

🎵 Master the Deepchandi Taal (14 Beats): Mukhda, Mohra, Tihai & Tukda Explained for Tabla Lovers!

Few rhythms in Indian classical music carry the graceful charm and emotional depth of Deepchandi Taal. Known for its 14-beat cycle, this taal has long been a favorite in *Thumri*, *Dadra*, and semi-classical compositions. Its slow, lilting gait and intricate phrasing offer tabla players endless room for creativity and expression. Whether you're a budding tabla enthusiast or a seasoned performer looking to polish your rhythmic vocabulary, mastering Deepchandi Taal is a rewarding journey into the heart of Hindustani rhythm.

🙌 What Is Deepchandi Taal?

Deepchandi (sometimes spelled *Dipchandi*) is a 14-beat rhythmic cycle traditionally played in *Vilambit* or *Madhya laya* (slow or medium tempo). It has a *romantic and graceful character*, making it ideal for light classical genres like *Thumri*, *Kajri*, *Chaiti*, and *Ghazal*.

Here's the basic structure (theka) of Deepchandi:

Dha Dhin Dhin Dha | Dha Tin Tin Ta | Ta Dhin Dhin Dha

Beats: 1 2 3 4 | 5 6 7 8 | 9 10 11 12 13 14

Vibhag (Divisions): 3 sections – 4 + 4 + 6

Tali (clap) on beats: 1, 5, 13

Khali (wave) on beat: 9

When played on the tabla, Deepchandi creates a gentle swing that feels both meditative and romantic — a rhythm that “breathes” between beats.



Listen to a Deepchandi Taal Theka demonstration:
(You can embed a sample from YouTube such as Zakir Hussain or Anindo Chatterjee playing Deepchandi Taal.)



Anatomy of the Deepchandi Cycle: Understanding Its Beauty

Unlike more commonly used taals like *Teentaal* (16 beats) or *Ektaal* (12 beats), Deepchandi's 14-beat structure gives it a distinctive asymmetry. The *theka* flows in three sections, each with a subtle emotional flavor — making it a favorite for expressive musical forms.

- **Vibhag 1 (4 beats):** Sets the mood and introduces the theme.
 - **Vibhag 2 (4 beats):** Adds rhythmic depth and space for melodic improvisation.
 - **Vibhag 3 (6 beats):** Creates tension and release, leading beautifully back to the *sam* (first beat).
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Key Compositional Elements: Mukhda, Mohra, Tukda & Tihai

In tabla, compositions are more than just patterns — they are rhythmic *poems*. Let's break down the most important components used within Deepchandi.

1. Mukhda (मुखड़ा) – The Face of the Composition

The Mukhda is the *introductory phrase* that leads to the *sam*. It's often short and catchy, acting as a rhythmic signature.

Example (in Deepchandi):

Dha Ge Ti Na | Dha Ti Na | Dha

This pattern beautifully circles back to the first beat, giving a clear rhythmic “face” to your playing.

2. Mohra (मोहरा) – *Bridging the Gaps*

A Mohra is slightly longer and more elaborate than a Mukhda. It's typically used to transition between compositions or to conclude a section of improvisation.

Example:

Dha Dha Tita Kata Gadi Gena | Dha Tirakita Dha Ge Na

This creates a flowing movement that bridges the performer's ideas with elegance.

3. Tukda (टुकड़ा) – *The Rhythmic Gem*

A Tukda is a short, complete composition ending neatly on the *sam*. It shows precision and control.

Example:

Dha Ge Tita Kata Gadi Gena | Dha Tirakita Dha Ge Na | Dha

Used effectively, a Tukda can add sparkle to your solo and highlight your command over timing.

4. Tihai (तिहाई) – *The Grand Finale*

Perhaps the most iconic feature of tabla performance, a Tihai is a phrase repeated thrice, resolving perfectly on the *sam*. It's the rhythmic equivalent of a perfect cadence in Western music.

Example (Deepchandi Tihai):

Dha Tirakita Dha Ge Na | Dha Tirakita Dha Ge Na | Dha Tirakita Dha Ge Na

This repeated phrase builds excitement and brings the cycle full circle, delighting both the performer and the listener.

Famous Performances in Deepchandi

Many maestros have used Deepchandi to showcase their artistry.

- Pandit Kishan Maharaj and Ustad Zakir Hussain have performed breathtaking *Thumri* and *Lehra* variations in this taal.

- In film music, Deepchandi-inspired rhythms appear in songs like “*Baju Band Khul Khul Jaye*” (from *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*) and “*Aaj Jaane Ki Zid Na Karo*” — where the tabla’s gentle lilt mirrors the song’s emotional pull.

 **Watch:** [Zakir Hussain – Deepchandi Taal Solo](#)

Why Tabla Lovers Should Learn Deepchandi

Learning Deepchandi refines your sense of balance, timing, and expression. It also improves your ability to accompany singers and dancers, since it demands sensitivity and awareness. Once you grasp its 14-beat cycle, you’ll find yourself naturally adapting to other complex taals.

Quick Rhythm Quiz

Can you spot the correct *vibhag structure* of Deepchandi?

1. $4 + 4 + 6$ 
2. $3 + 4 + 7$
3. $5 + 5 + 4$

(Answer: 1 – $4 + 4 + 6$!)

Conclusion

Deepchandi Taal is more than a rhythmic pattern — it’s a living, breathing expression of Indian artistry. Its 14-beat flow embodies *grace, poise, and rhythmic storytelling*. Whether you’re playing a *Thumri*, composing your

own Tukda, or simply practicing the theka, Deepchandi offers endless inspiration.

So, tabla lovers — grab your Dayan and Bayan, set your lehra in Deepchandi, and let your hands dance to the rhythm of fourteen!
