practices were borrowed by the Persians, who embraced rock-cut architecture. In fact, the royal tombs of Darius (522 BCE to 486 BCE) and the rest of the Old Persian (Achaemenid) Empire were rock cut; they are located just outside of the ancient city of Persepolis in modern-day Iran.

Most likely drawing on Persian precedent, India’s earliest stone architects commenced building rock-cut architecture in the 3rd-2nd centuries BCE. These architects adapted Persian forms — infusing them with local design preferences derived from their existing wood-based architecture and introducing entirely new features to suit their unique religious practices — to create rock-cut caves with an entirely new aesthetic.

Why were the Buddhists the first to build in stone?

It appears that the Buddhists just happened to have the support of rulers and rich merchants during the critical period in which Persian rock-cut architectural practices began to trickle into the subcontinent.

Keep in mind, although the Buddhist faith was founded in India in the 6th century BCE, it did not gain widespread adoption until it received imperial sponsorship by the powerful Mauryan Emperor, Ashoka, who converted to Buddhism and ruled most of the Indian subcontinent from 269-232 BCE. The faith garnered subsequent momentum as a rising merchant class were attracted to Buddhism given the absence of Hinduism’s rigid caste restrictions that would have otherwise restrained their rise in social stature.
Collapse of Buddhism in India

By the start of the 7th century, Buddhism had begun its prolonged decline in India, the result of foreign invasions that negatively impacted the faith’s leadership and Hinduism’s success in eroding its base of devotees. Although Buddhism enjoyed a strong revival under the Mahayana-oriented Pala Empire (between the 8th and the 12th centuries), this was confined to a small area of India: the Bihar and Bengal regions. For the most part, by the early 8th century, the construction of large-scale Buddhist monuments had ceased, as the center of the faith had relocated to China, Japan, Tibet, and Southeast Asia. And by the 12th century, the faith had been eradicated from India entirely.

Viewed from this perspective, the rock-cut caves of Ajanta and Ellora represent the first blossoming of Buddhist architecture in India, as well as its grandest achievements. Buddhist architecture was to continue, but not in India.

A new stage: Buddhism in the Far East

Buddhism spread to the rest of Asia by way of Silk Road trade routes, beginning in the 1st century BCE, accelerating under the Indian Kushan Empire in the 1st-3rd centuries, and continuing with momentum through the 8th century. This prolonged period of exchange sowed the seeds for Buddhist architecture to bloom again in China and Southeast Asia. Magnificent Buddhist structures outside of India — Angkor in Cambodia; Borobudur in Indonesia; Bagan in Myanmar; Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok in Thailand; and throughout China — would be where the rock-cut tradition successfully transitioned to massive stone-built architecture.
The Rise and Fall of Hindu Rock-Cut Architecture

While there is an overlap of nearly two hundred years when both Hindu and Buddhist structures were built in India — from roughly 500 to 700 (see Fig. 1) — Hinduism emerged triumphant over Buddhism and dominated all subsequent Indian architecture. Interestingly, the Hindu architectural tradition began with stone-built, rather than rock-cut, temples; these stone-built temples, however, were clearly influenced by the rock-hewn Buddhist monastery (vihara) and sanctuary (chaitya) cave forms. The first experimentation with this transformation from rock-hewn to stone-built structures occurred in Aihole (in the state of Karnataka) and Mahabalipuram (in the state of Tamil Nadu), beginning in the early 6th century. That said, Hindus did undertake rock-cut architecture for a brief period subsequent to the construction of their first stone-built temples. Elephanta (in the mid- to late-6th century) and Ellora (mid-6th century to the ninth century) are the fruits of the rock-cut stage of Hindu architecture. As it turns out, Ellora was the last site of rock-cut Hindu architecture in India.
After the cessation of rock-cut Hindu architecture at Ellora, all subsequent Hindu architecture was stone built. Engineering and design had advanced to a point where temples could be constructed in more populated urban centers, rather than on remote hillsides. The age of large-scale stone-built congregational temples was beginning. The stone-built tradition quickly splintered into two distinct styles: North Indian and South Indian. We explore the details of each style in subsequent sections. With this foundation in place, this Approach Guide continues by reviewing the temples of Khajuraho, the grandest expression of the North Indian temple style.
Basics of Hindu Architecture
North and South Indian Temples Compared

In order to provide the proper context before beginning a review of Khajuraho’s Northern style temples specifically, we offer descriptions of the two prevailing styles of Hindu temples in India: North Indian and South Indian. While both styles share the general features laid out in the prior section, their forms are quite different.
North Indian (Nagara) Temple Style

Fig. 8. Floorplan, Northern style temple (Kandariya Mahadeva, Khajuraho). Highlights added.
The layouts of Northern style temples typically share the following characteristics:

- **No walls surrounding temple compound.** Unlike Southern style temples, there are no walls encircling the temple compound.

- **Platform.** The typical Northern temple is built upon a stone platform that elevates it above all surrounding structures, thereby stressing its symbolic importance. The **five-temple platform** arrangement – consisting of a large central temple flanked by four smaller shrines (located in the four corners of the platform) – marks the high point of the Northern temple style.

- **Single stairway entrance.** The basic Northern floorplan employs a simple linear arrangement. Devotees proceed up a single stairway to the ardha-mandapa on the east side of the temple (green highlights in Fig. 8 and Fig. 9) and then continue to the shrine on the far side (red highlight in Fig. 8).

- **Transepts and balconies.** The apex of the Northern style — in evidence at Khajuraho — adheres to a **double-cross or Lorraine cross floorplan**, consisting of a central nave crossed by two transepts (yellow highlights in Fig. 8). Projecting **balconies** (light blue highlights in Fig. 8 and Fig. 9) coincide with the locations of the transepts; in addition to introducing significantly greater interior light, they create dark voids on the temple’s facade, which yield a dynamic interplay of light and shade.
Fig. 9. Northern style temple (Kandariya Mahadeva, Khajuraho). Highlights added.
Inward-Bending Convex Towers

The form of the tower (vimana) over the sanctuary is a chief differentiator versus the Southern style:

- **Curvilinear tower profile.** The Northern style’s tower (Fig. 9) exhibits sharp vertical sides that **bend inwards as they approach the summit**, forming a corn cob-like shape.

