



# Ramadan

*in focus*

A Guide to Fasting, Fitness, and Well-Being





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# Foreword

Ramadan in Focus: A Guide to Fasting, Fitness, and Well-Being, has been produced by the Sihat Jismani (Health and Fitness) department in line with its objective, that is, to develop awareness about the importance of physical fitness and well-being amongst members. The manual outlines the spiritual and physical blessings of fasting.

May Allah Almighty enable us to reap maximum benefits from this handbook. May He reward those who have been engaged in its publication, Ameen.

Islam teaches us that our physical well-being affects our moral and spiritual states, and the reverse is also true. Our well-being depends upon our physical as well as mental health. Each year the month of Ramadan reminds us about the excellence of fasting and how fasting should be observed. Ramadan also reminds us that the teaching of the Holy Qur'an is complete and comprehensive. Indeed, the Holy Quran addresses various aspects of the human life, including physical and mental health, through its teachings and guidance. Ramadan reminds us to engage in remembrance of God in an enhanced manner.

Regular prayer and remembrance of Allah provides a sense of peace, reduces stress and offers emotional stability:

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort."

(Holy Quran 13:29)

*Nushreen Jamal Ahmad  
Sadr Lajna Ima'illah  
28.02.2025*

# Preface

Ramadan is a time of deep reflection, spiritual renewal, and increased devotion. It is a month that calls upon us to strengthen our connection with Allah while also tending to our physical and mental well-being.

With this in mind, *Ramadan in Focus: A Guide to Fasting, Fitness, and Well-Being* has been put together as a humble effort to offer simple and practical guidance. It is not an exhaustive manual but a gentle companion designed to help navigate some of the common challenges faced during this sacred month. From maintaining energy levels to making mindful food choices and embracing the spiritual and physical benefits of fasting, this booklet aims to serve as a source of encouragement and ease.

This small effort is dedicated to the members of Lajna Ima'illah Mauritius. May this guide be of benefit to all, and may Allah enable us to make the most of this blessed month with gratitude and humility.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sadr Sahiba, the Sihat-e-Jismani team, Maaryah Soodhun, Tahirah Tajoo, and Arifa Hosany, as well as the Shoba Isha'at and Diyafat, for their support and contributions.

Humbly Serving as Sihat-e-Jismani Secretary,  
Khadija Roukhsar Taujoo

# *Essence of fasting*

The practice of fasting is not only a physical exercise but a spiritual one; the ultimate aim of which is the attainment of God's pleasure through regulation of one's life in accordance with His ordinances. If a Muslim merely observes the outward requirements of the fast, they will simply succeed in making themselves hungry and thirsty and nothing more. Explaining the true essence of fasting in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (as), states:

————— ‘ ’ —————

*Fasting is not merely staying hungry and thirsty; rather its reality and its impact can only be gained through experience. It is human nature that the less one eats, the more one's spirit is purified and thus his capacity for [spiritual] visions increases. The will of God is to decrease one kind of sustenance and to increase the other. A person who is fasting should always be mindful that he is not just required to stay hungry. On the contrary, he should remain engaged in the remembrance of God so that he can cut asunder ties of worldly desires and amusements and is wholly devoted to God. Hence, the significance of fasting is this alone that man gives up one kind of sustenance which only nourishes the body and attains the other kind of sustenance which is a source of comfort and gratification for the soul.*

Malfuzat Vol. 5, (Rabwah: NazaratIsha'at Rabwah Pakistan), 102.

Throughout history, in almost all religions of the world, fasting has long been promoted as a spiritual means for intensifying prayers and faith. People have fasted as it is an obligation to God, leading to good health and spirituality. Fasting brings great spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health. Fasting is now generally accepted as an effective and safe method of detoxifying the body, a technique that men have used for centuries to heal the sick. It purifies the body of the accumulated toxic poison and waste. Fasting regularly helps the body heal itself as well as awakening the mind and soul. Fasting is now medically proven to be a healthy act and offers numerous benefits to us, some which we know about and some we don't. As Allah says in chapter 2, verse 185:

“  
...And fasting is good for you, if  
you only knew.  
”

# Health benefits of fasting

## Physical benefits of fasting:

During Ramadan, we only eat during a specific time. We abstain from eating for extended periods of time. Since we are not consuming food, our body goes through several changes to conserve energy. Since there is no food to break down for energy production, our body starts breaking stored glycogen for fuel. Eventually, our body enters a state of ketosis, where it starts to burn fat for energy. This switch in metabolism brings about several health benefits.

### Blood sugar control

Fasting can improve blood sugar control by increasing insulin sensitivity and reducing insulin resistance. When you fast, your body produces less insulin, which allows your cells to become more sensitive to insulin. This means that your body can use glucose more efficiently, leading to lower blood sugar levels.



### Improved mental clarity

Fasting can actually improve mental clarity by boosting brain function. When you fast, your body produces ketones, which are an alternative energy source for your brain. Ketones have been shown to improve cognitive function, memory, and focus.



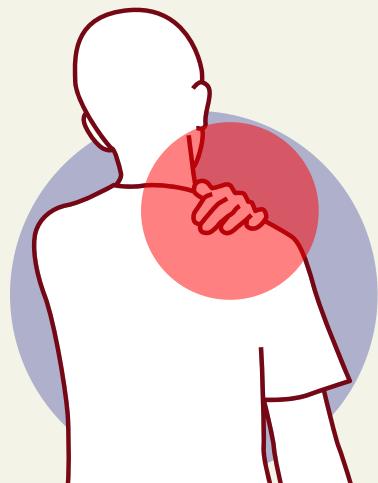
## Weight loss

Fasting leads to weight loss by reducing calorie intake. When you fast, you're not eating, so you're automatically consuming fewer calories. This calorie deficit can lead to weight loss over time. Our body starts to burn fat as a source of energy. This in turn promotes weight loss.



## Reduces inflammation

Fasting can help improve inflammation by reducing the production of inflammatory markers in the body. When you fast, your body enters a state of stress, which triggers a process called autophagy. Autophagy helps clear out damaged cells and cellular debris, which can contribute to inflammation. This process can help reduce chronic inflammation, which is linked to many diseases.



## Improved heart function

Fasting can help reduce inflammation throughout the body, including in the heart. Chronic inflammation is a major risk factor for heart disease.

Fasting can help lower blood pressure by reducing sodium retention and improving blood vessel function. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease.

Fasting can help improve blood sugar control. High blood sugar levels are a major risk factor for heart disease.

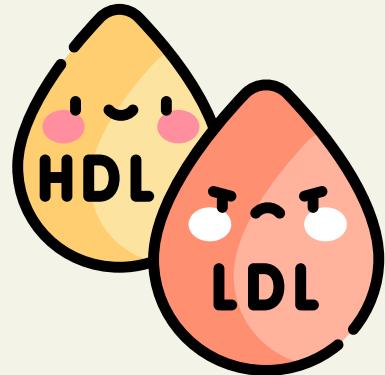
## Lower cholesterol

Fasting can have a positive impact on cholesterol levels, particularly by lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol and raising HDL (good) cholesterol.

