\*Lohri – Winter Harvest Festival\*

When the mist, fog, and cold waves cast its spell on earth on the longest winter night, the sacred fire of Lohri is lit to reach the skies. Sesame seeds, jaggery and all things that provide warmth to the human body are offered to the fire and the loud and exuberant folk music and dance of the people fill the air with festive spirit.

Lohri celebration in Punjab takes places because it is believed that after Lohri, the days start to become longer and warmer.

Significance: It is the winter harvest festival. It is said that the Sun God is invoked through the Lohri songs seeking warmth. The lore also has it that the day is celebrated in remembrance of the benevolent Dulla Bhatti who saved Hindu girls from being abducted by the Mughals. One of the popular themes of Lohri songs includes the mention of two girls thus saved by Dulla Bhatti named Sundari & Mundri.

Key attraction: The main highlight of this important festivals of Punjab is the bonfire and the folk songs and danced that take place around the fire. People go around the fire and put all the produce of the winter harvest into the fire that includes gurh, gachak, sesame seeds and other dry fruits. The same is distributed among the people which further leads to a grand feast with a delectable table spread including traditional dishes such as Til Rice, Makki di roti and sarson da saag among others.

When: On the day of winter solstice or the last day of the month when winter solstice takes place.

When: 13th January 2020

\*Holi- Festival of Colours\*

March 10

Holi welcomes the spring season and celebrates the end of winter. The Holi festival always falls on Purnima, or the day of the full moon. It's a two-day holiday; the day of the March full moon is.

That’s when a bonfire is lit for a puja (or prayer). The bonfire is cleansing and meant to burn away all the bad and evil. The next day, directly after the full moon, is all about the festival of colors

It’s purely about having fun within your community by taking to the streets or attending private celebrations to throw colors at each other. The colors are each said to symbolize something different. Blue is for Krishna, a Hindu god portrayed with blue skin. Green is symbolic of rebirth and new beginnings. Red is the color of marriage and can symbolize matrimony or fertility. And yellow, the color of turmeric, is often used on auspicious occasions.

\*Vaisakhi/Baisakhi \*– \*Harvest \*Festival \*Of Punjab\*

April 14

Significance: Harvesting the first crop of the year. Marks the first day of the Sikh new year.

Key Attraction: On this famous Punjabi festival, each and every house are decorated, people are seen in traditional clothes, fairs are held in different parts of the state. People celebrate performing their popular dance form Bhangra. The sound of dhol and folk music fills the air. And the cherry on the pie is the authentic Punjabi food spread that is served. If you ever visit Punjab at this time of the year, you will find the place at its vibrant best.

When: It is celebrated during the middle of the month of April.

Baisakhi 2020: April 13th (May vary)

In Punjab it is celebrated as the Birth of the Khalsa brotherhood. It is celebrated at a large scale at Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib. In India, U.K., Canada, United States, and other Sikh populated areas, people come together for a public mela or parade. The main part of the mela is where a local Sikh Temple (Gurdwara) has a beautiful Sikh themed float on which the Guru Granth Sahib is located and every one offers their respect by bowing with much reverence and fervour. To mark the celebrations, Sikh devotees generally attend the Gurudwara before dawn with flowers and offerings in hands. Processions through towns are also common. Vaisakhi is the day on which the Khalsa was born and Sikhs were given a clear identity and a code of conduct to live by, led by the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who baptized the first Sikhs using sweet nectar called Amrit.

In downtown Toronto it is celebrated with floats and we walk to Nathan Philips Square. Food is distributed and stalls are put up.

\*Diwali\*- \*Festival of Lights\*

Oct

Every autumn, the observance sees millions of people attend firework displays, prayer services and festive events in celebration of the occasion.

While Diwali holds significance for a variety of reasons, one of the core themes of the festival, as symbolised by the prevalence lights, is the triumph of good over evil.

Millions of Hindus around the world celebrate Diwali with gift exchanges, fireworks and festive meals. The Diwali celebration in India takes place when the monsoon season ends and the weather is mild and pleasant. People try to pay off their old debts, make or buy new clothes and thoroughly clean their houses as part of the festival preparations. House exteriors are whitewashed and sometimes decorated with designs drawn in white rice flour and filled in with color. Buildings are traditionally illuminated with oil-burning bowls called dipa lights, or more recently, with strings of artificial lights. People spend time with their friends and family.

Lamps, fireworks and bonfires illuminate this holiday, as the word “Deepawali” means “a row or cluster of lights” or “rows of diyas (clay lamps)”.

The festival symbolizes the victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. During Diwali, or Deepawali, the goddess Lakshmi, who symbolizes wealth, happiness and prosperity, is also worshipped.

Diwali falls in either October or November each year, depending on the cycle of the moon.

It's observed on the 15th day of Kartik, the holiest month in the Hindu lunar calendar.

