

Continuing our commitment in spreading knowledge about ethnic audiences in the UK and more effective marketing to these lucrative communities, below is information about the Sikh festival of **Vaisakhi** – the most important date in the religious calendar for over a 1/3 of a million UK residents.



Sikhism is the fourth largest religion in the UK. At the last Census, there were 336,179 Sikhs in the UK. Also known as Baisakhi, it is celebrated on 14th April by the estimated 26million Sikhs worldwide – a quarter of whom actually live outside of India

So what exactly is Vaisakhi all about?

No other day or event in the life of a Sikh carries more significance than the day of Vaisakhi, for it was on this day in the year 1699 that the Sikh Order, known as the Khalsa, was initiated by the Sikh Leader, Guru Gobind Singh. That singular act gave Sikhs a collective identity and unity of purpose that remains intact to this day.



The occasion is widely celebrated as a traditional harvest festival in many northern states of India such as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, farmers celebrate Vaisakhi as a Thanksgiving Day. After taking an early bath in ponds or rivers, people visit temples or Gurdwaras to express gratitude to the Almighty for the bountiful harvest and pray for prosperity and good times in future.

Indoor Media Ltd
Riverside House
47 The Lynch
Uxbridge
Middlesex
UB8 2TQ

+44 (0) 20 7125 0007
www.indoormedia.co.uk

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A high point of Vaisakhi celebrations in villages is the performance of traditional folk dances, bhangra and gidda by men and women respectively. Vaisakhi is also celebrated in New York, Canada and the UK where big parades are held and local people come out to do Seva (religious work) such as giving out free food.



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The most famous of the Sikh stories revolves around Vaisakhi. Guru Gobind Singh stood outside a tent and called for five Sikhs to sacrifice themselves for the community. When the first volunteer stepped up, the guru took him into the tent, and reappeared alone, carrying a blood stained sword. This happened with the four other people who volunteered. Later, the guru revealed that he had been smearing the sword with the blood of a dead animal, and all the five people were safe. The brave five showed their devotion and dedication and so he declared them to be the first members of a new community of equals, the Khalsa.

Happy Vaisakhi from all at Indoor Media

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