

# B&Q

## Embracing Cultural Diversity



**B&Q** Social Responsibility  
Environment | Diversity | Ethical | Community

# B&Q Social Responsibility

Environment | Diversity | Ethical | Community

## Contents

<u>Embracing Cultural Diversity</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Cultural Diversity Introduction</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Cultural Diversity and Language</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Cultural Diversity and Terminology</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Cultural Diversity and the World</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Cultural Diversity and Religion</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Holy Days and Festivals</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>Significant other dates</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Sources of Further Information and Advice</u>	<u>56</u>



# Embracing Cultural Diversity

When we asked our staff how B&Q can better value difference and welcome both employees and customers from minority groups, they told us that UNDERSTANDING is the key. What are the most important cultural or religious festivals? How are they celebrated? What impact does that have on their work or their shopping needs? How can we improve communication with people from different ethnic minority backgrounds?

We have put together this booklet to help you with these questions and more. Our own employees from different cultural groups have contributed enthusiastically and we have learnt an amazing amount.

You have a great opportunity to build your workforce to better reflect your local population and to appeal to a wider range of customers and their home improvement needs.

Please use this information to improve the reach of your business plan.



*Mike Cutt*

Mike Cutt  
Personnel Director



# Cultural Diversity Introduction

I would like to begin the introduction with a huge **Thank You** to everyone involved in producing this booklet. There are far too many people to name individually, but particular thanks go to the B&Q employees willing (and some needed a bit of persuasion) to share a brief glimpse of their culture with us, to the Cultural Diversity Steering Group members and to Mary-Anne Rankin from B&Q's diversity consultants who pieced it all together.

This booklet has been produced to help us understand the rich cultures that exist within the UK and to embrace the differences that we all bring to working at B&Q. This is a **brief introduction** to people's lifestyles, languages, religions and cultures, and some of the parts of the world that contribute to the multi-cultural Britain that exists today.

I hope you find the booklet informative and enlightening and that it assists you in fulfilling B&Q's value of Respect for People. I hope you get as much enjoyment from reading it as we did producing it.

Should it inspire you to want to know more, please refer to pages 56 to 60 for sources of further information.

Sue O'Neill  
Social Responsibility Manager Diversity



# Cultural Diversity and Language

- There are over 6,809 living languages in the world.
- 230 of these are European.

## Languages within B&Q

Language can be a key to meaningful communication – or it can be a barrier. In our multi-cultural society, it is important that we endeavour to overcome this barrier wherever possible.

In 2001 B&Q carried out a survey, which identified that more than 1,200 staff speak over 60 different languages, with many being multi-lingual. Languages spoken are as diverse as Afrikaans to Zulu and include Welsh and British Sign Language. This is a considerable resource and one that adds real value to employee and customer relations. Many staff indicated that they were willing to communicate with customers in another language and that they are happy to wear a badge to indicate this. This was a great opportunity to ensure B&Q stores are able to respond to the diversity of our customers and reflect the local communities in which we trade.

Here is our 'rough guide' to basic greetings in the languages most spoken by B&Q staff:

	Hello/ good day	Thank you	Goodbye/ come again
Gujarati	<i>Swagatam</i>	<i>Dhanyavad</i>	<i>Shubhakamna/ Avjo</i>
Punjabi	<i>Sat sri akal</i>	<i>Shukria</i>	<i>Sat sri akal</i>
Hindi	<i>Swagatam/ Namaste</i>	<i>Dhanyavad</i>	<i>Shubhakamna/ Namaste</i>
Urdu	<i>Salam</i>	<i>Shukria</i>	<i>Khuda hafiz</i>
Mandarin	<i>Ni hao</i>	<i>Xie xie</i>	<i>Zai jian</i>
French	<i>Bonjour</i>	<i>Merci</i>	<i>Au revoir/ a bientot</i>
German	<i>Guten tag</i>	<i>Danke</i>	<i>Aufwiedersehn</i>
Welsh	<i>Good morning – Bora da</i> <i>Good afternoon – Prynawn da</i> <i>Good evening – Noswaith da</i> (there is no 'good day' in Welsh).	<i>Diolch yn fawr</i>	<i>Hwyl fawr</i>

### Non-verbal communication

It is perhaps surprising that only about 20% of the information we receive is verbal – the remaining 80% is made up of facial expressions, gestures and body language. It is therefore important that we understand that just as spoken language differs from country to country, so does non-verbal communication. In some cultures, eye contact is positive and a sign of trust, in others it is considered offensive and challenging. Some cultures are very tactile whereas others find being touched an invasion of their space. In this booklet, we give a few examples of sensitivities to be aware of in different cultures and religions.

# Cultural Diversity and Terminology

The most useful advice we can give on describing members of ethnic minority communities or other groups is to ask the individual how they would like to be described. People are likely to identify themselves by way of their national or regional origin, or their religion.

For instance, the word 'Asian' encompasses all Asian countries and regions. Cultures vary so much within one continent that it is more appropriate to refer to someone as being from South East Asia, or the Far East, and even more preferable to describe them as being Malaysian or Hong Kong Chinese.

If it is necessary to use group terms, the descriptions 'minority ethnic people' or 'ethnic minority communities' are recommended. These terms encompass all those who see themselves to be distinct from the majority in terms of ethnic or cultural identity.

In the past, the term 'coloured' was used but this is offensive to some people and should therefore be avoided. Although the term 'black' was previously felt to be derogatory, this now has a more positive meaning. It is acceptable to describe people of Caribbean or African origin as 'black', and some people from the Indian sub-continent also accept this description. However, others do not and may prefer to be described by their country of origin.

Rather than grouping everyone from islands in the Caribbean together and calling them 'West Indians', it is more accurate to refer to a person as 'Barbadian', 'Jamaican' or as coming from Barbados or Jamaica. The term 'Afro-Caribbean' is widely used to describe someone of West Indian origin, although this does not refer to all people from the West Indies as some may be of white or Asian extraction.

The definitions 'half-caste' and 'mixed race' are no longer appropriate – instead a person may be referred to as being 'of mixed parentage' or 'multi-racial'. To use the term 'immigrants' to describe people of ethnic minority groups should be used with caution. Over 47% of minority ethnic people in the UK were born here and often prefer to use such terms as 'British Asian' or 'Black British'.

If you ask an ethnic minority person where they come from, they will probably reply 'Southampton' or 'Birmingham', in other words, where they live!



# Cultural Diversity and the World

In compiling this section, it quickly became clear that we would have to somehow limit the countries covered and in so doing, risk upsetting those from countries not included. For this we apologise and mean no disrespect or lack of interest. The countries covered reflect those from which the main ethnic minority groups in the UK originate. At the moment, the only statistics available are taken from the 1991 Census. The results of the 2001 Census will not be available until 2003.

## Population estimates by ethnic group and area of residence, 2000, Great Britain

Per cent distribution according to area of residence

	Black Caribbean	Black African	Other Black <sup>2</sup>	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Asian	Other <sup>3</sup>	All minority ethnic groups	White <sup>1</sup>
North East	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.2	1.6	98.4
North West and Merseyside	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	4.2	95.8
Yorkshire and The Humber	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.7	2.9	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	5.8	94.2
East Midlands	0.7	0.2	0.4	2.5	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	4.9	95.1
West Midlands	1.6	0.2	0.4	3.6	2.5	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.5	9.9	90.1
East of England	0.5	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	4.0	96.0
London	4.0	4.8	2.4	5.8	2.2	2.0	1.0	2.1	3.5	27.7	72.3
South East	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.6	3.5	96.5
South West	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.9	98.1
Wales	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	1.7	98.3
Scotland	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.5	98.5
<b>Total Great Britain</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>92.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes White-Mixed group of UK born, EC, Non-EC European, Commonwealth, USA and others.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Black-Mixed group.

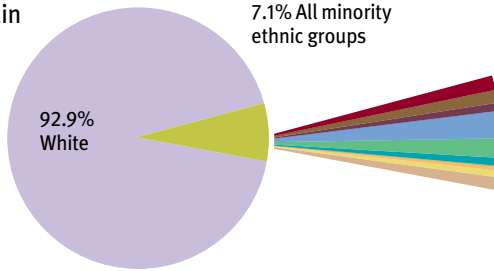
<sup>3</sup> Includes Other-Mixed group.

Source: Labour Force Survey (average of 2000 Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter quarters): residents of private households and selected communal establishments only.

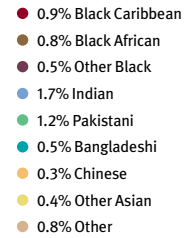
# Population estimates by ethnic group and area of residence, 2000, Great Britain

Per cent distribution according to area of residence

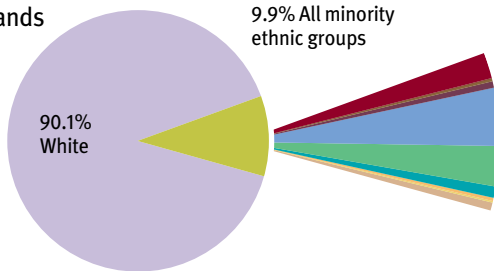
## Great Britain



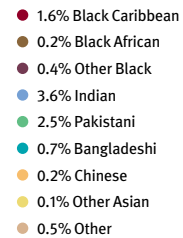
### Great Britain ethnic minorities



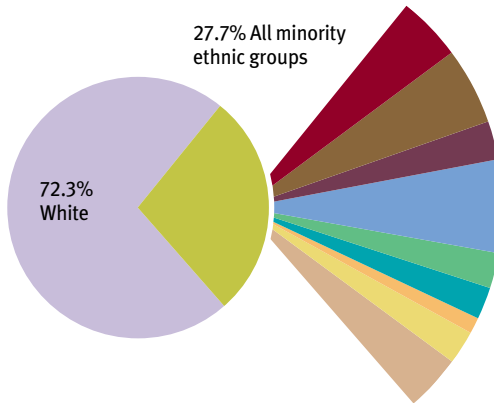
## West Midlands



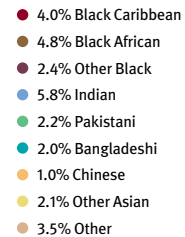
### West Midlands ethnic minorities



## London



### London ethnic minorities



Source: Labour Force Survey (average of 2000 Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter quarters): residents of private households and selected communal establishments only.

In addition to the short introduction to these overseas countries, we also include a section on the British Isles to assist staff to understand a little about the different cultures that make up the land in which we live and work.

Religion plays a major part in the development of different cultures and the major world religions are introduced in the Cultural Diversity and Religion section of this book.

# India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

India and Pakistan used to be one country, ruled by Britain, but independence from Britain was granted in 1947. Because Muslims and Hindus wished to have separate states, the country was divided into Pakistan, for Muslims, and India, for Hindus. Unfortunately, this period was marked by massive bloodshed, when violence broke out between the 15 million Muslims and Hindus migrating from one country to the other. It also created friction and distrust between India and Pakistan, which still continues today. Until Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971, it formed part of Pakistan.



## India

India is the world's largest democracy and with nearly one billion citizens, it is the second most populated country after China.

About three-quarters of all Indian people live in the countryside. India's people vary widely in terms of education and wealth and although there is now a primary school in every village, many children drop out of school to provide supplementary income for their families. As a result, there are major contrasts in society. For instance, although India has one of the largest pools of science graduates anywhere in the world, many people cannot read and write. Similarly, India is one of the world's major manufacturing countries, but many of its people live in extreme poverty and experience serious malnutrition. As a result of India's rich religious and cultural history, it contains some of Asia's most amazing architectural achievements, including thousands of ancient temples and the famous Taj Mahal.

B&Q purchase many products from India and has an Indian Buying Office in Jaipur to source products directly from India rather than through exporters. One of the first projects undertaken by this office helped improve working conditions for the workers in a factory which manufactures garden tools, resulting in improved productivity and reduced costs which have benefited all in the supply chain. The Indian Buying Office is supporting its local community by making donations to local projects and charities. In particular B&Q is working with Motivation, a British charity, to help set up a unit producing and supplying wheelchairs to meet a huge demand in the country.

This ensures that we have full visibility of the supply chain, and can affect and influence conditions in our factories to ensure that they are in line with B&Q's Code of Conduct on Ethical Trading.

## **Culture, religion and language**

It is impossible to speak of any one Indian culture, although there are deep cultural continuities that tie its people together. The people in India's intricate network of communities speak literally thousands of languages, practice all of the world's major religions, and participate in a complex social structure that incorporates the caste system, a rigid system of social hierarchy.

English is the major language of trade and politics, but there are approaching 20 official languages in all including Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali and Tamil. In addition to these, literally hundreds of dialects are spoken.

Religion is central to Indian culture, and its practice can be seen in virtually every aspect of life. Hinduism is the dominant faith of India, other prominent religions include Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and Buddhism. Religion has also been very influential in the music, dance and clothing of India. The unique sound of India's music is often created with an instrument called a sitar, an instrument that looks a little like a guitar, but with a very long neck. Indian people wear both European style clothes and traditional, such as the sari.

Cultural and religious pressures encourage large families, and the extended family is seen as an essential security for old age. In a typical household, three generations live together.

The cinema is enormously popular in India and the Indian film industry, known as 'Bollywood' and centred on Mumbai (previously known as Bombay), is one of the largest and most glamorous in the world.

