



Jagannath Temple



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Jagannath Temple, Puri

Jagannath Temple is a very popular temple and one of the holy shrines visited by the Hindus during their pilgrimage of char dham. Rath Yatra is also organized every year in which the deities of the temple are put into separate temple cars. The statues of most deities in different temples are either metallic or made by stone but the statue of Jagannath is made of wood.

This tutorial will let you know about the history of the temple along with the structures present inside. You will also get the information about the best time to visit it along with how to reach the temple.

Audience

This tutorial is designed for the people who would like to know about the history of Jagannath Temple along with the interiors and design of the temple. This temple is visited by many people from India.

Prerequisites

This is a brief tutorial designed only for informational purpose. There are no prerequisites as such. All that you should have is a keen interest to explore new places and experience their charm.

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1. Jagannath Temple – Overview

Jagannath Temple was built in the city of Puri by **King Chodaganhadeva** in 12th century. He also built the **Sun temple of Konark**. His grandson **Ananga Bhimadeva** completed the construction of the temple in 12th century. There are three main deities in the temple who are put into the temple cars during the festival of **Rath Yatra** and these deities are Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra.



Puri

Puri is a city in Odisha state that is popular for Jagannath Temple. That's the reason people come here as it is one of the temples for pilgrimage during **Char Dham Yatra**. Jagannath Temple was plundered by Hindu and Muslim rulers 18 times to rob the treasure of the temple. Besides the Jagannath temple, many other temples are also there which the tourists can visit.



Visiting Hours

The temple is opened for the public from 5:00am in the morning to 12:00 midnight. The temple is closed from 1:00pm to 4:00pm as a long break is given. There are many rituals performed in the temple which have different timings.

Tickets

There is no entry fees and people can visit the temple any time during the visiting hours. As many festivals are celebrated here, people can participate in them without paying any fees.

Best time to visit

Jagannath Temple can be visited during the period of November to February as the climate is very pleasant. But this is the peak season and so the city is very crowded. In order to visit the place when the city is less crowded, people can come in the month of June or July.

Where to Stay?

There are around 239 hotels in Puri where people can enjoy their stay. The hotels range from cheap hotels to expensive five-star hotels. Some of the hotels of the city are as follows:

- **Five-Star Hotels**
 - Pramod Convention & Beach Resort located at Ct Road

- Mayfair Waves located at Chakratirth Road
- **Four-Star Hotels**
 - Balaji International located at New Marine Drive Road
 - Toshali Sands located at Konark Marine Drive
 - The Hans Coco Palms located at Swargdwar
 - The Chariot Resort and Spa located at Baliapanda
 - Blue Lily Beach Resort located at Baliapanda
- **Three-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Pushpa located at Sea Beach
 - Nayak Beach Resort located at Chakratirth Road
 - Hotel Petal Regency located at Swargadwar
 - Jamindar's Palace located at Chakratirth Road
 - Hotel Niladri located at New Marine Drive Road
- **Budget or Two-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel New Rockbay located at Ct Road
 - Reba Beach Resort located at Gopal Bailav Road
 - Hotel Golden Dust located at New Marine Drive Road
 - Hotel Mayur located at Swargadwar
 - Gold Coast beach resort located at New Marine Drive Road
- **Cheap Hotels or One-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Mangal Chandi located at Baliapanda
 - Hotel Maa Kamakhya located at Gopal Bailav Road
 - Sai Resort located at Gopal Bailav Road
 - Chandan Lodge located at Station Road
 - Hotel Sapphire Inn located at Station Road

2. Jagannath Temple – History

Jagannath Temple under Ganga Dynasty

Jagannath Temple was constructed by King Chodaganga. The king started the construction and **Jaga mohan** or the assembly hall and **Vimana** or chariot of the temple were constructed during his reign. Later **Anangabhima Deva** completed the construction of the temple in 1174AD.