- **Vertical emphasis.** Strong vertical lines running the full height of the tower emphasize the vertical axis and the structure’s upward momentum. Unlike the Southern style’s tower, there are no accentuated storeys or levels, as their horizontal orientations would detract from such momentum.

- **Buddhist stupa inspiration.** The original inspiration for this tower form was likely the Buddhist stupa mound. The modestly projecting vertical face located in the middle of each side of the tower (a characteristic of all Northern temple vimanas) was likely derived from the flight of steps that ran up the side of the stupa.

- **The crown.** Ribbed fruits (*amalakas*) and pot finials were used to top key structures, especially the vimana; this topping element is called a *sikhara*. These crowns are marked with red highlights in Fig. 9; in the close-up in Fig. 10, the ribbed fruit is marked with yellow highlights and the pot finial with green highlights.
Fig. 10. Close-up, ribbed fruit and pot finial at top of tower. Highlights added.
- **Elaborate entranceways.** The Northern style employs extremely ornate entrance doorways, particularly those granting access to the mandapa and the sanctuary; covered with sculptures and reliefs, they are often highlights of the decorative scheme.

- **Niches with relief sculptures.** Niches line the exteriors of temples (as well as their platforms), framing relief sculptures of particularly high importance, typically deities associated with the primary one in the sanctuary; they are often surmounted by distinctive triangular pediments. To ease identification of these niches, we have added blue highlights to them in Fig. 9.

- **Columns.** Columns are distinctive, often exhibiting pot-shaped shafts and cushion capitals.

- **An internal “dome”** (see Fig. 11) usually graces in the ceiling of the ardha-mandapa or mandapa; it rises in corbelled concentric circles to a lotus bud at the apex.

- **Chaitya arches.** In addition to its standard position at the top of Hindu temple entranceways, the horseshoe-shaped chaitya arch (see Fig. 5 in the prior section entitled “Basics of Hindu Architecture - Decoration”) is frequently used as a repetitive design on the walls of the temple, marking it as a residence of the gods.
Fig. 11. Interior of a mandapa dome. Lotus bud at center.
South Indian (Dravidian) Temple Style

Fig. 12. Floorplan, Southern style temple (Kailasanatha, Kanchipuram). Highlights added.
The layouts of Southern style temples typically share the following characteristics:

- **Walled compound accessed through large gateways.** Unique to the South Indian style, temple compounds are typically encircled by high walls (blue highlights on Fig. 12) with entrances through large gateways, called gopurams (see pink highlights in Fig. 12 and Fig. 13); these gateways are so massive that they sometimes dwarf the enclosed temples. While North Indian Hindu empires quickly fell to Islamic invaders, those of South India continued to do battle; these walls likely served to protect their sacred structures. They further symbolize the break between the temporal world outside and the sacred eternal precinct of the gods inside.

- **Multiple stairway entrance.** There are often three stairways that afford entrance into the temple from the east, north, and south sides of the ardha-mandapa (green highlights in Fig. 12). This compares versus the Northern temple’s single stairway on the ardha-mandapa’s east side.

- **Core structures remain the same.** The progression of rooms follows the same pattern as in the North: in Fig. 12, the mandapa is shown in yellow highlights and the sanctuary in red highlights. However, unlike the Northern style, there are no balconies or cruciform interiors.

- **Vast hypostyle halls.** Later in the Southern style’s development, the temple’s mandapas were expanded in size and filled with as many as one thousand pillars. This architectural practice was driven by increasingly elaborate temple ritual.
Fig. 13. Enormous gopuram entrance (Meenakshi Temple, Madurai).
Fig. 14. Southern style temple (Dharmaraja ratha, Mahabalipuram). Highlights added.
Pyramidal Towers

In contrast to the curvilinear profile of the North Indian temple tower, the Southern style’s tower is **pyramidal** (see Fig. 14), consisting of a series of diminishing storeys. This is perhaps the most easily identifiable feature of the Southern style temple. The **horizontal lines** created by the diminishing storeys contrast with the Northern style’s strong vertical lines; this affords the Southern temple a less soaring, more grounded overall appearance.

The tower is comprised of the following elements:

- **Eaves.** Absent in the Northern style, the South’s eaves (blue highlights in Fig. 14) project out ever-so-slightly from the face of the facade, providing some protection from the elements for devotees as they circumambulate the temple.

- **Parapets.** Parapets are another key defining element of the Southern style. Resting directly on top of the eave, the Southern temple’s parapet — a low wall along the edge of each successive storey — is punctuated by a series of miniature curved roof forms (red highlights in Fig. 14). These curved roof forms might have been inspired by Buddhist vihara monastery antecedents; if so, they recreate the cells around a square room in which Buddhist monks were allowed to sleep. Architecturally, parapets further emphasize the horizontal lines of the tower design.

- **The crown.** A similar curved roof form — resembling a domed kiosk, typically square or octagonal in plan — was used to crown the vimana tower over the sanctuary (green highlights in Fig. 14). These domed kiosks assume the same position as the North’s ribbed fruits and pot finials.
Fig. 15. Monolithic stone window screen, Madurai.
Decorative Elements
Decoration is of particular focus in the South and it is here that it reaches its most ornate forms.

- **The chaitya arch.** The horseshoe-shaped chaitya arch is similarly pervasive in the South’s decorative repertoire. It was used to decorate both the temple (present on the vimana crown, eaves, and parapets in Fig. 14) and the massive gopurams that grant access into the temple compound (serving as the topping element in Fig. 13).

