

# The Islamic Celebration: Eid al-Fitr

## What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Falling between June, July and August on the Gregorian calendar and lasting from dawn until sunset for 29 or 30 days. Ramadan is a very important time for Muslims and is celebrated all over the world. During Ramadan, Muslims request forgiveness for sins in the past, pray for direction and try to cleanse themselves through self-control and great acts of faith.

It is a time of fasting for the Islamic people as fasting is one of the Five Pillars or duties of Islam. The Islamic name for this fasting is 'Saum'.

## Why do Muslims fast?

Fasting is intended to help teach Muslims to focus their attention on God, be self-disciplined and generous. It also reminds them of the suffering of the poor, who may rarely get to eat well. The prophet Muhammad set the example of fasting.

Each day during the month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until sunset. At the end of the day after sunset, Muslim families will often all eat together and celebrate their day of fasting.



## How do Muslims mark the end of Ramadan?

The end of Ramadan is a big celebration called 'Eid al-Fitr': The Festival of the Breaking of the Fast. Muslims celebrate the end of fasting and thank Allah for the strength that he gave them throughout Ramadan. Eid al-Fitr officially begins when the first sight of the new moon is seen in the sky. Traditionally, Eid al-Fitr would commence at the first sight of a sliver of a crescent moon.

## Did you know?

An estimated 2.1 billion Muslims across the globe will celebrate Eid al-Fitr to mark the end of the month-long fasting period of Ramadan - a third of that number are from the African continent.

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### **How is Eid al-Fitr celebrated?**

On the first morning of the celebration, many gather in local mosques or open-air locations for special prayers called Salat al-Eid, and have breakfast. Muslims put on their finest clothes for what will be their first daylight meal in a month. Whilst there, some Muslims will exchange gifts and greeting cards. Celebrations continue for one, two or maybe even three days. People wish each other 'Eid Mubarak' (Blessed Eid) or 'Eid Said' (Happy Eid). Celebrations vary from country to country but usually include gatherings to view the new moon, decorating homes inside and out, family visits, eating special foods, neighbourhood parties and wearing special, new clothes.

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# Questions About Eid al-Fitr

Answer the following questions using full sentences that give as much detail as possible.

1. Explain in your own words what Ramadan is.

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2. Why must Muslims show 'self-restraint' during Ramadan?

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3. What does 'Eid al-Fitr' mean? Why is it celebrated?

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4. Why is the crescent moon a symbol of Islamic faith?

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5. List seven activities that Muslims may take part in during their Eid al-Fitr celebrations.

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6. Can you think why Ramadan fasting is more challenging to complete when it falls during the summer months?

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7. Can you think of an example of a situation where you have 'exercised self-restraint'?

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8. 'Saum' is just one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Research the other four Islamic duties.

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# Questions About Eid al-Fitr

## Answers

1. Explain in your own words what Ramadan is.

**Ramadan is in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Falling between June, July and August on the Gregorian calendar and lasting from dawn until sunset for 29 or 30 days. Ramadan is a very important time for Muslims and is celebrated all over the world.**

2. Why must Muslims show 'self-restraint' during Ramadan?

**Each day during the month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world do not eat or drink from dawn until sunset. This 'fasting' takes great self-restraint.**

3. What does 'Eid al-Fitr' mean? Why is it celebrated?

**Eid al-Fitr is literally-translated to 'The Festival of the Breaking of the Fast'. It is celebrated at the end of the month of Ramadan.**

4. Why is the crescent moon a symbol of Islamic faith?

**Eid al-Fitr officially begins when the first sight of the new moon is seen in the sky. This is thought to be one of the reasons why a crescent moon symbol is important within Islam.**

5. List seven activities that Muslims may take part in during their Eid al-Fitr celebrations.

**Pupils must list seven activities from:**

- **Meet for special prayers and have breakfast.**
- **Give gifts and cards to each other.**
- **Gather to view the new moon.**
- **Decorate their homes inside and out.**
- **Visit family.**
- **Eat special foods.**
- **Hold neighbourhood parties.**
- **Wear new/special clothes.**

6. Can you think why Ramadan fasting is more challenging to complete when it falls during the summer months?

**Ramadan fasting is more challenging during the summer months because the sun rises earlier and sets later. This means the daylight hours time period that Muslim people must fast for each day is much longer.**

7. Can you think of an example of a situation where you have 'exercised self-restraint'?

**Pupil's own response.**

8. 'Saum' is just one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Research the other four Islamic duties.

**Shahadah: declaration of faith./Salah: prayer./Zakat: giving a fixed proportion of their money to charity./Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca.**