[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox holiday](/wiki/Template:Infobox_holiday) **Ramadan** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl), [Template:IPA-ar](/wiki/Template:IPA-ar);[[note 1]](#cite_note-1) also [romanized](/wiki/Romanization_of_Arabic) as **Ramazan**, **Ramadhan**, or **Ramathan**) is the [ninth month](/wiki/Ramadan_(calendar_month)) of the [Islamic calendar](/wiki/Islamic_calendar),[[1]](#cite_note-2) and is observed by [Muslims](/wiki/Muslim) worldwide as a month of [fasting](/wiki/Sawm) to commemorate the [first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad](/wiki/Muhammad's_first_revelation) according to Islamic belief.[[2]](#cite_note-3)[[3]](#cite_note-4) This annual observance is regarded as one of the [Five Pillars of Islam](/wiki/Five_Pillars_of_Islam).[[4]](#cite_note-5) The month lasts 29–30 days based on the visual sightings of the [crescent moon](/wiki/Hilal_(crescent_moon)), according to numerous biographical accounts compiled in the [hadiths](/wiki/Hadith).[[5]](#cite_note-6)[[6]](#cite_note-7) The word Ramadan comes from the Arabic root *ramiḍa* or *ar-ramaḍ,* which means scorching heat or dryness.[[7]](#cite_note-8) Fasting is [fardh](/wiki/Fardh) (obligatory) for adult Muslims, except those who are suffering from an illness, travelling, are elderly, pregnant, [breastfeeding](/wiki/Breastfeeding), [diabetic](/wiki/Diabetes_mellitus) or going through [menstrual bleeding](/wiki/Menstrual_cycle).[[8]](#cite_note-9) Fasting the month of Ramadan was made obligatory (wājib) during the month of [Sha'aban](/wiki/Sha'aban), in the second year after the Muslims migrated from [Mecca](/wiki/Mecca) to [Medina](/wiki/Medina). [Fatwas](/wiki/Fatwa) have been issued declaring that Muslims who live in regions with a natural phenomenon such as the [midnight sun](/wiki/Midnight_sun) or [polar night](/wiki/Polar_night) should follow the timetable of [Mecca](/wiki/Mecca).[[9]](#cite_note-10) While fasting from dawn until sunset, Muslims refrain from consuming food, drinking liquids, smoking, and engaging in sexual relations. Muslims are also instructed to refrain from sinful behavior that may negate the reward of fasting, such as false speech (insulting, [backbiting](/wiki/Backbiting), cursing, lying, etc.) and fighting.[[10]](#cite_note-11)

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## Religious practices[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Ramazan_with_the_poor.jpg)[Azim Azimzade](/wiki/Azim_Azimzade). Ramadan of the poor people. 1938 The predominant practice during Ramadan is fasting from dawn to sunset. The pre-dawn meal before the fast is called the [*suhur*](/wiki/Suhur), while the meal at sunset that breaks the fast is the *iftar*. Considering the high diversity of the global Muslim population, it is impossible to describe typical suhur or iftar meals.

Muslims also engage in increased prayer and charity during Ramadan. Ramadan is also a month where Muslims try to practice increased self-discipline. This is motivated by the Hadith, especially in Al-Bukhari[[30]](#cite_note-32) and Muslim,[[31]](#cite_note-33) that "When Ramadan arrives, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of hell are locked up and devils are put in chains."<ref name=guardian>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Fasting[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, improvement and increased devotion and worship. Muslims are expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam. The fast (sawm) begins at dawn and ends at sunset. In addition to abstaining from eating and drinking, Muslims also increase restraint, such as abstaining from sexual relations and generally sinful speech and behavior. The act of fasting is said to redirect the heart away from worldly activities, its purpose being to cleanse the soul by freeing it from harmful impurities. Ramadan also teaches Muslims how to better practice self-discipline, self-control,[[32]](#cite_note-34) sacrifice, and empathy for those who are less fortunate; thus encouraging actions of generosity and compulsory charity ([zakat](/wiki/Zakat)).<ref name=WP>[Help for the Heavy at Ramadan](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/27/AR2008092702592_2.html?nav=rss_world), [*Washington Post*](/wiki/Washington_Post), 27 September 2008</ref>

It becomes compulsory for Muslims to start fasting when they reach puberty, so long as they are healthy and sane, and have no disabilities or illnesses. Many children endeavour to complete as many fasts as possible as practice for later life.