- **A molded platform supports the temple.** The platform on which the temple sits exhibits a strong projecting molding.

- **Monolithic stone screens.** Monolithic stone screens (jali), consisting of intricate latticework designs, cover windows, providing filtered interior light. See Fig. 15.

- **Pilaster-demarcated undulation.** The base walls of the temple are divided into alternating projecting and receding bays, each of which was divided by pairs of pilasters (see Fig. 16). These bays, the primary locations for sculptures, introduce even more dynamic wall surfaces than those of North India.
Ornate columns
Columns hold a special place in the decorative hierarchy of Southern temples. They are masterpieces and rank as some of the most impressive sculptural works of the Hindu empires.
The grandest of these columns – all carved from single blocks of stone – assume two basic forms:

- A thick structural column paired with thinner, more decorative pillars.
- A thick structural column paired with dynamic sculptures, often depicting scenes that include a rearing horse or lion. See Fig. 17.
Fig. 17. Rearing horse monolithic column.
Khajuraho’s Temples
The temples of Khajuraho are the culmination of the Northern temple style. This section highlights **three architectural advancements** that were undertaken to make them unique and earn them their unrivaled reputation.

**Prototypes: the temples of Orissa**
The earliest extant examples of the Northern temple style are in **Bhubaneshwar**, located in the state of **Orissa**; the city sits on India’s east coast, approximately 1000 kilometers southeast of Khajuraho. Orissa’s impressive temples — the greatest concentration of which were built between the late 6th century and the late 13th century — likely served as inspiration for those of Khajuraho.

That said, in order to provide the proper context for Khajuraho’s advancements in temple building, this review necessarily considers how its temples deviate from those in Orissa.
Advancement 1: Increased Vertical Emphasis
At Khajuraho, architects employed a number of enhancements to emphasize the temple’s verticality and upward momentum.

Roofline
Khajuraho’s most advanced temple, Kandariya Mahadeva, achieves maximum vertical impact by emphasizing the shape of its curvilinear vimana tower.

- **Curvilinear mandapa roofs.** The curvilinear form of the primary tower is repeated in the roofs of the mandapas (maha mandapa, mandapa, and ardha-mandapa); see green highlights in Fig. 18. This compares versus temples in Orissa in which the vimana tower above the sanctuary (green highlights in Fig. 19) is the only strongly vertical component; the mandapa’s roof maintains a tiered pyramid shape, with strong horizontal moldings that detract from its overall upward thrust (red highlights in Fig. 19).
• **Gradual rise.** Further, the mandapas create a smooth rise from the entranceway (eastern end) to the dramatic summit over the sanctuary (western end); see red arrow in Fig. 18.

• **Clinging towers.** The sides of the primary tower over the sanctum are covered with smaller tower-like forms (yellow highlights in Fig. 18), further accentuating the vertical momentum and creating a more dynamic three-dimensional surface. With one notable exception (Rajarani Temple in Bhubaneshwar), this practice was not pursued in Orissa.

The evolving shape of the temple’s rooftop can be clearly traced within the confines of Khajuraho’s Western Group. The transformation begins at Lakshmana, at which Orissan temple precedent is still evident; the rooftop undergoes modifications at Vishvanatha, Chitragupta, and Devi Jagadambi; and finally, it emerges in its ultimate expression at Kandariya Mahadeva. The specifics of this transformation will be discussed in the featured temple profiles that follow in subsequent sections.
Increased number of wall projections
Khajuraho architects also took another major step forward in their attempt to stress the vertical axis: the projections on each side of the temple’s tower increase to seven, up from a maximum of five in Orissa. The increased number of projections creates an even greater number of vertical lines moving from the ground to the tower summit.

Fig. 20 has an illustration of the projections on towers from Khajuraho and Orissa; below are actual photos of these towers, with the corresponding projections highlighted.
And finally, in yet another move toward greater verticality, Khajuraho’s temples were placed on broad platforms; most Orissan temples sat directly on the ground.
Advancement 2: Unified, Integrated Interior

The layout of Khajuraho’s temples was pioneering in that it integrated what had earlier been discrete structures into a unified whole.

**Compared to Orissan prototypes**

In Orissa, the temple structure consists of discrete rooms connected together through a narrow passage: in the case of Brahmeshvara Temple (built in 1060), a sanctuary (red highlights in Fig. 21) was simply fused with mandapa (yellow highlights in Fig. 21).

In Khajuraho, however, **these discrete units give way to a single integrated whole**. This transformation happened for the first time in the design of Lakshmana. At Lakshmana, the sanctuary (red highlights in Fig. 22) and mandapa (yellow highlights in Fig. 22) have been joined together into a single structure.
Fig. 22. Floorplan, Lakshmana, Khajuraho. Highlights added.
Advancement 3: More Open Interior Space
Khajuraho temples are significantly more open than those of Orissa, providing more air and light into their interiors.

- **Balconies.** Consistent with other temples of the Western Group, Lakshmana has balconies (light blue highlights in Fig. 23 and Fig. 24) that open up the interior of the temple and admit significantly more light. Compare with this the closed arrangement of Orissan temples (see Fig. 19 and Fig. 21).

- **Ambulatory.** Unlike Orissan temples, Khajuraho’s temples introduced an ambulatory (green highlights in Fig. 23) for circumambulation around the sanctuary. Compare this with the shrine-only layout of an Orissan temple in Fig. 21.

- **Columns on the interior.** Unlike Orissa’s temples, which are astylar (use no columns), Khajuraho’s temples further opened up their interiors by using columns instead of solid walls.