Legend Regarding Jagannath Temple

A legend says that **Indradyumna** was a king who worshipped **Lord Vishnu** very much. Once the king was informed that Lord Vishnu has come in the form of **Nila Madhava** so the king sent a priest named **Vidyapati** to search for him. While travelling, Vidyapati reached a place where **Sabaras** were residing. **Vishvvasu** was the local chief who invited Vidyapati to live with him.

Vishvvasu had a daughter named **Lalita** and Vidyapati married her after sometime. Vidyapati noticed that when his father-in-law returns, his body had a good smell of sandalwood, camphor, and musk. On asking his wife, she told him about the worship of Nila Madhava by her father. Vidyapati asked his father-in-law to take him to Nila Madhava. Vishvvasu blindfolded him and took him to the cave. Vidyapati took with him seeds of mustard which he dropped on the way so as to remember the route to the cave.

Vidyapati informed the king so he came to the place but, to his disappointment, the deity disappeared. In order to see the deity, he observed fast unto death on **Mount Neela**. Once he heard a voice saying that he will see the deity so he sacrificed a horse and built a temple and **Narada** installed the idol of **Sri Narsimha** in the temple.



One night he slept and saw **Lord Jagannath** in his dream. He also heard a voice telling him about a fragrant tree and ordered him to make idols from it. So the king made the idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. Along with it, he also made the Sudarshan Chakra.

Then the king prayed to **Lord Brahma** to visit the temple and the deities. Lord Brahma was very pleased when he saw the temple asked about a desire which he (Lord Brahma) can fulfil. The king asked that there shall be no issues in his life and he should be the last one from his family. He also asked that if anybody is left in his family, then he should work for the temple and not the society.

Invasions on the Temple

The temple was invaded by many rulers and the count goes to eighteen. The temple was plundered and looted because of enormous wealth present in it. Due to these attacks, the idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra were transferred to various places in order to save them.

- **First Invasion** – It was done by **Raktavahu** in the 9th century.
- **Second Invasion** – It was done by **Illias Shah** who was the Sultan of Bengal.
- **Third Invasion** – It was done by **Feroze Shah Tughlaq** in 1360.
- **Fourth Invasion** – It was done by **Ismail Ghazi** who was the commander of **Allauddin Hussain Shah**, Sultan of Bengal. The invasion was done in 1509.
- **Fifth Invasion** – It was done by **Kalapahara** in 1568AD.
- **Sixth Invasion** – It was done by **Suleman** and **Osman**. Suleman was the son of **Kuthu Shah** whereas Osman was the son of **Isha**, the ruler of Odisha.
- **Seventh Invasion** – It was done by **Mirza Khurram**, the commander of **Islam Khan**. Islam Khan was the Nawab of Bengal. The invasion was done in 1601AD.
- **Eighth Invasion** – It was done by **Hasim Khan** in 1608AD. Hasim Khan was the Subedar of Odisha.
- **Ninth Invasion** – It was done by **Kesodasmaru** who was a jagirdar and a Hindu Rajput.
- **Tenth Invasion** – It was done by **Kalyan Malla**, son of **Raja Todar Mall**. It was done in 1611AD.
- **Eleventh Invasion** – It was also done by **Kalyan Malla** in 1612.
- **Twelfth Invasion** – It was done by **Mukarram Khan** in 1617AD.
- **Thirteenth Invasion** – It was done by **Mirza Ahmad Beg** who was the nephew of **Nurjahan**, wife of **Jahangir**.
- **Fourteenth Invasion** – It was done by **Amir Mutaquad Khan** in 1641AD.
- **Fifteenth Invasion** – It was done by **Amir Fateh Khan** in 1647AD.
- **Sixteenth Invasion** – It was done by **Ekram Khan**, the Nawab of Odisha. The invasion was launched in 1699.