## **Food**

Indian food is as varied as its terrain and its people, and religions have a major impact on regional food. For instance many Buddhists and Hindus are vegetarian and Hindus do not eat beef, as the cow is sacred. Food is flavoured with spices such as chilli, coriander, ginger and turmeric and milk-based desserts are popular. In the north, much more meat is eaten and the cuisine is similar to that of the Middle East and Central Asia. The emphasis is more on spices and less on chilli; grains and breads are more popular than rice. In the south, more rice is eaten, there is more vegetarian food and the curries get hotter! Another feature is that you do not use eating utensils; just scoop the food up with bread or your fingers. Only the right hand is used for eating, the left hand is deemed less clean and used for other purposes, never coming into contact with food.

## **Etiquette**

- **When Indian people greet one another, they place their hands together, bow slightly, and say 'Namaste' (pronounced 'Namastay') meaning 'I bow my head to you'.**
- **In India, pointing with a single finger is used only with inferiors. Instead, use your chin or your full hand.**
- **Indian people have a unique way of showing their agreement. They move their head quickly from side to side. Many Westerners often misread this gesture as signalling 'No'.**

# Pakistan

Pakistan's population of 128 million is one of the fastest growing in Asia. The two largest ethnic groups are the Punjabis (accounting for over 50% of the population), who dominate political and business life, and the Pashtuns, who work mainly as herders and farmers. In the south, most of the population are Mohajirs – Urdu-speaking immigrants from India at the time of independence.

Islamic militancy is on the increase, accompanied by growing discrimination against religious minorities. In 1995, a controversial blasphemy law was introduced, which carries a mandatory death sentence.

Home to the world's second highest peak, K2, Pakistan is among the world's premier mountain trekking destinations, with ample stretches of the mighty Himalayas. Cricket is Pakistan's greatest sporting obsession.

## **Culture, religion and language**

The extended family is a continuing feature and ties between its members are strong. Literacy rates in Pakistan are among the lowest in the world and the education system is biased towards educating males. Although some women hold prominent positions, relatively few are allowed out to work. The gap between rich and poor is considerable.

There are many ethnic cultures in Pakistan and also many languages and dialects although Punjabi is widely spoken. Other languages include Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, Baluchi and Brahui.

The Islamic faith predominates and has a strong influence over dress, requiring both men and women to dress modestly. Hinduism and Christianity are also followed.

## **Food**

Pakistani food is similar to that of northern India with a Middle Eastern influence. As in India, food is extremely varied and differs from region to region. Diet is closely linked to religion – for instance, Muslims will not eat pork products.

# Bangladesh

Bangladesh lies at the north of the Bay of Bengal and shares borders with India and Burma. Geographically, historically, and culturally, Bangladesh forms the larger and more heavily populated part of Bengal. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, despite the fact that more than 80% of the population is rural. Since its independence from Pakistan, Bangladesh has had a troubled history of political instability, although effective democracy was restored in 1991. As in India, there is considerable Muslim-Hindu tension.

The country of Bangladesh, which regularly suffers from cyclones and floods, is a strikingly lush and beautiful land with a rich history.

## Culture, religion and language

Modesty in dress is important in Bangladesh. Traditionally, married women wear a sari and unmarried women wear a shalwar kameez (a baggy shirt and trousers). Jewellery is worn as a sign of financial security. Islam is the state religion and the faith of 88% of the population, almost all of whom are Sunni Muslims. Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity are also practised. Languages spoken in Bangladesh are Bangla/Bengali and Urdu.

## Food

Bengali food is similar to that of the rest of the Indian subcontinent. A typical Bangladeshi meal consists of beef, mutton, chicken, fish or egg and vegetables cooked in a hot spicy sauce with mustard-oil, yellow watery lentils (dal) and plain rice. A lot of fish is also eaten because of the close proximity of the sea and rivers and sweet dishes, often milk-based, are very popular.

---

## China, Taiwan and Hong Kong

China's history goes back some 4,000 years. It is the world's most populated country comprising some 56 ethnic groups. Due to serious problems of over population, couples have been restricted to having only one child. The People's Republic of China was formed in 1949, by the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong. They began to turn China, a poor farming country, into a powerful industrial nation. However, during China's 'Cultural Revolution' against religion and capitalism, China's economy was held back. As a result of reform after Mao's death, China once again experienced rapid economic development but the Communist Party retained its strict control over the people.

There are substantial contrasts between the rich and poor, particularly in cities. During the Cultural Revolution, all teaching and authority was challenged, leaving a generation with little education and illiteracy is still widespread.

In 1997 Hong Kong was transferred from Britain to China under an agreement that gave the region considerable autonomy.

Taiwan is another region that separated from China. The Communist government rules the Chinese mainland, while the Republican government rules Taiwan.

The first B&Q store in mainland China opened in Shanghai in June 1999 since then five stores in other locations have opened. One of these is the largest B&Q in the world, with 'B&Q Lifestyle' – a large range of furniture and furnishings with full room sets to inspire



customers. People buying a new apartment in China often start off with a completely empty shell, with no partition walls, internal doors, plumbing or electric sockets. The B&Q decoration service is able to fit out and decorate the whole apartment. B&Q also has stores in Taiwan (which lies off the coast of mainland China). China is by far our largest source of products and B&Q has been buying from China ever since the business started. We have a Kingfisher owned company that deals with direct imports called Kingfisher Asia Ltd based in Hong Kong which sources products on behalf of B&Q.

### **Culture, religion and language**

The Chinese lunar calendar is the longest chronological record in history dating from 2637BC when the first cycle of the zodiac was introduced. One complete cycle takes 60 years and is made up of five cycles of 12 years each. Twelve animals were assigned to the 12 years, when, according to legend, the Lord Buddha summoned all the animals to come to him before he died. As a reward to those that came, he named a year after each one in the order that it arrived: the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar. It is believed that the animal ruling the year in which a person is born exercises a profound influence on their life.

Among the most spectacular festivities of Chinese new year are the dragon and lion dances. As many as 50 or more people support long paper dragons and lions while dancing in processions down city streets.

The Communists discouraged religious practices, which they considered anti-socialist, although the situation eased after 1977 the end of the Cultural Revolution, and under the Chinese constitution freedom of religion is guaranteed. The traditional religions of China were Confucianism (based on the ideas of Confucius, who taught that people should be polite, considerate and obey their elders), Taoism, Islam and Buddhism. People often practised and adhered to traditions of all three religions as well as incorporating a variety of local beliefs into their religious practice.

Languages spoken in China include Mandarin (particularly the Putonghua dialect), Cantonese, Wu, Hsiang, Min, Hakka and Kan.

### **Food**

Chinese cuisine can be divided into four regional types: Beijing/Mandarin and Shandong (with steamed bread and noodles as basics), Cantonese and Chaozhou (lightly cooked meats and vegetables), Shanghainese (the home of 'red cooking') and Sichuan (spicy, with lots of chilli).



*B&Q Shanghai store opening*



*Chinese ancestor festival*

## Etiquette

- **The Chinese will nod or bow slightly as an initial greeting.**
- **Use your whole hand rather than your index finger to point.**
- **Do not put your hands in your mouth, as it is considered vulgar. Consequently, when in public, avoid biting your nails, removing food from your teeth, and similar practices.**

## My experiences as a Chinese person living in the UK

*Ni hao! (Chinese for 'How are you?') My name is Lai-Har Shum and I work as a Business Analyst with the Cost Price Reduction Team at Head Office. I joined the Kingfisher Management Development Scheme (KMDS) in September 1999 and worked in West Thurrock B&Q Warehouse for six months before moving to the Commercial Department at Head Office in March 2001. Before joining B&Q, I worked briefly in Investment Banking and also studied Town Planning at the University of London. I am British-Born Chinese in that I was born in the UK (Eastbourne to be exact) but my parents are from Hong Kong and China and have been here for over 30 years. The vast majority of my relatives are still in Hong Kong and China, with a couple in France and Germany.*

*My first language is Cantonese, although I am probably more articulate in English, given that I speak English much of the time. I tend to use a mixture of English and Cantonese when speaking to my family and friends, but I've always made a conscious effort to speak Cantonese with my parents and other elders as a way of improving my language skills and keeping my Chinese identity alive. From the age of 7 to 21 I went to school every Sunday to learn to speak, read and write Cantonese. This was always hard work as it's a complicated language to grasp and you don't get to see/hear/use it on a daily basis apart from in the home. Cantonese is just one of many Chinese dialects, the most widely spoken is Mandarin, particularly in business.*



Lai-Har Shum

*In many ways, I feel quite privileged to be living part of two very different cultures. My immediate family is perhaps not the most traditional Chinese family by nature but I believe that my parents have adapted to a way of life in the UK, which has allowed my brothers and myself to develop quite unique identities. For example, being open to culture differences and looking at situations from a different perspective is almost second nature for us.*

*People often look at China and think of it as one country with one culture. In reality, in terms of sheer size, China is more akin with Europe and encompasses a similar amount of rich and striking cultural differences.*

*On a daily basis, apart from speaking the language, other 'Chinese' things that I do would mainly evolve around food!! Colourful, varied, healthy, ample and lively are just some of the words I'd use to describe mealtimes at home! We're constantly having friends who share our culture around for lunches and dinners, where discussing cooking ingredients and methods are not only pastimes, but a way of remembering what it's like being back in their childhood home.*

# Caribbean and the West Indies

The Caribbean was first discovered and explored by Christopher Columbus. Although the American continent including the Caribbean was initially inhabited by Native American peoples thousands of years ago, the first Europeans colonised the Caribbean in the 15th Century. The islands of the West Indies extend from near southern Florida to the coast of Venezuela, across the Caribbean Sea.

The larger islands include Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico and among the smaller islands are Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, Antigua, and the Virgin Islands. The islands are incredibly varied, ranging from lush and tropical to arid semi-desert.

The West Indies have close cultural and historical ties with Europe, Africa and Asia and the people of the West Indies are largely descendants of emigrants who arrived from other regions of the world. For those colonising the islands, land was abundant but labour was scarce. Eventually, slaves were imported from Africa, the Middle East and the Far East to provide labour, particularly to work on the sugar plantations. Most West Indian nations attained independence between the late 19th and the late 20th century.

Many people now work in the tourist industry whilst others may be involved with growing and exporting crops such as sugar cane, coffee, tobacco, bananas and other tropical fruits. However, some states, such as Haiti, suffer from severe unemployment.

## **Culture, religion and language**

Caribbean culture is a diverse and complex blend of many original cultures from all corners of the globe. The Caribbean people have struggled and strived to maintain ties with their ancestral links while creating something entirely new and different.

Christianity is practised in the West Indies and the Rastafarian movement, which originated in Jamaica in the 1930s, also has a following. Music is an important part of Rastafarian worship and it was the Rastafarian musician Bob Marley who popularised reggae music in the 60's and 70's.

Language too has been influenced by colonisation and French, Spanish and Dutch are spoken. Languages from around the world have also combined to form unique regional dialects known as Créoles or Patois.



Carnival is celebrated in a big way in the Caribbean. The best-known event in the UK is probably the Notting Hill Carnival.

### Food

Food differs from island to island and includes the use of tropical fruits and vegetables. The rich variety of cultures populating the islands has strongly influenced Caribbean food and British, Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese styles have all left their mark. Spicy Créole cuisine is a blend of all these European cooking traditions, combined with African, West Indian, and Native American.



*Notting Hill Carnival*

---

## Africa

The African continent is commonly divided along the lines of the Sahara desert, which cuts a huge swathe through the northern half of the continent. The countries north of the Sahara make up the region of North Africa and include countries such as Egypt and Algeria and in general, these nations are more developed than those countries to the south, partly due to the presence of the river Nile. Eastern Africa includes countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda. Among the nations of Central and West Africa are Angola, Ghana and Nigeria. The largest country in Southern Africa is South Africa and also includes Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia. As a whole, the African continent encompasses some 50 nations.



Within the space of four hundred years the Atlantic Slave Trade led to millions of people being forcibly taken from Africa. The majority went to the Americas to work as labourers on large agricultural plantations. The slave trade was gradually outlawed throughout the world and ended in the 1800s.

Communities range from rural cultures in which the foods, religions, dress, tribal roles, and daily life have remained unchanged for hundreds of years, to modern city environments. The African population remains predominantly rural, with only a third of the inhabitants living in towns.

## Culture and religion

Culturally, African people are perhaps the most diverse of any continent's inhabitants, with thousands of ethnic groups and languages. Apart from Arabic, the most widely spoken languages are Swahili and Hausa and also Yoruba and Igbo.

Christianity is Africa's most widespread religion, followed by Islam. In much of Africa, the family is linked to a larger society through ancestral groups and much of Africa's cultural activity centres on the family and the ethnic group.

## Food

As would be expected in such a large continent, the amount and type of available food differs greatly from country to country. Tunisian cooking, a blend of European, Oriental and desert dweller's culinary traditions, tends to be spicy hot. Sudanese cooking is extremely simple, with little or no use of spices and much of Nigerian food is grain-based. South Africa's culinary world reflects the country's diversity of cultures while in many homes traditional cuisine is a mix of elements from traditional African cooking, Malay, Indian, and Dutch.