Fasting can help reduce LDL cholesterol levels by decreasing the production of cholesterol in the liver.

Fasting can help increase HDL cholesterol levels by improving the body's ability to remove cholesterol from the bloodstream.

Fasting can also help lower triglyceride levels, which are another type of fat found in the blood.



## Improved digestion

Fasting can improve digestion by giving your digestive system a break from constant processing of food. When you fast, your digestive system doesn't have to work as hard to break down food. This allows your gut to rest and repair itself.



Fasting can also help improve the balance of bacteria in your gut, which is important for healthy digestion.

Fasting triggers autophagy, which helps remove damaged cells and debris from the body, including in the digestive system.

## **Detox**

Fasting can help detoxify your body by giving your liver a chance to focus on removing toxins instead of digesting food. Your liver is your main detox organ, and fasting allows it to focus on clearing out toxins instead of processing food.



Fasting triggers autophagy in your liver. This can help improve your liver's function.

By not eating, you reduce the amount of toxins you're exposed to through food.

# Common Health Issues in Ramadan

## & How To Manage Them

Ramadan can be a challenging time for some people. What are the common health issues and how to tackle them?

### 1 Dehydration

Not drinking enough fluids during the day can lead to dehydration, especially in hot weather.

Here are some tips for staying hydrated effectively during Ramadan:

Drink plenty of fluids before and after fasting hours: Aim for at least 8 glasses of water per day, especially before you start fasting and after you break your fast.

Choose hydrating foods: Fruits and vegetables like watermelon, cucumber, and spinach are high in water content and can help you stay hydrated.

Avoid sugary drinks: Sugary drinks can actually dehydrate you, so stick to water, unsweetened tea, or fruit-infused water.



Break your fast with dates and water: Dates are a good source of natural sugars and electrolytes, which can help replenish your body after fasting.

Limit caffeine: Caffeine can cause dehydration.

Boost hydration: You can consume electrolyte drinks in the form of sachets or gels (Rehidrata, Electrorush, Idrata). Include electrolyte-rich foods in your eating window such as banana, yoghurt, and coconut water.



Remember, hydration is key to staying healthy during Ramadan.

## 2 Fatigue

Fatigue is a common issue during Ramadan. Here are some tips to combat it:

- Prioritize Sleep: Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night.
- Balanced Diet: Focus on nutrient-rich foods during your eating window.
- Hydration: Stay well-hydrated throughout the day, especially before and after fasting.
- Moderate Exercise: Light exercise, like walking or stretching, can boost energy levels.



- Limit Caffeine: While it may provide a temporary boost, caffeine can disrupt sleep and worsen fatigue in the long run.
- Power Naps: Short naps during the day can help refresh you.
- Manage Stress: Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation to reduce stress levels.
- Listen to Your Body: Don't push yourself too hard. Rest when you need to.



By following these tips, you can combat fatigue and enjoy a healthier Ramadan.

## 3 Digestive issues

Changing eating patterns can upset the digestive system, leading to constipation, indigestion, or heartburn.

Here are some tips to help manage digestive issues during Ramadan:

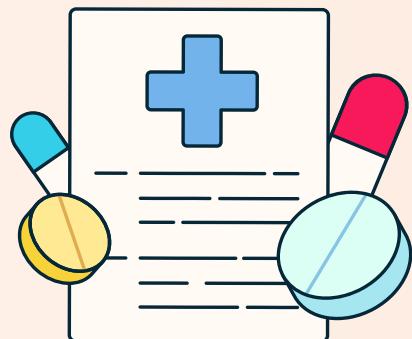
- Eat slowly and mindfully: Take your time, chew thoroughly, and focus on your food.
- Start with dates: Dates are a good source of fiber and natural sugars, helping to regulate digestion.
- Hydrate adequately: Drinking enough water before and after fasting is essential for proper digestion.
- Choose fiber-rich foods: Include plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your diet.



- Limit fatty and processed foods: These can be harder to digest and may cause discomfort.
- Avoid overeating: Eat moderate portions and listen to your body's fullness cues.
- Light exercise: Gentle physical activity can aid digestion.
- Manage stress: Stress can contribute to digestive problems. Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.
- Consult a doctor: If you experience persistent or severe digestive issues, seek medical advice.



Some common OTC  
medications can be used  
for digestive problems



Medications	Symptoms
Antacids - Maalox, Gaviscon	Heartburn and acid reflux
H2 Blockers - Facid (Famotidine)	Reduce stomach acid production
Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) - Omeprazole (Omeprazol), Esomeprazole (Nexium, Nexmezol), Pantoprazole (Pansec, Pantonex), Rabeprazole (Rabeloc, Pariet)	Stronger acid reducers, for more severe cases

Medications	Symptoms
Laxatives - Dulcolax, Duphalac, Fybogel, Nutrifibre	Constipation
Anti-diarrheal medications - Smecta, Imodium, Tasectan	Diarrhea
Probiotics - Ultrabiotique, Ultralevure, Actilosa, Lactibiane	To restore healthy gut bacteria

## 4 Headaches

Ramadan can be a challenging time for headaches, especially with changes in eating and sleeping patterns. Here are some tips to help:

- Stay hydrated: Dehydration is a common cause of headaches. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, throughout the day, particularly during the breaking of the fast.
- Eat a balanced diet: Focus on nutritious foods rich in vitamins and minerals. Avoid sugary and processed foods that can contribute to headaches.
- Get enough sleep: Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night.
- Manage stress: Ramadan can be a stressful time, so find healthy ways to manage stress, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time with loved ones.
- Avoid triggers: Identify any foods or activities that trigger your headaches and try to avoid them.
- Over-the-counter pain relievers: If you experience headaches, you can take over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen. However, consult a doctor if headaches are frequent, severe, or accompanied by other symptoms.

## 5

# Nutritional deficiencies

Ramadan can be a time of great spiritual reflection, but it can also be a challenge to maintain proper nutrition. Here are some tips to help you manage nutritional deficiencies during Ramadan:

- Eat a balanced diet: Focus on nutrient-rich foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats.
- Break your fast with dates and water: Dates are a great source of natural sugars and electrolytes, which can help replenish your body after a long fast.
- Include iron-rich foods: Iron deficiency is common during Ramadan. Include iron-rich foods like red meat, poultry, fish, lentils, spinach, and fortified cereals in your diet.
- Get enough vitamin D: Sunlight exposure is limited during Ramadan, so consider taking a vitamin D supplement.
- Supplements: Consider taking a multivitamin to ensure sufficient nutritional intake.



## 6

# Heat strokes

Heat stroke is a serious condition that can occur during Ramadan, especially in hot climates. Here's how to stay safe:

- Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of fluids during the breaking of the fast. Avoid sugary drinks, as they can dehydrate you.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day: Limit outdoor activities during the hottest hours, especially if you're fasting.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing: This will help your body stay cool.

