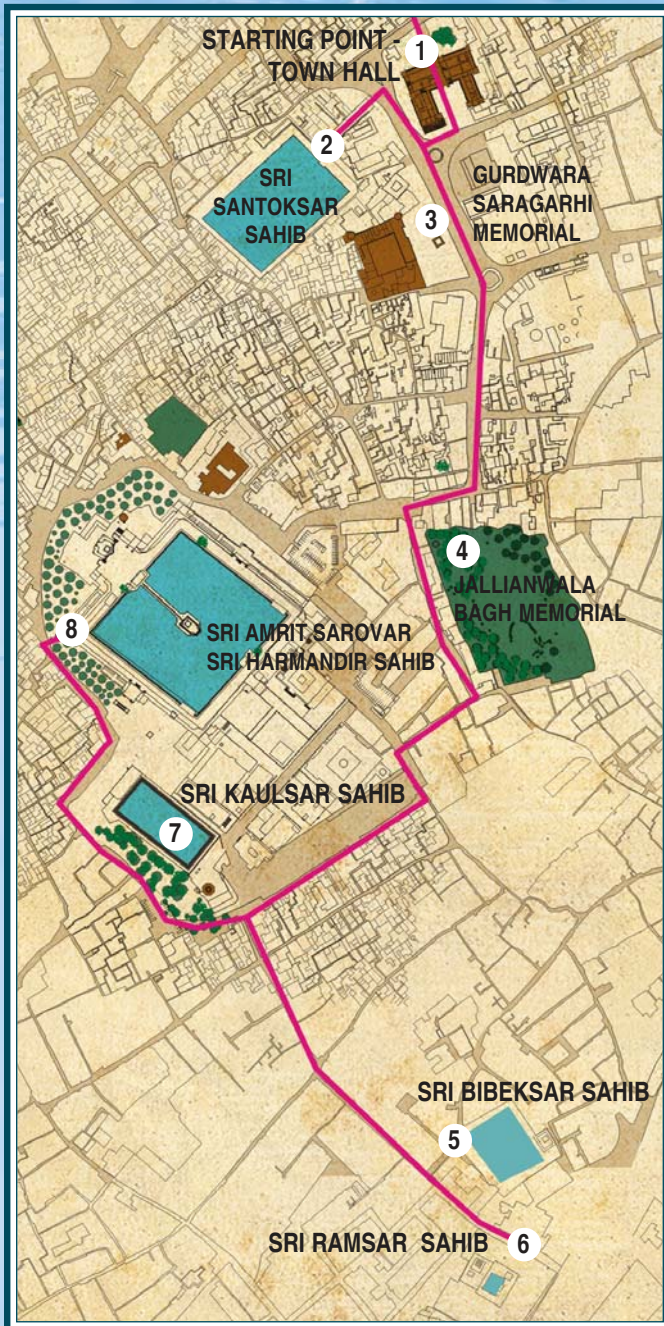


Panj Sarovar Yatra (Walk)



SAROVAR (a tank) especially at a sacred place or by a holy shrine used for sacramental ablutions and other religious ceremonies. Sanskrit synonyms are sar, sarvar, tarag and vapl. Another word is puskar or puskarini which usually means a pond full of lotus flowers. The lotus is a symbol of purity; water symbolizes fertility as well as purity. The primary association of sarovar is with the purificatory aspects of its water. In the Sikh sacred literature we find sarvar, sar, sarovar, and mansaused in the sense of a lake or pool. The sanctity of sarovar is often related to that of the place where it exists. It is a bathingplace where bathing has a religious significance. The word sarovar sums up a great deal of water symbolism documented in the religious history of India from the time of the Rgveda to that of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Panj Sarovar Yatra (Walk)



Sikhism is a monotheistic religion that follows the teachings of its ten Gurus and the holy book Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In its philosophy, emphasis is not only on an individual's personal dedication to following the path laid out in these teachings, but also in the congregation called sangat. Though it is important to read the scriptures on your own, it is equally important to regularly visit a gurudwara sahib. The word gurudwara means "gateway to the Guru". Gurudwaras Sahib are open to people of all religions, castes and races. Majority of the gurudwaras sahib are situated around or with a sarovar. Sarovars, are sacred tanks and it is a ritual for devotees to bathe in them.