---

# The British Isles

## England

If we go back far enough, it is likely that everyone who lives in Britain today has origins somewhere else. About 2,000 years ago the people living in England were a branch of the Celtic people who were early settlers from Europe. About 1,900 years ago armies from the Roman Empire conquered England and settled here and 1,500 years ago, Germanic peoples called Angles and Saxons settled in England (the name of the country comes from Angles-land). Other Germanic and Scandinavian people followed a few hundred years later. In 1066 England was conquered by the Norman (French) king, William the Conqueror, who brought with him many Frenchmen. He encouraged a community of French Jews to bring their capital and financial skills to Britain and Jews were the founders of our banking and financial services.

Africans were brought to Britain by force in the 17th and 18th centuries as slaves or servants; and thousands of people arrived at various times as refugees from France, Ireland, Russia, and other countries, escaping from persecution or famine in their own countries. Most people probably came because they thought they could make a better life for themselves here, before the First World War there were fewer restrictions and it was possible to travel without passports, visas or work permits. Flemish and French weavers, German mining engineers,



Dutch canal builders, printers, brewers and brickmakers brought new manufacturing skills and techniques. Seafarers transporting tea from China formed the first Chinese communities in Britain.

In the 1800s, to escape poverty and famine, the Irish helped to build much of the infrastructure of an industrial society in Britain, doing jobs that local people often did not want, in mines and docks, and building canals, roads, railways, and factories.

Following the Second World War the British government encouraged immigration to overcome labour shortages and to help rebuild Britain, although strict controls on immigration were introduced in the 1970s. Most immigrants to Britain today come from other parts of Europe, or are work permit holders – mainly from the USA, India, Australia, Japan and South Africa. Others are admitted as refugees from many countries.

The English people of today are therefore descended from all these different peoples and the English language includes words from the original languages of many different nationalities.

England has a rich history and culture and the country is a treasure trove of art, architecture and literature.



*London Guards*

## Ireland

In the 12th century Ireland was integrated into the United Kingdom and remained so until it was divided in 1920. Of the original 32 counties of Ireland, the 6 north-easterly counties became a British province officially known as Northern Ireland. The remaining 26 counties became independent as the Irish Free State (later Eire, and subsequently the Republic of Ireland).

There are deeply held differences of political outlook and allegiance between the majorities in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. These rest on many factors, including differences in the economic history and structure of the two parts of Ireland and differences in ethnic characteristics and in religious and cultural ethos.

## The Republic of Ireland

The Republic of Ireland comprises of about 83% of the island of Ireland. The population of Ireland is predominantly of Celtic origin. Irish liberation from British rule was achieved as the result of a struggle extending over several centuries and marked by numerous rebellions. In 1949, Eire became the Republic of Ireland, formally free of allegiance to the British crown. Ireland joined the European Community in 1973, and its currency is the Euro.

The Republic of Ireland is home to Europe's fastest growing economy and B&Q opened its first warehouse store in Liffey Valley Dublin in April 2002.

### **Culture, religion and language**

Ireland has a rich history and its evidence is found everywhere in the ruins of castles and ancient monuments, some of which are older even than the Pyramids. The earliest Irish art is found in carvings on monuments dating from 2500 – 2000 BC. In early historic times, Celtic art predominated and the Celtic patterns are still in use today. Due to Ireland's wealth of stunning landscapes, it has been a favourite film location for over 100 years. Ireland has produced many distinguished authors, writing in both Irish and English, and music is also important in Irish cultural life.

93% of the people of the Republic of Ireland are Roman Catholics and 4% are Protestants. About one quarter speak Irish, a Gaelic language.

## **Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland is situated in the north-eastern portion of Ireland. The month after Eire became the Republic of Ireland in 1949, the British Parliament confirmed the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

Since then, most of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland has identified with independent Ireland, and most of the Protestant majority with Britain. Catholics seeking integration with the Republic of Ireland are often referred to as republicans or nationalists, while Protestants who want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom are often called unionists or loyalists.

The Protestant community often refers to Northern Ireland as Ulster. Catholics tend to refer to the territory as 'the north of Ireland'. The Catholic-Protestant segregation extends to Northern Irish society in general. Urban residential neighbourhoods are highly segregated.

### **Culture, religion and language**

Northern Ireland's population is deeply divided along religious and political lines and this has strongly influenced the region's culture, settlement patterns, and politics. It is these differences of cultural and political identity that also serve to make Northern Ireland a richly varied and vibrant society. Northern Ireland is also famous for its musicians, artists and writers. Traditional and classical music have a strong following. Only a tiny percentage speaks Irish, a Gaelic language.

## **Scotland**

Scotland occupies the northern third of the island of Great Britain and includes over 700 islands. Scotland is well known for its mountainous and beautiful scenery and is noted for its lochs.

Scots divide themselves into Highlanders, who consider themselves of purer Celtic blood and retain a stronger feeling of the clan, and Lowlanders, who are largely of Teutonic blood.

A referendum was held in September 1997 in which more than 75% of the people of

Scotland voted to create their own parliament. Elections were held in May 1999, and the Scottish parliament convened in July 1999 for the first time since 1707.

### **Culture, religion and language**

Scotland has given rise to many famous people in the arts, literature, the sciences and as inventors, philosophers and architects. Scotland has a rich tradition of music, song and dance and perhaps the most famous icon of Scottish traditional culture is the bagpipe, which was probably introduced by the Romans, who acquired them in the Middle East. The Highland bagpipe achieved the height of its popularity during Queen Victoria's reign – she liked to be woken by one playing outside her window. Tartans date back to the Roman period, but were only associated with particular clans after the 17th century (originally the Scottish people were divided into clans, each one comprising of a group of an entire family with one head, or laird). The mainstay of traditional culture was the ceilidh (pronounced 'kayleigh'), a social gathering when a local bard would tell folk stories and legends and play songs. Ceilidhs are still held, though these days there are fewer stories and more dancing. Scotland has a long-standing record of good education.

The Church of Scotland, a Presbyterian denomination, is the official state church. Some 90,000 Scots (mainly inhabitants of the Highlands and island groups) speak the Scottish form of Gaelic.

## **Wales**

Wales has been described as one of the oldest countries in the world, with evidence of human habitation stretching back nearly 200,000 years. The country is mainly rural, with industrial areas in south Wales and the north east. The principal island of Wales is Anglesey (Môn in Welsh), affectionately known as the 'Mother of Wales'. The collapse of its traditional coal and steel industries led to large-scale unemployment in the 1970's and 80's.

Wales struggled for independence in the Middle Ages, but was ruled from England for the next 600 years. In 1997 the Welsh people narrowly voted for their own assembly. The Welsh assembly now decides how most domestic affairs are run.

### **Culture, religion and language**

The Eisteddfod (pronounced 'eyestedfod') is a thoroughly Welsh institution. The word means a gathering of bards, and traditionally the Eisteddfod was a contest involving poetry and music. The first was held in 1176, and the tradition still continues. The Welsh male voice choir is another Welsh institution, associated with the coal mining communities of south Wales. These choirs have their routes in Methodism. Other churches in Wales include Baptist and Presbyterian.

One thing that marks Wales out so distinctly from the rest of Britain is the survival of Welsh as a living language, and 1994 the Welsh Language Act was introduced, giving Welsh equal validity and making it illegal to discriminate against Welsh-speakers. All children have to take Welsh as a GCSE subject. Both English and Welsh are official languages. English is

spoken by most of the population and a small percentage speaks Welsh only. More than quarter of the population speaks both Welsh and English and there is a Welsh TV channel.

### **My experiences as a Welsh person**

*I'm Simon Phillips, General Manager at Swansea B&Q Warehouse. I actually worked in this store eight years ago when it was a Depot (the original name for B&Q Warehouse). I've been with B&Q for 15 years. My first job was in the Cardiff B&Q Supercentre, as a Customer Advisor (General Assistants we were called then). Over the past five years I have been involved with quite a few new B&Q stores including Cardiff, Bristol Longwell Green, Cricklewood and then back to Swansea to revamp this from an old Supercentre to a Warehouse.*



Simon Phillips

*I have a wife and two children and another on the way. Apart from 18 months in London I have always lived in Wales – originally I was from Llantrisant, just outside Cardiff.*

*Unfortunately I did not go to a Welsh-speaking school, but for my wife and her family, Welsh is their first language. We've decided that our children will be educated in totally Welsh-speaking schools and our oldest child, who is four, has already started.*

*I myself have been learning Welsh for the past year which means that I can speak with my son in Welsh as we are learning it at about the same pace!*



Swansea B&Q Warehouse store signage

*At the Swansea B&Q Warehouse all our signage is in Welsh and English and quite a large percentage of our staff speak Welsh, which is expected in this area of Wales.*

*Rugby, being our national sport, is very important to me. We follow rugby with a passion and cling on to our memories of being top class 30 years ago. When Wales play at an international level, the stores will just go dead. The 3 million people living in Wales are in mourning when we lose.*

*The Eisteddfod, the largest youth festival in Europe, starts on St David's Day. There are regional Eisteddfods throughout the whole country and then, during Whitsun week, we have the national festival. It is totally in Welsh. Every Welsh school will hope to put someone forward for the Eisteddfod, from as young as four. It is very competitive with people qualifying in the regional events for the national final. It is very much an honour to take part. In north and west Wales, where there are more Welsh speakers, the Eisteddfod is particularly strong.*



Welsh girl playing a harp

*St David's Day is a big day for the Welsh. A colleague from Bristol visited this store on St David's Day this year and she was very taken with the fact that so many children in the store were dressed in national costume. All in all, my Welsh culture is 100% important to me and I am looking forward to passing this onto my children.*

## The Isle of Man

The Isle of Man lies in the Irish Sea, between England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, less than 60 miles west of the Lancashire coastline. The island is a unique self-governing kingdom that belongs to neither the UK nor the European Union. It has its own parliament (called Tynwald), legal system, currency, language, traditions, culture, cuisine and postage stamps. It is also an international offshore financial centre.

People born here are known as 'Manx', classified as British (as opposed to English) and entitled to both Manx and British passports. Despite a steady influx of new residents from other countries, some locals refer to newcomers as 'comeovers' and England as 'across'.

### **Culture, religion and language**

The Three Legs of Man is the island's symbol of independence, the three legs meaning 'Whichever way you throw me I stand'. The Isle of Man has a rich heritage from the Celtic and Norse periods consisting of more than 200 carved crosses and standing stones on which the earliest written records of the Isle of Man are to be found. The carving usually included a simple representation of the Christian cross and the slabs were normally memorials to the dead.

As a holiday island it is best known for its relaxed pace of life, beautiful countryside, narrow-gauge railways and motor sports. Motorcycle road racing first came to the Isle of Man in 1907 and it enjoys its status as 'The Road Racing Capital of the World'. The TT (Tourist Trophy) motorcycle race is probably the most famous motor event on the island but there is also car and kart racing.

Every year, on 5th July, the island has its own National Day, called Tynwald Day, which is a bank holiday. The Tynwald Ceremony is the most visible display of the Isle of Man's independence.

## Channel Islands

A group of small rocky islands off the north west coast of France, and 90 miles south of England. The group consists of Jersey (the largest island) and Guernsey, two or three smaller islands – Alderney, Sark and Herm – and various tiny islets. The Channel Islands are not part of the UK although they are part of the British Isles. They are a collection of independent states originally annexed to France but since the Norman conquest in 1066, they have been a dependency of the British Crown and the Channel Islands still swear allegiance to the British Crown but have their own parliaments. Due to their unique legal status, the Channel Islands have become tax havens for wealthy Britons and an offshore centre for international banks and investment companies.

# Cultural Diversity and Religion

The UK has greater religious diversity than any other country of the European Union. Until the results of the 2001 Census are available in 2003, there are no precise statistics available for most communities – the last official Census dealing with religion was in 1851. However when the statistics are published, these will be available on *Inter.com>depts*.

This section of the Embracing Cultural Diversity booklet is designed to briefly introduce the main religions of the world. Of these, the majority people in the UK are Christians, followed, in group size, by Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, Buddhists, Jains, Bahá'ís, Rastafarians and Zoroastrians. In addition to these, there are other forms of religious expression not covered in this booklet such as those practised by Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pagans.

Some religions share beliefs and practices, but even when this is the case, there are also significant variations of tradition, organisation, ethnicity and language. The degree to which, and the method by which, people practice religion, is up to individual choice. Legally, the Human Rights Act 1998, states that:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion: this right includes freedom to change his belief and freedom... and to manifest his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance”.

However, regardless of the law, within B&Q, our Social Responsibility policy is to embrace cultural diversity as a way of enriching our workforce. By valuing and understanding the range of cultural differences within B&Q we reinforce B&Q's vision of being 'A Great Place to Work and Shop'.

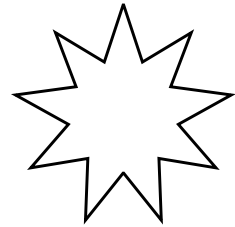


A Great Place to  
**Work...**  
**& Shop**

# Cultural Diversity and Religion

## Bahá'í

The nine-pointed star has special significance for Bahá'í as nine is the highest single-digit number and Bahá'ís consider that it represents completeness. The word Bahá'í means 'follower of Bahá'u'lláh'.



