

Ramadan, being one of the holiest of months in the Islamic Calendar, is one of the most revered and anticipated month in the lives of Muslims across the globe. It is a month of immense blessings and rewards like no other. It is a month of heightened spirituality and serves as an opportunity to get close to our Creator. Hence, it is the aim of each and every believer to make the most of Ramadan through fasting, exercising patience and control.



Ramadan 2021 in United States began in the evening of

Monday, April 12

and ends in the evening of

Wednesday, May 12

Ramadan, also known as Ramazan, is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar which is observed as the month of fasting by all Muslims around the world. The tradition lasts for twenty-nine to thirty days, from one sighting of the crescent moon to the next. Muslims follow a Lunar calendar. Ramadan begins 10-12 days earlier every year making the Ramadan month fall in every season during a 33 year cycle.

What is Ramadan?



Ramadan Festival History

Ramadan is the holy month for the Muslims and followers of Islam where they fast, introspect and pray. It is observed as the month during which Muhammad received the initial doctrines of the Quran, the holy book for Muslims. Fasting is one of the five fundamental principles of Islam.

According to the Islamic beliefs, around 610 A.D. a man named Muhammad (c.570-632) from the Arabian city of Mecca started receiving revelations from God, or Allah, via the angel Gabriel. The prophecies were said to be collected in a 114 chapter holy book known as the Quran, which is believed to contain the exact words of God. According to the religious followings, Muhammad was the final prophet in a line of prophets who were chosen by God to act as messengers and teach mankind.

Ramadan Festival Significance

Ramadan festival is considered as the sacred month and the most significant month as per the traditional Islamic calendar. The holy month is spent by the Muslim community throughout the world in great anticipation of the almighty and self while offering prayers, fasting and feasting. The month-long fasting during Ramadan is recognized as one of the five pillars of Islam. The most significant fact of this month as per the Holy Quran is that Prophet Muhammad received the first verses of the holy text during Ramadan.

How is Ramadan Observed?

Muslims are required to fast from dawn until dusk every day during the month of Ramadan. When a Muslim fasts, he/she not only abstains from eating and drinking but also steers clear of all evil. The religious rewards of fasting are believed to be multiplied during Ramadan. Muslims fast the whole month as it teaches them the true meaning of perseverance and tolerance.

Fasting includes, no eating, no drinking, or smoking. Alongside this, sexual relations, bad behavior and immoral speech are frowned upon. Muslims are taught to stay tolerant throughout the day no matter how difficult of a situation they are in. Fasting and prayer go side by side. As a Muslim you cannot forego prayer and just refrain from eating/drinking. A Muslim has to offer prayer five times a day to complete his/her fast.

Each morning before sunrise, Muslims engage in a pre-fast meal called 'suhour'. Once the sun has set, the fast is broken usually with dates being the first food consumed. Muslims will then pray every night during Ramadan, reciting different chapters each day until the Quran is completed.

Ramadan is a time for charity, self-discipline, purity, and self-reflection.

Ramadan Etiquette

For non-Muslims the following rules should be obeyed during Ramadan if you are visiting a Muslim country:

- Do not eat, drink or smoke in public between sunrise and sunset
- Do not engage in public displays of affection
- Do not display any type of aggressive behavior, including swearing
- Do not play loud music or dance in public
- Do not wear inappropriate clothing in public (women should cover their knees and shoulders, and men should cover their arms)
- Accept gifts offered to you, and if invited to a fast-breaking meal called Iftar, it is an honor to accept
- It is polite to greet people by saying "Ramadan Kareem". This translates into English as "Happy Ramadan".

Non-Muslims are permitted to eat and drink in the privacy of their own home, at specially designated areas, and where restaurants or cafes which are open throughout the day, you can purchase food to take away to eat in private.



Ramadan
2021



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- **Fasting** - This is an act of self discipline and done with the aim to improve the same. Ramadan is a month for self reflection, improved devotion and worship. The aim behind this observance is to ensure that all remain in the teachings of Quran and to not stray into the worldly acts of materialistic life. During the month of Ramadan Muslims are required to fast from dawn till sunset without drinking and eating. Moreover they are also expected to abstain from sexual relations and other sinful actions and speeches.
- **Suhoor** - Before they begin the fasting they have a meal called the pre dawn meal that is had before the first prayer in the morning. This meal is called the Suhoor.
- **Iftar** - This is the meal that they have after breaking the fast. The iftar is usually commenced with dates as the first food they eat. The practice of eating the dates is to honor Prophet Muhammad's practice of breaking fast using three dates. After the Iftar they come together for the fourth prayer of the day after which the main meal is served.
- **Charity** - Apart from abstinence, fasting and prayers they are also expected to give charity. Generally a small percentage of their income should be set aside for charity.
- **Recitation of Quran** - This is a month that is in commemoration of Prophet Muhammad receiving the Quran thus it is important that we read the Quran daily. In some places Quran is read in public squares

What Happens After Ramadan?

After Ramadan comes to an end, Muslims observe Eid al-Fitr. Eid al-Fitr, also called the "Festival of Breaking the Fast", is a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan.

Eid Al-Fitr 2021 will begin on the evening of Wednesday, May 12th and end the next evening, Thursday, May 13th. This religious Eid is the only day in the month of Shawwal during which Muslims are not permitted to fast.

Eid is one of the most joyous days in the Islamic calendar. The festival is a very important time in Islam and allows families, loved ones and communities to come together and celebrate following a month of abstinence and dedication to Allah (SWT). It is all about gathering together, lots of food and children receive presents. Keeping the primary notion same, Eid is celebrated across the globe with several alterations. Worshippers often dress in fine clothing and decorate their homes.