![Fig. 23. Floorplan, Lakshmana, Khajuraho. Highlights added.](image)
Fig. 24. Balconies, Lakshmana, Khajuraho. Highlights added.
Reliefs and Sculptures
Erotic Reliefs – History and Meaning

While Khajuraho’s carved decoration maintains many elements of the traditional (Puranic) Hindu belief system, it is also infused with Tantric elements that impart a distinct erotic quality. See Fig. 29, Fig. 30, and Fig. 31.

Fig. 29. Erotic figures on exterior relief panel, Khajuraho.
Tantra Origins and Influence

Tantra began as a rebellious offshoot from Hinduism in the 1st-2nd centuries CE and gained greater acceptance during the Gupta Period (320-550). However, it garnered greatest momentum under the auspices of the powerful Pala Empire (750-1174) that embraced Tantric Buddhism as its state religion.

Given the proximity of the Pala Empire to that of the later Chandela Empire — the Pala Empire was based in the modern-day city of Patna, 600-700 km east of Khajuraho — it is not unreasonable to believe that the Chandelas were influenced by the Tantric beliefs of their influential neighbors.

It is important to point out that the presence of Tantra-inspired erotic sculptures is not confined to Khajuraho’s temples. Tantric beliefs were widespread throughout India — particularly in neighboring Orissa — and necessarily influenced temple decoration throughout the subcontinent. However, **what makes Khajuraho’s erotic panels unique is their particularly graphic nature and the primary position they were afforded on temple walls.**

![Fig. 30. Erotic figures on exterior relief panel, Khajuraho.](image)
Tantric Beliefs

A brief review of a fundamental tenet of Hinduism — non-duality — will provide insight into the meaning of Khajuraho’s erotic reliefs.

Non-duality explained
The concept of unity-in-opposition is a fundamental tenet of Hinduism. The Hindu faith posits that the duality — implicit in pairs of opposites (e.g., good versus bad, beautiful versus ugly, living versus dead, divine versus profane, male versus female) — that appears to ground our daily existence is merely illusion. When believers cast aside this illusion and realize that everything is of one essence (non-duality), they can achieve enlightenment. The critical part of this process is that the believer realizes his own divinity, that one is all.

The Tantric way: a physical path to unity
While Tantra shares a belief in non-duality with Hinduism, it advocates an altogether different path to achieving this insight. While enlightenment is realized through intellectual or emotional (devotional) pathways in other forms of Hinduism, enlightenment in Tantra is achieved (at least in part) through the physical act of sex.

Under Tantra, the duality of masculine and feminine creates tension that is only resolved with sexual union. Further, it is believed that the rapture of enlightenment is most closely approximated by the rapture of sexual union; in union, both are one and each is both.

By adding this physical element to its religious practice, Tantra propounds to offer an accelerated path to enlightenment. Under conventional Hinduism, devotees likely require many lifetimes (via the cycle of samsara, or cyclical rebirth) in order to achieve enlightenment; under Tantra, however, the devotee has the potential to achieve enlightenment in a single lifetime. This acceleration is achieved through the performance of the sexual act, wherein it is believed one can better approach the divine.
Temples Decoration As Pathway to Enlightenment

Viewed from this perspective, Khajuraho’s temple decoration can be seen as an instrument for showing the path to enlightenment. The erotic figures depicted on the exteriors of the temples are not deities (who necessarily already possess enlightened spirits), but rather humans; they engage in Tantric practices in order to move closer to the divine.

And symbolically, the erotic sculptures — interior and exterior — are only evident on a specific portion of the temple: the junction between mandapa and sanctuary. At this architectural junction, the human and divine meet, both physically (in the confines of the temple where the divinity is manifest in the sanctuary) and symbolically (in the rapture achieved through the joining of man and woman depicted in these sculptures).

The confined usage of erotic reliefs to the junction of mandapa and sanctuary differs from Orissa and perhaps represents a refinement of earlier practices. In Orissa, while often not as graphic, erotic decoration is even more pervasive, present in all areas of exterior decoration, with greatest concentration on the walls of the sanctuary itself.
Fig. 31. Erotic figures on exterior relief panel, Khajuraho.
Khajuraho’s most impressive temples reside in the Western Group. In the sections that follow, we profile our picks for the Western Group’s five most important temples. They are presented in chronological order, based on their dates of construction (see Fig. 32):

1. Lakshmana
2. Vishvanatha
3. Chitragupta
4. Devi Jagadambi
5. Kandariya Mahadeva

Author Tip: As an extra, we profile Chaturbhuj, our favorite temple in the Southern Group. We recommend visiting at sunset.
Satellite view of temples, Western Group, Khajuraho. See in Google Maps.
Author Tip: The first temple that you encounter upon entering the Western Group is also its oldest. Lakshmana is a groundbreaking structure, pioneering many features that would come to define the Khajuraho style. Exploring its exterior and interior decoration — still in excellent condition — is an ideal way to begin your visit to Khajuraho.
Background

- **Constructed**: 930-950.
- **Resident deity**: Vishnu.

*Fig. 33. Lakshmana, Khajuraho.*
• **Five-temple platform.** This is an excellent example of the **five-temple platform** arrangement: rather than a single temple sitting atop an elevated platform, the large central temple is surrounded by **four small shrines** that sit in the corners. The two shrines in the rear point toward the front of the platform; the two at the front point toward its center.

• Visitors enter the temple from the east, passing through an **ardha-mandapa** entranceway (green highlights in Fig. 34), a **mandapa** (blue highlights in Fig. 34) and a larger **maha mandapa** (yellow highlights in Fig. 34) en route to the **sanctuary** (red highlights in Fig. 34). There are **five projecting balconies** (light blue highlights in Fig. 34) and an **ambulatory** (pink highlights in Fig. 34) around the sanctuary.

• As discussed in an introductory section ("Pinnacle of North Indian Temple Style"), Lakshmana marked a major shift in temple design. Here, for the first time, **the sanctuary and maha mandapa were fused into an integrated unit**; in earlier temples, they remained largely discrete elements, connected through a narrow passageway.

