

# Granary

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A **granary** is a storehouse or room in a barn for threshed grain or animal feed. Ancient or primitive granaries are most often made out of pottery. Granaries are often built above the ground to keep the stored food away from mice and other animals.

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## Early origins

From ancient times grain has been stored in bulk. The oldest granaries yet found date back to 9500 BC<sup>[1]</sup> and are located in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A settlements in the Jordan Valley. The first were located in places between other buildings. However beginning around 8500 BC, they were moved inside houses, and by 7500 BC storage occurred in special rooms.<sup>[1]</sup> The first granaries measured 3 x 3 m on the outside and had suspended floors that protected the grain from rodents and insects and provided air circulation.<sup>[1]</sup>

These granaries are followed by those in Mehrgarh in the Indus Valley from 6000 BC. The ancient Egyptians made a practice of preserving grain in years of plenty against years of scarcity. The climate of Egypt being very dry, grain could be stored in pits



A simple granary



Ancient Greek geometric art box in the shape of granaries, 850 BC. On display in the Ancient Agora Museum in Athens, housed in the Stoa of Attalos.

for a long time without discernible loss of quality. The silo pit, as it has been termed, has been a favorite way of storing grain from time immemorial in all oriental lands. In Turkey and Persia, usurers used to buy up wheat or barley when comparatively cheap, and store it in hidden pits against seasons of dearth. In Malta a relatively large stock of wheat was preserved in some hundreds of pits (silos) cut in the rock. A single silo stored from 60 to 80 tons of wheat, which, with proper precautions, kept in good condition for four years or more.

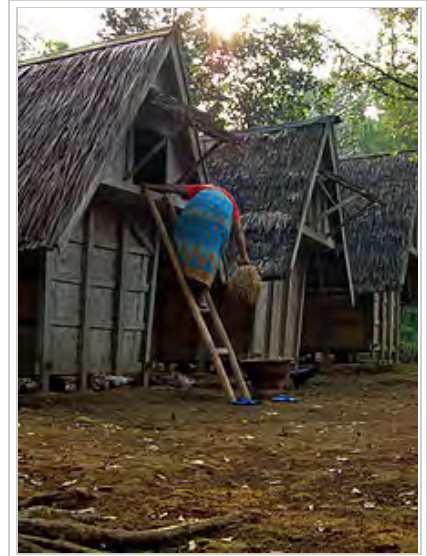
## East Asia

Simple storage granaries raised up on four or more posts appeared in the Yangshao culture in China and after the onset of intensive agriculture in the Korean peninsula during the Mumun pottery period (c. 1000 B.C.) as well as in the Japanese archipelago during the Final Jōmon/Early Yayoi periods (c. 800 B.C.). In the archaeological vernacular of Northeast Asia, these features are lumped with those that may have also functioned as residences and together are called 'raised floor buildings'.

## Southeast Asia

In vernacular architecture of Indonesian archipelago granaries are made of wood and bamboo materials and most of them are built raised up on four or more posts to avoid rodents and insects. Examples of Indonesian granary is Sundanese *leuit* and Minang *rangkiang*.

## Great Britain



Leuit, Sundanese traditional granary, in West Java, Indonesia.



Granary in Kashan, Iran



In Great Britain small granaries were built on mushroom shaped stumps called staddle stones. They were built of timber frame construction and often had slate roofs. Larger ones were similar to lincays, but with the upper floor enclosed. Access to the first floor was usually via stone staircase on the outside wall.<sup>[2]</sup>

Towards the close of the 19th century, warehouses specially intended for holding grain began to multiply in Great Britain. There are climatic difficulties in the way of storing grain in Great Britain on a large scale, but these difficulties have been largely overcome.

## Modern

Modern grain farming operations often use manufactured steel granaries to store grain on-site until it can be trucked to major storage facilities in anticipation of shipping. The large *mechanized* facilities, particularly seen in Russia and North America are known as grain elevators.

## Moisture control

Grain must be kept away from moisture for as long as possible to preserve it in good condition and prevent mold growth. Newly harvested grain brought into a granary tends to contain excess moisture, which encourages mold growth leading to fermentation and heating, both of which are undesirable and affect quality. Fermentation generally spoils grain and may cause chemical changes that create poisonous mycotoxins.

One traditional remedy is to spread the grain in thin layers on a floor, where it is turned to aerate it thoroughly. Once the grain is sufficiently dry it can be transferred to a granary for storage.

In modern silos, grain is typically force-aerated *in situ* or circulated through external

A big granary in Bydgoszcz, Poland, on the Brda river.



Han dynasty granary on Silk Road west of Dunhuang



Modern steel granaries in the United States

grain drying equipment.

## See also

- Hórreo
- Raccard
- Storage silo
- Staddle stones Used to lift granaries off the ground to prevent access by vermin, etc.
- Corn crib
- Groote Schuur, the stately South African home was originally a granary.
- Rice barn
- Treppenspeicher
- Ghorfa
- Parish granary
- Port Perry



The Port Perry mill and grain elevator, granary circa 1930. Originally built in 1873, the building remains a major landmark to this day as the oldest in Canada. The original line of the PW&PP Railway can be seen in the foreground.

## References

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2. [http://www.southhams.gov.uk/index/business\\_index/ksp\\_development\\_and\\_planning/ksp-development\\_and\\_planning-conservation/sp-development\\_and\\_planning-barnguide.htm](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/index/business_index/ksp_development_and_planning/ksp-development_and_planning-conservation/sp-development_and_planning-barnguide.htm) The Barn Guide by South Hams District Council

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