- Take cool showers or baths: This can help lower your body temperature.
- Eat a balanced diet: Focus on nutrient-rich foods that will help you stay hydrated and energized.
- Be aware of the signs of heat stroke: Symptoms include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and loss of consciousness. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.



## 7 Low blood sugar

Low blood sugar, also known as hypoglycemia, can be a concern during Ramadan, especially for people with diabetes. Here's how to manage it:



- Eat a balanced diet: Focus on complex carbohydrates, lean protein, and healthy fats to help regulate blood sugar levels.
- Break your fast with dates and water: Dates are a good source of natural sugars, which can help raise blood sugar levels quickly.
- Avoid skipping meals: Don't skip suhoor or iftar.
- Monitor your blood sugar levels: If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar levels regularly and adjust your medication or insulin as needed.
- Be aware of the signs of low blood sugar: Symptoms include dizziness, sweating, headache, weakness, and confusion. If you experience any of these symptoms, eat or drink something sugary immediately.
- Carry a quick-acting source of sugar: Keep glucose tablets, juice, or candy on hand in case you experience low blood sugar.
- Consult a healthcare professional: If you have any concerns about managing low blood sugar during Ramadan, consult a doctor or registered dietitian for personalized advice.

# Healthier Cooking Alternatives

Deep frying has long been a popular method of cooking, especially for special occasions and traditional dishes. However, it's also known for adding excessive fats and calories to foods, making them less healthy. During Ramadan, when we are especially focused on our well-being, it's a perfect opportunity to explore healthier cooking alternatives that can transform our iftar meals.

The goal is not just to avoid unhealthy eating, but to make conscious choices that enhance the nutritional value of our meals while still maintaining the taste and enjoyment we associate with our favorite dishes. Here are several healthier alternatives to deep-frying:

## Baking

Baking is one of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce fat and calories in your meals. Whether you're making samosas, pakoras, or even chicken wings, you can achieve a crispy texture without the need for deep frying. Using parchment paper or a light spray of olive oil can help foods brown nicely in the oven.

### ***Why It's Healthier?***

- Lower in fat : Baking uses minimal oil compared to deep frying.
- Preserves nutrients : Many baked items retain more of their nutrients compared to deep-fried foods.



**Pro Tip:** Use whole wheat or multigrain flour for pastries to increase fiber content and overall nutrition.

## Air frying

Air fryers have gained popularity due to their ability to mimic the crispiness of fried foods without submerging them in oil. An air fryer uses hot air circulated around the food, producing a crispy exterior while keeping the inside moist.

### **Why It's Healthier?**

- Significantly less oil: Often, just a tablespoon or two is enough for air frying.
- Retained taste: You can enjoy your favorite dishes with a similar texture to deep-frying, without the excess fat.



## Grilling

Grilling imparts a unique flavor to foods and is another excellent alternative to deep frying. Whether it's meats, vegetables, or skewers, grilling is a fantastic way to cook without excess oil.

### **Why It's Healthier?**

- Less oil required: Grilled foods are often cooked with minimal fat.
- Reduces fat content: As food cooks on the grill, excess fat drips off, resulting in a leaner meal.



**Pro Tip:** Use a marinade of olive oil, lemon juice, and herbs for flavor without the added fat.

## Steaming

Steaming is one of the healthiest cooking methods. It preserves the nutrients of vegetables, fish, and other ingredients without the need for added fats or oils. Steaming works especially well for delicate foods and is a common method in Asian cooking.

## **Why It's Healthier?**

- No added fats: Steaming requires no oil, making it a low-fat option.
- Nutrient retention: Steaming helps retain more vitamins and minerals compared to other cooking methods.



**Pro tip:** Steamed dumplings, vegetables, and even fish can be made healthier without compromising flavor.

### **Sautéing & Stir-frying**

Sautéing and stir-frying are both great alternatives to deep frying, especially when done with heart-healthy oils like olive oil or avocado oil. These methods require less fat and allow you to cook quickly while retaining flavor.

## **Why It's Healthier?**

- Less oil: You only need a small amount of oil, making it a lower-calorie choice.
- Quick cooking: These methods help retain the nutrients in your food by cooking it quickly over high heat.



### **Using healthier oils**

If you must use oil, consider switching to healthier options such as olive oil, avocado oil, or coconut oil. These oils contain beneficial fats, such as omega-3 fatty acids, which are healthier for the body.

## **Why It's Healthier?**

- Heart-healthy fats : These oils are higher in monounsaturated fats, which are known to support heart health.
- Better for cooking : Some oils, like avocado oil, can withstand higher temperatures without breaking down.

# A healthier iftaar



Making small changes in how we cook can have a significant impact on our overall health. By choosing healthier alternatives to deep frying, we can still enjoy traditional dishes while making them more nutritious for our bodies. This approach not only benefits us during Ramadan but also contributes to a long-term healthier lifestyle.

It's time to reconsider the traditional cooking methods we've grown accustomed to and embrace techniques that will nourish our bodies in the best possible way.

*Ref: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - Healthy cooking methods and their impact on nutrition.*



## DO'S AND DONT'S IN RAMADAN



### DO'S

Eat consistent food for sehri: Consuming a nutritious meal before dawn helps sustain you throughout the day.

Make sincere intentions: Start each fast with a clear intention to fast for the sake of Allah.

Give Sadaqah generously: Increase your acts of charity during Ramadan, as the rewards are multiplied.

Make more du'a: Regularly ask Allah for forgiveness, guidance, and mercy, especially during the last third of the night.

Seek Laylat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree): Intensify your worship during the last ten nights of Ramadan, seeking the Night of Power.

Maintain family bonds: Spend quality time with family, share meals, and encourage one another in acts of worship.

Reflect on Your Actions: Use this time to self-reflect, seek forgiveness, and work on improving yourself spiritually.

Follow the Sunnah by breaking your fast with dates and water, then proceed with a balanced meal.

Perform all five daily prayers: Ensure you observe the obligatory prayers on time, as they are fundamental to your worship.

Control your speech: Avoid gossip, backbiting, and harmful speech to maintain the purity of your fast.

Engage in increased Tilawat-e-Quran and reading of commentary of the Holy Quran: Dedicate time daily to read and reflect upon the Qur'an, aiming to complete it by the end of Ramadan.

Perform Iftar with gratitude: Be thankful for the food and the opportunity to fast, and offer a prayer of thanks before eating.



# DON'T'S



Avoid unhealthy and fast foods: Refrain from consuming excessive sugary and oily foods during Sehri and Iftar.

Do not engage in negative behavior: Avoid anger, arguing, or engaging in sinful behavior. Fasting is about controlling your actions and emotions.