There are approximately:

- 6 million Bahá'ís worldwide
- 6,000 in the UK.

The Bahá'í faith is a new, and rapidly growing, religion, which began in Persia (now Iran) in the 1840's.

A merchant named Mirza Ali Mohammed (a descendent of the Prophet Mohammed) and known as the Báb, meaning 'Gate' or 'Door' to the truth', predicted the coming of a great prophet, Him Whom God shall make manifest. As a result of this, he was seen as a threat by Muslims and was executed in 1850.

In 1863, when Bahá'u'lláh, the Promised One, declared himself to be the predicted prophet having been inspired by the Báb. Bahá'ís saw him as the latest and most important in a line of prophets which include Moses, Krishna, the Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and the Báb.

Bahá'ís believe that all religions share the same God, and that the prophets of different religions all spoke the word of this one God.

Five of the main Bahá'í beliefs are:

- Everyone is equal, regardless of sex or race
- There should be a unity of religions
- There should be no extremes of poverty or wealth
- Everyone should be educated
- True religion should be in harmony with scientific knowledge.

For Bahá'ís the highest achievement in life is to do good for their fellow human beings.

Bahá'ís in Iran have suffered persecution from Muslim rulers and are still discriminated against in Iran. The headquarters of the faith are now in Haifa, in Israel, where the Báb is buried. Bahá'ís try to make a pilgrimage to Haifa at least once in their lives.

### Prayer

The Bahá'í religion is characterised by the total absence of public rituals or sacraments. However followers of the faith are expected to observe certain practices in their daily lives

and there are obligatory prayers which must be recited at prescribed times during the day.

Bahá'ís gather together with their local communities on the first day of each month, to celebrate the Feast of the Nineteenth Day (the Bahá'í calendar being made up of 19 months, each with 19 days). The worship includes prayers, readings from scripture, and fellowship, which generally reflects the local culture of the community's region.

When praying, Bahá'ís turn in the direction of Bahji, in Israel, where Bahá'u'lláh is buried. Fasting is undertaken from 2nd to 20th March, when no food or drink is taken between sunrise and sunset. This is a period of meditation, prayer and spiritual recuperation.

### **Bahá'í culture**

In Bahá'í society, social and economic development is a process driven by the human spirit rather than by material resources. Bahá'ís come from virtually every nationality, religious background, ethnic group and social class. There is no form of traditional dress requirement apart from practicing moderation and modesty.

### **Diet**

There are no dietary requirements except an abstinence from alcohol.

### **Countries where there are many Bahá'ís**

Iran                  India                  Africa                  South America

### **Languages spoken by Bahá'ís include**

Persian                  Arabic                  Hindi                  Urdu                  Farsi                  English

### **Etiquette**

- **Bahá'ís are discouraged from smoking, drinking alcohol and using other drugs because they believe that these deaden the mind.**

---

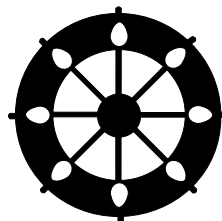
## **Buddhism**

The Wheel of Law and Truth is an eight-spoke wheel representing the Eightfold Path (the Middle Way in Buddha's own search for enlightenment) and one of the codes of life for a Buddhist.

There are approximately:

- 500 million Buddhists worldwide
- 130,000 in the UK.

A man called Siddhattha Gotama developed Buddhism in India, around 2,500 years ago. Although born a Hindu, following years of religious study and serious fasting, he saw that going to extremes were harmful and he thus adopted the Middle Way or Eightfold Path.



Following his enlightenment, he became known as 'the Buddha', or 'Enlightened One'. The Buddhist religion does not believe in one God, the beliefs being inherited from the Buddha's search for truth.

At the time of the Buddha's birth, many Hindus were searching for answers to questions, particularly about suffering, this being of particular significance to Hindus because of their belief in rebirth, meaning that they would suffer not just in one life, but in many. The Buddha determined to find new ways of solving this problem, his Hindu followers left the Hindu faith and became known as Buddhists. In his first sermon, the Buddha expressed the fundamental ideas on which his teaching is based.

These are the Four Noble Truths:

- All life involves suffering
- The cause of suffering is desire and attachment
- Desire and attachment can be overcome
- The way to overcome them is to follow the Eightfold Path.

The cessation of suffering is nirvana, the ultimate goal of all Buddhists. Nirvana means the state of spiritual perfection, freedom from the cycle of rebirth and thus freedom from suffering. Buddhists believe that nirvana can be reached by practicing awareness, loving kindness and living an ethical life.

In addition to the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha's teaching comprised the Three Universal Truths and the Eightfold Path, which together are known as the dharma. He also gave five ethical precepts that all Buddhists should practise in everyday life:

- To abstain from taking life or harming living things, and to practice kindness
- To abstain from taking things that have not been freely given, and to be generous
- To live life in a decent way, with stillness and simplicity
- To avoid lying or speaking unkindly, and to be truthful
- To abstain from alcohol and drugs and be mindful at all times.

As well as obeying the five precepts, meditation is considered an important part of achieving nirvana.

### **Prayer**

Buddhist places of worship vary from large temples, to shrines in normal rooms. The original shrines were called stupas or pagodas, depending upon the country in which they were built. Many Buddhists will have a small shrine in their home. Flowers, candles and incense are placed before a statue of Buddha and prayer phrases called mantras may be recited during puja (worship). Sometimes hundreds of prayers are written on a scroll inside a prayer wheel, which is then spun round releasing the mantras into the universe.

Tibetan Buddhists for centuries have flown prayer flags outside their homes and places of spiritual practice for the wind to carry the beneficent vibrations across the countryside.

## Buddhist culture

Buddhism is not bound to any culture, particular society, race or ethnic group. It moves very easily from one culture to another because the emphasis in Buddhism is on internal rather than external practice. Its emphasis is on the way a person develops his mind rather than the way he dresses, the kind of food he takes, the way he wears his hair and so forth.



*Buddhist Stupa, Nepal*

## Diet

Most Buddhists are vegetarians or working towards becoming vegetarians.

## Countries where there are many Buddhists

India

Sri Lanka

Europe

USA

Australia

## Largest Buddhist communities in the UK

All over the UK

## Etiquette

- **The compassionate desire to cause no harm to other beings has caused many Buddhists to become pacifists.**
- **Half-truths and gossip are against Buddhist culture.**

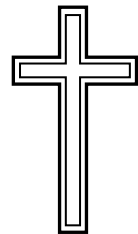
---

# Christianity

The Cross is of the utmost significance because of Christian's belief that the crucifixion of Jesus was the ultimate expression of God's love for mankind.

There are approximately:

- 1,000 million Christians worldwide
- 40 million in the UK.



2,000 years ago, according to Christian scriptures, God sent the Angel Gabriel to tell a young woman called Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up as a Jew, in Nazareth. When he was about 30 he was baptised by John the Baptist who recognised Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God. After his baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days following which he began to teach, heal and perform miracles.

He travelled with a group of disciples (learners), from whom he selected 12 apostles (messengers).

Initially Jesus had Jewish followers but Jews did not agree with all that Jesus did, such as forgiving sins which they believed only God could do. Soon non-Jews (gentiles) began to follow Jesus and his following became known as Christians. As well as associating with ordinary people of his nation, Jesus and his followers mixed with social and religious outcasts, in order to demonstrate the love of God for all types of people. In accordance with scriptures Jesus was condemned to death. On the day after the Last Supper, which Jesus celebrated with his disciples, he was crucified and buried. After 3 days he rose from his tomb and appeared to his disciples before ascending into Heaven to be reunited with God, his Father.

Christians believe that God created the universe. They acknowledge the manifestation of God through the Bible, which comprises the Old Testament (pre Jesus writings) and the New Testament. Christianity shares the Old Testament with Judaism. The guidelines for the ideal Christian morality are expressed in the Ten Commandments:

- 1 You shall have no other gods before me
- 2 You shall not make for yourselves an idol
- 3 You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
- 4 Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
- 5 Honour your father and your mother
- 6 You shall not murder
- 7 You shall not commit adultery
- 8 You shall not steal
- 9 You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour
- 10 You shall not covet.

Christianity is considered the world's largest religion. For historical and contemporary reasons there are various categories of Christian following, particularly Church of England, Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Free churches which include Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Christian Scientists and Unitarians.

*Celebration of Mass*



## **Prayer**

The main act of Christian worship takes place on a Sunday. Depending upon the form of Christianity practised this may take place in a church, or chapel, or in a non-religious building. Churches were traditionally built in the shape of a cross. Christian worship involves prayers, readings from the Bible and the singing of hymns or chants and the focal point is the altar. The Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is an important part of Christian worship. It is a re-enactment of the Last Supper.

## **Christian culture**

Christians come from virtually every nationality, ethnic group and social class. The culture varies depending upon the form of Christianity practised.

## **Diet**

In general, Christians have no dietary restrictions although some Christians abstain from certain foods during Lent, the period before Easter. There are some also who do not drink alcohol as a matter of principle.

## **Countries where there are many Christians**

Worldwide.

## **Languages spoken by Christians**

The language of the country of residence.

## **Etiquette**

- **Do not use the name of God or Jesus in a disrespectful way.**

---

# Hinduism

Om (Aum) is the most sacred symbol in Hinduism. It is a phonetic symbol representing Brahman, the Supreme Spirit.

There are approximately:

- 750 million Hindus worldwide
- 500,000 in the UK.

Hinduism is one of the world's oldest living faiths and its roots go far back into India's ancient past. Because of its ancient origins and visions of truth, the Hindu traditions embrace a very wide range of beliefs and practices and Hinduism may be viewed more a way of life than a religion.

Hindus do not call their religion 'Hinduism' but refer to it as Sanatan Dharma meaning 'eternal teaching' or 'eternal law'. Hindus believe in the need to uphold dharma – each person's sacred duties.



Hinduism is distinguished from the other major religions as there is no clear concept of a God who is the creator of the universe or an essentially moral being who must be obeyed. Instead it has many different Gods, and individuals worship the Gods or Goddesses of their choice. Rama, Krishna and Ganesha (with an elephant's head) are some of the best-known Gods.

The Hindu belief begins with the assumption that all living beings have a soul, which goes through an endless cycle of life, death and rebirth. Whether the individual soul is reborn as a human being, animal, insect or plant depends, upon the results of its actions (karma) in a previous life.

This wheel of life is seen as undesirable and Hindus hope eventually to be freed from it. Release from the cycle of rebirth and suffering is called moksha. People can hope to achieve moksha only by striving to replace their ignorance with wisdom.

### **Prayer**

Most Hindus pray twice a day and many may have a small shrine dedicated to the various Gods in their homes, where they will worship (puja). Fasts are observed on certain days in the week or the year to ensure the health and well-being of the family. The 'mandir' is the term used to describe the Hindu temple and each temple has a Brahmin (priest). Footwear is removed before entering the temple.



*Hindu God Ganesa*

### **Hindu culture**

Hindu society was traditionally divided into four castes: priests, rulers or warriors, farmers or businessmen and manual workers. A person is born into a caste and if Hinduism is strictly followed, a person cannot leave their caste or marry outside it. Some of the old laws have been abolished so that Hindus from all levels of society can hold positions of power.

Hindu names usually have three parts: a personal name, an additional name and the family name. When a woman marries, she generally takes her husband's family name. However because some Hindus don't use their family name, to show rejection of the caste system, the middle name becomes the last and therefore a husband and wife will have different surnames.

### **Diet**

Hindus are largely vegetarian, however a growing number eat meat, poultry or fish. However, beef is strictly forbidden, as the cow is sacred.

## My experiences as a Hindu living in the UK

*My name is Kavshika Patel (Kav) and I joined B&Q on the graduate scheme. I am currently the Hardware Team Leader at Wednesbury B&Q Warehouse and I'm loving it, even though I sometimes think I was born to shop, not to work in one! At work I give 100% all the time and I am very passionate about training and development. I believe that raising the awareness of cultural diversity will be a benefit to everyone, and will enable us all to deliver excellent customer service to both staff and the public. When not at work, I enjoy going out and have just taken up playing netball in an attempt to get fit!*

*Living as a Hindu in the UK is great as I get the best of both worlds. My family is quite traditional so I'm quite cultured and have visited India many times. I enjoy the sunshine and hot weather so it's great that I know people over there that I can visit. My family have been in this country for nearly 40 years and are very open and welcoming to the British way of life. I feel both proud and lucky to be a part of two very different cultures. I visit the local Shree Krishna temple.*

*I'm glad to say that I don't have many bad experiences; however recently, due to religious and political conflict around the world, and a lot of ignorance, I have experienced racist remarks. People tend to get confused about different religions and make assumptions about which religion and culture I practice. This has been quite upsetting but I've got better things to think about and the Diversity programme in B&Q allows me to do something about it.*



Kavshika Patel

### Countries where there are many Hindus

India                  Nepal                  East Africa

### Languages spoken by Hindus include

Hindi                  Gujarati                  Punjabi                  Urdu  
Bengali                  Tamil                  English

### Largest Hindu communities in the UK

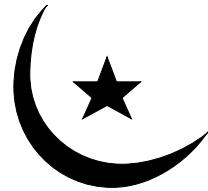
Greater London                  Birmingham                  Coventry                  Leicester

### Etiquette

- **Disrespectful reference to cows which Hindus consider sacred.**
- **Swearing, which is considered offensive and aggressive.**
- **Drinking and smoking are not usually accepted.**

# Islam

The crescent moon and star – the constantly regenerating moon reflects God’s everlasting purpose and control and the star represents divine authority and practice.