• As is typical of the Northern style, the towers are topped by ribbed fruits (amalakas) and pot finials.

![Fig. 34. Floorplan, Lakshmana, Khajuraho. Highlights added.](image)
Lakshmana represents the first attempt to break from Orissan temple precedent and introduce a more vertically-oriented temple style.

- To further emphasize the verticality of the tower over the sanctuary (green highlights in Fig. 35), Lakshmana introduced smaller decorative towers that cling to its sides (yellow highlights in Fig. 35). This was an important first step; these clinging towers will grow in numbers in subsequent temples.
- Nevertheless, Lakshmana remained anchored in earlier Orissan temple precedent: the roofs over its mandapas still exhibit a tiered pyramidal shape (red highlights in Fig. 35). Their prominent horizontal moldings weigh on the overall impression of verticality.
• **A bas-relief frieze on the temple platform** (location marked with red highlights in Fig. 36) depicts a grand procession of dancers, warriors, musicians, and most notably, elephants; all assume dynamic poses.

• On the base of the temple, set upon the centers of the projecting balconies, there are **miniature niches** with deity sculptures inside (locations marked with blue highlights in Fig. 36). The depiction of Ganesha – the son of Shiva and Parvati who acts as the remover of obstacles – on the south side is in a high state of preservation.

• Higher up on the temple walls, there are **two registers of large (2.5-3.0 feet high) panels** (location marked with yellow highlights in Fig. 36). They display deep bas-relief sculptures; the round-limbed figures are well rendered and extremely naturalistic in pose.

• At the junction of the maha mandapa and sanctuary, the meeting point of the human and divine, respectively, depictions on these panels take on an erotic character. This is **one of the first temples at Khajuraho to employ erotic reliefs.**
Fig. 36. Relief and sculpture locations, Lakshmana. Highlights added.
Columns
The columns lining the central passageway of the maha mandapa — octagonal at their bases and round at their tops — support magnificent capitals that hold the following sculptural figures:

- **Miniature dwarves.** Miniature dwarves stand with arms raised (see Fig. 37), apparently straining to support the weight of the ceiling above.
- **Maidens.** On large angled brackets, expertly carved maidens stand beneath trees.
Sanctuary

- In front of the entrance to the sanctuary is a **half-circle altar** (green highlights in Fig. 38) symbolizing the meeting point of human (circle) and deity (square). Above the entrance is a relief frieze depicting the **nine Navagrahas** (yellow highlights in Fig. 38); these “cosmic influencers” typically sit at the entrances to sanctuaries and help devotees connect with the presiding deity.
The sanctuary houses a **three-headed image of Vishnu** (see Fig. 39). He stands with straight legs and perfectly erect in *sarnabhanga*.

*Fig. 38. View into the sanctuary from the maha mandapa, Lakshmana, Khajuraho.*
Fig. 39. Vishnu icon sculpture, Lakshmana, Khajuraho.
2. Vishvanatha

**Author Tip:** A Lakshmana look-alike in many respects, Vishvanatha has even more profuse decoration. Don’t forget to check out the Nandi pavilion.
Background

- **Constructed**: 1002.
- **Resident deity**: Shiva.

**Fig. 40.** Vishvanatha.
Fig. 41. Floorplan, Vishvanatha, Khajuraho.
An open pavilion housing a **sculpture of a Nandi bull** sits immediately east of the entrance. As the bull serves as Shiva’s transport, its position in front of the temple marks it as a Shiva dedication.

- Vishvanatha also has a **five-temple platform**. However, of the original four small corner shrines on the periphery of the temple platform, only two remain.
- The floorplan of the temple itself (see Fig. 41) is virtually **identical to that of Lakshmana**.

*Fig 42. Design features, Vishvanatha. Highlights added.*
New Exterior Decorative Arrangement

While the floorplan is unchanged from Lakshmana, there are some notable modifications in the arrangement of decoration on the temple exterior:

- The niches on the base of the temple (on the centers of the projecting balconies) are smaller and double stacked. See blue highlights in Fig. 42.
- The number of registers of large relief panels increased from two to three, marking the first deviation from Orissan temple precedent. See yellow highlights in Fig. 42.
Vishvanatha shows a clear step forward from Lakshmana in terms of emphasizing its verticality:

- The decorative **replica towers that cling to the sides of the primary vimana tower increase in number** (yellow highlights in Fig. 43).
- There is a **smooth rise** from the roof over the entrance hall (ardha-mandapa) to the top of the primary vimana tower over the sanctuary (see red arrow in Fig. 43).
- However, despite these advances, **the roofs over the mandapas remain pyramidal** (red highlights in Fig. 43), with prominent horizontal moldings that detract from the upward thrust; this is consistent with earlier Orissan prototypes and Lakshmana before it.
The shrine’s entrance features elaborate relief carvings. See Fig. 44.

The presiding deity housed in the sanctuary, Shiva, is represented in the form of a phallus-shaped linga; it sits atop a square, vagina-like base, called a yoni (symbolizing shakti, that is, feminine creative power). The unsculpted nature of the stone linga represents divine consciousness beyond form and universal unity in the figure of Shiva. See Fig. 44.
Author Tip: Chitragupta was built with a more compact arrangement than earlier temples. While its exterior decoration is in relatively poor condition, we encourage you to enter and explore the interior, which has high quality reliefs and an impressive deity image in the sanctuary.
**Background**

- **Constructed**: 1000-1025.
- **Resident deity**: Surya (sun god, incorporating aspects of both Vishnu and Shiva).

