

RAMADAN DURING COVID-19



WHAT IS RAMADAN?

The month of Ramadan is the holiest month of the Islamic year as this was when the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammed. Muslims around the world fast during daylight hours although there are a few exceptions such as the old or sick. Muslims also increase spiritual devotional acts such as prayer and strengthening family ties.

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR FASTING OR SAWN?

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Fasting plays an important role in many major religions and is a central feature in all the Abrahamic faiths; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In Islam, Muslims are asked to fast during Ramadan and other times of the year too.

A key objective of fasting is to engender a sense of gratitude, self-discipline, and self-improvement as well as the closeness to God. This is called **taqwa**. The breaking of fast meal at sunset encourages families and local communities to share their meals. This is called **iftar**.

LAYLAT AL-QADR (ARABIC: "NIGHT OF POWER"):

Islamic festival that commemorates the night on which God first revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. It is believed to have taken place on one of the final 10 nights of Ramadan in 610 CE, though the exact night is unclear.

EID AL-FITR (FESTIVAL OF BREAKING THE FAST):

This is the first of the two Eids of the Islamic (lunar) calendar year. It is a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan. This religious Eid is the only day in the month of Shawwal during which Muslims are not permitted to fast.

RAMADAN AT HOME

Ramadan will be the second year that it will be a very different experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of there being **taraweeh** prayers at the mosque or outside homes, these may be done online either pre-recorded or live. Virtual **iftars** with loved ones and community members may take place.

Remember to take regular breaks from work, perhaps around **salaah** (prayer) times. You may be able to start work earlier so you can have some downtime prior to **iftar**.

ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS AND MANAGERS

Some employees will be abstaining from food and drinks for up to 17 hours so may experience mild dehydration, causing headaches, tiredness, and a lack of concentration.

Be aware and open to discussing Ramadan and do not assume all employees want to be treated differently because they are fasting.

Be accommodating around annual leave requests, especially toward the end of Ramadan to celebrate **Eid** (holiday marking the end of Ramadan).

Allow workers to have regular breaks for afternoon prayers as needed (**Dhuhr and Asr**) if requested.

Ramadan 2021 is expected to begin on Tuesday 13 April 2021 following the sighting of the moon over Mecca.

When Does Ramadan Start?

Tuesday 13th April 2021

How Long is Ramadan?

30 days

When Does Ramadan End?

Tuesday 11th May 2021

When Is Laylat al-Qadr?

On or around Saturday 8th May 2021

When is Eid al-Fitr?

Thursday 13th May 2021 - dependant on moon sightings