There are approximately:

- 1,000 million Muslims worldwide
- Up to 3 million in the UK.

Islam means obedience to the will of Allah (God) and followers of Islam are called Muslims (or Moslems). Islamic beliefs and practices are based on the Qur’an (Koran), the Islamic holy book, which is regarded as the message of Allah, as revealed to his Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad was asked to tell the people to stop worshipping idols and to focus on just one god, Allah. Muslims believe that Allah is unique and the creator and sustainer of the universe.

Muslims believe that everything in life should be at the service of Allah and they have six main beliefs:

- 1 Belief in Allah as the only God
- 2 Belief in angels
- 3 Belief in the holy books
- 4 Belief in the Prophets
- 5 Belief in the Day of Judgement
- 6 Belief that Allah has already decided what will happen.

According to Prophet Muhammad, every human being is born pure and is personally responsible for their acts of disobedience. Individuals are rewarded or punished by Allah according to their actions. Muslims do not worship Muhammad, but as Allah’s messenger, he is regarded with great respect.

The ‘five pillars of Islam’ help Muslims put their faith into action:

- 1 Shahadah – the declaration of faith
- 2 Salat – ritual prayer five times a day
- 3 Zakat – the duty to give a fixed percentage of wealth to charity
- 4 Sawm – fasting during Ramadan
- 5 Hajj – pilgrimage to Mecca.

Sectarian divisions within the Muslim community have arisen as a result of historical and political developments. The main Muslim sects are the Sunnis (90% of Muslims), the Shi’ites and the Kharijites.

## Prayer

The Islamic faith requires Muslims to pray 5 times a day, dawn, midday, late afternoon, after sunset and late evening, the exact times change throughout the year depending upon the

times of sunrise and sunset. These prayer periods are very important to Muslim people, as is the need for them to have somewhere quiet where they can pray. Communal Muslim worship takes place in a Mosque, and is led by an imam, or 'man of knowledge'. Just outside the entrance to the Mosque is a place where worshippers can remove and leave their shoes. Mosques are bare rooms, devoid of statues, as there is no image of Allah. A niche in one of the walls shows the direction the worshippers should face in order to face Mecca (the birthplace of the Prophet Mohammed) and the floor is often covered in carpets, or prayer mats. Congregational worship takes place at noon each Friday.

Muslims consider Arabic to be a sacred language and although the Qur'an has been translated into many languages, many believe that only in Arabic, does it truly convey the Word of God.

### **Muslim culture**

Islam prescribes that both men and women behave and dress modestly. Men are always to be covered from the navel to the knee and some wear a small head covering, called a Kufi. Many devout Muslim men have beards. When in public, women wear non-revealing clothes showing only the face and hands, whilst others may wear a headscarf called a hijab. Family life is very important to Muslims.

### **Diet**

According to Islam, meat must be prepared in a certain way for it to be halal (permitted). In general, all vegetables are permitted but all pork products are forbidden, as it is thought to be impure. Muslims may also be cautious about eating foods that could include lard. Alcohol and drugs are prohibited.

### **My experiences as a Muslim living in the UK**

*Hi, my name is Mohammed (Mo) Meah. I am the Trade Team Leader at Erdington and I am a Muslim. I am married with two children. I am one of six brothers and three sisters, and I was the only one of us to be born in England – the others were all born in Burma. The Asian community likes to be very involved with their families. For instance I live very close to my parents and see them every day. My hobbies are cars, sporting activities and socialising.*

*I try to do as much as possible to practice my religion, as it is very important to me. I am supposed to pray five times a day but in practice, this is very difficult. I pray before I go to work every morning but it is difficult during the day and I generally catch up with my prayer in the evenings. I try to go to the mosque, which is very close to my home, every day for at least 10 minutes, but I will try always to pray at the mosque every Friday. We have prayer rugs within our home and believe it is important to maintain a high level of hygiene in the home in order for it to be fit for prayer. It would be*



Mohammed Meah

*very nice to have a quiet room at work where I, and people from other religions, could pray.*

*I think B&Q is very good to work for as a Muslim – very flexible and down to earth in the way they treat their colleagues. The element of diversity comes through the management from a senior level, which allows your individuality to shine through and avenues of progression are open.*

*I myself have not experienced any racism, but I know others who have and I think this could be overcome with a greater awareness, understanding and respect of different religions and cultures.*

### **Countries where there are many Muslims**

Middle East                      North Africa                      Asia

### **Languages spoken by Muslims include**

Urdo	Bangla	Turkish	Punjabi
Gujerati	Pushto	Kashmiri	Arabic
Swahili	Somali	Hausa	English

### **Largest Muslim communities in the UK**

West Midlands	West Yorkshire	Lancashire
Greater London	Central Scotland	

### **Etiquette**

- **Prayer times are extremely important to Muslims and it is important that this need is accommodated.**
- **Some Muslims will be reluctant to shake hands with an unrelated person of the opposite sex.**
- **In observing the teaching of the Qur'an, many Muslims avoid sustained eye contact.**
- **Sitting with a foot (particularly the sole) pointing towards someone is considered discourteous as feet are seen as unclean.**
- **Use both hands, or the right hand to pass goods – never the left hand on its own.**
- **Muslims may be reluctant to take part in social gatherings celebrating religious holidays of other faiths or where alcohol is served.**

---

## **Jainism**

The Palm or raised hand, is a symbol of protection and blessing.

There are approximately:

- 3 million Jains worldwide
- 30,000 in the UK.



Jainism, which originated in India, is much older than Buddhism and can be truly considered as one of the most ancient and living religions of the world. Like Buddhism,

Jainism developed at a time when people were questioning the established norms of social conduct and religious ideology. Jains do not believe in a creator god who punishes or rewards. Instead, the emphasis is on human responsibility, with each individual soul being responsible for its own spiritual progress.

The main character in the history of Jainism is Mahavira, the Great Hero, a contemporary of the Buddha. Following Mahavira's enlightenment, he became known as 'the conqueror', or Jina and his followers were called Jains or 'followers of the conqueror'. The ultimate objective of Mahavira's teaching is how one can attain the total freedom from the cycle of birth, life, pain, misery, and death, and achieve the permanent blissful state of one's self. This is also known as liberation, nirvana, absolute freedom, or Moksha.

The fundamental belief of Jains is the avoidance of any physical or mental harm to anything living. Three cornerstones of Jainism are: Right Knowledge (Samyak Jnana), Right Belief (Samyak Darshan) and Right Conduct (Samyak Charitra). At the heart of Right Conduct for Jains lie the five great vows:

- Non-violence – not to cause harm to any living beings
- Truthfulness – to speak the harmless truth only
- Non-stealing – not to take anything not properly given
- Chastity – not to indulge in sensual pleasure (outside marriage)
- Non-possession/non-attachment – complete detachment from people, places, and material things.

Jains hold these vows at the centre of their lives. The monks and nuns follow these vows strictly and totally, while the common people try to follow the vows as far as their life styles will permit.

### **Prayer**

A Jain temple is called a Mandir. In areas of the country where there is no temple, Jains meet in homes and halls. Many Jains have a shrine within their home. Shoes are left outside the temple.

### **Jain society**

The Jain society takes no regard of nationality, religious background, ethnic group or social class. Jains are predominantly a business-based community both in, and outside of India.



*Jain worship Tirthankara*

### **Diet**

The Jain community is fundamentally vegetarian. Alcohol is forbidden.

## Countries where there are many Jains

India

## Languages spoken by Jains include

Hindi                      Gujarati                      Punjabi                      English

## Largest Jain communities in the UK

Greater London                      Leicester                      Coventry                      Luton  
Manchester                      Northampton                      Wellingborough

## Etiquette

- **The harming of any living thing, whether animal or plant, is absolutely against the Jain faith.**

---

# Judaism

The seven-branched candlestick, or Menorah, represents the sun, the moon, the planets and also the seven days of the week. Below the seven branches, is the Star of David.



There are approximately:

- 15 million Jews worldwide
- 300,000 in the UK.

Jewish history goes back to the Middle East, when Abraham, a Hebrew, promoted the idea of one God, rather than many. It is believed that through Abraham, God chose the Hebrews to be an example to the world. Jews believe that as descendants of Abraham, they have a unique relationship to God through a special covenant between God and Abraham.

They believe that in exchange for the good that God does for Jewish people, Jews will keep God's laws and bring holiness into all aspects of their lives. The fundamental Jewish belief is that of one God, as the creator of the universe.

The creation of the Jewish people is closely linked with the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. As a faith, Judaism is closely linked to the history of Jewish people, and has been strongly influenced by their cultural, political and social circumstances.

Judaism, which goes back some 4,000 years, is derived from the Jewish scriptures, written over a period of nearly 1,000 years by the rabbis (teachers). These scriptures are called the Old Testament by Christians, and the Tenakh, by Jews. The Torah written in Hebrew is one of these holy scriptures and is often used to describe all of Jewish teachings.

Today Jews are divided into Orthodox and non-Orthodox. Those who are ultra-Orthodox include Hasidic and Haredim Jews. Non-Orthodox includes Progressive, Liberal and Reform Jews.

## Prayer

The Sabbath (known as Shabbat) Jewish holy day is observed from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday when no work either outside or within the home is carried out. The synagogue is the place of worship and the positioning of the Ark shows the direction of Jerusalem, the direction of prayer. Services are led by the rabbi. In Orthodox synagogues, there are only male rabbis and the men and women sit separately. In Reform synagogues, men and women sit together and women take part in the service, including becoming rabbis.

## Jewish culture

Jewish people feel part of a worldwide community and a lot of Jewish religious life is based around the home and family activities. Orthodox Jewish men wear a skullcap or yarmulka. Many Jewish homes have a mezuzah, or small plaque, attached to the door frame, as a reminder of the constant presence of God and His commandments.

## Diet

In Orthodox homes, food must be prepared in a particular way in order that it is kosher (permissible). Fruit and vegetables are permitted, but only the meat of animals with a split hoof, that chew cud, may be eaten, and only fish with scales. Pork may not be eaten in any form. During preparation of kosher meat, all traces of blood must be removed. In Orthodox Jewish homes especially, food must be prepared in accordance to strict religious laws to make it kosher. Meat and milk products must never be eaten at the same time, or prepared with the same utensils. Homes may therefore have different areas of the kitchen where these foods are prepared and stored, requiring 2 sinks, 2 sets of utensils etc. Different Jewish communities have various views regarding these traditions.

## My experiences as a Jew living in the UK

*I'm Peter Wall, assistant manager at Handforth. I joined B&Q quite late, when I was 36 and I had been married about 10 years. I had had a retail business of my own since I was 21, but it got to the stage when I was working seven days a week. A relation offered me a job, which eased the situation, but unfortunately, I was made redundant – which was when I joined B&Q.*

*When I started B&Q had just 82 stores, had just bought Dodge City and the expansion was terrific. During the course of the years I was promoted to Store Manager and was in that position for several years. In '98, for personal reasons, I decided to take a step down the career ladder and I have not regretted this.*



*Peter Wall*

*I have three children, one daughter and twin sons who are all grown up now. My wife works as a freelance researcher and one of her clients is Manchester Airport, which benefits us as we get special*

travel deals. As we both work shifts, we try to replicate each other's times but this doesn't often happen, so sometimes we are like ships that pass in the night.

I live in Prestwich, where I was born and bred, and only moved away once. I am actually only second generation English, my grandparents being of Russian / Polish descent. I am an orthodox Jew, which I would class as middle of the road. My Jewish background and upbringing was more about maintaining tradition, rather than strict religious practice. As a youngster I went to the synagogue for the Jewish version of Sunday school (Chedar), learning Hebrew and preparing for my Barmitzvah at 13 (similar to confirmation in the Christian / Catholic Church). After that, I am afraid it became a more spasmodic thing – three times a year for the major religious festivals. Once I got married, I started going a bit more regularly. Working weekends means that I cannot go to synagogue on the Sabbath and for someone more dedicated this would need to be taken into consideration.

At home we have a mezuzah on our door frame. We do buy kosher meat, but don't keep a strictly kosher house as we bring take-away meals into the house, which we should not. We celebrate the major religious festivals when we go to the synagogue and get together with close family for prayer and festivities.

### **Countries where there are many Jews**

Israel            USA

### **Languages spoken by Jews include**

Hebrew            Yiddish            English

### **Largest Jewish communities in the UK**

Greater London	Manchester	Leeds	Glasgow	Birmingham
Bournemouth	Brighton	Liverpool	Southend	

### **Etiquette**

- **Jews do not eat pork or shellfish, nor food products taken from non-kosher animals.**
- **Jews are traditionally not allowed to wear clothes made of a mixture of wool and linen threads.**

---

## **Rastafarian**

The Lion of Judah represents Haile Selassie, the Conqueror. It represents the King of Kings as a lion is the king of all beasts. Selassie wore a Lion of Judah ring that was given to Bob Marley at the time of Selassie's death.