**Fig. 45.** Chitragupta, Khajuraho.
Chitragupta’s **floorplan is simplified**, as compared to the earlier Lakshmana and Vishvanatha temples:

- The double mandapa (mandapa and maha mandapa) arrangement was abandoned in favor of a simpler **single mandapa** that affords access to the sanctuary.
- There are **only two projecting balconies** — reduced from five at Lakshmana and Vishvanatha — that project from the sides of the mandapa; the three balconies that project from the sanctuaries of the two earlier temples were eliminated. As at Vishvanatha, the niches on the base of the temple (on the centers of the projecting balconies) are smaller and double stacked.
Despite its simpler layout, Chitragupta plays an important role in the evolution of Khajuraho temples’ increasingly vertical style. **For the first time, the shape of the mandapas’ roofs was modified to closely resemble the curvilinear profile of the primary tower over the sanctuary** (see Fig. 45), thereby affording the temple greater cohesion and upward momentum; in a final break, the pyramidal shape of Orissan mandapas, along with their prominent horizontal moldings, was abandoned. While the new shape of the mandapas’ roofs represents a clear step forward, the overall roofline profile is not entirely successful in this temple, as there is less of a gradual upward building of vertical momentum from entrance to sanctuary. As a result, the temple still has an earthbound, horizontal quality.
Exterior Decoration
Unfortunately, the tower over the sanctuary and its two registers of sculptural panels are in a low state of preservation.
Interior Decoration

The temple’s interior, however, has high quality sculptures throughout. The sanctuary — the entrance of which has exceptionally well preserved relief decoration — houses a masterful depiction of the sun god, Surya (see Fig. 46). Standing with straight legs and perfectly erect in sarnabhanga, his stiffness is accentuated by the tribhanga swaying figures that stand to his sides. Appropriately, a sun disk sits directly behind his head.

Fig. 46. Surya image, sanctuary, Chitragupta, Khajuraho.
4. Devi Jagadambi

**Author Tip:** Devi Jagadambi makes for a great visit. Its exterior reliefs are still in very good condition. And since the scale of the temple is relatively smaller, you can inspect them at close range.
Background

- **Constructed**: 1000-1025.
- **Resident deity**: Vishnu.

*Fig. 47. Devi Jagadambi, Khajuraho. Photo by: Marcin Bialek*
Layout and Appearance
Devi Jagadambi shares the same platform as Kandariya Mahadeva. It resembles Chitragupta, executed at approximately the same time, in two key respects:

- **Simplified floorplan.** The floorplan is simplified, with only a single mandapa and two projecting balconies.
- **Vertical emphasis.** Like Chitragupta, Devi Jagadambi has curvilinear madapa roofs, but lacks a smooth rise from the roof over the entrance hall to the top of the primary vimana tower over the sanctuary (see Fig. 47).
High Quality Sculptural Relief Panels
While the towers over its sanctuary and mandapa are in a low state of preservation, Devi Jagadambi’s two registers of sculptural panels are of superior quality and in good condition. **They are worth exploring as they hold some of Khajuraho’s best reliefs.**
Interior Decoration

The decoration on the temple’s ceiling is of high quality. The image in the sanctuary, however, is of Parvati and dates from a later period.
5. Kandariya Mahadeva

Author Tip: The ultimate expression of the Northern style, Kandariya Mahadeva stands out for its balance and upward momentum, even among Khajuraho’s collection of world-class temples. The perfection extends down to even the smallest decorative details. A masterpiece!
Background

- **Constructed**: 1025-1050.
- **Resident deity**: Shiva.

*Fig. 48*. Kandariya Mahadeva, Khajuraho.
The largest and grandest of Khajuraho’s temples, Kandariya Mahadeva achieves the absolute peak of the Northern temple style.

- The temple sits on an elevated granite platform.
- The floorplan is consistent with that of Lakshmana and Vishvanatha: visitors enter the temple from the east, passing through an **ardha-mandapa** entranceway (green highlights in Fig. 49), a **mandapa** (blue highlights in Fig. 49) and a **maha mandapa** (yellow highlights in Fig. 47) en route to the sanctuary (red highlights in Fig. 49). There are five **projecting balconies** (light blue highlights in Fig. 49) and an **ambulatory** (pink highlights in Fig. 49).
- In order to support its greater height — the peak of the tower reaches 30 meters — the walls of the temple are significantly thicker than those of Lakshmana and Vishvanatha. See Fig. 49.

Fig. 49. Floorplan, Kandariya Mahadeva, Khajuraho. Highlights added.
As discussed in the introductory section on Khajuraho as the “Pinnacle of North Indian Temple Style,” Kandariya Mahadeva conveys the greatest vertical momentum of all the temples in the Western Group (see Fig 48; for color highlights, see Fig. 18 in the section entitled “Pinnacle of North Indian Temple Style”). This effect was achieved through the combination of the following features:

- **Curvilinear mandapa roofs.** The roofs of mandapas assume the same curvilinear spire-like shape of the primary vimana tower over the sanctuary.
- **Gradual rise.** There is a smooth rise from the roof over the entrance hall to the summit of the vimana tower.
- **Clinging towers.** There is a greater number of decorative replica towers that cling to the primary vimana tower.
- **Seven projections.** The seven projections on each side of the temple’s tower emphasize the rise to the summit.
Exterior Decoration

- As at Lakshmana, **the base of the temple has large single niches** set upon the centers of the projecting balconies that house deity sculptures.
- Consistent with the change begun at Vishvanatha, there are **three registers of 2.5-3.0 feet high bas-relief panels** that line the upper walls of the temple and take on an erotic character at the junction of the maha mandapa and sanctuary. They are of high quality and remain in good condition.
- Look for the **half-circle moonstone** positioned at the base of the entrance stairway to the temple’s ardha-mandapa. It symbolically marks the transition from profane (circle) to sacred (square).

