

Visit to Gurdwara or Sikh Temple in Lisbon

1 Very short introduction to Sikh religion

A Sikh is a follower of [Sikhism](#), a **monotheistic religion** which originated during the 15th century in the [Punjab region](#) of South Asia.

The term "Sikh" has its origin in the [Sanskrit](#) words: disciple, student or instruction. "Sikh" properly refers to adherents of Sikhism as a religion, not an ethnic group. However, because Sikhism has seldom sought converts, most Sikhs share strong ethno-religious ties. Many countries, such as the U.K., therefore recognize Sikh as a designated ethnicity on their censuses.

Male Sikhs usually have "Singh" (Lion), and female Sikhs have "Kaur" (princess) as their middle or last name.

Initiated or baptized male Sikhs must cover their hair with a turban, which is also compulsory for baptized female Sikhs.

Sikhism as a religion evolved within the [Hindu](#) cultural sphere, and was founded by gurus who were Hindus by birth, social identity and beliefs. There is a substrate influence of the older Hindu matrix like [Buddhism](#).

The origins of Sikhism lie in the **teachings of Guru Nanak** and his successors. The term guru comes from the Sanskrit, meaning teacher, guide, or mentor.

The traditions and philosophy of Sikhism were established by ten specific gurus from 1469 to 1708. Each guru added to and reinforced the message taught by the previous, resulting in the creation of the Sikh religion.

The Sikh gurus established a mechanism which allowed the Sikh religion to react as a community to changing circumstances

There is one primary source of scripture for the Sikhs: the **Gurū Granth Sāhib**. This is the holy book of the religion Sikhism. It contains prayers, and hymns of Sikh religion. Sikhs believe the Guru Granth Sahib to be a living Guru, hence the Guru Granth Sahib has its own place also commonly known as 'Sach Khand' (the pure Heaven).

The name of the book is made up of three words. The first word is Guru, what means a teacher, Granth means a book and Sahib means master. Thus, the Guru Granth Sahib means a Master Book by the Teacher. The book is usually placed in the center of the temple, high up under a roof

The essence of Sikh teaching is summed up by Guru Nanak in these words: "Realization of Truth is higher than all else. Higher still is truthful living".

Sikh teaching emphasizes the principle of equality of all humans and rejects discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, and gender. Sikh principles encourage living life as a householder.

In Sikhism, God is shapeless, timeless, and unable to be seen with the physical eye.

The beginning of the first composition of Sikh scripture is the figure "1"—signifying the universality of God. It states that God is omnipresent and infinite with power over everything, and is signified by the term [Ik Onkar](#).



Sikhs believe that before creation, all that existed was God and God's order. When God willed, the entire cosmos was created..

There are a number of **religious prohibitions** in Sikhism.

- Cutting hair is strictly forbidden in Sikhism for those who have taken the initiation ceremony.
- Consumption of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and other intoxicants is not allowed.
- Superstitions and rituals should not be observed or followed. The religion forbids pilgrimages, fasting and ritual purification; circumcision; idols and grave worship; compulsory wearing of the veil for women; etc.
- Obsession with material wealth is discouraged in Sikhism.
- The practice of [sati](#) or widows throwing themselves on the funeral burning of their husbands, ritual animal sacrifice to celebrate holy occasions, etc. are forbidden.
- A Sikh is encouraged not to live as a recluse, beggar, yogi, monastic, monk or nun or celibate.
- Lying, slander, worthless talk "back-stabbing", etc. are not permitted.
- Sikhism does not have hierarchical priests. The only position is that of the [Granthi](#) to look after the [Guru Granth Sahib](#). Any Sikh is free to become Granthi or read from the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Eating meat killed in a ritualistic manner is strictly prohibited; eating halal meat from animals slaughtered in a religiously prescribed manner is forbidden. In some small Sikh Sects eating any meat is believed to be forbidden, but this is not a universally held belief.
- Having extramarital sexual relations.

Sikhs who have undergone the Sikh initiation ceremony may also be recognized by the five Ks. The Five Ks (ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰ Pañj Kakār) are five "Articles of Faith" that initiated Sikhs wear. They are not just symbols, but articles of faith that collectively form the external identity

The Five Ks are:

1 Keski = small turban used to cover the Kesh or uncut hair



The stamp of the Guru is the Keski, if after being initiated, one takes it off, know him them as a renegade (apostate).

2 Kangha = small wooden comb. It's a symbol of cleanliness. Combing their hair reminds Sikhs that their lives should be tidy and organized.

Comb the hair twice a day, covering it with turban that is to be tied from fresh.



3 Kara = steel or iron bracelet. The Kara is a constant reminder that whatever a person does with their hands has to be in keeping with the advice given by the Guru. It's an iron/steel circle also to symbolize life as never ending. A symbol of permanent bonding to the community and also supposed to represent being handcuffed to god and his will.