There are approximately:

- 300,000 Rastafarians worldwide
- 1,500 in the UK.



The Rastafarian religion originated in Jamaica. In the 1930's, a Jamaican called Marcus Garvey, predicted that there would be a black Messiah in Africa. When Ras Tafari became Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, in the 1930's, he was acknowledged as being this Messiah.

The Rastafarian name for God is Jah and they believe that he assumed a human form in Jesus and finally as Ras Tafari. Rastafarianism is not just a religion, but a way of life and Rastafarians speak out against poverty, oppression and inequality. Babylon is the Rastafarian term for the white political power structure that has been holding the black race down for centuries. The focus of Rastafarians is to try to remind black people of their heritage and to stand up against this oppression.

Rastafarians, or Rastas, generally reject the Bible, opting instead for a "black man's Bible", known as the Holy Piby. They also give special significance to the Ethiopian Holy Book, the Kebra Negast.

The defining colours of the Rastafarian religion are red, gold, and green. These colours were taken from the Garvey movement. Red symbolizes the blood that martyrs have shed in the history of the Rastas, yellow represents the wealth of the homeland and green represents the beauty and vegetation of Ethiopia, the Promised Land. Sometimes black is used to represent the colour of Africans.

### **Prayer**

Rastafarian worship is called Nyabingi. Music is an important part of worship and the Nyabingi drum is used to produce the rhythm of reggae. Traditionally Rastas see cannabis as a holy herb and believe that it should be smoked as part of their worship, which currently conflicts with the law.

### **Rastafarian culture**

Rastas stimulate the spirit of the lion in the way that they wear their hair and in the way that they walk. The dreads on a Rasta's head symbolise the Rasta roots, contrasting the straight, blonde lock of the white man. The way the Rastas' hair grows has come to represent the symbol of the Lion of Judah. Further, dreads have come to depict rebellion of the system and the 'proper' way to wear hair. Sometimes a woolly hat called a Tam or Crown is worn. Women wear clothes that cover their bodies.

### **Diet**

True Rastas eat only I-tal food. This is unique food because it never touches chemicals and is completely natural. The food is cooked, but served in the rawest form possible, without salts, preservatives, or condiments. Devoted Rastafarians, therefore, are completely vegetarian.

### **Countries where there are many Rastafarians**

Jamaica

## Languages spoken by Rastafarians include

Creole          Patois          English

### Etiquette

- Alcohol, milk, coffee, and soft drinks are viewed as unnatural.
- 

# Sikhism

Khanda – the double-edged sword in the middle signifies power, truth, justice and freedom. The circle, or chakkar, represents eternity, and the 2 swords remind Sikhs that they may need to defend their faith.



There are approximately:

- 23 million Sikhs worldwide
- 350,000 to 500,000 in the UK.

Sikhism was established about 500 years ago by Guru Nanak in the Punjab in India. Guru Nanak believed that God had spoken to him of a new message, neither Hindu nor Islamic, which led to his followers being known as Sikhs, meaning 'disciples'. The concept of the guru (teacher) is central to Sikh belief. The term refers to God (Sat Guru), Guru Nanak, and the nine following spiritual teachers who provided leadership, guidance to Sikh scriptures and the community.

The Sikh religion is based on the following beliefs:

- That there is only one God – the same for all religions
- That people of different races, religions or sex are all equal in the eyes of God
- That the true path to achieving salvation requires looking after their families, living and earning honestly and supporting the community.

Sikhs can be practising and non-practising. Khalsa (practising) Sikhs have been baptised and strongly observe the Sikh faith and have a daily pattern of prayer. Non-practising Sikhs share the same beliefs but have not been baptised and do not observe all religious practices.

Most of the world's Sikhs live in the Punjab and there is a strong empathy between Sikhism and the Punjab, which is recognised by Sikhs the world over.

### Prayer

Khalsa Sikhs are required to practice a daily prayer routine consisting of morning and evening prayer. The Sikh temple is called a gurdwara, meaning 'door to the Guru'. Gurdwaras range from magnificent structures to ordinary buildings. Footwear is removed before entering the gurdwara. Externally, a saffron-coloured flag displaying the Khanda symbol identifies the gurdwara. The most important item in the gurdwara is the Sikh holy

---

book, called the Adi Granth, or Guru Granth Sahib. There are no priests but most gurdwaras have a Granthi – a learned Sikh who is skilled in reading the scriptures. Any Sikh can lead the worship, which has no set form. Following worship, a meal is served at the gurdwara. Sikhs do not have a specific holy day in the week.



*Sikh Wedding*

### **Sikh culture**

All Sikh men take the religious name Singh (meaning lion) and all Sikh women have Kaur (meaning princess) as their second name. However, the name Singh does not necessarily mean that a person is a Sikh and in the UK, some Sikh wives attach the name Singh to their own.

Turbans are worn, mainly by Sikh men, to keep their long hair tidy. Cutting hair is seen as interfering with nature. The traditional dress of Sikh women consists of salwar (trousers) and kamiz (long over-shirt) with a chumi (chiffon scarf). White, rather than black, is worn during a period of mourning.

The extended family plays an important part in the Sikh community, and several generations may live together. Elders are regarded with great respect.

### **Diet**

Many Sikhs are vegetarian and any meat must be jhatka, where the animal is killed instantaneously, with one stroke. Sikhs will avoid eating meat prepared according to the rituals of other religions. Traditionally alcohol and other intoxicants are not allowed.

### **My experiences as a Sikh living in the UK**

*My full name is Jasvinder Kaur Sohal but I am generally known as 'Jas'. I am a non-practising Sikh and consider myself to be a British Asian. I am married with twin boys and part of a strong extended family. My parents-in-law are both Khalsa (practising) Sikhs and through them, I have learned a lot about my religion. I am a solicitor who specialises in Employment Law and joined B&Q in July 2001 to work as an Employment Legal Specialist.*

*My parents emigrated from India and were married in the UK where I was born. I was brought up in Hampshire amongst a predominantly white, English population. As a child I sometimes found it was difficult for my peers to*



*Jasvinder Kaur Sohal*

*understand my religious and cultural differences, such as keeping long, uncut hair, wearing trousers rather than skirts and knowing I would have an arranged marriage.*

*Nowadays, I find people in the UK from different cultural backgrounds are more accepting and genuinely interested in my religion and culture. I feel this is because there is a greater emphasis and exposure on diversity in the fields of education, the media and employment. I am proud to be a Sikh and enjoy the cultural differences it involves such as being able to speak another language (Punjabi), wearing the traditional dress, attending Sikh weddings and enjoying its music and dance, known as Bhangra.*

### **Countries where there are many Sikhs**

North-west India – the Punjab      Canada      USA

### **Languages spoken by Sikhs include**

Punjabi      English

### **Largest Sikh communities in the UK**

Birmingham    Bradford      Cardiff      Coventry      Glasgow  
Leeds      Leicester      Greater London (especially Southall)  
Slough      Wolverhampton

### **Etiquette**

- **It is important to accommodate a Sikh's need to observe essential prayer times. Older Sikh people may feel awkward speaking to, or meeting the eyes of members of the opposite sex.**
- **Sikhs born in India are likely to describe themselves as Indian, but those raised in Britain may describe themselves as British Asian.**
- **Because historically, Muslim leaders tried to convert Sikhs into Muslims, sensitivities may still exist between these two communities.**

---

## **Zoroastrian**

The Winged Figure, representing divine protection is the symbol of Ahura Mazda (Lord Wisdom). The left hand extends the ring of divinely bestowed sovereignty upon the Iranian emperors of old and the other hand is raised in a gesture of blessing.

There are approximately:

- 150,000 Zoroastrians worldwide
- 5,000 in the UK.



The name comes from the Greek form of ‘Zarathushtra’ – a philosopher-priest who founded the religion some 3,000 years ago in north-east Iran (Persia). Zoroastrians believe in one God, Ahura Mazda (Lord Wisdom), the all-powerful and eternally perfect creator, who is believed to have created the world in six stages: the sky, water, earth, plants, animals, and humans.

Ahura Mazda originally created Man perfect. He gave Man his freedom of choice, leading to good or evil thoughts, words and deeds. The word ‘Mazda’ means ‘Creator and Giver of Thought’. In Zoroastrianism guilt can be overcome by recognition of error and compensating for it through goodness. Zoroastrians are urged to live their lives according to good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

### **Prayer**

Places of worship are traditionally known as Fire Temples because a flame is constantly burning inside (fire is seen as a symbol of truth and treated with respect). Before entering the prayer hall, the hands and face (and now rarely feet) are washed – a ritual gesture of respect. During worship, led by a priest, worshippers may bow before the fire and some may lightly touch their forehead with the cold ash from the temple flame.

### **Zoroastrian culture**

Because of Zoroastrians belief that Ahura Mazda was the supreme and sole Creator, they have a strong ecological awareness and a deep sense of respect and responsibility towards the environment. Fasting and celibacy are derided as weakening humans in their struggle against evil. Traditionally Zoroastrians wore the Sudreh (sacred white muslin or cotton shirt) and Kushti (sacred cord worn around the waist), but this is steadily decreasing.

### **Diet**

Zoroastrians do not follow any specific diet, although some are vegetarians and others do not eat pork or beef out of respect to Muslims and Hindus. There is no religious restriction on drinking alcohol, as long as it is in moderation.

### **Countries where there are many Zoroastrians**

Iran                      India                      Pakistan                      England                      North America

### **Languages spoken by Zoroastrians include**

Gujarati                      Persian/Farsi                      English

### **Largest Zoroastrian communities in the UK**

London                      North-west England

### **Etiquette**

- Zoroastrians believe it is important to keep the environment unpolluted.
- Most Zoroastrians do not smoke.

# Cultural Diversity

## Holy Days and Festivals

The dates of the following holy days and festivals can be found on the B&Q Calendar of Cultural and Religious Festivals and Events, some of which are approximate rather than fixed as different calendars may be used, i.e. the Lunar, Gregorian, Fasli etc. A good example of this is Easter which can occur any time in March or April, depending on the phases of the moon. Our research suggests that those highlighted in red are festivals when people following each faith may wish to take part of their annual leave for prayer, celebration or time with their families. How followers of these religions observe their holy days and festivals in the UK may differ from person to person. Individual members of these faiths may celebrate other festivals and there can be no hard and fast rule. All requests for days off or holidays must follow the holiday guidelines section in the B&Q employees handbook.

Local communities may organise celebratory events to coincide with holy days and festivals and by talking to members of staff and local organisations, it may be possible for B&Q to recognise these events by perhaps displaying posters wishing their customers, for instance, a 'happy Diwali'. It may also be possible to link a promotion to the occasion, e.g. a Festival of Lights could be marked by a lighting promotion, but this would be at the manager's discretion.

The following should be treated as a guide only.

*Jewish festivals begin at sunset on the evening of the day prior to the date given.*

## January

### Christian

#### **New Year's Day**

### Hindu

#### **Lohri/Makara Sankrant**

Lohri is the name for this festival in the Punjab and is celebrated by Hindu/Sikh. Makara Sankrant is observed by Hindus all over India as the Winter Solstice Festival. It is a day for almsgiving and making peace. A fire is lit and a special sweet made of sesame seeds is given to friends and relatives. There would be singing and dancing in homes and community centres. Births and marriages that have occurred since the last Lohri would be particularly celebrated.

### Japanese

#### **Ganjitsu – Japanese New Year**

Usually businesses close for three to five days. Traditions include the eating of special rice cakes and the donation of gifts to children.

### Jewish

#### **Tu B'Shevat**

A minor festival celebrating the New Year for trees when new trees are planted.

### Rastafarian

#### **Rastafarian Christmas 7th January**

The Eastern Orthodox and Armenian churches also celebrate Christmas at this time, in accordance with the Julian calendar, which preceded the Gregorian.

Sikh

**Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh's birth**

Celebrating the 10th Guru by an unbroken reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book at the gurdwara (place of worship).

---

## February

**Buddhist**

**Parinirvana/Nirvana Day**

Marking the anniversary of the death of Gautama Buddha.

**Buddhist**

**Losar**

A major festival for Tibetans, celebrating Buddha's early life and teaching and the start of the new year.

**Chinese**

**Yuan Tan – New Year's Day**

The most important event in the traditional Chinese calendar. A week before the New Year, the house is thoroughly cleaned and decorated with flowers. New clothes symbolise the New Year. The Lantern Festival marks the end of festivities. Strings of lanterns are used to decorate homes and public places. Community events include dragon and lion dances.



*Chinese lantern festival*

**Christian**

**Shrove Tuesday/Pancake Day**

Associated with confession of sins. Pancakes were introduced as a way of using up food before the Lenten Fast.

**Christian**

**Ash Wednesday**

The first day of Lent.

**Christian**

**Lent**

From Ash Wednesday to Easter – forty days remembering Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. Often Christians will abstain from certain foods or luxuries for the duration of Lent, as a form of penitence.

---

**Hindu**

**Vasanta Panchami**

Widely celebrated in north India to celebrate the beginning of spring. It is often combined with Saraswati Puja in honour of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, wisdom and fine arts, whose associated colour is yellow. Particularly celebrated in schools, colleges and fine art centres, with music and dancing.

