

The Golden Temple

What Is the Golden Temple?

The Golden Temple is the most famous Sikh temple in the world. It is also known as God's Temple or Harmandir Sahib.

Where Is the Golden Temple?

The Golden Temple is in Amritsar which is in the far North of India.

Who Worships at the Golden Temple?

The Golden Temple is a sacred place for Sikhs. Sikhs follow the teachings of ten Gurus or special religious leaders. They believe in one God and that all people are equal. The Guru Granth Sahib is the Sikh holy book which is a central point inside the Golden Temple.



What Will You Find at the Golden Temple?

The Golden Temple is made mostly from marble but is covered by gold plate, which makes it beautiful to look at. Many Sikhs make a pilgrimage or yatra, which is a special religious journey, to the Golden Temple, but you don't have to be a Sikh to visit. In front of the Golden Temple is the Amrit Saras Kund, the Pool of Immortality. Sikhs believe that the waters here have miraculous healing powers.

How Do Sikhs Behave at the Golden Temple?



remove shoes



cover heads



sit on the floor to show they are equal before God

How Do Sikhs Create a Sense of Community at the Golden Temple?

Everyone is welcome at the Golden Temple. To help create a strong sense of community, Sikh temples offer a langar which is a free meal that people eat together.

Pangat: Sitting in rows to show everyone is equal.

Sewadar: Volunteer who prepares, serves and clears away the food.

Langar: Free vegetarian meal, served after prayer.



Keywords

Can you find these words in the text? Find where it explains what they mean. Can you tell a friend?

Golden Temple

sacred

Guru

Guru Granth Sahib

yatra

Amrit Saras Kund

langar

pangat

sewadar

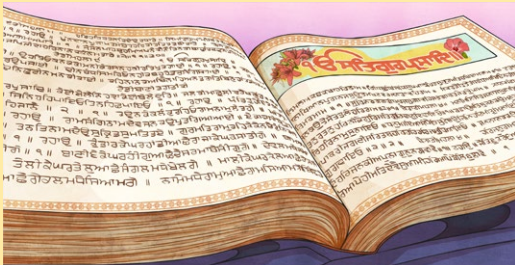
The Golden Temple

The Golden Temple is in Amritsar, North India. It is a well-known Sikh temple famous for the gold plate that covers its outer walls.

A Guru is a spiritual guide or leader. The Golden Temple is a sacred place for Sikhs who call it Harmandir Sahib, meaning God's Temple.

There are four entrances to the Golden Temple - doors to the north, south, east and west. This is because Sikhs believe in welcoming everyone from the four corners of the world.

Many Sikhs make a pilgrimage, or yatra, to the Golden Temple. They do this for two main reasons:



To pay their respect to the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book. The Guru Granth Sahib gives Sikhs rules on morals, ethics and for living a good life.



To bathe in the Amrit Saras Kund (Pool of Immortality) for spiritual purification. It is believed to have miraculous healing powers.

The Golden Temple

Like most other religious communities, Sikhs have certain rituals that they follow when entering the Golden Temple.



remove shoes



cover heads



sit on the floor to show they are equal before God

There is a strong sense of community at the Golden Temple. Sikhs welcome anyone and everyone to visit and worship or reflect. In fact, 35% of all visitors to the Golden Temple are non-Sikh! Another ritual involves the preparation and serving of a langar. This is a free meal that visitors can share together after prayer.

Pangat: Sitting in rows to show everyone is equal.

Sewadar: Volunteer who prepares, serves and clears away the food.

Langar: Free vegetarian meal, served after prayer.



The Golden Temple

The Golden Temple is the most famous Sikh temple in the world. Also referred to as Harmandir Sahib, meaning God's Temple, it stands proudly in the holy city of Amritsar in the far north of India. Constructed using marble, the outer covering of gold plate adds to the effect of awe and wonder.



The Golden Temple is a sacred place to members of the Sikh community and to them, it represents the magnificence and strength of Sikhs around the world.

There is a strong sense of community surrounding the Golden Temple. There are four entrances for visitors in the north, south, east and west of the temple. This signifies a willingness to welcome worshippers from the four corners of the world. In fact, 35% of all visitors to the Golden Temple are non-Sikh.

A pilgrimage, or yatra, is a journey made to a special place. Many Sikhs make a pilgrimage to the Golden Temple for two important reasons:



To pay their respect to the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book. It is unique because instead of a person, the Guru Granth Sahib is considered the supreme spiritual authority. The Guru Granth Sahib gives Sikhs rules on morals, ethics and for living a good life.



To bathe in the Amrit Saras Kund (Pool of Immortality) for spiritual purification. It is believed to have miraculous healing powers.



Sikh Temples, or gurdwaras, are gathering places for the community. Anyone and everyone is welcome. After prayer, people are welcome to stay and eat together. This communal meal is known as langar. The meal, which is vegetarian to reflect the Sikh faith, is prepared in huge quantities and served by volunteers or sewadars.

Visitors to the gurdwara sit in rows, or pangat, to share their free meal together. The largest langar of any temple saw 35,000 meals served by the sewadars!

Golden Temple Facts

- There are no religious statues inside the Golden Temple. Sikhs prefer to imagine God.
- Anyone can lead the worship at a Sikh temple - there are no priests.
- The foundation stone of the Golden Temple was laid down by a Muslim saint called Mian Mir.
- The Golden Temple attracts around 3 million visitors a month. In comparison, the Taj Mahal receives 3 million visitors in a year!

Golden Temple Glossary

gurdwara	a Sikh temple
sacred	dedicated to God, with a religious purpose
yatra	pilgrimage or special journey made by Sikhs
Amrit Saras Kund	the Pool of Immortality at the Golden Temple, believed to have healing powers
vegetarian	someone who does not eat meat
langar	a free, communal meal held at a gurdwara
pangat	sitting in rows at the langar to show that everyone is equal
sewadar	a volunteer who cooks, serves or clears away at the langar