4 Kachera = cotton underwear. The Kachera symbolises self-respect, and always reminds the wearer to maintain mental control over lust, one of the Five Evils in Sikh philosophy. This obligation was introduced in times where people didn't used underwear at all.

The sign of true chastity is the Kachera, you must wear this and hold weapons in hand.



5 Kirpan = short dagger which symbolizes a Sikh's duty to come to the defence of those in peril. Its use is only allowed in the act of self-defense and the protection of the defenseless. The kirpan is also a tool for meditation and acts as a reminder that as a weapon can change the tide of a battle, so can God change the tide of your life.

Those who never depart his/her arms, they are the most excellent initiated..



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Amritsar (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ) is the spiritual and cultural center for the Sikh religion. The Golden Temple , the most important Sikh shrine, attracts more visitors than the Taj Mahal with more than 100,000 visitors on week days alone and is the most popular destination in the whole of India. The city also houses the political authority and the Sikh Parliament.

2 Punjab region

The Punjab also spelled Panjab, (ਪੰਜਾਬ , پنجاب) is a geographical region in South Asia comprising vast territories of eastern Pakistan and northern India.

The name of the region literally means "Five Waters" referring to the following rivers: the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas. All are tributaries of the Indus River.

The region has a long history. It has been inhabited by Harappans, proto-Dravidians and Indo-Aryans and has seen numerous invasions by the Persians, Greeks, Kushans, Ghaznavids, Timurids, Mughals, Afghans, British and others.

The main religions of the Punjab region are Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Other religious groups are Christians, Jains and Buddhists.

In 326 BCE, Alexander the Great invaded the tip of Punjab from the north and defeated King Porus. His armies entered the region via northwest Pakistan and his rule extended up to the city of Sagala (modern-day Sialkot in northeast Pakistan).

In 305 BCE the area was ruled by the Maurya Empire. The Maurya presence in the area was then consolidated in the Indo-Greek Kingdom in 180 BCE. Menander I Soter "The Saviour" (known as Milinda in Indian sources) is the most renowned leader of the era.

In 711–713 CE, the Arab Sultan Muhammad bin Qasim came by way of the Arabian Sea with Arab troops to defeat Raja Dahir. The Sultan then led his troops to conquer Sindh and Punjab regions for the Islamic [Umayyad Caliphate](#). Qasim was the first to bring Islam to the region. At that moment Punjab, Spain and Portugal were part of the same Caliphate.

During the establishment and consolidation of the Muslim Turkic Mughal Empire prosperity, growth, and relative peace were established. The Muslim empires ruled Punjab for approximately 1000 years. The period was also notable for the emergence of the first guru and founder of Sikhism. (1469–1539),

In 1758, Punjab came under the rule of [Marathas](#) who captured the region by defeating Afghan forces.

Later on Punjab was divided into 36 areas and 12 separate Sikh principalities. From this point onward, the beginnings of a Punjabi Sikh Empire emerged. Out of the 36 areas, 22 were united by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The other 14 accepted British sovereignty.

Six years after Ranjit Singh's death, the British East India Company was given an excuse to declare war and in 1849, after two Anglo-Sikh wars, the Punjab was annexed by the British.

The [British Raj](#) had political, cultural, philosophical and literary consequences in the Punjab, including the establishment of a new system of education.

After the annexation of the Sikh kingdom by the British, the latter recognized the Martial qualities of the Sikhs and Punjabis in general and started recruiting from that area. During the 1857 [Indian mutiny](#), the Sikhs stayed loyal to the British.

This resulted in heavy recruiting from Punjab to the colonial army for the next 90 years of the British Raj. The distinct turban that differentiates a Sikh from other turban wearers is a relic of the rules of the British Indian Army.



Arrival of the 15th Sikh Regiment in the North of France during World War I



Punjabi soldiers in the trenches of Flanders Fields (leper 1917)

During the independence movement of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, many Punjabis played a significant role.

The months leading up to the [partition of India](#) in 1947 were marked by conflict in the Punjab between Sikhs and Muslims. This caused the religious migration of Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus from West Punjab, mirroring a similar religious migration of Punjabi Muslims from East Punjab.

The partition of India in 1947 eventually accompanied the creation of two independent dominions, India and Pakistan. In 1971, the People's Republic of Bangladesh came into being after the Bangladesh Liberation War.

The partition involved the division of three provinces, Assam, Bengal and Punjab, based on district-wide Hindu or Muslim majorities. The boundary demarcating India and Pakistan came to be known as the Radcliffe Line. The partition was set forth in the Indian

Independence Act 1947 and resulted in the dissolution of the British Raj, as the British government there was called. The two self-governing countries of Pakistan and India legally came into existence at midnight on 14–15 August 1947.