**Muslim**

**Eid-ul-Adha the Festival of Sacrifice**

The most important event in the Islamic calendar, celebrated by all Muslims, to mark the end of the Hajj, the holy pilgrimage. Traditionally an animal is slaughtered (because the prophet Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son but instead he sacrificed a ram) and the meat shared with the poor, but in the UK this would be represented by a special order of meat. The day would start with prayer attended by all members of the family. Family and friends will be visited and there will be a festive spirit.

## March

**Bahá'í**

**Naw Ruz**

Celebrating the beginning of the Bahá'í New Year and signalling the end of a nineteen day fast.

**Christian**

**St David's Day**

This is particularly celebrated in Wales, St David being the country's patron saint. There may be church services, concerts, marches and perhaps an Eisteddfod – a competitive singing, dancing and reciting festival. The national emblems of Wales – a leek or a daffodil – will be worn.

**Christian**

**Mothering Sunday**

Celebrated by mothers being given gifts and cards.

**Christian**

**St Patrick's Day**

St. Patrick's Day is Ireland's greatest national holiday as well as a holy day. The date marks the anniversary of the death of the missionary who became the patron saint of Ireland. The day is celebrated with parades, speeches, festive dinners, and dances. Green is the colour of the day, with thousands of little cloth shamrocks worn. The three leaves of this traditional emblem are said to represent the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

*St Patrick's Day celebrations*



<b>Christian</b>	<b>Good Friday</b> The anniversary of Christ's crucifixion. A day of fast or feast, depending upon which form of Christianity is practised.
<b>Christian</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b> The most important festival in the Christian Church, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus. Special church services are held. Families exchange Easter eggs, which signify rebirth and renewal.
<b>Christian</b>	<b>Easter Monday</b>
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>Mahashivrati</b> Great Shiva Night of prayer to celebrate the marriage of Lord Shiva to Parvati. This involves a strict fast throughout the day and keeping vigil all night.
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>Holi</b> This is the most colourful Hindu festival and Hindus play with brightly coloured paints and paint one another's bodies to show that everyone is equal. It celebrates the end of the Hindu year and the beginning of spring and involves processions, singing, dancing. Holi is the time when people from all castes and social strata come together forgetting all past differences and grievances, starting the new year with a new zeal.
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>Navratri/Dassera</b> This religious festival is considered the most auspicious time of the Hindu calendar and is celebrated twice a year (in Spring and Autumn). This is a nine-day festival during which Hindus worship the Goddess Devi. The last three days are the most important. During this festival images of Goddesses are worshipped with the performance of dances, plays and music.
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>Al Hijrah</b> The first day of the Muslim New Year observed by special gatherings in the mosque.
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Pesach or Passover</b> Celebrating the Jews exodus from Egypt, where they had been held as slaves. The festival lasts for eight days, during which no bread, cakes, or food and drink containing yeast, may be consumed. The first and last two days are particularly important.
<b>Zoroastrian</b>	<b>Jamshedi No-Ruz/New Year's Day according to the Fasli calendar</b> One of the most important festivals signifying the imminent arrival of spring. Celebrated by festivities, the wearing of new clothes and the giving of gifts.
<b>Zoroastrian</b>	<b>Khordad Sal</b> The Birthday of Zarathustra, the founder of the religion (according to the Fasli calendar).

# April

**Bahá'í**

## **Festival of Ridvan**

The most important Bahá'í festival. It was in these twelve days that Bahá'u'lláh declared himself as the Promised One. The first, ninth and twelfth days are especially significant and are celebrated as holy days when no work is done.

**Christian**

## **St George's Day**

Commemorating the patron saint of England. Although not English, he was adopted as the Patron Saint. It is thought that he was born in Cappadocia (now Turkey) around the year 280 AD. Legend has it that there lived a dragon in the bay of Beirut (near the town of Silene) which terrorised the local population. The king's daughter was finally chosen as a sacrifice to the dragon at which point St. George rode up on his white steed, dismounted and fought the dragon on foot. He finally dragged the dragon to the town, using the princess's girdle, and slayed it in front of all the town's people.

**Hindu**

## **Rama Navami**

Rama Navami brings together people of different castes. In earlier times, it was specified that all should celebrate this festival, perhaps as a way to release the social tension that existed due to the caste system. With the decline of the strict adherence to caste, this festival is now celebrated to sing the glory of a great mythical hero and is a source of divine inspirations celebrating the birth of Lord Rama. It is a religious festival observed with sanctity and fasting.

**Jain**

## **Mahavira Jayanti**

The anniversary of the birth of Mahavira, the model of the Jains.

**Sikh**

## **Baisakhi/Vaisakhi**

Celebrating the Punjabi New Year; the formation of the Sikh community and harvest festival. Sikhs visit gurdwaras (temples) and hold fairs and parades with highly decorated lorries and floats. The flag hanging outside the gurdwara may be changed as a symbol of renewal.

---

# May

**Bahá'í**

## **Declaration of the Báb**

Commemorating the day that the Báb, the Messenger of God, revealed his mission to found the Bahá'í faith to his first disciple.

**Bahá'í**

## **Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh**

A solemn day of prayer commemorating the death of Bahá'u'lláh, the Greater One, who led the Bahá'í faith having been inspired by the Báb.

**Buddhist****Wesak/Vaisakha Purana/Bodhi Day**

The most important festival in the Buddhist year, commemorating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. The festival is marked with much colour and light. People light lamps and there may be firework displays. Houses are cleaned and statues of the Buddha are washed with scented water. Celebrated over a weekend involving devotional practice and social activities with a general sense of festivities. Special shrines may be set up and banners displayed. This may be recognised with two days fasting before the celebrations.

Chinese Buddhists would celebrate this in December and other Buddhist groups may celebrate in April, depending upon which calendar is being used. Celebrations often take place at the time of the full moon.

**Zoroastrian****Zartusht-No-Diso**

Commemorating the death of the prophet Zarathustra (according to the Shenshai calendar).

## June

No major Holy days and festivals

## July

**Bahá'í****Martyrdom of the Báb**

A solemn day of prayer commemorating the death of the Báb, founder of the Bahá'í faith.

**Buddhist****Dharma Day**

When the moon is full, prayer and meditation celebrate the Buddha's teaching.

**Buddhist****Obon**

Particularly celebrated in Japan when Buddhists celebrate the reunion of the living with their dead ancestors.

**Rastafarian****The birth of Haile Selassie**

## August

**Hindu/Sikh****Raksha Bandhan/Rakhri**

This age-old festival celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters. It is marked by the exchange of bracelets of twisted golden threads. By tying this thread, the brother pledges to protect his sister for a full one year.



*Painting of Hindu God Krishna*

**Hindu**

**Janamashtami**

Janma literally means 'birth' and ashtami means the 'eighth day'. At midnight Hindus celebrate the birth of Lord Krishna. Homes are beautifully decorated and the whole family may fast during daylight hours.

**Zoroastrian**

**No-Ruz**

New Year's Day according to the Shenshai calendar. One of the most important festivals celebrated by festivities, the wearing of new clothes and the giving of gifts.

**Zoroastrian**

**Khordad Sal**

The Birthday of Zarathustra, the founder of the religion (according to the Shenshai calendar).

**Caribbean**

**Carnival**

This is celebrated in a big way in the Caribbean over the August Bank Holiday. Perhaps the most well-known event in the UK is the Notting Hill Carnival. West Indian communities in the UK celebrate carnival time and barbecues are popular.

---

## September

**Christian**

**Harvest Festival**

Giving thanks for the harvest. It is customary to display fruits, vegetables and flowers in churches, which are later given to charitable causes.

**Hindu**

**Ganesh Chaturthi**

Worshipping Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, remover of obstacles.

**Jain**

**Paryushana-Parva**

An eight to ten day festival when Jains endeavour to restore peace, compassion and forgiveness to their soul.

**Jewish**

**Rosh Hashanah**

Two days marking the Jewish New Year and the beginning of the ten days of atonement (making amends).

**Jewish**

**Yom Kippur**

The most sacred day of the year, the Day of Atonement, during which a fast is observed for 25 hours from the eve of the day before.

**Jewish**

**Sukkoth or  
Feast of the Tabernacles**

A nine day festival commemorating the protection given to the Israelites during their wanderings through the wilderness. The first and last two days are the most important.



*Jewish festival Sukkoth*

**Rastafarian**

**Ethiopian New Year's Day**

---

## October

**Bahá'í**

**Anniversary of the birth of the Báb**

Founder of the Bahá'í faith.

**Hindu**

**Navratri/Dassera**

This religious festival is considered the most auspicious time of the Hindu calendar and is celebrated twice a year (in Spring and Autumn). This is a nine day festival during which Hindus worship the Goddess Devi. The last three days are the most important. During this festival images of Goddesses are worshipped with the performance of dances, plays and music.

---

## November

**Bahá'í**

**Anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh**

Leader of the Bahá'í faith

**Buddhist**

**Sangha Day**

A celebration of both the ideal of spiritual community and the actual spiritual community in which one is involved.

**Christian**

**St Andrew's Day**

This is particularly celebrated in Scotland, St Andrew being the country's patron saint. The day may be celebrated by concerts or ceilidhs (dances).

---

**Hindu****Diwali/Deepawali**

It is perhaps the most important festival in India. Diwali in India is equivalent to Christmas in the West. The 'festival of lights' marks the beginning of the new Hindu year. Before Diwali, houses are cleaned thoroughly and then decorated with small lamps, and fireworks are let off. This is a very positive time for visiting relatives, exchanging cards and gifts and wishing people well.

**Muslim****Ramadam**

A month of fasting and abstinence. During Ramadam, prayer periods (morning and evening) are extended. Throughout Ramadam family and friends will be visited, the last ten days being particularly important.



*Muslim boy reading the Koran*

**Jain****Diwali**

When Jains celebrate Mahavira's death and his soul's arrival in nirvana.

**Jewish****Hanukkah or Festival of Lights**

An eight day festival celebrating the Jewish rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it had been wrecked by Greek invaders. Candles are lit in homes, particularly a anti-racism candlestick – one 'servant' candle is used to light first one on the first night, two on the second, until all candles are lit.

**Rastafarian****Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie****Sikh****Anniversary of Guru Nanak's birth**

A day of celebration following a two day non-stop reading of the Sikh holy book at the gurdwara (place of worship). There may be firework displays and street processions with floats.

**Sikh**

**Diwali**

Primarily commemorating Guru Hargobind's release from imprisonment by the Mughal emperor. Homes are decorated, candles are lit and gifts are exchanged. There may be firework displays at gurdwaras and at people's homes. A special candle of ghee (animal fat) may be burned in homes.

---

## December

**Buddhist**

**Enlightenment/Bodhi Day**

Celebrating Gautama Buddha's day of enlightenment on this day under the bo/bodhi tree.

**Christian**

**Advent**

Marking the beginning of the Christian Church's year and the preparation for Christmas.



*Christmas decorations*

**Christian**

**Christmas Day**

Meaning 'Christ's Mass' and celebrating the birth of Jesus with prayer, joy and festivities. Homes are decorated, and cards and gifts exchanged.

**Christian**

**St Stephen's/Boxing Day**

St Stephen is celebrated as the first Christian martyr. 'Boxing Day' refers to the contents of alms boxes being distributed to the poor.

**Japanese**

**Omisoka**

A festival preparing for the New Year by cleansing shrines.

**Muslim**

**Eid-ul-Fitr**

Celebrating the end of Ramadam. Traditionally Muslims wear new clothes and decorate their homes. In the morning people will gather at the mosque and then family and friends will be visited.

**Zoroastrian**

**Zartusht-No-Diso**

Commemorating the death of the prophet Zarathustra (according to the Fasli calendar).

---

# Cultural Diversity

## Significant other dates

The dates included in this section are generally seen and recognised as important cultural dates, however these dates do not especially have religious significance.

### January

**25th January**

#### **Burns Night**

A tribute to the life, works and spirit of the great Scottish poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796).

This celebration includes the eating of a traditional Scottish meal, the drinking of Scotch whisky, and the recitation of works by, about, and in the spirit of the poet.

**27th January**

#### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

Commemorating the millions of people who have lost their lives in mass atrocities around the world.

---

### February

**14th February**

#### **St Valentines' Day**

In ancient Rome this was a holiday to honour Juno, the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses.

Gradually, 14th February became the date for exchanging love messages and St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers.

---

### March

**Fourth Sunday  
of Lent**

#### **Mothering Sunday**

Celebrated in Britain on the fourth Sunday in Lent since at least the 16th century.

Originally a church festival when everyone was expected to revisit the church in which they were baptised, i.e. their 'mother church'.

Servants in the homes of the wealthy had to be given a day off to visit their home church and would also be able to visit their families on this occasion. Eventually this became the prime purpose of this annual visit and so 'Mothering Sunday' was born.

---

# April

1st April

## **Fools Day**

One of the most light-hearted days of the year stems from a serious subject—the adoption of a new calendar. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII ordered a new calendar (the Gregorian Calendar) to replace the old Julian Calendar. The new calendar called for New Year's Day to be celebrated on 1st January. However some people either refused to accept the new date, or did not learn about it, and continued to celebrate New Year's Day on 1st April. Other people began to make fun of these traditionalists, sending them on “fool's errands” or trying to trick them into believing something false.