This walk aims to introduce the story of five important sarovars to the visitors and to also give them an insight into the evolution of Sikhism. The walk begins at Sri Santokhsar Sahib Sarovar and moves along the road passing the Gurdwara Saragarhi and Jallianwala Bagh along the way onto the narrow streets to the second stop of the walk; Sri Bibeksar Sahib Sarovar. Then just across the street is the third pit stop of the walk; Sri Ramsar Sahib Sarovar. Then going on the sacred Sri Guru Granth Sahib Marg where pilgrims often walk bare-footed in honour of the fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji to reach the fourth stop on this walk the Sri Kaulsar Sahib Sarovar before making a small visit to Sri Baba Atal Sahib. Moving along, the walk leads us into the premises of the Sri Harmandir Sahib, passing the langar hall to Ramgarhia Bunga and then to the final and most sacred sarovar, Sri Amrit Sarovar Sahib.

Additional Important Information:

1. Visitors are required to remove their shoes and deposit them at the Joda Ghar (Shoe Bank).
2. Wash your hands and feet before entering the holy place.
3. Keep your head covered at all times. "Scarves to cover your head are available at the entrance to all the Gurudwaras".
4. Water is served as a part of volunteer service by devotees within the Holy premises.
5. Read carefully the instructions on photography displayed in different parts of the premises.
6. Enjoy a langar (meal) from the free kitchen. The Langar is run by volunteers doing selfless service & it is a community kitchen where volunteers prepare and serve food. The Sikh community contribute towards the Langar in form of cash, grains, pulses, service etc. resulting in strengthening the community feeling.

* Panj Sarovar Yatra (walk) Contribution: Rs 10/-



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Panj Sarovar Yatra
(Walk)

Amritsar



Sri Santoksar Sahib Sarovar

This is the first sarovar in Sikh history. Situated near the Town Hall of the walled city and approximately 700 metres from Sri Harmandir Sahib, this spot marks the place where the fourth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Ram Dasji, came from Sri Goindwal Sahib on the instruction of the third Guru, Sri Guru Amar Dasji to identify a spot for the excavation of the sarovar.

The legend has it that during the time that the sarovar was being dug, Sri Guru Ram Dasji found a Yogi, (saint) meditating at the spot. After some time the Yogi opened his eyes and told Sri Guru Ram Dasji that he had been meditating there for a long time, waiting for a Guru to give him salvation. He disclosed his name as Santakha and then breathed his last. The tank was then named as Santokhsar.

The fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjun Devji completed the unfinished work of the Sarovar - Santoksar. The work at this site was completed in 1643. In 1881, it was connected to a hansli (water channel) bringing the water of the River Ravi to the Amritsar sarovars.

Gurdwara Saragarhi Memorial

The Gurdwara Saragarhi Memorial is dedicated to the twenty-one soldiers of the 36 Sikhs Battalion who lost their lives bravely defending their posts on September 12, 1897. The soldiers, members of the Sikh regiment of British India, were sent to protect Fort Lockhart in Saragarhi, located in the North-West Frontier Province (now in Pakistan). While standing guard, they were unexpectedly ambushed by ten thousand Pathan tribesmen, in keeping with the tradition of the Sikh Army. The men fought to the death,

refusing to surrender. Although they were only twenty-one strong, the battle lasted over six hours and is considered by UNESCO as one of the eight most important demonstrations of collective bravery. To commemorate their bravery, three gurdwaras were erected — one at Saragarhi, the venue of the battle, the second at Ferozpur called the Saragarhi Memorial and the third here at Amritsar, called Gurdwara Saragarhi. The memorial at Amritsar was unveiled on February 14, 1902. All twenty-one soldiers were posthumously awarded the Order of Merit which was equivalent to Victoria Cross. Every year on the 12th of September, an event is organized in memory of their heroism and celebrating their bravery.



