



The Golden Temple

The Harmandir Sahib (or the Golden Temple), is located in the city of Amritsar, which is in the northwestern state of Punjab, in India. It is 28 kilometres from the border with Pakistan. This impressive holy site can be found at the centre of Amritsar's old walled town.

The temple is a gurdwara, which is a place of worship for those following the Sikh religion. The original building was constructed in the late 1500s-early 1600s, but was destroyed in 1757 by an Afghan invasion. During the 1800s it was rebuilt in marble and gold.

- There are 4 entrances to the Golden Temple on the north, south, east and west of the building. The 4 entrances symbolise that everyone, regardless of their faith or where they are from, is welcome.
- The steps into the Golden Temple go down, which is done intentionally to create a sense of humility. Most holy places of worship have steps that go up.
- 35% of all visitors to the Golden Temple are non-Sikhs.
- The lake surrounding the temple is called Amrit Sarovar (translated as Pool of Nectar) which eventually gave Amritsar its name as the city grew around the temple during the 16th century. Sikhs bathe in the water believing in its sacred healing powers. Men and women bathe in separate areas of the water and women are hidden from view.
- Sikhs come to the temple to worship the Guru Grant Sahib which is the name of their holy book.
- In every gurdwara, Sikhs have a langar, which is place where anyone is welcome to share the food they have to offer without charge. In the Golden Temple, they can serve up to 200,000 people during special religious events, and all of the food is donated. People sit on the floor to eat, to symbolise humility and that everyone is equal. Volunteers help in the langar making and serving the food.

- **The Golden Temple attracts around 100,000 visitors every day. That's approximately 3 million visitors a month!**

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Questions:

- 1. In which Indian state will you find the Golden Temple?**
- 2. What is the name given to the place where people can eat food for free?**