Do not forget to make Du'a for others: Focus not only on your own needs but also ask Allah to help others and grant them success, health, and forgiveness, especially for Huzoor-e-Anwar, the elderly and sick people, the poor, the orphans, and other needy people.

Avoid overeating when breaking your fast: instead, eat moderately to stay healthy and energized for prayers.

Do not waste time with distractions: Avoid unnecessary distractions such as excessive social media, TV shows, or other time-wasting activities during the day.

Do not waste food: Be mindful of your food intake. Avoid wasting food, as it goes against the spirit of Ramadan, which emphasizes moderation.

Do not engage in gossip or Ghibat (backbiting): Refrain from speaking ill of others or engaging in gossip, as it can invalidate the reward of your fast.

Never skip your obligatory prayers, as they are the foundation of your worship. Ensure you pray on time.

Do not lose patience: Practice patience and tolerance, even when faced with difficult situations. Avoid getting irritated or angry, as this can diminish the reward of your fast.

Do not neglect the night prayer (Tahajjud or Taraweeh): Ramadan is a special time for extra worship. Don't miss out on the opportunity to pray Nawafil.

Do not forget to give Fitrana: Fitrana has to be offered before Eid. At times it is observed that it is offered right before or after the Eid prayer, however it is better to offer fitrana well before Eid, so that the poor and needy can be provided with the means to celebrate Eid in time.



# EATING HABITS THAT MAKE FASTING EASIER VS HARDER DURING RAMADAN:



## EASIER

Eating a balanced sehri with protein, healthy fats, and fiber-rich carbs.

Drinking plenty of water during sehri and iftar to stay hydrated.

Avoiding salty foods in sehri to prevent thirst during the day.

Eating fiber-rich foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains) in sehri.

Incorporating healthy fats (avocados, nuts, olive oil) into sehri.

Breaking your fast with a light iftar (dates and water) followed by a balanced meal.

Eating protein-rich foods (chicken, eggs, legumes) during iftar.

Consuming foods with a low glycemic index (oats, quinoa, sweet potatoes).

Gradually adjusting your eating habits before Ramadan.

Getting enough rest at night to maintain energy levels during the day.

## HARDER

Skipping sehri or having a very light meal.

Eating large, heavy meals at iftar or sehri.

Relying heavily on sugary foods at iftar.

Drinking too much caffeine before and after fasting.

Not drinking enough water during non-fasting hours.

Eating processed or fried foods at iftar.

Overeating at iftar in an attempt to "catch up."

Consuming too much salt, leading to increased thirst.

Skipping naps or rest during the day.

Indulging in unhealthy snacks after iftar (chips, fast food).

# LIGHT WORKOUTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Try incorporating a DHIKR walk.. An afternoon walk before Iftaar to reach the count that Huzoor (aba) has instructed us. Click [here](#) to watch the video.



## THE PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF SALAT (PRAYER POSTURES & FITNESS)

### Physical Health Benefits of Sajdah



- **Supports the Lower Back & Neck:** When you lower and lift your head during Sajdah, your neck and back muscles work to maintain balance and posture.
- **Stretches the Toes & Joints:** Your toes get a good stretch, which improves flexibility and overall body health.
- **Relieves Back Pain:** The bending movement of Sajdah helps create space between the joints in your spine, reducing pressure on nerves and easing back pain and sciatica.
- **Stretches Back Muscles:** It helps loosen tight back muscles, including those along the spine.
- **Improves Spine Flexibility:** Moving mindfully through the spine during Sajdah can help make your back more flexible and reduce stiffness.
- **Releases Hip Tension:** Since we spend a lot of time sitting, our hip muscles get tight. The repeated movements in Sajdah help stretch and relax the hip area.
- **Eases Lower Back Discomfort:** It helps reduce tension in the lower back and around the hip joints, which can improve stability and reduce pain.

“

The Holy Prophet (saw) in a hadith advised not to put the forearms flatly on the ground but to keep them elevated above ground and this is better for the forearm and arm muscles.



”

**Boosts Brain Function:** The position stimulates the brain's frontal lobe, which is responsible for memory, focus, and motivation. It also helps remove harmful toxins from the brain.

**Strengthens the Core:** The right-angle position of the knees helps tone stomach muscles and prevents belly fat buildup.

**Removes Harmful Charges:** Placing the forehead on the ground helps release electrostatic charges from the body, which may reduce stress and tension.

**Relieves Sinus Congestion:** The position helps drain mucus from the sinuses, reducing the chances of sinus infections.

**Improves Blood Circulation:** More blood reaches the head, including the eyes, ears, nose, and lungs, which enhances vision, hearing, and breathing. It helps prevent headaches and reduces the risk of brain-related issues like hemorrhages.

**Regulates Blood Pressure:** It can lower high blood pressure by improving circulation.



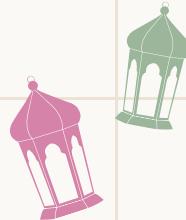
**Promotes Lung Health:** Sujud helps expel stale air from the lower part of the lungs, allowing fresh air to enter and improving breathing efficiency. This reduces the risk of lung diseases.

**Supports Pregnancy & Women's Health:** Sujud can help maintain the correct position of the fetus, reduce the risk of complications like a breech baby, and assist in conditions like a tilted uterus.





# Students' corner



## AT WHAT AGE SHOULD ONE START OBSERVING COMPULSORY FASTING?

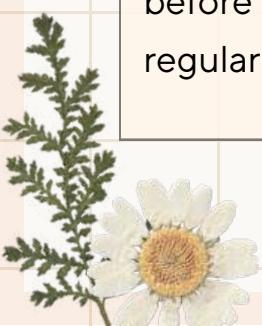
Guidance by Hazrat Khalifatul Massih V, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) during Gulshan-e-Waqfe Nau program held in Australia on 12th October 2013

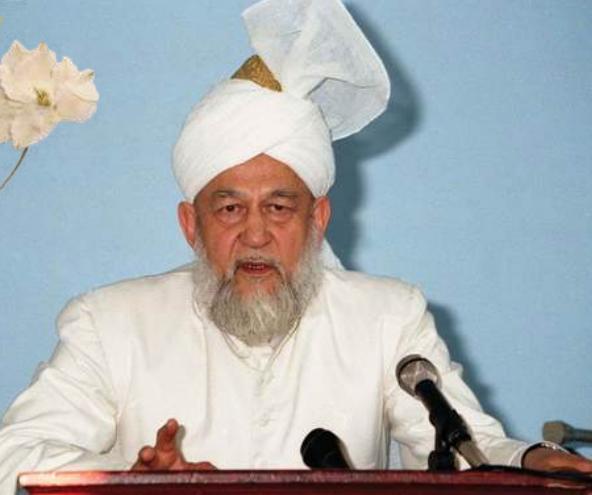


Fasting becomes compulsory upon you when you have fully matured. Usually, it is at the age of 17 or 18 that fasting becomes compulsory. One should definitely start fasting thereafter. If you are really fond of it, you can try out one, two, three or four fasts at the age of eight or ten. However, that would not be compulsory. Fasting will become compulsory upon you when you grow older and are able to endure the fasts. The endurance will come once you have become a young adult. When you reach the age of at least 17 or 18 years, then it is okay to fast.