---

# May

First Monday

## **May Day**

This was a custom that marked an important seasonal transition in the year. Putting a maypole up involved all the village taking a growing tree from the wood, and bringing the tree into the village to be decorated in flowers and leaves to mark the oncoming season of summer. May Day became a people's day so it is not unnatural that the Labour and socialist movements treated this day as part of the socialist calendar on the first Monday in May.

9th May

## **Liberation Day (Channel Islands)**

The war in Europe ended on 8th May 1945 and the Germans surrendered the Channel Islands on the following day, which is now referred to in the Channel Islands as ‘Liberation Day’.

Second Monday

## **Commonwealth Day**

An annual event held on the second Monday in May, during which all the fifty-four member countries of the Commonwealth celebrate their links with one another. Everyone celebrates in their own way, from official receptions to school assemblies, sports tournaments to concerts, multi-faith observances to tree-planting ceremonies.

---

# June

First Sunday

## **Father's Day**

The origin of Father's Day is not known.

21st June

## **Summer Solstice**

In the northern hemisphere this is the longest day and shortest night of the year. It is a time distinctive on an astrological level and also a time of year celebrated by ancient civilizations with their unique traditions to mark the summer season.

---

# July

4th July

## **Independence Day (USA)**

On 4th July, 1776, America claimed its independence from England. Each year on 4th July, Americans celebrate that freedom and independence with barbecues, picnics, and family gatherings.

14th July

## **Bastille Day (France)**

This symbolises the end of the monarchy and the beginning of the Republic. The national holiday is a time when all citizens can feel themselves to be members of a republican nation. To everyone in France, Bastille Day today means the solemn military parade up the Champs Elysées in the presence of the head of state. It is also a holiday on which each commune holds a local dance and fireworks.

---

# August

No significant dates

---

# September

No significant dates

---

# October

31st October

## **Halloween**

Originally a Celtic celebration marking the end of summer, a major harvest festival, and the beginning of the New Year on 1st November. It was called All Saints Day, All Souls Day or All Hallowed (hallowed ones) Day. The evening before was called 'All Hallows Eve', which was shortened to Halloween. There was also an association with evil spirits and people dressed up in ghoulish costumes in order to scare away the spirits.

An Irish folk tale says that a man named Jack tricked the devil up a tree and then carved a cross into the bark, trapping him. Jack made a deal with the devil, saying that if he never tempted him again, he would let him down. After Jack died, God wouldn't let him into heaven because of his drunken ways and the devil wouldn't let him into hell. However, the devil gave Jack a single ember to light his way through the darkness of eternity, which Jack placed inside a hollowed-out turnip.

In America, pumpkins outnumbered turnips and so they became "Jack's lantern".

---

# November

**5th November**

## **Guy Fawkes Night**

This marks the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, a conspiracy to blow-up the English Parliament and King in 1605.

It was intended to be the beginning of a great uprising of English Catholics, who were distressed by the increased severity of penal laws against the practice of their religion. Thirty-six barrels of gunpowder, overlaid with iron bars and firewood, were secretly stored in the cellars beneath the Houses of Parliament. However Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were discovered and imprisoned, or executed.

## **Remembrance Day**

The origins of this lie in World War I (1914–18). The Armistice (ceasefire) to end the war happened on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month (11.00 am, 11th November, 1918) and this was the moment the guns fell silent. Nowadays the day has much wider connotations and particularly remembers those who have died during times of conflict.

## **Thanksgiving Day (USA)**

The American Thanksgiving holiday began as a feast of thanksgiving in the early days of the American colonies. In 1620, a boat filled with more than one hundred people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.

The Pilgrims settled in what is now the state of Massachusetts. Their first winter in the New World was difficult, crops failed and without nourishment there was much sickness. The following autumn, as a result of American Indians teaching them about crops to grow in the unfamiliar soil, they had a bountiful harvest of corn, barley, beans and pumpkins.

The colonists celebrated with Thanksgiving. This celebration continues, on the last Thursday in November. Thanksgiving is a time for tradition and sharing. Family members gather for a reunion. Turkey, corn (or maize), pumpkins and cranberry sauce are symbols, which represent the first Thanksgiving.

---

# December

**22nd December**

## **Winter Solstice**

On this day in the northern hemisphere, the daytime hours are at a minimum, and night time is at a maximum.

**24th December**

## **Christmas Eve**

---

# Sources of further information and advice

## Organisations focusing on race, culture and religion

### Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

Tackles racial discrimination and promotes racial equality for everyone regardless of their race, colour, nationality, or national or ethnic origin. The Policy and Communications Department provides advice and information on equal opportunities policy and practice in respect of employees, customers and service users. The CRE has a database of national and local organisations focusing on specific race groups. 9.00am to 5.45pm, Monday to Friday. Cost of call only.

Elliot House  
10-12 Allington Street  
London SW1H 5EH  
Tel: 020 7828 7022  
Fax: 020 7630 7605  
Website: [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

### National Association of Racial Equality Councils (RECs)

RECs work in local areas, among local communities, to promote racial equality and tackle racial discrimination. There are currently over 100 RECs or similar organisations throughout the UK. A full list of regional RECs can be found on the Commission for Racial Equality Website or their information department will give you details of your local office.

### Race Relations Employment Advisory Service

National service providing confidential strategic advice to employers and others. To assist the development and implementation of policies and practices, for racial equality among the workforce. A national service with a team of advisers based throughout the country to ensure local expertise to all clients. Advisers will visit employers to provide free advice. RREAS work in partnership with other interested groups or bodies on initiatives to promote racial equality in employment. 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. Cost of call only.

DfEE  
14th Floor, Cumberland House  
200 Broad Street  
Birmingham B15 1TA  
Tel: 0121 452 5447  
Fax: 0121 452 5485  
Website: [www.dfes.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

## Race for Opportunity

This is a Business in the Community campaign. Race for Opportunity works with organisations that want to reap the business benefits of looking at race. B&Q is a member of the National/London office. As a member, B&Q can seek advice and information free of charge. General enquiries should be made to the London number. However regional offices will be able to provide details of local/regional race organisations. 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

### **National Office and London Race for Opportunity**

Tel: 0870 600 2482

Fax: 0207 486 1700

Website: [www.raceforopportunity.org.uk](http://www.raceforopportunity.org.uk)

### **Race for Opportunity East Midlands**

Tel: 0115 911 6666

Fax: 0115 911 6667

Website: [www.raceforopportunity.org.uk](http://www.raceforopportunity.org.uk)

### **Race for Opportunity North West**

Tel: 0192 523 9662

Fax: 0192 523 9657

Website: [www.raceforopportunity.org.uk](http://www.raceforopportunity.org.uk)

### **Race for Opportunity South West**

Tel: 0117 923 9001

Fax: 0117 923 8264

Website: [www.raceforopportunity.org.uk](http://www.raceforopportunity.org.uk)

### **Race for Opportunity West Midlands**

Tel: 0121 451 2227

Fax: 0121 451 2782

Website: [www.raceforopportunity.org.uk](http://www.raceforopportunity.org.uk)

## Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

An organisation with member groups from different ethnic minority groups, including the provision of information and advice on immigration and asylum seekers and anti-racism training. Also, hold a database of organisations focusing on specific ethnic minorities.

9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Cost of call only, except for training for which there is a charge.

3rd Floor, Ascot House

24-31 Shaftesbury Square

Belfast BT2 7DB

Tel: 028 9023 8645

Fax: 028 9031 9485

## **Community Relations Council (Northern Ireland)**

The Council exists in order to promote the improvement in community relations and the appreciation of cultural diversity. Its aim is to help the people of Northern Ireland to recognise and counter the effects of communal division. It aims to do this by providing support (finance, training, advice, information) for local groups and organisations; developing opportunities for cross-community understanding; increasing public awareness of community relations work and encouraging constructive debate throughout Northern Ireland. Cost of call only.

6 Murray Street  
Belfast BT1 6DN  
Northern Ireland  
Tel: 028 9022 7500  
Fax: 028 9022 7551  
Website: [www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)

## **The Equality Commission Northern Ireland**

Enforcing Northern Ireland's equality legislation on disability, race relations, religion and politics, sex discrimination and equal pay. Cost of call only.

Andras House  
60 Great Victoria Street  
Belfast BT2 7BB  
Northern Ireland  
Tel: 028 9050 0600  
Fax: 028 9033 1544  
Website: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

## **The Equality Authority – Republic of Ireland**

Provides advice and information on the following Republic of Ireland legislation: The Employment Equality Act of 1988 and the Equal Status Act 2000 – Goods, Services and Facilities. Promotes and defends the rights established under legislation; will support the development of equality in the workplace and in the provisions of goods, services and facilities. 9.15am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Cost of call only.

Tel: +353 1 417 3333  
Fax: +353 1 417 3366  
Textphone: +353 1 417 3385  
Website: [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

## Equality Commission – Northern Ireland

Responsible for combating discrimination and promoting equality in Northern Ireland. The organisation encompasses all aspects of equal opportunities and provides information, advice and free seminars on organisations supporting UK legislation – Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, Commission for Racial Equality and Northern Ireland legislation only – the Fair Employment Commission. 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Cost of call only.

Tel: 028 9050 0600

Fax: 028 9032 8970

Textphone: 028 9024 0010

Website: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

---

## Organisations focusing on religion

### **The Multi Faith Centre**

University of Derby

Kedleston Road

Derby DE22 1GB

Tel: 0133 259 1285

Fax: 0133 2622 746

### **Association of Bahá'í Studies**

27 Rutland Gate

London SW7 1PD

Tel: 020 7584 2566

Fax: 020 7584 9402

Website: [www.bahai.org.uk](http://www.bahai.org.uk)

### **The Inter Faith Network for the UK**

5-7 Tavistock Place

London WC1H 9SN

Tel: 020 7388 0008

Fax: 020 7387 7968

Website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

### **The Buddhist Society**

58 Eccleston Square

London SW1V 1PH

Tel: 020 7834 5858

Fax: 020 7976 5238

Website: [www.buddsoc.org.uk](http://www.buddsoc.org.uk)

### **Christianity**

The Multi Faith Centre and

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

(see above)

### **National Council of Hindu Temples**

c/o Bhaktivendanta Manor

Hilfield Lane

Aldenham

Watford

Herts WD2 8EZ

Tel: 0192 385 6269

---

**Association for British Muslims**

47 Davis Road  
London W3 7SE  
Tel: 020 8932 4081  
Fax: 020 8932 4081  
Website: [www.british-islam.org](http://www.british-islam.org)

**Institute of Jainology**

28 Lindsay Drive  
Kenton  
Harrow  
Middx HA3 OTD  
Tel: 020 8204 9167

**Board of Deputies of British Jews**

6 Bloomsbury Square  
London WC1A 2LP  
Tel: 020 8543 5400  
Fax: 020 7543 0010  
Website: [www.bod.org.uk](http://www.bod.org.uk)

**The Rastafarian Society**

290-296 Tottenham High Road  
London N15 4AJ  
Tel: 020 8808 2185

**British Sikh Education Council**

1st Floor Office Suite  
192 The Broadway  
Wimbledon  
London SW19 1RY  
Tel: 020 8540 3974  
Fax: 020 8540 3974

**Sikh Educational Advisory Services**

42 Park Avenue  
Leeds LS15 8EW  
Tel: 0113 260 2484

**World Zoroastrian Organisation**

135 Tennyson Road  
South Norwood  
London SE25 5NF  
Tel: 020 8655 1281  
Website: [www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org)

## **Acknowledgments**

We are grateful to the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and the Inter Faith Network for the UK for their help and assistance, and for the invaluable information contained in their publication 'Religions in the UK 2001–2003'.

As well as the many people and organisations who have assisted with this publication including:

The London Buddhist Centre  
The Jain Association of UK  
Institute of Jainology  
Association for British Muslims  
Bahá'í Community of the UK  
The Sikh Missionary Society  
ISKCON Educational Services  
World Zoroastrian Organisation  
Office for National Statistics

## **Picture acknowledgments**

Ann & Bury Peerless Picture Library (p.11 bottom, 25, 26, 28, 33, 39, 43, 48, 49, 50)  
Halden Photography (p.14)  
Robert Harding Picture Library (p.16, 44, 51)  
The Photolibrary Wales (p.19 bottom)

If you require this document in alternative media format, please contact the Social Responsibility team on 023 8025 7338 or e-mail [diversity@b-and-q.co.uk](mailto:diversity@b-and-q.co.uk)

## **How green is this booklet?**

This booklet is printed on Revive Matt made of 100% recycled material. At least 75% is made from 100% de-inked post-consumer waste removed and the remaining 25% of total fibre content is recycled mill broke waste. Recycled papers used are a combination of Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) papers.

Printed by Lawrence-Allen, part of the Butler Tanner Group.

Design by Martin Lock Associates.





## **B&Q** Social Responsibility

Environment | Diversity | Ethical | Community

B&Q plc, Portswood House, 1 Hampshire Corporate Park  
Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3YX, UK

Tel: +44 (0)23 8025 7302

Fax: +44 (0)23 8025 7287

[www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com)