- **Seventeenth Invasion** – It was done by **Muhammad Taqi Khan** in 1731.
- **Eighteenth Invasion** – It was done by the followers of **Alekh** religion in 1881.

3. Jagannath Temple – Architecture

Jagannath Temple is a very big temple and covers an area of 37000m². The height of the outer wall is 6.1m. This outer wall surrounds the whole temple and is known as **Meghananda Pacheri**. The main portion of the temple is also surrounded by a wall known as **Kurma Bheda**.

The temple was built on the basis of **Oriya architecture** and has around 120 temples and shrines inside. The main temple has curvilinear shape with a chakra of Lord Vishnu on the top. This chakra is also known as **Nila Chakra**. The tower of the temple has the height of 65m.

Nila Chakra

Nila Chakra is located on the top of the temple and a different flag, each named as **Patita Pavana**, is hoisted on the chakra daily. The chakra has eight spokes called **Navagunjaras**. The chakra was made by an alloy of eight metals also known as **Ashtadhatu**. The circumference of the chakra is 11m and height is 3.5m.



Singhdwara

There are four gates to enter the temple and one of them is Singhdwara which is a Sanskrit word which means **Lion Gate**. There are statues of two lions one on each side of the gate. People can enter the temple through the staircase of 22 steps which is known as **Baisi Pahacha**.

There is an image of Lord Jagannath which is painted on the right side of the entrance and is known as **Patitapavana**. This image was made for untouchables who were allowed to pray to the image of the lord from outside but cannot enter the temple.

Arun Stambha

Arun Stambh is situated in front of the Singdwara. The pillar is sixteen-sided and is monolithic. Idol of **Arun** can be found here who drives the chariot of **Sun god**. Arun Stambh was previously located at Konark temple but was brought here by **Guru Brahmachari Gosain**.



Hathidwara, Vyaghradwara, and Ashwadwara

Hathidwara, Vyaghradwara, and Ashwadwara are the three other entrances from where people can enter the temple. Hathidwara is also known as **elephant gate**, Vyaghradwara as **tiger gate**, and Ashwadwara as **horse gate**. The gates are named so as they are guarded by elephant, tiger, and horse respectively.

Vimala Temple

There are many minor temples in the precincts of Jagannath Temple and Vimala temple is one of them. Hindu mythology says that the feet of **Goddess Sati** has fallen on the spot where the temple is constructed. The food offered to Lord Jagannath is also offered to goddess Vimala then it is called **Mahaprasad**.



Mahalaxmi Temple

Many rituals are performed in Jagannath temple and the Mahalaxmi Temple plays an important role because preparation of the food to be offered to Lord Jagannath is supervised by Mahalaxmi. The food is known as **Naivedya**.



Mukti Mandapa

Mukti Mandapa is a platform made with granite and its height is five feet. The square-shaped mandapa covers an area of 900 square feet. The roof of the mandapa is supported by twelve pillars out of which four are built in the middle. The roof is 13 feet high while the height of each pillar is 8 feet. Idols of many gods and goddesses have been installed here.

Dola Mandapa

Dola Mandapa is used to make a swing on which idol of **Dologobinda** is placed. The swing is made during the annual **Dol yatra**. The mandapa is carved by using Torana and it is the same arch on which the swing is hanged.

4. Jagannath Temple – Festivals

Each year many festivals are celebrated in the temple and most important of them is the Rath Yatra in which the three main deities of the temple are carried to **Gundicha Temple** on three separate chariots. Some of the festivals celebrated in the temple are as follows:

Chandan Yatra

Chandan Yatra is the longest festival celebrated in the temple as it takes 42 days to complete the yatra. The yatra is divided into two parts namely **Bahara Chandana** and **Bhitara Chandana** and each part is celebrated for 21 days. Bahara Chanda is the first part in which the chariots are built that will take the three deities during Rath Yatra.