Younger children should also keep two or three fasts every Ramadan so that they can experience the arrival of Ramadan. Even if you decide not to fast, then wake up in the morning and eat sehri along with your parents, offer Nawafil [voluntary prayers] and offer the [obligatory] prayers regularly.

Ramadan for students and girls like you is that you should definitely wake up during Ramadan, eat sehri, make all the arrangements, offer two or four Nawafil before that, offer the [obligatory] prayers regularly and recite the Holy Quran regularly.





## IS IT PERMISSIBLE FOR STUDENTS TO ABSTAIN FROM FASTING IF THEY FEEL THAT IT MAY HINDER THEIR STUDIES?

Guidance by Hazrat Khalifatul Massih IV, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh)

You know, if the general principle applicable to every such situation is this,

لَا يُكَفِّرُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَوْ شَعْهَا

{Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity [Holy Quran 2:287]}

This is why those labourers who have to work very hard for earning their bread, otherwise there wouldn't be any source of livelihood for them, during the extreme summer days in Pakistan, in India for instance and other hot countries, they are permitted to postpone their fasting till such times as there will not be too much for them.

Hardship is not the object or the goal of fasting or any other worship. The goal is purification and ultimate creation of love and a sense of submission to the will of God. So, that should be achieved. And no such worship should be undertaken as is beyond one's capabilities at a time. But that should not create ground for lame excuses.

In fact, such decisions can only be rightly or wrongly taken by the person concerned. Even the parents cannot take such decisions because each child is built differently and each child knows his own capabilities better than the parents do. So, if a child can keep the fast and read alright without a substantial loss, then he should continue fasting.

I never found it at all interfering with the studies at all in any way or any other activities. Children are strongly built human beings, even stronger in many regards. Physical exercise is also possible during fasting, quite extensively too.

Why do you expect small things from your children? Why don't you make them fragile and small-minded about these things? Try to make them courageous and infuse confidence into them. I think this is just a lame excuse. As far as the children are concerned, a majority of course among them would be capable of fasting as well as studying with some hardships.

Yes, but why not? Everybody else has to go through some hardships for the sake of earning some better qualities. So that is a part of life.

# How to make the most out of Ramadan as Students?

Managing time effectively during Ramadan can be a challenge for students balancing their academic responsibilities with the spiritual practices of fasting, prayer, and reflection. This blessed month is not only a time for self-discipline but also an opportunity to deepen one's connection with faith and to practice gratitude, patience, and compassion. While it is essential to manage study schedules, students must also remember the essence of this month—its focus on spiritual growth and self-improvement. By striking a balance between religious observances and academic commitments, students can make the most of both their educational pursuits and the profound blessings of Ramadan.

You may find the following tips helpful:



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## 1. Prioritize a healthy sleep schedule

Many students find it difficult to wake up early after long study hours. Ramadan is the perfect opportunity to get into the habit of doing so. Waking up for sehri is an integral part of fasting, but even children who are not fasting are encouraged to have sehri with the family. Students can thus go to bed earlier, thus ensuring they get enough time to sleep. After Fajr prayers, students can engage in work that requires light focus, as morning time optimizes concentration.

## 2. Tahajjud prayers

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) emphasized their importance, stating,

‘‘  
Whoso stands in tahajjud prayer in  
Ramadan with firm faith and with the  
intention of achieving the pleasure of God,  
all of their previous sins are forgiven.  
’’



For students, engaging in Tahajjud can enhance spiritual growth and provide a sense of tranquility, which may positively influence academic performance. Incorporating this practice into one's routine during Ramadan can lead to both spiritual and personal development.

## 3. Healthy eating

During Ramadan, maintaining a balanced diet is crucial for students to stay energized and focused throughout the day. Eating nutrient-rich foods during sehri and iftar helps sustain energy levels and supports overall health.



Incorporating whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and plenty of water into meals can prevent dehydration and ensure that the body has the necessary fuel for both academic and spiritual activities. It's also important to avoid overeating at iftar, as this can lead to sluggishness and hinder concentration during study sessions.

#### 4. Making time for Ibaadat

Throughout the day, students can incorporate small but meaningful moments of ibaadat, utilizing breaks for dhikr (remembrance of Allah) or reading Jamaat books. During Iftar, instead of rushing through the meal, students can pause to reflect, engage in extra worship, and thank Allah for the strength to fast.

By being intentional with time and creating small pockets of worship throughout the day, students can stay spiritually connected while still fulfilling their academic duties during this blessed month. Before going to bed, they can again make time to read the Quran or Jamaat books. Mindfully reducing idle screen time allows for plenty of time to engage in Ibaadat.

-Reading articles from Al-Hakam or Review of Religions are a quick way to boost your religious knowledge without having to commit to a book



-Reading the short commentary of the Holy Quran (Tafseer-e-Sagheer) by Hadhrat Musleh Maoud is an accessible way to increase your comprehension of the words of Allah, using your phone itself.

-Challenge yourself to memorizing a portion or Surah from the Holy Quran during the month of Ramadhan. Listening to audios of the chosen portion or Surah on your way to school or during idle waiting time, rather than listening to music can help you easily memorize your chosen portion or Surah.



# Example of a timetable students can adopt during this Ramadan:

04:15-04:30	Tahajjud Prayers
04:30-04:50	Sehri
05:00-05:20	Tilawat Quran
05:20-05:35	Fajr Prayers
05:35-06:30	Work requiring light focus e.g Homework/Research
06:30-07:30	Getting ready for school/University
08:00-15:00	School/University
13:00	Make time for Zuhra prayers, if possible
15:30-17:00	Tuition
17:15	Asr prayers
17:30-18:30	Shower & Rest; preparation for Iftar
18:30-19:15	Iftar & Maghrib Prayers
19:15-20:00	Work requiring more focus
20:00-21:15	Esha & Taraweeh prayers
21:15-22:00	Work requiring more focus
22:00-22:15	Tilawat Quran/Reading time, Sleep

The above is just an example and will vary from student to student.  
Feel free to use the template as a guide to help manage your time.

# Ramadan FAQs & Practical Tips

## 1. What is Ramadan?



Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar, during which approximately 1.9 billion Muslims around the world fast every day from sunrise to sunset. The month of Ramadan begins with the sighting of the crescent moon, and its end is marked by the well-known celebration known as Eid-ul-Fitr. It is not merely about abstaining from food and drink, for this alone does not bring any spiritual benefit.

