

Ramadan 2017: Why is it so important for Muslims?

Ramadan is upon us once again. Here is what happens during the holy month.



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[Ramadan](#) is the holiest month for Muslims. Every year, [Muslims](#) around the world fast during daylight hours, but what is it really about?

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Muslim lunar calendar. Healthy adult Muslims fast in Ramadan from dawn until dusk. This includes abstaining from drinking, eating, immoral acts and anger. Other acts of worship such as prayer, reading the Quran and charity are also encouraged during Ramadan.

Muslims also believe that the Quran was revealed in Ramadan.

During the holy month, Muslims would wake up early to eat a pre-dawn meal called *suhor*, and they break their fast with a meal referred to as *iftar*.

It is common for mosques to host large iftars, especially for the poor and needy. Nightly prayers called *Tarawih* are also held in mosques after iftar.

Different cultures have different traditions during Ramadan, whether it is a special food they must cook, or eating iftar with the extended family. Islamic tenets, such as generosity, inspired most of these traditions, such as sharing food and inviting guests over for iftar.

When is Ramadan?

Since Ramadan is part of a lunar calendar, its date annually changes on the Gregorian calendar. Muslims tend to wait for the new month's moon to appear before they announce the first day of Ramadan. However, they can still estimate the day beforehand. This year, Ramadan will probably [begin on May 27 or 28](#).



Other than fasting during Ramadan, Muslims also read the Quran, pray and give to charity, among other acts of worship [Suhaib Salem/Reuters]

How long is Ramadan?

Lunar months last between 29 to 30 days depending on when the new moon is sighted. If the moon is not seen on the night of the 29th, then Ramadan lasts for the full 30 days. The Eid al-fitr celebration marks the end of the month, when Muslims celebrate a successful month of fasting and worship

Why do Muslims fast in Ramadan?

Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. There is also a verse in the Quran that prescribes fasting for all Muslims who are mature and healthy enough to fast for the full day. So, Muslims fast as an act of worship, a

chance to get closer to God and a way to become more compassionate to those in need.

Fasting is also seen as a way to learn patience and break bad habits.

How the dates of Ramadan 2017 will be Determined: First day of fasting will be on May 27 or 28

The first day of Ramadan fasting will be confirmed on Friday.

MAY - JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

As per astronomical calculations, the first day of Ramadan will be May 27, the last will be June 25.
RAMADAN 2017

- Calculated to start May 27
- 10 days earlier than 2016
- Eid between June 25 and 27

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan will begin either on Saturday, May 27 or on Sunday, May 28, depending on [moon sighting](#) on the eve of May 27.

Muslim lunar months last between 29 and 30 days, depending on sighting of the moon on the 29th night of each month. If the moon is not visible, the month will last 30 days.

By the Gregorian solar calendar, [Ramadan](#) comes 10 to 12 days earlier each year. Last year, the first day of Ramadan was on June 6, 2016.

In order to declare the beginning of Ramadan, [Saudi Arabia](#) and other Muslim-majority countries depend on the testimonies of local moon sighters. The Judicial High Court then makes a decision on when Ramadan begins.

In the United States, the Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) [announced](#) that Ramadan would be observed from May 27, based on astronomical predictions.

Muslim communities in [Europe](#) will also observe Ramadan starting from May 27, as per the European Council of Fatwa and Research and the Islamic Relief UK charity.

Astronomically the birth of a new moon can be calculated, but the actual visibility of the crescent depends on factors such as atmospheric conditions, cloudiness, and the distance between the sun and the moon on the horizon.

[Calculation](#) indicates that the moon should be visible from most countries in the evening of May 26, either with the naked eye or a telescope.

Holy month

For Muslims, Ramadan is the month in which the first verses of the Quran, Islam's holy book, were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad more than 1,400 years ago.

During Ramadan, Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sex from sunrise to sunset. This fasting is intended to bring the faithful closer to God and to remind them of the suffering of those less fortunate.

Ramadan fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam, along with the Muslim declaration of faith, daily prayer, charity and performing the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

In Muslim-majority countries, offices are required by law to reduce working hours, and many restaurants are closed during daylight hours.

"Ramadan Mubarak" and "Ramadan Kareem" are common greetings exchanged in this period, wishing the recipient a "blessed" and generous Ramadan.

Last year, fasting hours across the world ranged between 11 and [22 hours](#). This year, fasting hours will range between 10 hours in Chile and 21 hours in [Greenland](#).

[View image on Twitter](#)



At the end of Ramadan, after 29 or 30 days, Muslims celebrate the [Eid al-Fitr](#) holiday. Eid al-Fitr in Arabic literally means "festival of breaking the fast".

Depending on the actual start date of Ramadan and moon sighting on the 29th night of Ramadan, the Eid al-Fitr this year will fall between Sunday, June 25 and Tuesday, June 27.