Exemptions to fasting are travel, menstruation, severe illness, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. However, many Muslims with medical conditions insist on fasting to satisfy their spiritual needs, although it is not recommended by the hadith. Professionals should closely monitor individuals who decide to persist with fasting.[[33]](#cite_note-35) Those who were unable to fast still must make up the days missed later.[[34]](#cite_note-36)

#### Suhur[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Iftar_in_Istanbul_Turkey.jpg)[Iftar](/wiki/Iftar) at [Sultan Ahmed Mosque](/wiki/Sultan_Ahmed_Mosque) in [Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul), [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) Each day, before dawn, Muslims observe a pre-fast meal called the [suhur](/wiki/Suhur). After stopping a short time before dawn, Muslims begin the first prayer of the day, [Fajr](/wiki/Fajr).[[35]](#cite_note-37)[[36]](#cite_note-38) At sunset, families hasten for the fast-breaking meal known as [iftar](/wiki/Iftar).

#### Iftar[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) In the evening, [dates](/wiki/Phoenix_dactylifera#Dates) are usually the first food to break the fast; according to tradition, Muhammad broke fast with three dates. Following that, Muslims generally adjourn for the Maghrib prayer, the fourth of the five daily [prayers](/wiki/Prayers), after which the main meal is served.[[37]](#cite_note-39) Social gatherings, many times in a [buffet](/wiki/Buffet) style, are frequent at iftar. Traditional dishes are often highlighted, including traditional desserts, and particularly those made only during Ramadan. Water is usually the beverage of choice, but juice and milk are also often available, as are soft drinks and caffeinated beverages.[[33]](#cite_note-35) In the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East), the iftar meal consists of water, juices, dates, salads and appetizers, one or more main dishes, and various kinds of desserts. Usually, the dessert is the most important part during iftar. Typical main dishes are lamb stewed with wheat berries, lamb kebabs with grilled vegetables, or roast chicken served with chickpea-studded rice pilaf. A rich dessert, such as luqaimat, [baklava](/wiki/Baklava) or [kunafeh](/wiki/Kanafeh) (a buttery, syrup-sweetened kadaifi noodle pastry filled with cheese), concludes the meal.[[38]](#cite_note-40) Over time, iftar has grown into banquet festivals. This is a time of fellowship with families, friends and surrounding communities, but may also occupy larger spaces at masjid or banquet halls for 100 or more diners.[[39]](#cite_note-41)

### Charity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Men praying during Ramadan at the](/wiki/File:Men_praying_in_Afghanistan.jpg) [Shrine of Hazrat Ali](/wiki/Shrine_of_Hazrat_Ali) or "Blue Mosque" in [Mazar-i-Sharif](/wiki/Mazar-i-Sharif), [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) Charity is very important in Islam, and even more so during Ramadan. [Zakāt](/wiki/Zakāt), often translated as "the poor-rate", is obligatory as one of the pillars of Islam; a fixed percentage of the person's savings is required to be given to the poor. [Sadaqah](/wiki/Sadaqah) is voluntary charity in giving above and beyond what is required from the obligation of zakāt. In Islam, all good deeds are more handsomely rewarded during Ramadan than in any other month of the year. Consequently, many will choose this time to give a larger portion, if not all, of the zakāt that they are obligated to give. In addition, many will also use this time to give a larger portion of sadaqah in order to maximize the reward that will await them at the [Last Judgment](/wiki/Last_Judgment).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Nightly prayers[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Tarawih ([Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar)) refers to extra prayers performed by Muslims at night in the Islamic month of Ramadan. Contrary to popular belief, they are not compulsory.[[40]](#cite_note-42) However, many Muslims pray these prayers in the evening during Ramadan. Some scholars[Template:Who](/wiki/Template:Who) maintain that Tarawih is neither [*fard*](/wiki/Fard) or a [*Sunnah*](/wiki/Sunnah), but is the preponed [*Tahajjud*](/wiki/Tahajjud) (night prayer) prayer shifted to post-[*Isha'*](/wiki/Isha') for the ease of believers. But a majority of Sunni scholars regard the Tarawih prayers as *Sunnat al-Mu'akkadah*, a salaat that was performed by the [Islamic prophet](/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam) Muhammad very consistently.

### Recitation of the Quran[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

In addition to fasting, Muslims are encouraged to read the entire Quran. Some Muslims perform the recitation of the entire Quran by means of special prayers, called [Tarawih](/wiki/Tarawih). These voluntary prayers are held in the mosques every night of the month, during which a whole section of the Quran ([*juz'*](/wiki/Juz'), which is 1/30 of the Quran) is recited. Therefore, the entire Quran would be completed at the end of the month. Although it is not required to read the whole Quran in the Tarawih prayers, it is common.