In these 21 days, the idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra along with five Shiva Lingas are taken to the **Narendra Tirtha tank**. The deities are put into the boats and they swim in the tank. Bhitara Chanda is the phase carried for the last 21 days in which the rituals are carried inside the temple.

Snana Yatra

Snana Yatra is celebrated on the full moon day of the **Jyeshtha** month as this is the birthday of Lord Jagannath. On this day, Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Madamohan, and Sudarshan are taken to Snana Bedi in a procession and bathed while performing different rituals.



These rituals are performed on the basis of a description made in the **Skanda Purana** which states that the rituals were arranged by King Indradyumna when the three deities were first installed. The devotees believe that on visiting the deities on this day clean all their sins.

Anavasara

Anavasara or Ansara is celebrated after the snana yatra in which the deities are taken to **Anavasara Ghar** where they rest for 15 days. In these days, the devotees can go to **Brahmagiri** to see **Alernath** which a four handed deity and a form of Lord Vishnu. These 15 days are the resting period of main deities and devotees are not allowed to see them. Cooked food is also not offered to the deities.

Rath Yatra

Rath Yatra of Puri is very famous and is conducted either in the month of June or July. In this yatra, Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra were brought outside and kept in three separate chariots. Then they are taken to Gundicha Temple. Every year new chariots are built having wooden wheels. These chariots are pulled by the devotees.



Chhera Pahara is the most important ritual of this yatra in which the Gajapati king wears the dress of a sweeper and sweeps around the chariots. The road is cleaned with a gold-handled broom and sandalwood water and powder is sprinkled. The ritual is carried on for two days. On the first day it is performed when the deities are brought to **Mausi Maa Temple** and secondly when they are brought to the Jagannath Temple.

Gupta Gundicha

Gupta Gundicha is celebrated 16 days before the Vijayadashmi. In this festival, idol of **Madhaba** and **Goddess Durga** tour the temple premises for first eight days. In the next eight days, they are brought to **Narayani Temple** and worshipped here. Then they are brought back to the Gundicha temple after eight days.

Nava Kalebara

Nava Kalevara is celebrated when the lunar month of **Ashadha** is followed by another month of **Ashadha** which happens at a difference of 8, 12, or 18 years. In this festival, the old idols are buried and new idols are installed. Large number of devotees attend this festival.

5. Jagannath Temple – How to Reach?

Puri is a small district and has no airport. The nearest airport is Bhubaneshwar which is around 60km away from Puri. But the city is well-connected to various cities through road and rail transport.



