

Eid al-Fitr



Why Do Muslims Fast?

Fasting is intended to help teach Muslims to focus their attention on Allah (God), to be self-disciplined and to be generous. It also reminds them of the suffering of the poor, who may rarely get to eat well. The **prophet Muhammad (PBUH)** was one of the first Muslims to fast — other Muslims follow his example.

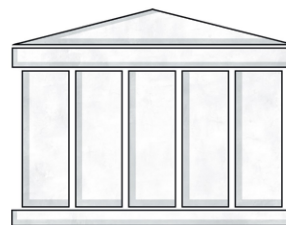
Each day during the month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world refrain from eating and drinking from dawn until sunset. Following sunset, Muslim families will often enjoy a large meal together (known as 'Suhur') and celebrate their day of fasting.



Eid al-Fitr is a **Muslim** festival that marks the end of Ramadan: the holy month of **fasting**. Around 2.1 billion Muslims across the globe will celebrate Eid al-Fitr.

What Is Ramadan?

Ramadan is in the ninth month of the Islamic **lunar calendar**. The festival begins at different times for Muslims depending on when the new moon is first sighted. It lasts from dawn until sunset for 29 or 30 days. Ramadan is a very important time for Muslims and is celebrated all over the world. During Ramadan, Muslims request forgiveness, pray for direction and try to practise self-discipline and great acts of faith. Ramadan is a time of fasting for Muslims: fasting is one of the five duties (or pillars) that Muslims obey. Another name for fasting is 'sawm'.



How Do Muslims Mark the End of Ramadan?

The end of Ramadan is marked by a festival called 'Eid al-Fitr': The Festival of the Breaking of the Fast. Muslims celebrate the end of fasting and thank Allah (God) for giving them strength. As with Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr officially begins when a new moon is sighted in the sky. If a new (crescent) moon is not sighted, Ramadan continues for another day.



Why Are There Two Eids?

The Islamic festivals of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are often both shortened and referred to as 'Eid' (another word for 'feast' or 'festival'). However, the two festivals take place at different times of the year and are different in the way in which they are celebrated. Eid al-Adha celebrates the end of the pilgrimage (Hajj) — the fifth pillar of Islam. Eid al-Adha, like other events in the Muslim calendar, follows the lunar cycle and occurs around two calendar months after Eid al-Fitr.

Glossary

fasting:

Eating little or no food for a period of time.

lunar calendar:

A dating system that uses the monthly cycle of the Moon's phases to track the progression of time.

Muslim:

Relating to the followers of the religion of Islam.

prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

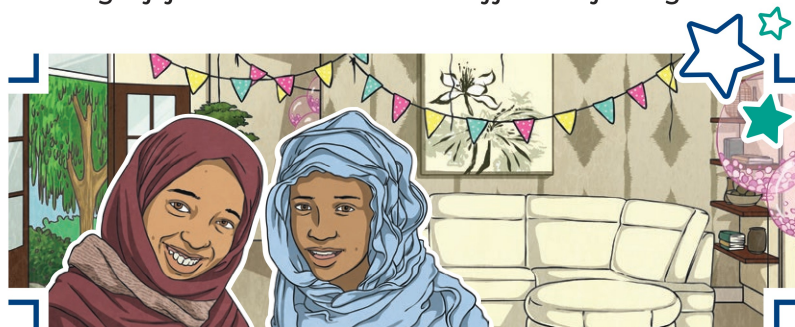
The final messenger of Allah to whom the Qur'an was revealed. PBUH means 'Peace Be Upon Him'.

How Is Eid al-Fitr Celebrated?

On the first morning of the celebration, many Muslims gather in local mosques or open-air locations to partake in special prayers and to eat breakfast. Muslims dress in their finest clothes for what will be their first daylight meal in a while. While there, some Muslims will exchange gifts and greeting cards. Celebrations typically last for up to four days. People wish each other 'Eid Mubarak' (Blessed Eid) or 'Eid Said' (Happy Eid).

Celebrations vary from country to country but typically include gatherings to view the new moon, decorating homes inside and out, family visits, eating special foods, neighbourhood parties and wearing special, new clothes.

In some parts of the world, Eid al-Fitr is known as 'sweet Eid' as people enjoy sweet treats to mark the end of fasting for Ramadan. In Turkey, for example, many people enjoy eating baklava: a traditional pastry made with nuts and sweetened with honey. Other countries bake Eid biscuits, which take on a variety of forms and include different fillings.



Questions

1. What does Eid al-Fitr mean? Tick one.

- ☐ festival of God
- ☐ festival of the Breaking of the Fast
- ☐ festival of Light
- ☐ festival of the New Moon

2. Draw **four** lines and match each word with its correct meaning.

Ramadan	an Islamic greeting meaning 'Blessed Eid'
sawm	a large meal eaten together
Suhur	another word for fasting
Eid Mubarak	the holy month of fasting

3. When does Eid al-Fitr officially begin?

4. Look at the section called **Why Do Muslims Fast?**

Find and copy one word which means 'to be able to control your feelings and desires'.

5. What is baklava?

6. Look at the section called **Why Are There Two Eids?**

Discuss why you think that this section has been included in the text.

7. Explain why it is not possible to predict the exact date that Eid al-Fitr will begin each year.

8. **Fasting is intended to help teach Muslims to focus their attention on Allah, to be self-disciplined and to be generous.**

Explain why fasting requires 'self-discipline'.

9. Discuss how the celebration of Eid al-Fitr as discussed in the text may be impacted by social distancing.
