

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH



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South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM) first took place in 2018 and runs from the 18th of July to the 17th of August each year.

SAHM seeks to commemorate, mark and celebrate South Asian cultures, histories, and communities.

The month seeks to understand the diverse heritage and cultures that continue to link the UK with South Asia.

South Asian culture has made a significant impact on Britain in various aspects, such as food, clothing, music, words, and the overall ambiance of our towns and cities.

It's a beautiful display of the rich and proud South Asian heritage that has blended into the British way of life, contributing to the diversity of our nation. Observing South Asian Heritage Month provides us with an excellent chance to embrace and celebrate the history and identity of British South Asians.

It's crucial to allow people to share their own stories, and this occasion offers an opportunity to showcase what being South Asian in the 21st century entails, while also reflecting on our past and how it has shaped us.

The month begins on 18th July, the date that the Indian Independence Act 1947 gained royal assent from King George VI, and ends on the 17th August, the date that the Radcliffe Line was published in 1947, which finally set out where the border between India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) would be.

The start and end dates show just how much of an influence Britain has had on South Asia as a whole over the last few centuries.

**South
Asian
Heritage
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The dates coincide to a large extent with the South Asian month of Saravan/Sawan, which is the main monsoon month when the region's habitat undergoes renewal. Having it take place across the two Western calendar months of July and August is entirely apt, as it respects the traditions of the South Asian calendars. This period also includes several independence days connected to South Asian countries.

Which countries make up South Asia?

Afghanistan

Bangladesh

Bhutan

India

The Maldives

Nepal

Pakistan

Sri Lanka

Every single one of those countries has been hugely impacted by its relationship with Britain, primarily through war, colonisation, and ultimately via the British Empire. People of South Asian heritage are a significant part of the British population, with about 1 in every 20 people in the country being of South Asian heritage

British India was a region of Asia that included the following present-day countries as British-governed areas or Princely States whose foreign policy was controlled by Britain:

- **Bangladesh**
- **India**
- **Pakistan**

The countries which formed British India gained independence from the British Empire in 1947.

In 1947, East Bengal was a province in Pakistan, and the province became known as East Pakistan in 1955. Bangladesh became a separate country in 1971.

The following were kingdoms or emirates whose foreign policy was controlled by Britain, but which were never part of British India:

- **Afghanistan (1879 to 1919)**
- **Bhutan (1910 to 1949)**
- **Nepal (1816 to 1923)**
- **The following were British colonies at the same time as British India:**
- **The Maldives (1796 to 1965)**
- **Sri Lanka (1815 to 1948)**

South Asian Heritage Month 2023 is all about celebrating the stories that make up our diverse and vibrant community.

What moments in your life have shaped who you are today?

What experiences have taught you valuable lessons?

Our stories are what make us unique, and they connect us to each other in profound ways. Whether you express yourself through art, writing, music, fashion, or food, there are so many ways to share your experiences and celebrate your heritage.

Credit: www.southasianheritage.org.uk

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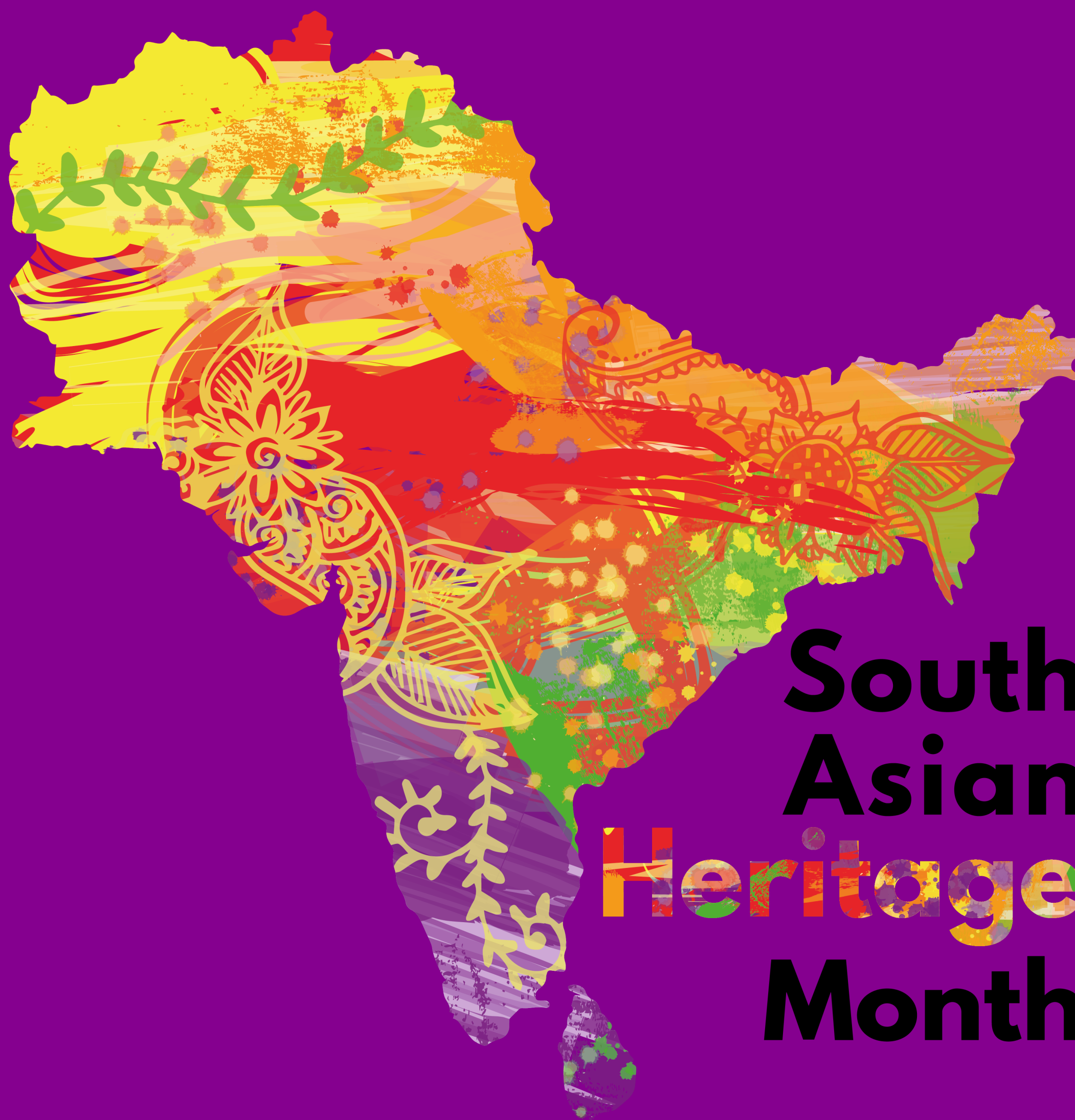
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