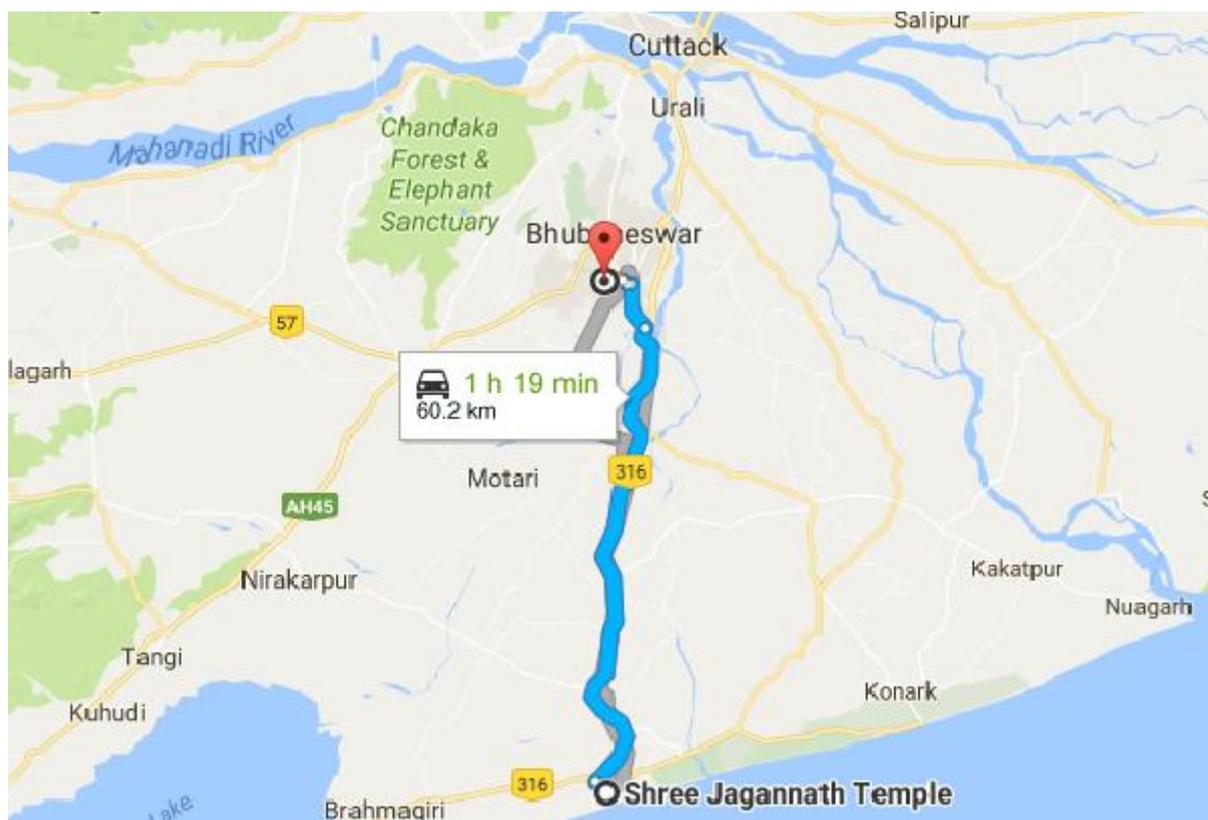
The approximate distance of some of the cities from Puri is as follows:

- **Puri to Bhubaneshwar**
 - By rail – 63km
 - By road – 59km
- **Puri to Vishakhapatnam**
 - By rail – 469km
 - By road – 444km
- **Puri to Kolkata**
 - By rail – 502km
 - By road – 518km
- **Puri to Cuttack**

- By rail – 91km
- By road – 81km
- **Puri to Rajahmundry**
 - By rail – 669km
 - By road – 625km
- **Puri to Vizinagram**
 - By rail – 408km
 - By road – 396km