Jallianwala Bagh Memorial

Upon passing its narrow entrance, visitors are immediately drawn to the Memorial's eternal Flame of Liberty, a powerful reminder of India's struggle for independence and a beacon of hope for its future. Bullet marks from that infamous episode remain on the surrounding brick walls, seemingly misplaced in the expansive and lush garden they enclose. Yet, the aura that envelops Jallianwala Bagh is filled with remorse and faith, a belief that struggle inspires prosperity and success lies in overcoming life's obstacles.



It was on the fateful day of April 13, 1919, during the Sikh religious festival of Baisakhi, that the British Commandant, Brigadier Dyer ordered his troops to brutally massacre over a thousand unarmed Indian men, women and children. Although one of the most gruesome events in modern Indian history, what unfolded that day united Indians against the British Raj and set the stage for a concerted effort to achieve peace and freedom. The Martyr's Well, into which many jumped to evade gunfire, the adjacent museum filled with historical artefacts and a painting capturing an artist's impression of the massacre, vividly capture the emotions and intimate details of the tragedy that transpired. The Jallianwala Bagh Memorial is a must-see for visitors, and is located just 1 kilometre from the Golden Temple in downtown Amritsar.

Sri Bibeksar Sahib Sarovar



The making of this sarovar is associated with the sixth Sikh Guru, Sri Hargobind Sahibji. He is credited with introducing martial arts and weapons training to Sikhs. Following his father's martyrdom, he created a standing military force for the defense of the masses. He carried two swords "Miri" and "Piri". Miri, signified "Temporal Power" and Piri" signified "Spiritual Power", the first to smite the oppressor and the other to protect the innocent.

This sarovar was dug and built under his guidance. He used this spot to organize his followers on military lines following skirmishes with the Mughal Forces and also to provide them religious and spiritual guidance. As the Guru used his wisdom (bibek) to answer the questions of his followers, the sarovar came to be known as Sri Bibeksar Sarovar. Sri Guru Hargobind Sahibji laid the foundation of the holy tank and the present day gurdwara was built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1628.

It is believed that anyone who bathed in the pool would receive the benefits of rational thinking (Bibek).

The two ancient villages of Chatiwind and Sultanwind border the gurdwara.

Sri Ramsar Sahib Sarovar



Though it is the smallest of the five samovars, this site marks the exact location of the formal beginning of the Sikh scripture making it a site of special significance for all Sikhs. Located near the Chhatwind Gate on the South Western side of the walled city of Amritsar, it is a small marble-lined hall topped by a gilded fluted lotus dome. The gurudwara was built in 1855 but the site has a much older history. Sri Guru Arjun Devji, the fifth Sikh Guru who was looking for a quiet spot away from the growing city of Amritsar. He chose this site as the spot where the Sri Guru Granth Sahib would take form. In 1602 to make the surroundings more agreeable, he had a small tank dug. Sri Guru Arjun Devji named it 'Ramsar' after his father Sri Guru Ram Dasji. Here, the Guru Sahib set about collecting the hymns of the first four Gurus, Sri Guru Nanak Devji, Sri Guru Angad Devji, Sri Guru Amar Dasji and Sri Guru Ram Dasji. In addition to the teachings of the earlier Gurus, Sri Guru Arjun Devji added his own compositions, as well as selections from the writings of several Hindu Saints and Muslim Pirs that shared the principles of Sikhism. It is believed that the Sukhmani Sahib (the "Psalm of Peace") was composed here by Sri Guru Arjan Devji. Once he finished the compilation of the holy book in 1604, he carried it on his head to Sri Harmandir Sahib and sat with the rest of the congregation during its installation.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Marg: The road connecting Sri Ramsar Sahib Sarovar to Sri Harmandir Sahib was renamed the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Marg on 1st September, 2004 marking the 400th anniversary of the installation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib at the Golden Temple. Pilgrims often walk barefooted from Sri Ramsar Sahib Sarovar to Sri Amrit Sarovar in an effort to honour Sri Guru Arjan Devji's journey.

