

#UNITY IN DIVERSITY

World Religion Day

Celebrating World Religion Day involves participating in interfaith events, engaging in discussions about faith with an open mind, and learning about the beliefs and traditions of religions different from one's own.



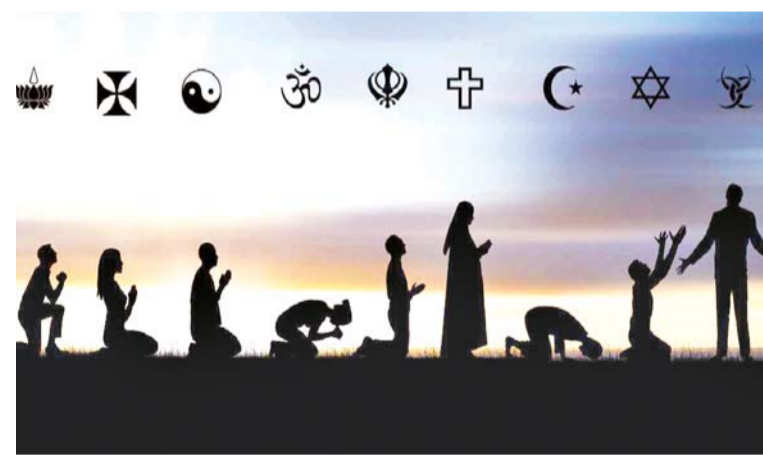
World Religion Day is a special time to bring people together. It is celebrated on every third Sunday in January. On this day, folks from different faiths gather to share and learn from each other. The goal? To spread peace, understanding, and unity among all religions.

This day got its start in 1950, after a group in 1947 aimed to promote global peace through understanding religion, and it has grown a lot since then.

Now, over 80 countries join in the celebrations. Whether through face-to-face meetings or virtual gatherings, the day brings to light how much we all have in common despite

our diverse beliefs. People mark World Religion Day in many ways. They attend events where leaders from different faiths speak, engage in discussions to learn about other religions, and take time to think about how we're all connected by our humanity, regardless of the faith we follow.

The idea is to encourage everyone to embrace diversity and foster a sense of community worldwide. So, World Religion Day is more than just a date on the calendar. It's a chance to celebrate our shared values and learn from the rich tapestry of world religions. It reminds us of the beauty in our differences and the strength we find in coming together.



History of World Religion Day

World Religion Day started with a powerful idea in 1947, promoting peace through understanding different faiths. This idea became more structured when the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States announced it in 1949.

The very first celebration took place in 1950. Originally called 'World Peace Through Religion Day', it was first observed in Portland, Maine.

Over the years, the day has gained momentum and now sees celebrations across the globe, including in Australia and Bolivia by 1951. The essence of this day is to recognize and appreciate the similarities and common spiritual goals among all religions.

Over 4,300 recognized religions exist worldwide, and they are celebrated in various forms such as temple gatherings, church services, and tribal events.

World Religion Day emphasizes finding common ground among these diverse

faiths, promoting unity rather than focusing on differences. It encourages people to explore and learn about different religions, understanding that most of the world's religious population follows one of the five major religions, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism.

This day allows us to reflect on what brings us together, fostering a more peaceful and cohesive global community. Celebrating World Religion Day involves participating in interfaith events, engaging in discussions about faith with an open mind, and learning about the beliefs and traditions of religions different from one's own. It's a day for education and sharing, not for conversion, aimed at broadening one's horizons and appreciating the rich tapestry of global religions. Participating in these activities can contribute to a world where diversity is celebrated, and unity and peace prevail.



For the grave bullet injury suffered in the chest, Hardeep Singh (then captain) was declared a Battle Casualty and awarded a Wound Medal. For other Cordon and Search Operations in the Kashmir Valley, Hardeep Singh was awarded a General Officer Commanding-in-Chief's (GOC-in-C's) Commendation Card. The grave bullet injury suffered by him in 1995, which missed his heart by a whisker and hit his spinal cord, affected his capacity in carrying out any further operations.