## Cultural practices[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[thumb|left|300x|Striking the](/wiki/File:COLLECTIE_TROPENMUSEUM_Oproep_tot_het_gebed_op_vrijdag_via_de_trom_bij_de_moskee_Tulehu_TMnr_20018271.jpg) [bedug](/wiki/Bedug) in Indonesia [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Lanterns_from_below.JPG)[Fanous Ramadan](/wiki/Fanous_Ramadan) decorations in [Cairo](/wiki/Cairo), [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt) [thumb|upright|Ramadan in the Old City of](/wiki/File:Ramadan_jerusalem_kmhad.jpg) [Jerusalem](/wiki/Jerusalem)

In some Muslim countries today, lights are strung up in public squares, and across city streets, to add to the festivities of the month. [Lanterns](/wiki/Lantern) have become symbolic decorations welcoming the month of Ramadan. In a growing number of countries, they are hung on city streets.[[41]](#cite_note-43)[[42]](#cite_note-44)[[43]](#cite_note-45) The tradition of lanterns as a decoration becoming associated with Ramadan is believed to have originated during the [Fatimid Caliphate](/wiki/Fatimid_Caliphate) primarily centered in [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt), where [Caliph](/wiki/Caliph) [al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah](/wiki/Al-Mu'izz_li-Din_Allah) was greeted by people holding lanterns to celebrate his ruling. From that time, lanterns were used to light mosques and houses throughout the capital city of [Cairo](/wiki/Cairo). Shopping malls, places of business, and people's homes can be seen with stars and crescents and various lighting effects, as well.

As the nation with the world's largest Muslim population, [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia) has diverse Ramadan traditions. On the island of [Java](/wiki/Java), many [Javanese Indonesians](/wiki/Javanese_people) bathe in holy springs to prepare for fasting, a ritual known as *Padusa*. The city of [Semarang](/wiki/Semarang) marks the beginning of Ramadan with the Dugderan carnival, which involves parading the [Warak ngendog](/wiki/Warak_ngendog), a horse-dragon hybrid creature allegedly inspired by the [Buraq](/wiki/Buraq). In the Chinese-influenced capital city of [Jakarta](/wiki/Jakarta), fire crackers were traditionally used to wake people up for morning prayer, until the 19th century. Towards the end of Ramadan, most employees receive a one-month bonus known as *Tunjangan Hari Raya*. Certain kinds of food are especially popular during Ramadan, such as beef in [Aceh](/wiki/Aceh), and snails in [Central Java](/wiki/Central_Java). The [iftar](/wiki/Iftar) meal is announced every evening by striking the [bedug](/wiki/Bedug), a giant drum, in the mosque.

Common greetings during Ramadan are "Ramadan Mubarak" or "Ramadan Kareem", which wish the recipient a blessed or generous Ramadan.[[44]](#cite_note-46)

## Penalties for infraction[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

In some [Muslim countries](/wiki/List_of_Muslim_majority_countries), failing to fast or the open flouting of such behavior during Ramadan is considered a [crime](/wiki/Crime) and is prosecuted as such. For instance, in [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria), in October 2008 the court of [Biskra](/wiki/Biskra) condemned six people to four years in prison and heavy fines.[[45]](#cite_note-47) In [Kuwait](/wiki/Kuwait), according to law number 44 of 1968, the penalty is a fine of no more than 100 [Kuwaiti dinars](/wiki/Kuwaiti_dinar), or jail for no more than one month, or both penalties, for those seen eating, drinking or smoking during Ramadan daytime.[[46]](#cite_note-48)[[47]](#cite_note-49) In some places in the [U.A.E.](/wiki/United_Arab_Emirates), eating or drinking in public during the daytime of Ramadan is considered a minor offence and would be punished by up to 150 hours of community service.[[48]](#cite_note-50) In neighbouring Saudi Arabia, described by [*The Economist*](/wiki/The_Economist) as taking Ramadan "more seriously than anywhere else",[[49]](#cite_note-51) there are harsher punishments, whereas in Malaysia, there are no such punishments.