\*Bandi Chhor Divas\*

Oct 27

Guru Hargobind Ji is released from Gwalior Fort by Jahangir's order

Bandi Chhor Divas ("Day of Liberation") (ਬੰਦੀ ਛੋੜ ਦਿਵਸ) is a Sikh holiday which coincides with the day of Diwali. Sikhs historically celebrated Diwali along with Hindus, with Guru Amar Das explicitly listing it along with Vaisakhi as a festival for Sikhs.[1][2][3] In the late 20th century, Sikh religious leaders increasingly called Diwali as Bandi Chhor Divas, and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee adopted this name along with the Nanakshahi calendar in 2003.[4]

Unlike the Hindu festival of Diwali whose significance is based on the ancient mythological event and scriptures of Hinduism, Bandi Chhor Divas celebrates a Sikh historic event related to the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind. According to Sikh history, on this day, Guru Hargobind was released from prison by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir who freed 52 other Hindu kings with him.[5][6][7]

\*Gurupurab\* – \*Colorful Sikh Festival\*

Gurupurab, one of the most important festivals of Punjab, is a matter of spirituality for the Sikhs. The Sikh community celebrate the birth anniversaries of the highly revered Sikh Gurus. The festival begins be a religious procession with the chanting of holy hymns. People visit the Gurdwaras, offer prayers, seek blessings and enjoy the sweet and holy langar on this auspicious Punjabi festival.

Significance: It is a celebration of birth anniversary of Guru’s birth.

Key attraction: Religious procession, visiting Gurdwaras and relishing langar.

Where: Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh

Gurupurab :November (May Vary)

The festivities in the Sikh religion revolve around the anniversaries of the 10 Sikh Gurus. These Gurus were responsible for shaping the beliefs of the Sikhs . Their birthdays, known as Gurpurab, are occasions for celebration and prayer among the Sikhs.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born on Puranmashi of Kattak in 1469,

\*Martydrom Of the Chaar Sahibzade\*-\*Martyrdom of the Four\* \*Sons.\* Dec

The Martyrdom of both the elder and younger Sahibzadas is a remembrance of the four young princes (sons of Guru Gobind Singh, founder of Sikhism) who were martyred in late December. The two older sons, Sahibzade Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, were killed by Mughal soldiers during the battle of Chamkaur. [4]. Both the younger sons Sahibzade Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, were executed after being captured.[5] These Martyrs are observed 26 December and 21 December respectively

These days remember the martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh's (the tenth Sikh Guru) four sons. During Guru Gobind Singh's time as the Guru for the Sikh religion, the Emperor Aurangzeb ruled India. He also ruled during his father's time as the Guru for Sikhism.

The four Sahibzade Khalsa warriors princes were the sons of Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), the leader of the Sikhs in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent during the Mughal empire (1526–1857). In 1699, Gobind Singh (born Gobind Rai) created the Khalsa, an elite warrior band of initiated devout orthodox Sikhs to protect the innocent from religious persecution. Gobind Singh had three wives and four sons: Ajit, Jujhar, Zorawar, Fateh. All four of his sons were initiated into the Khalsa and all were executed by Mughal forces before the age of 19.

Sikhism honors the illustrious martyred sons of Guru Gobind Singh in the prayer of ardas for their valor and sacrifice as "Char Sahibzade," the four princes of the Khalsa warrior order.

Ajit Singh was martyred at the age of 18, on December 7, 1705 CE at Chamkaur, after he volunteered to leave the besieged fortress with five Singhs and face the enemy on the battlefield.

Jujhar Singh was martyred at the age of 14, on December 7, 1705 CE at Chamkaur where he earned the reputation of being likened to a crocodile for his fierceness in battle, when he volunteered to leave the besieged fortress with five of the last Singhs standing, and all achieved immortality on the battlefield.

Sahibzada Singh was martyred at the age of six, on Sirhind Fatehghar, December 12, 1705 CE, on the 13th day of the month of Poh, SV year 1762. Zorawar Singh and his younger brother Fateh Singh were captured with their grandmother Gujri, the mother of Guru Gobind Singh. The sahibzade were imprisoned with their grandmother and put to death by cruel Mughal rulers who attempted to suffocate them ​inside a brick enclosure.

Fateh was martyred at the age of six on Sirhind Fatehghar, December 12, 1705 CE, the 13th day of the month of Poh, SV year 1762. Fateh Singh and his brother survived being bricked up alive, but then the order was given for them to be beheaded. Their grandmother Mata Gujri died of shock in the prison tower.

Jan - lohri

March- Holi

April- vaisakhi/vaisakhi

Oct - Diwali And Bandi Chhor Divas

Nov - Gurupurab

Dec-Martydrom of the Chaar Sahibzade

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Nov - Gurupurab

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