It is narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:  
**“There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger.”**  
(Sunan Ibn Majah, 1690)

In the Friday Sermon of May 10, 2019, Beloved Huzoor (aba) stated:  
“To remain hungry from morning until evening is not considered a fast. The Promised Messiah (as) has stated, ‘**Through the practice of fasting, God Almighty desires for a person to decrease one form of nourishment and increase in another form of sustenance. A person observing the fast should always be mindful that observing the fast does not simply mean that one should remain hungry. Rather, one should remain occupied in the remembrance of God Almighty in order to develop a state of inclination towards God and detachment from the world.**’ That is so that a person progresses in forming a relationship with God Almighty, in worshipping and remembering Him, and in detaching themselves from the world.”

## 2. Why do Muslims pay special heed to the Holy Quran in Ramadan?

Once, while speaking about the essence of Ramadan and its link to the Holy Quran, His Holiness (aba) said:

“This is a month in which a spiritual atmosphere is fostered, and this is the atmosphere that should be created among the community of believers. Alongside fasting during this month, greater attention is also given to worship, as it ought to be. Greater attention is given to reciting and listening to the Holy Quran, and if one desires to attain the true blessings of fasting, then alongside worship, greater care should be given to reading and listening to the Holy Quran.

Ramadan has a special connection with the Holy Quran (2:186).”

His Holiness (aba) also mentioned the verse:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى  
لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ

**“The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination.”**

Huzoor (aba) further stated that according to some authentic narrations, the first revelation descended upon the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) on the 24th of Ramadan. Additionally, every year, Angel Gabriel would recite the entire Holy Quran to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) during the month of Ramadan. (Friday Sermon – 31.03.2023)

For this reason, Muslims are encouraged to pay special heed to reading and pondering over the Holy Quran during Ramadan and to complete its recitation at least once.

### 3. What is the meaning of the word Ramadan?

The word ‘Ramadan’ is derived from the Arabic root Ramdh (رمض), which means ‘intensely hot’ or ‘burning’. The month of Ramadan is named as such for three reasons:



1. One who fasts experiences heat due to thirst.



2. Worship and devotion in this month burn away traces of sin.



3. Devotion in this month kindles the warmth of love for the Creator and fellow beings.

### 4. Is fasting mandatory?

Islam prescribes fasting for all Muslim adults who have the physical ability to do so. However, since Islam does not burden anyone beyond their capacity, exemptions are granted to those who are sick or traveling. They are required to complete the missed fasts later, as stated in the Holy Quran (2:186):

وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضاً أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ آيَاتٍ أُخَرَ  
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

**“But whoso is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you.”**

Pregnant women, menstruating women, and nursing mothers are also exempted from fasting due to potential health challenges. They are required to complete the missed fasts later and they must pay **Fidya** (compensation for missed fasts). (Friday Sermon - 10.05.2019)



Hazrat Musleh Maoud (ra) once shed light upon the issue of travelling while fasting in one of his sermons.

He explained that fasting is forbidden by the Shariah during a journey that is made with the intention of travelling and for which regular preparations are undertaken by preparing the luggage, even if it is a short journey. However, a journey that is made as part of a trip for enjoyment or excursion will not be considered as “travelling” for the purposes of fasting and one would fast during it.

## 5. What is forbidden during fasting hours?

From dawn to dusk, Muslims must abstain from:

- Eating food.
- Drinking water.
- Deliberate vomiting.
- Engaging in sexual relations.



Additionally, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) strongly discouraged fighting and the use of foul language while fasting. It is narrated in a Hadith that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

• •

**Fasting is a shield (or a screen or a shelter). So, the person observing fasting should avoid sexual relations and should not behave foolishly or impudently. If someone fights or abuses him, he should say twice, 'I am fasting.' By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, the smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the fragrance of musk.**

**(Allah says about the fasting person), 'He has left his food, drink, and desires for My sake. The fast is for Me, so I will reward (the fasting person) for it, and the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times.'**

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 1894)

• •

## 6. What is Fidya, and how is it paid?

For those unable to observe their fasts during Ramadan due to illness, incapacity, or travel, the Qur'an instructs them to pay Fidya as compensation for the missed opportunity to perform this virtuous act, while still having the chance to fast later. Fidya is allocated to the poor and needy, regardless of their religion.



"The rate of Fidya, depending on individual circumstances, is equivalent to two meals for every fast which has been missed."

(An Introduction to Financial Sacrifice)

Fidya can be given in the form of food or money (after proper calculation).

Regarding Fidya, Huzoor (aba) stated in his Friday Sermon of 10 May 2019:

*"Those afflicted with temporary illnesses can also give the Fidya so that they may recover and be able to fast. However, once one has recovered from an illness or completed a journey, it becomes obligatory to make up for the missed fasts. The necessity of both—observing the missed fasts and giving Fidya—is established by the following:*

*The Promised Messiah (as) explains that those who recover and can fast should not assume that paying Fidya alone suffices. Such a notion opens the door to legitimizing what is otherwise impermissible. If a person recovers after Ramadan or falls ill during it but later regains health, simply saying, 'I did not fast in Ramadan, but I have paid Fidya,' is not correct. This would set a precedent for false exemptions and wrongful innovations. Even if one has paid Fidya, they are still required to make up for the missed fasts at any time during the year."*

## 7. Isn't fasting too difficult?

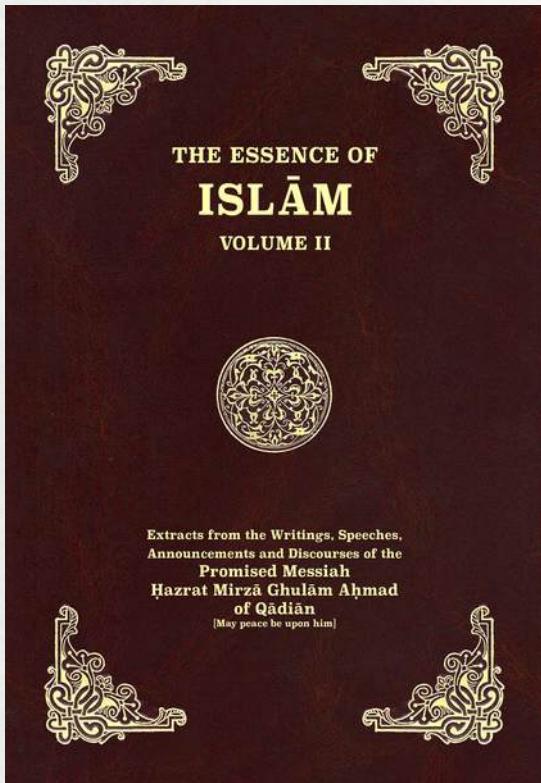
Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:



**"Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity." (2:287)**

The obligation of fasting is only upon adult Muslims who are capable of fulfilling it. Exemptions are granted to those who are ill, traveling, pregnant, elderly, children, or facing genuine hardship. If they recover or find themselves able to fast later, they should make up for the missed fasts. However, if they remain unable, they may pay Fidya.