● Gaurav Dixit

Indian government, in one of the largest domestic deployments of its army since independence, sent 140,000 Army troops under Operation Rakshak-2 into violence-hit state of Punjab, with clear instructions to out the insurgents and prepare the ground for next year's assembly election. The dimension of terrorism was fast spreading in Punjab, and civic administration and law and order situation were badly disrupted, causing great suffering for the ordinary masses. Two consecutive years, 1990 and 1991, alone saw as many civilians killed by terrorists as in the preceding 12 years. 2 JAK RIF (Bodyguard), one of the illustrious battalions, was also inducted into the operation. One of its officers,



Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh (who later rose to the rank of Brigadier), was recently commissioned into the 2 JAK RIF, and was posted in his hometown Sangrur. Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh operated like a man possessed, and many successful operations were carried out against the terrorists in his area of responsibility. This proved pivotal in assembly elections being conducted in the state, and an elected government coming to power.

Earlier, Hardeep Singh cleared the Combined Defence Services competitive examination and attended the Indian Military Academy Dehradun, as part of the 89 Regular course on July 20, 1990. He was involved in many operations in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, before he was hit by a bullet in 1995, during an operation in Kashmir, bringing an end to his active deployment in the counter-insurgency operations.

A Gallant And A Bullet



#BRIGADIER HARDEEP SINGH

Operations in Kashmir

2 JAK RIF (Bodyguard) was inducted into the Kashmir Valley in April 1992, when the insurgency was at its peak, characterized by widespread killings and expulsions from the Valley, mainly of Kashmiri Pandits, all of which posed a formidable challenge to the security forces. It was in the theatre of Kashmir where Brigadier Hardeep Singh achieved his greatest accomplishment as a military official. 2 JAK RIF carried out more than 700 Cordon and Search Operations during its tenure. He was involved in all of these operations in various capacities, either in planning or in an execution role.

One of his major encounters with the terrorists was on July 15, 1993 in a village Kaitsan of District Baramulla, where a large group of militants were hiding. A Cordon and Search Operation was launched, and Hardeep Singh, as a young Second Lieutenant, personally led the operation. He quickly deployed his troops so as to cut off the escape route of the around twenty militants in the mountainous area. Troops led by him carried out search operation of complete rigour, where these terrorists were firing intensively at Indian troops. Unmindful of intense fire, Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh moved forward and personally killed five terrorists.



With the help of backup, the troops managed to kill all balance terrorists.

In another operation in July 1993, Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh eliminated three militants. A Hezbollah Regimental Commander had taken out the pin from the grenade and was about to lob it at Captain Hardeep Singh, when he was shot dead by him.

An operation was launched by the Indian Army on 06 October, 1993 that resulted in the killing of 23 terrorists,

including six Afghans and one Pakistani national, and the apprehension of one. Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh, officiating company commander of 'B' Company deployed at Dalau, saw about 15 armed persons and chased them with the personnel of his company headquarters. 05 terrorists were killed by Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh alone. For this gallant act, Second Lieutenant Hardeep Singh was awarded the Sena Medal for gallantry.



World Snow Day

World Snow Day is celebrated on the third Sunday in January each year and the inaugural celebration started in 2012. World Snow Day is celebrated to get more kids involved with snow sports. The purpose of World Snow Day is to encourage families to make lasting memories with their children, as well as to offer opportunities for kids to have experiences with winter sports like snowboarding and skiing. So much joy can be experienced when the winter weather comes! As long as you're dressed appropriately with the right gear, the cold weather doesn't need to get in the way.



Operation in Tral: Shaurya Chakra

In 1995, Captain Hardeep Singh was leading a patrol in the mountainous area of Tral Valley in Jammu and Kashmir. The patrol was climbing the heights north of village Naristan, when three terrorists fired from the higher reaches. Captain Hardeep quickly seized control of the situation and deployed his patrol to thwart the escape of the terrorists, even as bullets rained heavily on his patrol. He, along with his radio operator, crawled within 50 metres of the terrorists from a flank. The terrorists noticed his move and started firing on him. In the crossfire at almost an eye-ball distance, Captain Hardeep Singh was hit by a bullet in his chest. Undeterred by his grave injury, he killed two terrorists. For this valiant action, Captain Hardeep Singh was awarded the Shaurya Chakra.



