

# 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) set the example of fasting. Each day during the month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world follow his example and abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until sunset. At the end of the day (after sunset), Muslim families will often enjoy Suhur (a large meal) together and celebrate their day of fasting.

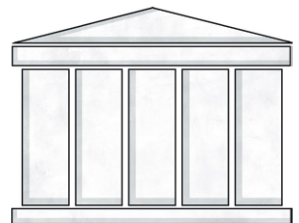


Eid al-Fitr is a joyous Muslim festival that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. An estimated 2.1 billion Muslims across the globe will be celebrating Eid al-Fitr: the end of the month-long fasting period of Ramadan.

## 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 cleanse themselves through self-discipline and great acts of faith.

The Five Pillars of Islam are the five core beliefs and practices that are considered to be mandatory in Islam; they help Muslims to maintain a good relationship with Allah (God). Ramadan represents an observance of the fourth pillar of faith: fasting (known in Islam as 'sawm').



## How Do Muslims Mark the End of Ramadan?

Muslims mark the end of Ramadan with a large festival called 'Eid al-Fitr'. The word 'Eid' translates into English as 'feast' or 'festival' and the term 'al-fitr' means 'the breaking of the fast'. Muslims celebrate the end of fasting and thank Allah for the strength given to them throughout Ramadan.

## What Dishes Are Eaten to Celebrate Eid al-Fitr?

In some parts of the world, Eid al-Fitr is known as 'sweet Eid' and is synonymous with eating sweet treats to mark the end of the abstinence of Ramadan.

### baklava

In Turkey, many people enjoy eating baklava: a traditional pastry made with nuts and sweetened with honey.

### dates

The naturally sweet date is a traditional and popular first food choice for people when breaking their Ramadan fast.

In Iraq and Saudi Arabia, dates are an important ingredient in kleicha biscuits, which are very popular during celebrations like Eid al-Fitr.

### Eid biscuits

Many countries prepare biscuits to celebrate Eid al-Fitr and these cookies take on a variety of forms. In Palestine, for example, it is popular to bake Eid biscuits (known as 'ghraybeh') stuffed with pine nuts or almonds.



As with Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr commences at the first sight of a sliver of a crescent moon; if a new moon is not visible, Ramadan would continue for another day.

## 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 break their fast. 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 continue up to four days. Common greetings may include 'Eid Mubarak' (Blessed Eid) or 'Eid Said' (Happy Eid).

Celebrations vary from country to country but typically include gatherings to observe the new moon, decorating the interior and exterior of homes, familial visits, preparing and eating special foods and delicacies, neighbourhood parties and donning special, new clothes.



## 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'. 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, is determined by lunar cycles and occurs around two months after Eid al-Fitr.

# Questions

1. What is the Islamic word for fasting? Tick one.

- ☐ Ramadan
- ☐ sawm
- ☐ Suhur
- ☐ Eid

2. In which country might Muslims typically enjoy ghraybeh biscuits during Eid al-Fitr? Tick one.

- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Saudi Arabia
- ☐ Palestine
- ☐ Iraq

3. At what time of the day do Muslim families enjoy Suhur?

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4. Find and copy a phrase that suggests that Muslims behave in the same way as the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) because they admire him.

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5. List **two** ways that Muslims might celebrate Eid al-Fitr.

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6. Look at the section called **What Is Ramadan?**

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

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7. Explain why Ramadan fasting could be more challenging during the summer months.

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8. **In some parts of the world, Eid al-Fitr is known as 'sweet Eid' and is synonymous with eating sweet treats...**

Explain what the word 'synonymous' means.

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9. Based on what you've read in the text, why do you think that the crescent moon is a symbol of the Islamic faith?

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10. How is Eid al-Fitr similar to another religious event or festival that you know of?

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