![Fig. 50. Entranceway arch, Kandariya Mahadeva, Khajuraho.](image)
• Kandariya Mahadeva’s ardha-mandapa has one of the best examples of an entrance arch in Khajuraho. The **multi-lobed arch** springs from the mouths of mythical hybrid creatures, **makaras** (red highlights in Fig. 50), to reach the face of the self-devouring monster **Kirtimukha** at its apex (yellow highlights in Fig. 50). This omnipresent gatekeeper, Kirtimukha, is symbolic of the need to recognize the monstrous nature of one’s existence (dictated by the attachment to duality, the pairs of opposites) prior to reaching enlightenment; a confrontation with this figure upon entering the temple is of high spiritual consequence.

• The temple’s **domed ceilings** — consisting chiefly of patterning reminiscent of vegetation — are of exceptional detail and three-dimensional, multi-layered complexity. The dome that rises over the ardha-mandapa (see Fig. 51) represents **the apex of the style**.

• The presiding deity housed in the sanctuary, Shiva, is represented in the form of a **linga**. The entrance to the sanctuary holds high quality relief decoration.
Fig. 51. Corbelled dome, Kandariya Mahadeva, Khajuraho.
Author Tip: Located on the southern boundary of Khajuraho (approximately 3 kilometers from the city center), Chaturbhuuj is a beautiful and highly recommended stop at the end of a day’s touring!
Background

- **Constructed**: 1100.
- **Resident deity**: Vishnu.

*Fig. 52. Exterior, Chaturbhuj, Khajuraho.*
• Unlike all the other temples in Khajuraho that face eastward, **this small temple faces westward** in order to catch the last rays of sunlight from the descending sun on the beautiful image of Vishnu in the sanctuary.

• This much-restored temple has a **compact arrangement**: an entrance pavilion fronting a sanctuary. Architects likely opted for such an arrangement in order to enable light to reach the interior of the sanctuary.

• **Three registers of 2.5-3.0 feet high bas-relief panels** line its upper exterior walls; they are notable for their lack of erotic imagery.
Deity Image in the Sanctuary

This temple houses **perhaps the greatest and most expressive of Khajuraho’s primary deity images**: a 2.7 meter high Vishnu image.

- He is in *chaturbhuj* (four-armed) form.
- While the primary deities in other temples stand with straight legs and rigid in sarnabhanga, Vishnu here stands gracefully in tribhanga (three bends of the body; see Fig. 53). For an example of sarnabhanga, see Fig. 39 in the section entitled “1. Lakshmana” and Fig. 46 in “3. Chitragupta.”
- His upper right hand, with fingers up and palm facing outward, signals the *abhaya* (have no fear) mudra; his upper left hand holds a manuscript with what appears to be a lotus stalk. His lower hands are broken.
- A horseshoe-shaped chaitya arch rises from the mouths of makaras behind his head.
- He is flanked by two small female attendants.
Fig. 53. Vishnu sculpture, Chaturbhuj, Khajuraho.
Are you going to see the Islamic highlights of Delhi and Agra, the rock-cut caves of Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta or the Hindu temples in south India? See our other India guidebooks.
Our Recommendations
While there are many excellent sources for recommendations, we have included a collection of the places that we personally enjoyed while on location researching this guidebook.
**Restaurant.** Bukhara is an excellent restaurant located in the Maurya hotel. Its chefs have perfected the use of the tandoor oven to create authentic and delicious dishes. Highly recommended. Website: [www.itchotels.in](http://www.itchotels.in)

**Antiques.** Sunder Nagar Market, just south of the Oberoi hotel lies a cluster of shops selling handicrafts and “antiques.” It’s one of our favorite markets to find unique gifts. See in [Google Maps](http://maps.google.com).
Mumbai

- **Antiques.** Natesan’s Antiqarts. Natesan’s Antiqarts in the basement of the Jehangir art gallery in Colaba. This is a very impressive store, with some interesting pieces, especially wooden sculptural works. Website: [www.natesansantiqarts.com](http://www.natesansantiqarts.com)

- **Antiques.** Chor Bazaar. A lively market with a smattering of interesting and unique “antiques”, including posters, lamps, metalwork.

- **Clothing.** Aza. Excellent boutique on Altamount Road that sources clothes and jewelry made by designers from around India. Website: [www.azafashions.com](http://www.azafashions.com)

- **Clothing.** Melange. Near Aza on Altamount Road. Excellent selection of Indian fashion by up-and-coming designers. Website: [www.melangeworld.com](http://www.melangeworld.com)

- **Clothing.** Bombay Electric. Boutique that sources clothes (men, women, and children) and jewelry made by designers from around India. Website: [www.bombayelectric.in](http://www.bombayelectric.in)

- **Home Goods.** Bungalow 8. Located in a lofty building in Colaba, this modern and fashionable store offers unique clothing, jewelry, and home goods. [www.bungaloweight.com](http://www.bungaloweight.com)

- **Home Goods.** Central Cottage Industries Emporium. Located in Colaba, this is a good place to pick up textiles and other small crafts from around India. We love the block print bed covers.
Packing List

We’re constantly on the road and as you can imagine, have a pretty defined list of things that we never leave home without. Here’s a peak at what’s in our luggage, from our favorite camera to portable wine glasses. It’s the ultimate list for a seasoned traveler!

We never travel without ...

