Vaisakhi
A celebration for new beginnings.

For many Hindus, April 13th and 14th marks the celebration of Vaisakhi (va-SAH-kee) or Baisakhi. This festival is held almost every year on the same day and is known as the solar new year for some Hindu communities. This is not universal for all Hindus, as some consider Diwali, Ugadi, and Gudi Padwa as the start of the new year, leading to several different origins as to the significance of why Vaisakhi is celebrated.

The first day of Vaisakhi recognizes the traditional solar new year for many and is celebrated in diverse ways to mark the spring harvest and the sacredness of rivers in Hindu culture. Some believe that Vaisakhi originated several thousand years ago as Goddess Ganga came to Earth to help rid humanity of its sins and many Hindus will take pilgrimages to seek a blessing by bathing in the sacred Ganga river. The sacredness of rivers in Hindu communities as well as the honoring of the past year crops make Vaisakhi a long established ancient harvest festival to celebrate the agricultural year and to pray for an abundant crop for the next season. All throughout India, Vaisakhi has various regional names and significant celebrations to honor the rich traditions of this holiday.

Assam
Referred to as Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu, celebrations lasting seven days mark the beginning of the Assamese New Year, which usually takes place during the second week of April. Each day holds a particular significance in honoring the harvest crops and tends to be a unifying celebration for all the different communities in Assam regardless of background or religious affiliation. Assamese celebrate with feasts, music and dancing and hang brass, copper or silver pots on poles in front of their house.

Tamil Nadu
Puthandu, also known as Puthuvarusham or Tamil New Year, is the first day of the month on the Tamil calendar. Observations on this day include cleaning up homes and visits to the temple or family prayers with fruits, flowers and auspicious items. People wear new clothes and families get together and enjoy a celebratory meal.

Uttarakhand
The Bikhoti Festival rings in the new year and observers will take dips in the holy river and beat stones that represent demons with sticks to help usher out any negative energy while welcoming new blessings.

Kerala
Residents of Kerala celebrate Vishu by spending time with family and preparing auspicious prayer offerings such as golden flowers, rice, and money or silver to Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna. After prayer services, either at home or at the temple, people of all ages enjoy fireworks and sparklers, wear new clothes and sadhya (a special meal made with a mix of sour, sweet, salty and bitter food items) is served.

Bihar and Nepal
In the Mithal region of Bihar and Nepal, the new year is celebrated as Jurshita. It is traditional to use lotus leaves to serve sattu (a powdered meal derived from grains of red gram and other ingredients) to family members.

Vaisakhi & the Sikh Community
In addition to the many Hindus that celebrate Vaisakhi, the Sikh community hold Vaisakhi in high regard as it commemorates the establishment of the Khalsa (collective family of all initiated Sikhs) in 1699. Vaisakhi is considered the traditional Sikh new year and is celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab and other neighboring states.

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Vaisakhi

ART ACTIVITY
Share your coloring activities with us on Instagram! Just use the hashtag #vaisakhiwithhaf in your post for a chance to be featured on our Instagram account: @hinduamerican.

COLOR THE SCENE

FREE DRAW!
Use your imagination and show us how you celebrate Vaisakhi!

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