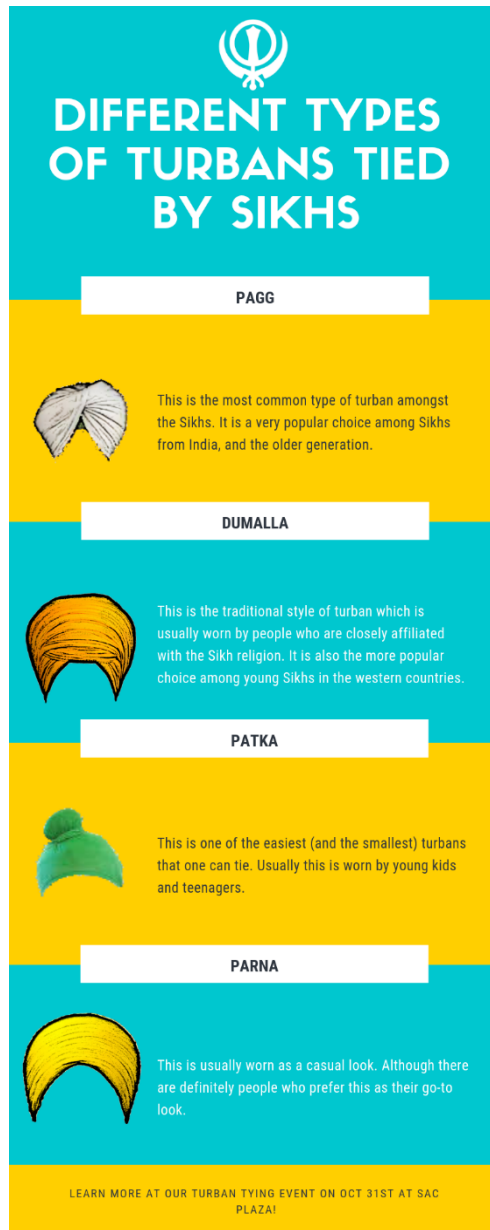


Experience Being a Sikh: Get a Turban Tied

The Stony Brook Sikh Student Association is hosting its 2nd Annual Turban Tying Event October 31st during Campus Lifetime at the SAC Plaza. Sikhs are a religious group originating from north India. The religion, Sikhi (or Sikhism as it is sometimes referred to as), was founded about 500 years ago by Guru Nanak Dev. Sikhs are often visibly distinguished by their turbans and full beards.



Sikhs say that their turban is a symbol of resistance against oppression. During the 17th century India, a turban used to be seen a symbol of royalty. It was quite literally a crown. The tenth guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, instructed his followers, many of whom were from lower castes, to start wearing a turban to push the idea of equality amongst all human beings. It was a way to empower the untouchables, as many people of lower caste are called in Indian culture.

"Sikhs tie a turban to this day as reminder to stand up against oppression and to fight for justice.", says the event coordinator Ramanjot Singh. "It also creates a lot of confusion though. People are afraid and fearful when they see a turban, especially after 9/11. It is associated with terrorism a lot of times."

Singh hopes that education is the answer. The Stony Brook Sikh Student Association started hosting a turban tying event last semester for the Stony Brook students and faculty. "We are hoping that by raising awareness in the community, we can make a difference. There are a lot of Sikhs on campus, but I'm not sure many people know who we are."

Singh explains that the during the event students, faculty, staff or anyone else can stop by and get a turban tied on themselves. "We just want to create a fun experience for everybody where they can also learn a bit about the religion and clear up any doubts they may have."

Singh says that they had about a 100 students and staff drop by last year, and they are hoping for a bigger turnout this year. "We really enjoy this event. It allows us to share about ourselves and of course, we get to learn from other people as well. So, we look forward to it every year."