Sri Kaulsar Sahib Sarovar



This is the sarovar next to the Gurdwara Mata Kaulan near the main Darbar Sahib at Harmandir Sahib. It is named after a holy lady who was raised as a Muslim called Bibi Kaulan, the adopted (possibly Hindu) daughter of the Qazi of Lahore. She was a highly spiritual woman who was above religious divides and took refuge with the sixth master Sri Guru Hargobind Sahibji at Amritsar (1606-1645). The samadh of the lady, who is called Mata Kaulan lies at the western end of the Sri Kaulsar Gurdwara.

The significance of Gurdwara Mata Kaulan and Sri Kaulsar could be adjudged from the fact that Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Sikh guru, had directed the devotees to take a dip in the Sarovar Kaulsar before the Golden Temple sarovar.

Gurudwara Sri Baba Atal Sahib

Close to the Golden Temple, this is an octagonal tower over 45 m high. It commemorates the death of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahibji's nine year old son Sri Baba Atal Sahibji.

The story of Sri Baba Atal sahibji is recorded in Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi. Baba Atalraiji and his friend Mohan played together and one day his friend Mohan did not come. Baba Atalraiji went to inquire and found his companion's relatives weeping as Mohan had died due to a snake bite. Baba Atal touched the body of his friend with a stick and said, "Why do you sleep so soundly" ...adding "it is not for time to sleep". On the touch of the stick Mohan sat up.

His father Sri Guru Hargobind Sahibji however was very annoyed and said it that doing miracles was a form of violence, as it went against the Will of the Lord. Atal took the reprimand to heart and paid his respects at the sacred pool and then came and lay down with the stick under his head and passed away. It was a life for life.

The cornerstone of the tower was built in his memory and was



laid in 1770 and the first three storeys completed by 1784. Maharaja Ranjit Singh added the upper floors in 1820s. The Nine storeys represent the nine years of Baba Atalraiji.

There are beautiful murals on the walls and ceilings of the second and third floors. The doors on the ground floor, where the Sri Guru Granth Sahibji is seated, are adorned with impressive designs on silver and brass sheets.

Sri Amrit Sarovar

The excavation for the construction of the Sri Amrit Sarovar - Sri Harmandir Sahib began on 6th November 1573 and was completed in 1577. The original pond was turned into a masonry structure in 1584. The foundation of Amritsar was laid by Sri Guru Ram Dasji on the land purchased during the time of the third Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Amar Dasji.

The tank is 500 feet in length, 490 feet in width and 17 feet deep. It originally was filled only with rainwater and would dry up when rainfall was inadequate. During the British regime, in 1866, the hansali was connected with the Upper Bari Doab Canal and since then the water supply has been taken from there.

It is a practice to drain and clean sarovars periodically. The Punjabi term used for draining of the water and the cleaning of the sarovar is known as the kar seva. The last kar seva at Sri Harmandir Sahib was undertaken in 2004. A new filtration system too has been installed. Fish of different species are present in the sarovar to keep the water clean as they consume algae and other micro-organisms.

Each morning the parkirama, the pathway around the sarovar is washed with milk, following which the Sri Guru Granth Sahib is brought from Sri Akal Takht Sahib in a procession. Hari ki paudi is the most sacred point of the sarovar, which Sri Guru Arjan Dev himself consecrated. Here, marble steps descend into the sarovar.

At the eastern end of the sarovar are two brick watch towers called the Ramgarhia Bunga. This structure was built by the Sikh warrior and Ramgarhia misl Chief Jassa Singh Ramgarhia in 1794. It was constructed to serve the dual purpose of housing pilgrims and fortifying the area to protect the holy complex from outside invasion. The towers are 46 metres high.