- **Luggage (duffel).** We’ve tried many types of luggage and this duffel from North Face is what we use most often. It’s waterproof, indestructible, easily goes on your back (especially helpful when staying in old cities with cobbled streets that make rolling luggage difficult), locks easily, and easily compresses into any space. Ideal!
- **Camera.** We’ve been huge fans of Canon for a long time and their new model is our latest obsession. This camera is our go-everywhere, do-it-all camera of choice — it’s a portable camera with the power of a DSLR.
- **Tripod.** This is one of our favorite travel tripods. It is super light and very easy to set up and take down (it almost sets itself up!) — because of its lightweight profile, it easily fits in a bag or backpack and really works great. Highly recommended!
- **Flashlight.** The interiors of many ancient structures lack electric lighting, so a flashlight is quite valuable, especially when you want to get a better look at wall paintings. Although many times there will be a guard on hand who has a flashlight to use for a small tip, we opt to bring our own to guarantee a good view. For taking photos, [on-camera video lights](#) work well.
- **Wine glasses.** One of the more luxurious items on our packing list, these stemless wine glasses from Riedel come with travel cases. Thin-lipped and high quality, these really make a difference when enjoying a glass of wine after a day of sightseeing.
- **Multi-tool / pocket knife.** This is a great tool and comes in handy more often than expected. The Leatherman contains pliers, knife, screwdriver, scissors, bottle opener ... all in a compact, indestructible package. It’s invaluable. (One note, this is also an item favored by thieves, so make sure you keep it in your locked luggage at all times).
- **Waterproof jacket.** Designed to protect against water and wind, we bring this waterproof shell on every trip. It even has zipper vents to let air in while keeping you dry. Whether it’s a cool night on the beach or a downpour in the middle of the monsoon, you’ll be glad you have this jacket.
- **Backup hard-drive.** Like all travelers, we take a lot of photos and videos and those files are VERY important to us. To get the ultimate protection, we download our photos and videos onto a separate, external backup drive (in fact two drives, but...
we tend to overdo things), which is stored separately from our carry-ons.

- **Luggage locks.** No one wants to think about things going missing, but it happens to everyone at some point. To protect our belongings, we lock all of our bags, from small carry-ons and to larger checked luggage, all the time. These locks are programmable (all locks can have the same code) and TSA approved.

- **Bug spray with DEET.** We often find locally-available bug sprays not effective in keeping bugs away, which is particularly worrisome in areas where malaria-carrying mosquitos are found. We recommend bringing your own bug spray with DEET to make sure you’re protected in these areas.

- **Mosquito net.** When traveling in areas where there is a risk of malaria, a mosquito net (along with anti-malarial medication and bug spray) will keep you protected while you sleep. We never count on hotels having an ideal set up, so always bring our own. We prefer the four-corner type and use **bungee cords** to hang it up in our room.

- **Wet bag.** We carry several wet bags with us when we travel. These waterproof bags are ideal for keeping dirty laundry separate from the rest of your clothing or, if you have hand-washed laundry that’s not quite dry, you can toss in your wet bag to keep it separate from your dry clothes until you arrive at your next destination. These bags are genius!

- **Travel containers.** We’re always in the market for small travel containers to keep shampoo, body wash, or other liquids in when we’re traveling. Durable (they’re silicon) and well-made (they won’t open in your luggage), they are the best we’ve found.

- **Extra pair of socks.** Not glamorous, but socks can be extremely valuable when you have to remove your shoes to visit a site. Not only to keep feet clean, but surfaces can get very hot from sitting in the midday sun and socks will make sure you can visit no matter how hot it is.
About Approach Guides
Travel guidebooks for the ultra curious, Approach Guides (www.approachguides.com) reveal a destination’s essence by exploring a compelling aspect of its cultural heritage: art, architecture, history, food or wine. Approach Guides are currently available for over 60 destinations worldwide.

- **100% focus on cultural sites.** Guidebooks provide unrivaled insights into the destination’s quintessential experiences.
- **Designed for digital.** Digital is better for travel. Download a guidebook and immediately access it from all of your mobile devices.
- **More interactive and visually oriented.** High-resolution images, videos, interactive maps and links to important online information, provide an engaging experience.
- **Free updates.** All guidebooks are marked with version numbers; when we update a guidebook, existing customers can easily download the update for free.
Contact
Visit www.approachguides.com, join us on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, or email us at founders@approachguides.com.
Compulsive (and compulsively informed) travelers, the Raezers are the masterminds behind the downloadable Approach Guides, which are filled with a university course-worth of history and insights for 62 destinations worldwide. Why we love it. The Raezers share our desire for deep, well-researched information on the wonders of the world.

**Travel + Leisure**

What started as one couple’s travel notes aimed at filling in the gaps in guidebooks has become ApproachGuides.com — a menu of downloadable travel guides that cover cultural and historical topics of interest to thoughtful travelers. What’s hot: Bite-sized travel guides that specialize in topics ranging from ... the foods of Italy to one that helps you explore the historical and architectural significance of Angkor’s famous temple structures in Cambodia.

**Los Angeles Times**
Approach Guides’ new video series offers a fresh perspective on the world’s most inspiring travel experiences: a tour Sri Lanka’s most sacred Buddhist temple, the sound of the call to prayer echoing through Fez’s medina and an exploration of the mosaics of St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice.

Watch our new travel video series: www.approachguides.com/video
Guidebooks for the ultra curious, Approach Guides has over 40 guides to the world’s greatest cultural sites. Browse our catalog to find a travel guidebook for your next destination.

Italy | France | Spain | Turkey | Jordan | Israel | Morocco | India | Sri Lanka | Myanmar | Cambodia | Thailand | Java | Japan | Australia | New Zealand | Guatemala & Honduras | Chile | Argentina | New York City

(www.approachguides.com/amazon)

Your wine shop companion, our wine app is the definitive guide to the world’s wines

Wine App for iPhone and iPad
(wine.approachguides.com)
Free Updates and Enhancements

We are constantly updating and improving our guidebooks with new content, images and author tips. One of the benefits of being a digital (and independent) publisher is that we are able to release updated versions of our guidebooks to our existing customers for free.

**Author tip:** *The easiest way to make sure you have the latest version is to sign up to get notified of updates by email.*
How do I find out if I have the latest version of this guide?

- Look on the title page of your guidebook to find its version number.
- Then simply visit www.approachguides.com/updates where we list the latest version numbers for each guidebook.
How do I download the latest version?

- If you discover that you do not have the latest version, getting an updated version is easy.
- Visit [www.approachguides.com/updates](http://www.approachguides.com/updates) for detailed download instructions.