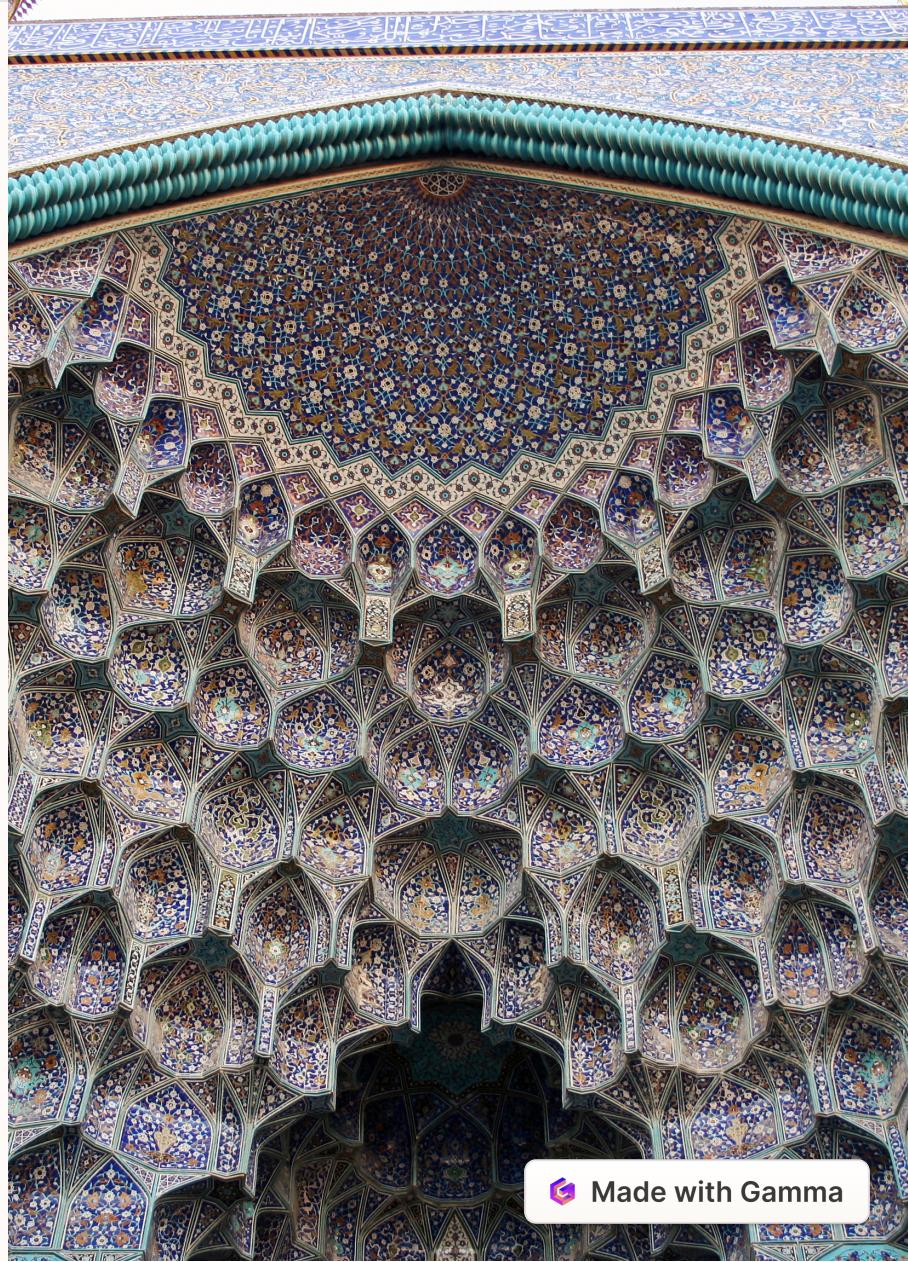


Discovering Islam

An introduction to the basic beliefs, practices, and holidays that make Islam a vibrant and influential religion around the world.

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The Beliefs of Islam

One God

Islam is a monotheistic religion that believes in one God, Allah, who is compassionate and merciful.