The present day design of Sri Harmandir Sahib has been in place since 1764. The greater part of the shrine's decoration was added in the early 19th century by the historic contribution of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who got the shrine gold-gilded. This distinguished feature has made Sri Harmandir Sahib known throughout the world as the (Golden Temple) Sri Harmandir Sahib.



Palki Sahib

Palki Sahib is where the holy book of the Sikhs, the Sri Guru Granth Sahibji resides when carried during ceremonial processions. Since the Holy book is regarded as the 'living guru' by the Sikhs, The Sri Guru Granth Sahibji is placed on the Manji Sahib - a raised platform covered by the Palki - a canopy, to show its importance. The Sri Guru Granth Sahibji is covered by a piece of beautiful cloth material called a Rumalla Sahib.



These "Palkis" are largely manufactured within the walled city of Sri Amritsar Sahib and this street is famous for the same and one would find a large collection of these "Palkis" in its various forms.

Ik Onkar

The first word of the holy Guru Granth Sahib Ji is "Ik Onkar" which means "God is one" and is found in Gurdwaras (Sikh Temples). It is related to the Sikh belief in the unity of God.



Guru Ka Langar (Community Kitchen)

The concept of langar or community kitchen was established by the third Guru, Sri Guru Amardas to encourage all Sikhs to eat together within the premises of their place of worship. The aim was to remove a prejudice that prohibited higher and lower castes from eating together. The Guru Ka Langar at the Golden Temple is open day and nights and feeds more than 50000 people every day.

Devotees from all over offer ration and donations to keep this langar going.



Khanda (Double Edge Sword)

The Khanda, is one of three important symbols of Sikhism. It is commonly called the Sikh coat of arms, or "Khalsa Crest". It consists of three items in one, each with a symbolic meaning: a double-edged sword called a Khanda in the centre, a Chakkar which is circular and two single-edged swords (kirpans), are crossed at the bottom and sit on either side of the Khanda and Chakkar. However, the name Khanda is derived from the central symbol, a special type of double-edged sword which confirms the Sikhs' belief in One God. The central double edged sword signifies truth, strength, freedom and justice. The circle or chakkar represents the eternal. The two swords of Miri and Piri represent political and spiritual sovereignty.



Nishaan Sahibs (Flags)

The twin Nishaan Sahibs fluttering before the Akal Takhat are linked by the shield and crossed swords. They symbolize *meeri-peeri*, the temporal and spiritual aspect of Sikhism. They also symbolise the militaristic phase of Sikhism which began with Sri Guru Hargobind's Sahibji accession in 1606.



Kar Seva at Sri Harmandir Sahib

Offering of selfless voluntary service for the upkeep and smooth functioning of the holy shrines in the Sikh religion without expecting any reward in return is called Kar Seva. This is one of the founding principles of the religion. Maintaining the purity of Sri Harmandir Sahib is a daunting and important task. In 1923, the first Kar Seva was performed to clean the Sarovar (holy tank) which was followed by another in 1973 and the latest in 2004. Lacs of devotees from all over the world participated in this offering their services voluntarily for cleaning of the sacred tank. On a daily basis too, devotees offer their services in the form of cleaning the premises of the holy shrines, offering water to pilgrims, performing tasks in the community kitchen, working in the "joda ghar" where the shoes of the pilgrims are stored etc.



Karhah Prasad

The Karhah Prasad is the traditional Prasad distributed to the congregation at all Gurudwaras. It is blessed food made of whole wheat, flour, sugar and clarified butter, Prayers are recited during its preparation.

Chaur Sahib

Chaur Sahib is normally found next to the Manji Sahib where the Sri Guru Granth Sahib is placed during the day within the Gurdwara's Darbar Sahib (Main Hall). The Chaur is used to fan the Granth as a sign of reverence and respect for the scriptures. These days, the chaur is usually constructed from yak hair mounted in a wooden or metal handle.

The Sevdar (volunteer) respectfully waves the Chaur Sahib above the Guru Sahib as a sign of respect and dedication.