For the grave bullet injury suffered in the chest, Hardeep Singh (then captain) was declared a Battle Casualty and awarded a Wound Medal. For other Cordon and Search Operations in the Kashmir Valley, Hardeep Singh was awarded a General Officer Commanding-in-Chief's (GOC-in-C's) Commendation Card. The grave bullet injury suffered by him in 1995, which missed his heart by a whisker and hit his spinal cord, affected his capacity in carrying out any further operations. Hence, he was transferred to the Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) as a Captain. He did well in AOC too, and rose to the rank of Brigadier, which is a flag rank. The Indian Army Doctrine, published in 2004, clearly explains

that the hallmark of a good soldier entails having a sense of responsibility, professional expertise and loyalty to the Nation and the Army. The ethos and moral code set forth principles and ideals which exhort every man in uniform to abide by his duty without regard to personal safety. Brigadier Hardeep Singh has the distinction of being awarded a Shaurya Chakra, a Sena Medal, a General Officer Commanding-in-Chief's Commendation Card and a Wound Medal in one tenure. He clearly had all the attributes of a good soldier, and is one of the model for generations to follow.

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Gaurav Dixit is the Project Leader for the Gallantry Awards Project at the USI of India. He has been associated with National Security Council Secretariat as a Researcher. He is co-editor of two books, *India-Uzbekistan Partnership in Regional Peace and Stability: Challenges and Prospects*, and *India's Emerging Challenges and Way Forward*, and contributes regularly to various defence and security magazines, online portals.



#STREET-FOOD

Food @ India's Railway Stations

Some of the best Indian foods that railway stations across the country have to offer!

Train journeys have long been intimately connected with food, taking us through India's diverse cultures and cuisines, even as we head towards our destination. If you're stocked up on *theplas* packed in foil, and are planning to make do with the *samosas* and little cups of tomato soup sold on-board, allow us to take you on a gastronomic journey. Here are some of the best Indian foods that railway stations across the country have to offer! Fair warning, reading this article will make you feel very hungry. Maybe, just enough to go ahead and book tickets for your next train journey!



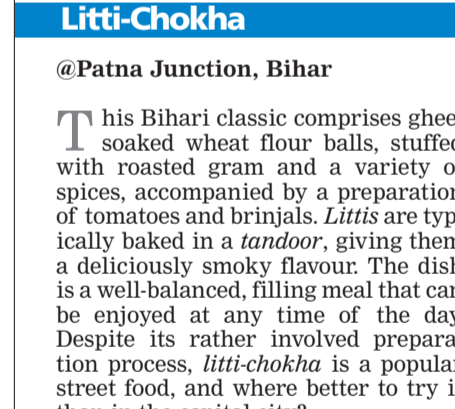
Pazham Pori

@Ernakulam Junction, Kerala
Pazham (remember that 'zh' is pronounced with a soft 'r' sound) means 'banana.' Pazham Pori is made from *Nendram Pazham*, a ripened plantain that is indigenous to Kerala. To make this dish, the banana is coated in flour batter and deep-fried until golden and crispy. Make sure to grab a few (dozen) helpings of this sweet snack for the road, if you're in the area.



Sandesh

@Howrah Junction, West Bengal
When your train halts at Howrah Junction, you can sample this sweet treat for yourself or, in Bengali tradition, gift it to your loved ones. With curd milk as the base, sandesh is garnished with powdered sugar, cardamom, almonds or tuffinutti.



Litti-Chokha

@Patna Junction, Bihar
This Bihar classic comprises ghee-soaked wheat flour balls, stuffed with roasted gram and a variety of spices, accompanied by a preparation of tomatoes and brinjals. Littis are typically baked in a *tandoor*, giving them a deliciously smoky flavour. The dish is a well-balanced, filling meal that can be enjoyed at any time of the day. Despite its rather involved preparation process, litti-chokha is a popular street food, and where better to try it than in the capital city?



@Guwahati Railway Station, Assam
What's a trip to Assam without sampling the state's finest treat? Lal Chah gets its name because of its typical reddish-brown hue. It is a simple Assam black tea, brewed with no milk, and flavoured with liberal helpings of sugar, spices and lemon juice. Lal Chah is easily available at local tea shops, at and near Guwahati Railway Station, a must-try beverage for weary passengers.