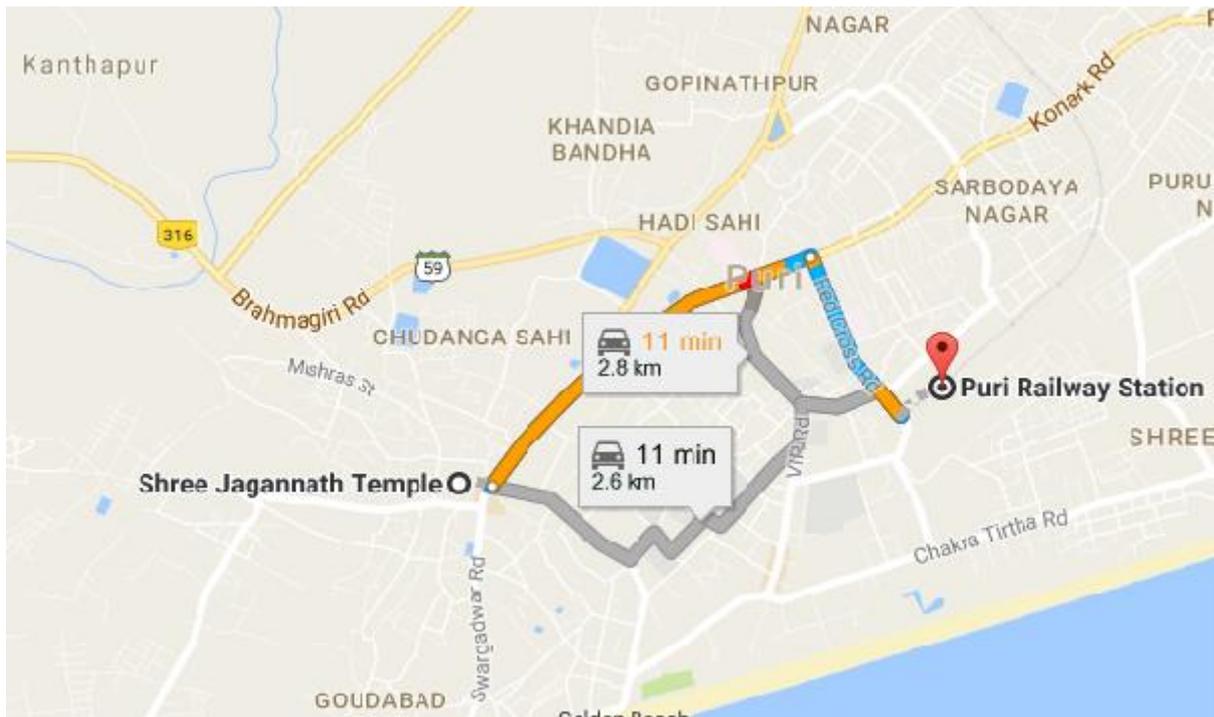
By Air

There is no airport in Puri but Bhubaneswar airport is around 60km away from Puri. Bhubaneswar Airport is also known as **Biju Patnaik International Airport** and is the only international airport in Odisha. The airport has two terminals where **Terminal 1** is for domestic flights and **Terminal 2** is for international flights.