While fasting is not necessarily easy, its essence is to cultivate self-discipline and spiritual growth by reducing dependence on food, drink, and worldly desires, thereby strengthening one's connection with Allah.



The Promised Messiah (as) beautifully expressed this purpose:

**"During that month [of Ramadan], one should discard one's preoccupation with eating and drinking; and cutting asunder from these needs should address oneself wholly towards God.**

**Unfortunate is the person who is bestowed with material bread and pays no attention to spiritual bread."**

(The Essence of Islam, Vol. 2, p. 316)

## 8. Why do Muslims offer more charity during Ramadan?

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was once asked about the best form of charity, to which he replied:

### Charity in Ramadan

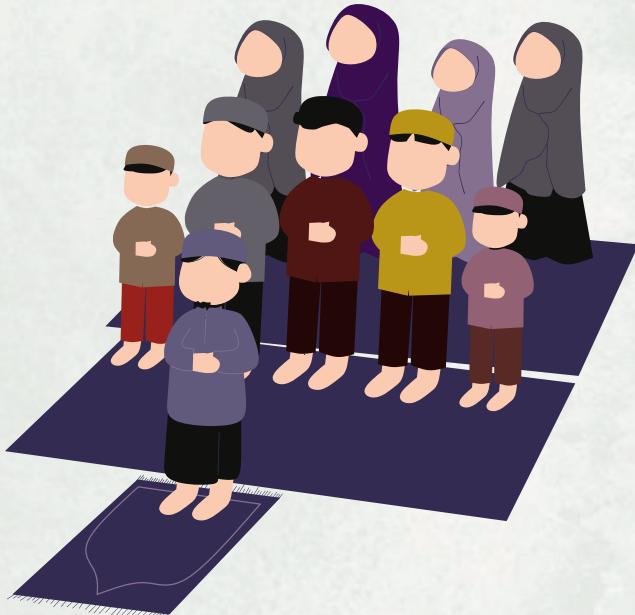
(Jami' al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 663)

It is also narrated that during Ramadan, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was most generous in giving charity, just like the blowing wind.

(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2308a)

Following this noble example, Muslims strive to maximize their charitable giving in Ramadan, recognizing the immense blessings attached to it. They aim to embody the Prophet's (ﷺ) generosity by supporting the needy, engaging in acts of kindness, and strengthening their spirituality.

## 9. Where do Muslims go every night during Ramadan?



Ramadan places special emphasis on prayer. Among the most virtuous prayers is Tahajjud, performed in the early hours of the morning after a portion of the night has been spent in sleep. The term 'Tahajjud' literally means to wake up after sleeping and dedicate oneself to worship.

For those unable to pray Tahajjud, another significant option is Tarawih, offered in congregation after Isha prayer. In many mosques, the entire Qur'an is recited throughout the nights of Ramadan during Tarawih, providing an opportunity for communal reflection and spiritual upliftment.

## 10. What is Lailatul Qadr (The Night of Decree)?

Lailatul Qadr is one of the most sacred nights in Islam. The Holy Qur'an states:

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۝

"The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months." [97:4]

This means that worship on this night carries rewards greater than 83 years of devotion. Lailatul Qadr is also a night of immense mercy and forgiveness, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

**"Whoever established prayers on the Night of Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven."**

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 1901)

Huzoor (aba) explained in his Friday Sermon of 27 August 2010:

**"From various narrations of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, we find that in the last ten days of Ramadan, one night comes that is known as 'The Night of Decree.' On this night, God directs His special mercy and attention toward His sincere servants. When they reach a heightened state of spirituality, they are blessed with an extraordinary experience of Divine grace and nearness. This is why Muslims place such great emphasis on the last ten days of Ramadan."**



## 11. What is Eid-ul-Fitr?



Eid-ul-Fitr, one of the two major Islamic festivals, is celebrated on the 1st of Shawwal, marking the conclusion of Ramadan—a month of fasting, devotion, and self-improvement. The term Al-Fitr means breaking the fast, symbolizing not just the end of Ramadan but also a transition into maintaining the spiritual discipline cultivated during the month.



Eid is a day of gratitude, joy, and unity. Muslims gather for a special Eid prayer, visit family and friends, and engage in acts of charity and kindness. However, Eid is not merely a celebration; rather, it serves as a reminder that the spiritual progress achieved during Ramadan should extend beyond it. True joy and inner peace stem from maintaining a connection with Allah, caring for others, and striving for self-betterment throughout the year.

# RECIPE BOOK

for this Ramadan

# OATMEAL WITH DATES AND NUTS

**Servings:** 1

**Time:** 10 minutes

## Ingredients:

- ½ cup rolled oats
- 1 cup milk or water
- 2 dates, chopped
- 1 tbsp almonds or walnuts, chopped
- ½ tsp honey (optional)

## Instructions:

1. In a saucepan, heat the milk or water and add the oats.
2. Cook on low heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Remove from heat and mix in chopped dates and nuts.
4. Drizzle with honey if desired. Serve warm.



## **Significance:**

Oats provide complex carbohydrates for long-lasting energy, while dates offer natural sugars to keep you energized. Nuts add protein and healthy fats.

## **Islamic Insight:**

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) frequently ate dates, and they are mentioned multiple times in Ahadith. Incorporating them into Sehri reflects his Sunnah. (Al Hakam)

# GRILLED CHICKEN WITH MIXED VEGETABLES

**Servings:** 2

**Time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients:

- 2 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp paprika
- 1 cup mixed vegetables  
(carrots, bell peppers, zucchini)

## Instructions:

1. Marinate chicken in olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and spices for 10 minutes.
2. Heat a grill pan and cook chicken for 5-6 minutes per side until fully cooked.
3. In the same pan, sauté vegetables for 5 minutes.
4. Serve together.



**Significance:**  
Grilled chicken provides lean protein for muscle recovery after fasting, while vegetables offer essential vitamins and fiber.

# DATE SHAKE

**Prep Time: 5 minutes**

**Servings: 2**



## Ingredients:

- 6 pitted dates
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk (or any milk of choice)
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract (optional)
- Ice cubes (optional, for colder consistency)



## Method:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth and creamy.
3. Taste and adjust sweetness or consistency as desired (add more milk or dates).
4. Serve chilled.

## Nutrition Fact:

Dates are high in fiber, which aids in digestion. They also provide a good source of antioxidants and essential minerals like potassium, magnesium, and copper.

(Source: National Nutrient Database, USDA)

# MUSHROOM FRITTATA

**Prep Time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Servings:** 4

## Ingredients:

- 6 large eggs
- 1 cup mushrooms (sliced)
- 1/4 cup onion (diced)
- 1/4 cup bell peppers (diced)
- 1/2 cup spinach (chopped)
- 1/4 cup cheese (optional, such as cheddar or feta)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp olive oil



## Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat.
3. Add onions, peppers, and mushrooms. Cook until softened, about 5-7 minutes.
4. Stir in spinach and cook for another 2 minutes.
5. In a bowl, whisk eggs, salt, and pepper, then pour over the vegetables in the skillet.
6. Sprinkle cheese on top if desired.
7. Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake for 10-12 minutes until the frittata is set.
8. Serve warm.