The Holy Quran

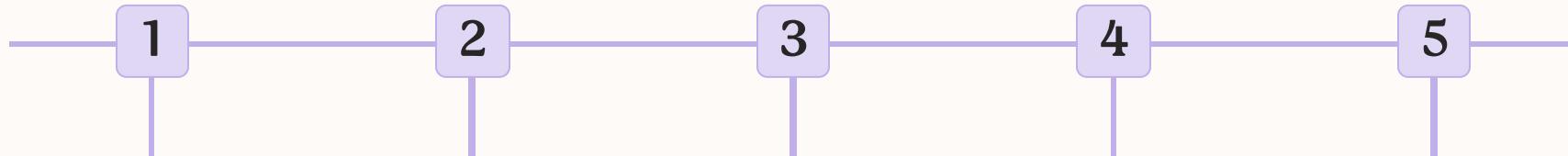
The Quran is the holy book of Islam, which contains the word of Allah as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

Prophets of Allah

Islam recognizes many prophets, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, but considers Muhammad to be the last prophet.



The Five Pillars of Islam



Shahada

The declaration of faith that "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

Salah

The practice of prayer, which Muslims are expected to do five times a day, facing towards Mecca.

Zakat

The act of giving to charity, which is considered a duty for all Muslims who can afford it.

Sawm

The observance of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, which involves avoiding food, drink, and other physical needs while the sun is up.

Hajj

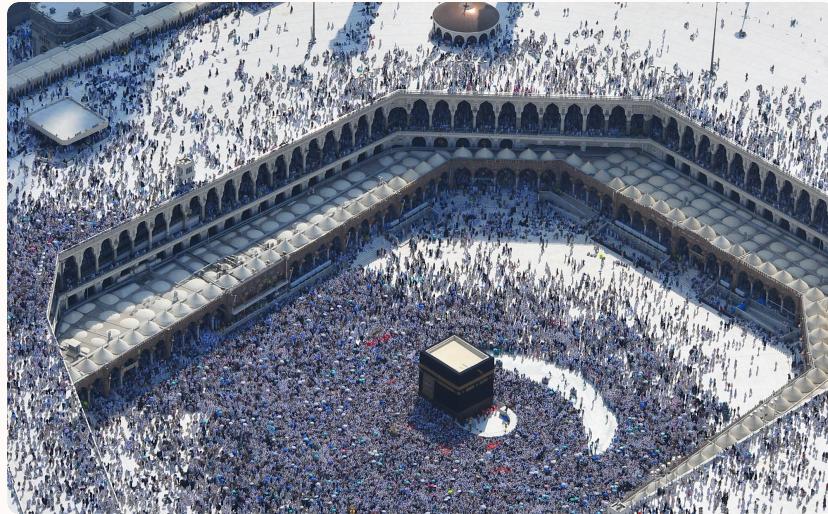
The pilgrimage to Mecca, which is expected of all able-bodied Muslims who can afford it at least once in their lifetime.

The Islamic Calendar and Holidays



Eid al-Fitr

This holiday marks the end of Ramadan and is a celebration of the breaking of the fast.



Hajj

This is the largest gathering of Muslims in the world, where millions come together for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.



Eid al-Adha

A festival of sacrifice, which honors the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son for Allah.



Mawlid

A celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, which is marked by readings, songs, and storytelling.

The Status of Women in Islam

1 Rights and Responsibilities

Islam endorses gender equality and provides women with a number of rights, including the right to own property, marry by choice, seek education, and play an active role in society.

2 The Hijab

Wearing the hijab is a personal choice for many Muslim women and is seen as a way of preserving modesty, privacy, and religious identity.

3 Leadership Roles

Women have served as important political, social, and religious leaders throughout Islamic history, from Aisha bint Abu Bakr, who was a beloved wife of the Prophet Muhammad, to Benazir Bhutto, who served as the prime minister of Pakistan.

Islamic Art and Architecture

Calligraphy

The art of beautiful writing has been a prominent feature of Islamic art, found in everything from the Quran to wall decorations.

Mosques

Islamic architecture is known for its intricate geometric designs and decoration, often featuring domes, arches, and ornate tilework.

Carpet Weaving

The rich art of carpet weaving is a defining feature of Islamic culture, with intricate designs and patterns that reflect the history and traditions of the region.



Islam and Modernity

Science and Technology

Many scholars, both past and present, have made significant contributions to fields like mathematics, physics, and medicine.

Women in Politics

Many Muslim women have become leaders in their countries, like Tansu Ciller who became the prime minister of Turkey, and Sheikh Hasina who became the prime minister of Bangladesh.

The Arts

Islamic culture has produced a rich tradition of literature, music, and film, with many modern artists embracing their heritage while still pushing artistic boundaries and engaging with the wider world.



Islam and the Contemporary World

The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring movement, which began in 2010, saw widespread protests and political upheaval in many Muslim-majority countries, sparking change and renewed hope for many people in the region.

