

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.

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.



Questions

1. What is the Golden Temple? What is it famous for?

2. Where would you find the Golden Temple?

3. Who worships at the Golden Temple? What do they call it?

4. How does the Golden Temple welcome everyone?

5. Explain why Sikhs make a yatra to the Golden Temple.

6. What is the significance of the Amrit Saras Kand?

7. Why do Sikhs have rituals for entering the Golden Temple?

8. 35% of visitors are non-Sikh. What does this fact tell you?

9. What is a langar?

10. Explain the role of the sewadar.