In [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt), alcohol sales are banned during Ramadan.[[50]](#cite_note-52) In 2014 in Kermanshah, [Iran](/wiki/Iran), a non-Muslim was sentenced to having his lips burnt with a cigarette and five Muslims were publicly flogged with 70 stripes for eating during Ramadan.[[51]](#cite_note-53) Despite these punishments, some observers claim relatively few Iranians fast during Ramadan.[[52]](#cite_note-54)

### Other legal issues[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

Some countries have laws that amend work schedules during Ramadan. Under U.A.E. labor law, the maximum working hours are to be 6 hours per day and 36 hours per week. [Qatar](/wiki/Qatar), [Oman](/wiki/Oman), [Bahrain](/wiki/Bahrain) and Kuwait have similar laws.[[53]](#cite_note-55)

## Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Ramadan fasting is safe for healthy people, but those with medical conditions should seek medical advice.[[54]](#cite_note-56) The fasting period is usually associated with modest weight loss, but the weight tends to return afterwards.[[55]](#cite_note-57)

### Renal disease[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

A review of the literature by an Iranian group suggested fasting during Ramadan might produce [renal injury](/wiki/Renal_injury) in patients with moderate (GFR <60 ml/min) or worse [kidney disease](/wiki/Kidney_disease), but was not injurious to [renal transplant](/wiki/Renal_transplant) patients with good function or most stone forming patients.[[56]](#cite_note-58)

## Crime rates[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

The correlation of Ramadan with crime rates is mixed: some statistics show that crime rates drop during Ramadan, while others show that it rises. Decreases in crime rates have been reported by the police in some cities in Turkey ([Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul)[[57]](#cite_note-59) and [Konya](/wiki/Konya)[[58]](#cite_note-60)) and the [Eastern province](/wiki/Eastern_Province,_Saudi_Arabia) of Saudi Arabia.<ref name=arabnews>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> A 2012 study showed that crime rates decreased in [Iran](/wiki/Iran) during Ramadan, and that decrease was [statistically significant](/wiki/Statistical_significance).<ref name= irjabs>[Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)</ref> A 2005 study found that there was a decrease in assault, robbery and alcohol-related crimes during Ramadan in Saudi Arabia, but only the decrease in alcohol-related crimes was statistically significant.[[59]](#cite_note-61) Increases in crime rates during Ramadan have been reported in Turkey,<ref name=tdn>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> [Jakarta](/wiki/Jakarta),[[60]](#cite_note-62)<ref name = globe>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=jakartacity>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> parts of Algeria,[[61]](#cite_note-63) Yemen<ref name= yemen>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> and Egypt.<ref name=Egypt/>

Various mechanisms have been proposed for the effect of Ramadan on crime:

* An Iranian cleric argues that [fasting during Ramadan](/wiki/Sawm) makes people less likely to commit crimes due to spiritual reasons.<ref name=aytolh>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> [Gamal al-Banna](/wiki/Gamal_al-Banna) argues that fasting can stress people out, which can make them more likely to commit crimes. He criticized Muslims who commit crimes while fasting during Ramadan as "fake and superficial".<ref name=Egypt>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>
* Police in [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) attributed a drop in crime rates to the "spiritual mood prevalent in the country".<ref name=arabnews/>
* In [Jakarta](/wiki/Jakarta), [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia), [police](/wiki/Indonesian_National_Police) say that the traffic due to 7 million people leaving the city to celebrate [Eid al-Fitr](/wiki/Eid_al-Fitr) results in an increase in street crime. As a result, police deploy an additional 7,500 personnel.<ref name=jakartacity/>
* During Ramadan, millions of pilgrims enter Saudi Arabia to visit [Mecca](/wiki/Mecca). According to the Yemen Times, such pilgrims are usually charitable, and consequently smugglers [traffic children](/wiki/Trafficking_of_children) in from Yemen to beg on the streets of Saudi Arabia.<ref name= yemen/>

## Ramadan in polar regions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

The length of the dawn to sunset time varies in different parts of the world according to summer or winter solstices of the sun. Most Muslims fast for 11–16 hours during Ramadan. However, in polar regions, the period between dawn and sunset may exceed 22 hours in summers. For example, in 2014, Muslims in Reykjavik, Iceland, and Trondheim, Norway, fasted almost 22 hours, while Muslims in Sydney, Australia, fasted for only about 11 hours. Muslims in areas where continuous night or day is observed during Ramadan follow the fasting hours in the nearest city where fasting is observed at dawn and sunset. Alternatively, Muslims may follow Mecca time.[[62]](#cite_note-64)[[63]](#cite_note-65)