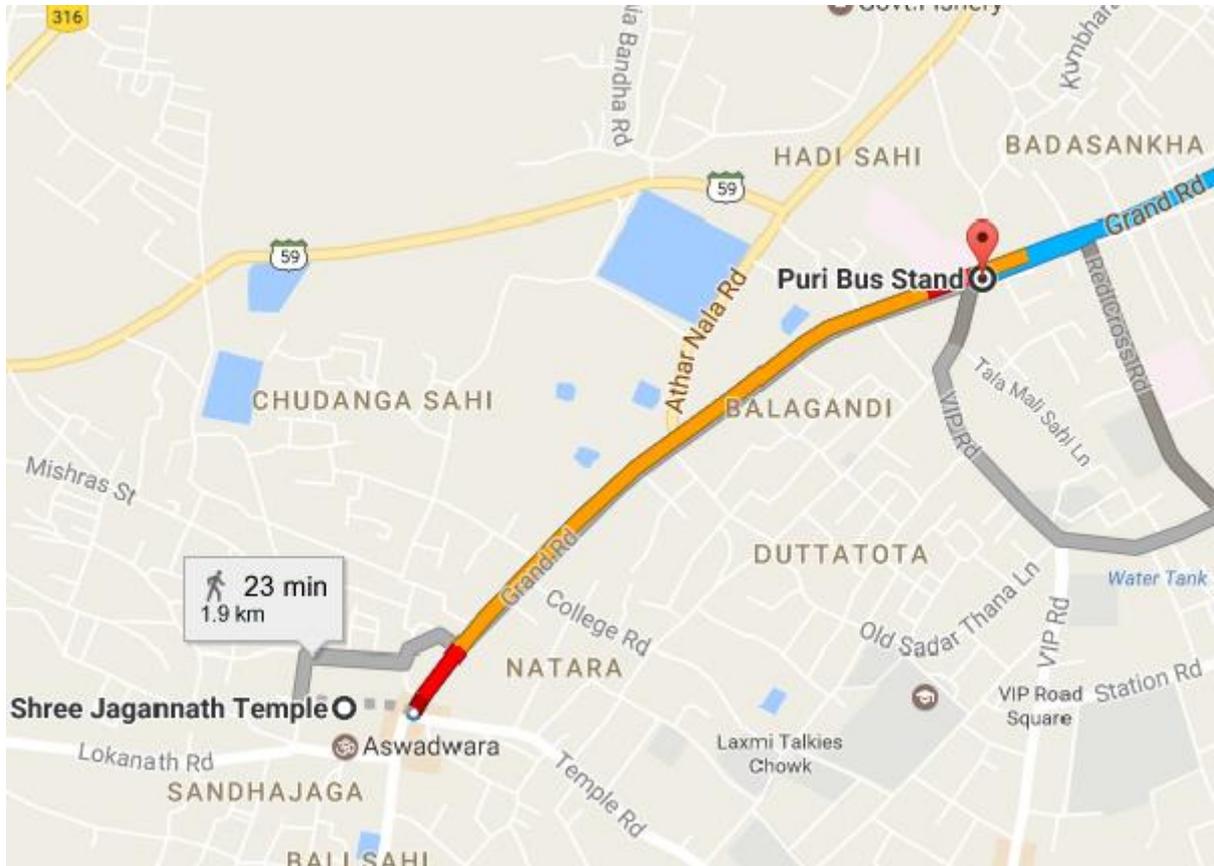
By Train

Puri is well-connected to various parts of India through the rail transport. Many trains run from Puri to Ahmedabad, Kolkata, New Delhi, and other places. Puri is a terminal railway station. Shatabdi, Garib Rath superfast and fast mail and express trains run from here.



By Road

Bus stand of Puri is near the Gundicha temple from where tourists can get direct buses to Kolkata and Vishakhapatnam. People can also catch buses to Bhubaneshwar and Cuttack Buses from here also run to the nearby Konark temple.



Local Transport

Tourists can move around in the city through cycle and auto rickshaws though auto-rickshaws are very few. Besides these, people can hire, bikes, mopeds, and cycles in order to visit the city.

6. Jagannath Temple – Nearby Places

There are many temples and other places that can be visited in as well as outside Puri. People can go to these places through local transport. These places are nearby Jagannath Temple. Some of them are as follows:

Konark Sun Temple

Konark Sun Temple was built in 13th century most probably by **Narnimhadeva I** who belonged to **Ganga dynasty**. The shape of the temple is like a huge chariot with wheels, pillars and walls. The temple was built on the banks of river **Chandrabhaga**.



There are twelve pairs of stone wheels and the width of each of them is 3m. There are seven horses which are shown as if they are pulling the chariot. The temple is 30km away from Jagannath Temple.

Suna Goswami Math

Suna Goswami Math is one of the popular maths of Orissa and India where many festivals are celebrated. Chandan Yatra, Snana Purnima, and Agni Utsava are some of them. During the festival of Chandan Yatra, ornaments are distributed among the devotees. These ornaments are made up of flowers. Panti bhoga is made on the occasion of Agni Utsava.

Atharnala Bridge

Atharnala bridge is a popular tourist attraction which was built in 13th century to develop transport system. The bridge was used to cross the **Mandupur stream**. The dimensions of the bridge is 85m x 11m. Now also people come here and offer prayer.



Puri Beach

Puri beach is considered as one of the beautiful beaches of India. It is a good picnic spot as many people come to the beach daily for their enjoyment. The beach is situated in **Bay of Bengal** and is popular for sunrise and sunset. Puri festival is organized in the month of November and is the best time to visit the beach.



Gundicha Ghar temple

Gundicha Ghar Temple is very popular temple of Puri as it is compared with the Jagannath Temple. According to Hindu Mythology, the temple was a place where **Gundicha**, aunt of Lord Krishna, used to live and he comes and lives here for nine days during Rath Yatra. Idols of Lord Jagannath, Subhadra, and Balabhadra is also brought here during Rath Yatra.