The partition displaced over 14 million people along religious lines, creating overwhelming refugee crises in the newly constituted dominions; there was large-scale violence, with estimates of loss of life accompanying or preceding the partition disputed and varying between several hundred thousand and two million. The violent nature of the partition created an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion between India and Pakistan that plagues their relationship to the present.

Partition of British India into India and Pakistan had a most profound effect on the demographics, economics, culture, political and social structures of Amritsar. The state of Punjab was divided between India and Pakistan and Amritsar became a border city, often on the front lines of India-Pakistan wars. Punjab (about 35%) became part of India, while West Punjab (65%) became part of Pakistan.

Prior to partition, the Muslim league wanted to incorporate Amritsar into Pakistan because of the Amritsar's proximity to [Lahore](#) (a distance of 30 miles) and a nearly 50% Muslim population but the city became part of India.

The [Indian National Congress](#) had similar aims of incorporating Lahore into India as Lahore was the cultural, economic, and political capital of undivided Punjab and Hindus and Sikhs constituted nearly 50% of the population, but Lahore became a part of Pakistan.

Amritsar and Lahore experienced some of the worst communal riots during the partition of India. Muslim residents of Amritsar left the city en-masse leaving their homes and property behind due to violent anti-Muslim riots in Amritsar. Similar scenes of communal carnage against Hindus and Sikhs were witnessed in Lahore and led to their mass evacuation.

Even today there remains unrest between India and Pakistan on the exact location of the border. Every evening the border is closed with some ceremony. Well known is the Wagah Crossing Ceremony ([واگھا](#))

The ceremony was created to deflect tension and possible violence in border area between Pakistan and India, and is evolving nowadays into a nationalist and tourist attraction

Seen from the Indian site of border: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi6iEx0nrXY>

Seen from the Pakistan site of border: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXVMIOT-EFg>

Daily closing border ceremony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fbrH7XOuLY>

The 1960s saw growing animosity between Sikhs and Hindus in India, with the Sikhs demanding the creation of a Punjab state on a linguistic basis similar to other states in India.

Although the Sikhs obtained the Punjab, they lost Hindi-speaking areas to Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. Chandigarh was made a union territory and the capital of Haryana and Punjab on 1 November 1966.

Tensions arose again during the late 1970s, fuelled by Sikh claims of discrimination and marginalisation by the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress party and tactics adopted by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Today a lot of Punjabi people live across the world and are integrated in several countries. Here and there you can see strong remaining of the Sikh religion.



3 Punjabi language

Punjabi is an Indo-European language (as most European languages) and part of the Indo-Aryan branch.

The word Punjabi is derived from the word Panj-āb, Persian for "Five Waters", referring to the five major eastern tributaries of the Indus River. Panj is cognate with Sanskrit pañca and Greek pente "five", and "āb" is cognate with the Av- of Avon and aqua in Latin .

It's immediately related to languages as Hindi or Urdu (590 million), Bengali (205 million), Marathi (75 million), Gujarati (50 million), Bhojpuri (40 million), Awadhi (40 million), Maithili (35 million), Oriya (35 million), Marwari (30 million), Sindhi (25 million), Rajasthani (20 million), Chhattisgarhi (18 million), Assamese (15 million), Sinhalese (16 million), Nepali (17

million), and Rangpuri (15 million) and more indirectly to Persian (60 million), Pashto (ca. 50 million) and Kurdish (35 million).

Punjabi is spoken by 102 million native speakers worldwide, making it the 10th most widely spoken language (2010) in the world. It is the native language of the Punjabi people who inhabit the historical Punjab region of Pakistan and India.

Punjabi is the most widely spoken language in Pakistan and the 11th most widely spoken in India and the 3rd most natively spoken language in Indian Subcontinent.

Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in England and Wales and third most spoken in Canada.

There are two ways to write Punjabi: Gurmukhi and Shahmukhi. The word Gurmukhi translates into "Guru's mouth", Shahmukhi means "from the King's mouth".

Gurmukhi is derived from the Sanskrit alphabet and Shahmukhi from the Arabian alphabet. Gurmukhi is used in India and Shahmukhi in Pakistan.

The Gurmukhi writes more in syllables or consonants with vowels than the letters we use in the Latin alphabet. It contains 50 graphemes, the smallest unit of a writing system of any given language.

http://www.discoverikhism.com/punjabi/punjabi_gurmukhi_alphabet.html

An individual grapheme may or may not carry meaning by itself, and may or may not correspond to a single phoneme of the spoken language.

Examples: .