## Nutrition Fact:

Mushrooms are an excellent source of B-vitamins, including riboflavin and niacin, which are essential for energy production. They also contain antioxidants that support immune health.

(Source: National Institute of Health, NIH)

# HUMMUS

**Prep Time: 10 minutes**

**Servings: 6**

## Ingredients:

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 tsp cumin (optional)
- Water to adjust consistency

## Method:

1. In a food processor, blend chickpeas, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper.
2. Add water as needed to achieve a creamy consistency.
3. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed.
4. Serve with pita bread or veggies.

## Nutrition Fact:

Chickpeas (garbanzo beans) are a good source of protein, fiber, and essential minerals like iron and magnesium. They help stabilize blood sugar levels.

(Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)

# COUSCOUS SALAD

**Prep Time: 10 minutes**

**Cooking Time: 5 minutes**

**Servings: 4**

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup couscous
- 1 1/4 cups boiling water or vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup cucumber (diced)
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes (halved)
- 1/4 cup red onion (thinly sliced)
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley (chopped)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Method:

1. Bring the water or broth to a boil. Pour over couscous in a large bowl, cover, and let it steam for 5 minutes.
2. Fluff the couscous with a fork, then allow it to cool slightly.
3. Add cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, and parsley to the couscous.
4. Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice over the salad, then toss to combine.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

## Nutrition Fact:

Couscous is a good source of selenium, an antioxidant mineral that helps reduce inflammation and supports immune function.

(Source: National Nutrient Database, USDA)



# MANAKEESH (LEBANESE FLATBREAD)

**Prep Time:** 10 minutes

**Resting Time:** 1 hour

**Cooking Time:** 10-12 minutes

**Servings:** 4

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dry yeast
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1/4 cup za'atar (a blend of thyme, sesame seeds, and sumac)
- 3 tbsp olive oil (for topping)



## Method:

1. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water. Let sit for 5-10 minutes until foamy.
2. In a large bowl, mix flour and salt. Add the yeast mixture and olive oil, and knead the dough for about 5-7 minutes until smooth.
3. Cover the dough and let it rise for 1 hour in a warm place.
4. Preheat the oven to 475°F (245°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Punch down the dough and divide it into 4 portions. Roll each portion into a flat circle (about 1/4 inch thick).
6. In a small bowl, combine zaatar with olive oil to make a paste.
7. Spread the za'atar mixture evenly on top of each dough circle.
8. Bake for 10-12 minutes until golden brown.
9. Serve warm

## Nutrition Fact:

Za'atar is rich in antioxidants from thyme and sumac, both of which have anti-inflammatory properties. Sesame seeds provide a good source of healthy fats.

(Source: National Institute of Health, NIH)



### Recipe 8

Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 25 minutes  
Servings: 4

## ROASTED RED PEPPER SOUP

### Ingredients:

- 3 red bell peppers, roasted and peeled
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 medium potato, peeled and diced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup heavy cream (optional)
- Fresh basil for garnish

### Method:

1. Roast the red peppers by placing them under a broiler or on a grill until the skins are charred, about 5-7 minutes. Peel the skin off and remove seeds.
2. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, sautéing for 3-4 minutes until softened.
3. Add diced potato, roasted peppers, cumin, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes.
4. Blend the soup using an immersion blender or in batches in a blender until smooth.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste, and stir in heavy cream if desired.
6. Garnish with fresh basil and serve hot.

### Nutrition Fact:

Red bell peppers are an excellent source of Vitamin C and beta-carotene, which help boost the immune system and promote healthy skin.

(Source: National Nutrient Database, USDA)

# BEEF SHEESH KEBAB

**Prep Time: 20 minutes**

**Cooking Time: 10-12 minutes**

**Servings: 4**

## **Ingredients:**

**1 lb beef (cubed, preferably sirloin)**

**1/4 cup olive oil**

**1 tbsp lemon juice**

**2 garlic cloves, minced**

**1 tsp ground cumin**

**1 tsp ground coriander**

**1 tsp paprika**

**Salt and pepper to taste**

**Skewers (wooden or metal)**

## **Method:**

**In a bowl, combine olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, coriander, paprika, salt, and pepper.**

**Add the beef cubes to the marinade and mix well. Let it marinate for at least 30 minutes (or up to 2 hours for more flavor).**

**Preheat the grill or a grill pan over medium-high heat.**

**Thread the marinated beef onto skewers.**

**Grill the skewers for 10-12 minutes, turning occasionally, until the beef reaches your desired level of doneness.**

**Serve with rice, pita, or a salad.**

## **Nutrition Fact:**

Beef is a great source of protein and iron, essential for building and repairing tissues and supporting red blood cell production.

(Source: National Nutrient Database, USDA)



# CHICKEN SHAWARMA

**Prep Time:** 15 minutes

**Marinating Time:** 1 hour

**Cooking Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Servings:** 4

## Ingredients:

- 2 lbs chicken thighs, boneless and skinless
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tbsp yogurt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp ground paprika
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 pita or flatbreads
- Fresh veggies (tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce) for serving



## Method:

1. In a bowl, mix olive oil, yogurt, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, paprika, turmeric, coriander, salt, and pepper.
2. Add the chicken thighs and marinate for at least 1 hour (preferably overnight for better flavor).
3. Preheat the grill or a skillet over medium-high heat.
4. Cook the chicken for 7-10 minutes per side, until fully cooked and browned.
5. Slice the chicken into thin strips.
6. Serve the chicken in pita bread with fresh veggies and a drizzle of tahini or garlic sauce.

## Nutrition Fact:

Chicken thighs are an excellent source of protein and B-vitamins, especially niacin, which helps convert food into energy.

(Source: National Nutrient Database, USDA)

# DATE COOKIES

**Prep Time: 15 minutes**

**Cooking Time: 10-12 minutes**

**Servings: 12**

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup honey or maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup pitted dates, chopped
- 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped (optional)



## Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, mix the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt.
3. In another bowl, beat the butter, brown sugar, honey, and vanilla extract until smooth.
4. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, stirring until combined.
5. Fold in the chopped dates and walnuts.
6. Drop spoonfuls of dough onto the prepared baking sheet.
7. Bake for 10-12 minutes, until the cookies are golden brown.
8. Let cool on a wire rack.

## Nutrition Fact:

Dates are high in fiber, promoting digestive health and providing a quick source of natural energy. They also contain essential minerals like potassium and magnesium.

(Source: National Nutrient Database, USDA)



# A word of thanks

*Jazakumullah to all  
those who contributed  
to this initiative,  
and may this small  
effort be of benefit to  
all who seek guidance  
in navigating this  
special time InshAllah*

