



# Afghan Holidays

## National Holidays

The following holidays are officially recognized in Afghanistan.

**Notes:**

1. Afghanistan officially uses the Islamic Solar Calendar (*Hejrah-e shamsi*) and observes the Islamic Lunar Calendar (*Hejrah-e qamari*) for Islamic holidays.
2. The present year of 1392 started March 21, 2013 and will finish March 20, 2014.
3. Each holiday may be celebrated differently across regions.



Preparation for Eid al-Fitr

Date	Holiday	About the day
March 21	<b>Nowruz</b> (literally meaning 'new day')	Celebrates the first day of spring and the beginning of the traditional New Year. There are many festivals throughout the country and <i>buzkashi</i> matches (polo with the carcass of an animal) are common. In the Kabul region, people prepare a dish made of seven types of fruit served in syrup called <i>haft mewa</i> .
April 28	<b>Victory Day</b>	Celebrates the fall of the Afghan socialist government in 1992.
May 1	<b>National Labor Day</b>	
August 19	<b>Independence Day</b>	Commemorates the treaty of Rawalpindi in which the British Empire officially recognized Afghanistan. The day is a celebration of Afghan culture and national pride.

There are also a number of religious holidays. The dates of these holidays vary each year as they are based on the lunar calendar, which is eleven days shorter than the solar calendar.

## Holidays below are the dates for 2013

Date	Holiday	About the day
January 24	<b>Mawlid al-Nabi</b>	Birthday of the prophet Mohammed
July 11	<b>Beginning of Ramadan</b>	This day marks the beginning of the month of Ramadan (also pronounced <i>Ramazon</i> ). During this month, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. At dusk, people gather for large meals to break the fast.
August 10-12	<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>	Often celebrated for up to five or six days, <i>Eid al-Fitr</i> marks the end of Ramadan. <i>Eid Mubarak</i> (blessed Eid) is used as the blessing during <i>Eid al-Fitr</i> . Afghans celebrate by praying, visiting friends and family, and serving food to guests.
October 16-19	<b>Eid al-Adha</b>	After <i>Eid al-Fitr</i> , <i>Eid al-Adha</i> is the second most important Muslim holiday. It is locally referred to as <i>Eid al-Qurban</i> and commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, before God provided him a sheep to sacrifice instead. Many families will sacrifice an animal for the holiday. The meat is then divided between the family, friends and the poor.
November 15	<b>Ashura</b>	Ashura is the holiday that commemorates the martyrdom of Hussain at the battle of Karbala.

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**Reference:** Afghan Mission to the UN: <http://www.afghanistan-un.org>; U.S. Embassy in Kabul: <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/>.

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