Gurmukhi: ਲਹੌਰ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਧਾਨੀ ਹੈ | ਲੋਕ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਰਾਚੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਲਹੌਰ ਦੂਜਾ

Shahmukhi: لہور پاکستانی پنجاب دا دارالحکومت اے۔ لوک گنتی دے نال کراچی توں بعد

4 Practical preparation and aspects of the visit

4.1 Practical aspects of visit

- Nobody is obliged to participate.
- People don't drink alcohol before entering the Gurdwara (chewing gum)
- When you participate, you should respect the Sikh traditions.
- The temple is called Gurudwara.
- Before entering the sacred place of the Temple, people wash their feet.
- Before entering the sacred place of the Temple, people cover their hair (head). Bring a little white towel from the hotel or a clean piece of cloth (40 x40 cm). The Gurudwara has also a lot of cloths you can use. Joe will assist you.
- Inside the temple people walk barefoot.
- The sacred place is open to male and female, who use the same room.
- When entering the sacred room, people bow.
- You can sit on the carpet, there are no chairs.
- Women sit on the left side and men on the right side.
- There is no fixed ceremony; the sacred book is read by a Granthi.
- People can stay as long as they wish to meditate, pray or think.
- Before leaving, you can give a little donation.
- Afterwards people are offered a meal and tea. The meal contains a sweet candy like substance (honey, nuts, sugar, milk, cream...) that represents god's presence. Especially during the weekend there are a lot of participants (social contact). The Gurdwara serves free food to all who asked for it (Sikh or non Sikh).



4.2 Aspects you might observe during the visit:

- Short explanation of Sikh religion: history and religious principles
- Who is responsible for the Temple, how is the Temple organized and run?
- Are there contacts with other temples in Europe? Contacts with India? Amritsar? Is there a network of Temples?

- Is the Temple having an educational role; helping young Sikh students and/or advising the Sikh parents on school education and education in the family?
- Has the Temple a social role? If so, what is that social function of the Temple?
- Is the temple helping with the integration of Sikh people in Portuguese or European society?
- Does the Temple give legal support or advice in case of administrative questions?
- Is there contact with other religions (such as Catholic, Muslim and Hindu)?

4.3 Location and travel

Gurdwara Lisbon

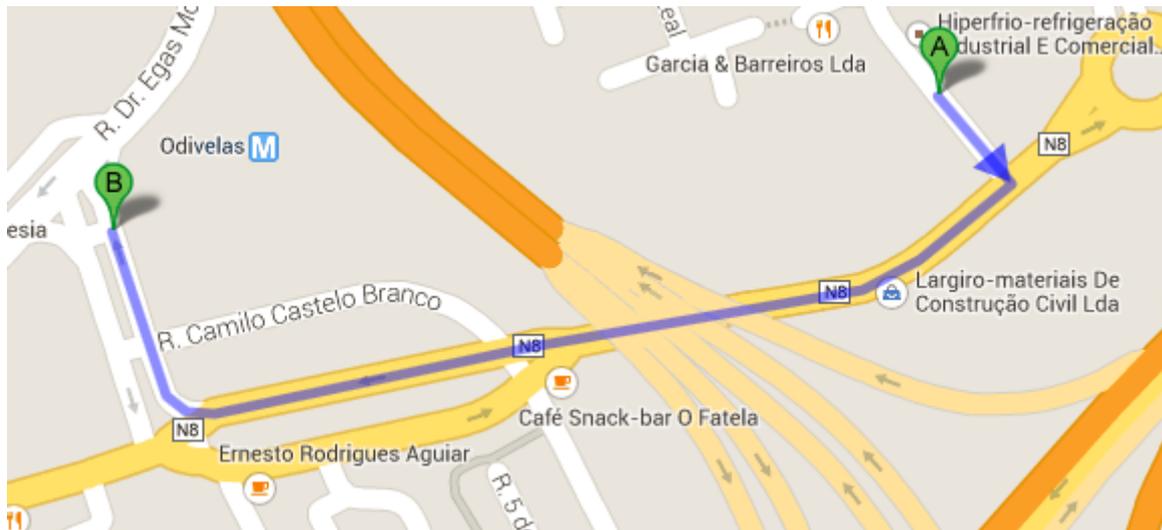
Rua Jose Duarte Lexim Lote -6

2675-901 , Odivelas , Portugal

<http://lisboagurdwara.yolasite.com/>

Route by metro from hotel:

- Take metro at station Marquês de Pombal
- Take yellow line (linha amarela) direction Odivelas
- Leave the metro in the terminus station Odivelas
- The Gurudwara, Sikh Temple, is 500 meters walking from the metro station.



Punjabi inspired music:

MC Punjabi (Mundian To Bach Ke) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C3umDN3voo>

Best of the traditional songs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7WAmhiZJH8>