Aloo Chaat

@New Delhi Railway Station
Indian street food is synonymous with all manner of chaat. And you don't even have to step out of the railway station for a taste of authentic, Delhi-style chaat. Crispy-fried potatoes, mixed in with spices, sweet and sour chutneys, lemon juice, topped with sev and coriander is the complete flavour package that will make your journey all the more enjoyable.



Kadhi Kachori

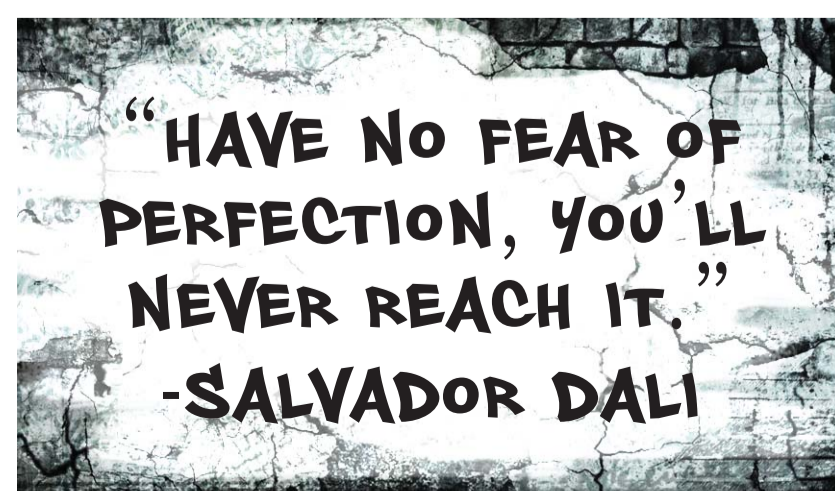
@Ajmer Junction, Rajasthan
This tangy Rajasthani dish is a staple in Ajmer, available at every street corner and of course, the railway station. The crispy *kachoris* are served with the city's distinct *kadhi*, richly flavoured with a range of spices, such as fennel seeds, coriander seeds and fenugreek leaves.

Kanda Poha

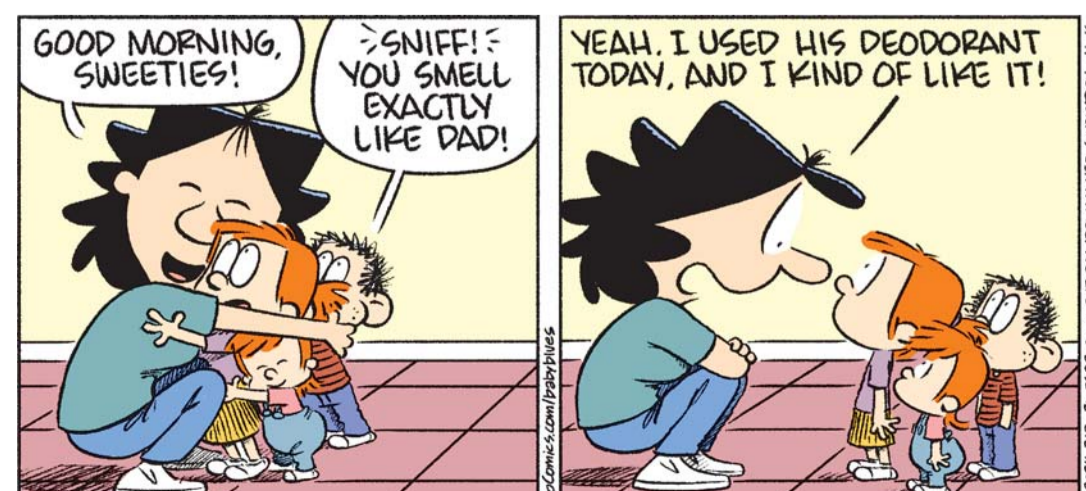
@Ratlam Junction, Madhya Pradesh

Ratlam is more than just 'that station from *Jab We Met*.' The *kanda poha* served here is a local favourite. Start your day off right with a hot cup of tea and this classic breakfast food that's light, delicious and topped with crunchy *sev* and pomegranate seeds.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman