

# FESTIVAL INFO

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## RAMADAN

**Ramadan** ([Arabic](#): رَمَضَان, [romanized](#): *Ramaḍān* [*ra.ma.dʿa:n*]),<sup>[1]</sup> also spelled **Ramazān**, **Ramzan**, **Ramadhan** or **Ramathan**, is the [ninth month](#) of the [Islamic calendar](#).<sup>[9]</sup> observed by [Muslims](#) worldwide as a month of [fasting](#) (*sawm*), prayer, reflection and community.<sup>[10]</sup> A commemoration of [Muhammad's first revelation](#),<sup>[11]</sup> the annual observance of Ramadan is regarded as one of the [Five Pillars of Islam](#)<sup>[12]</sup> and lasts twenty-nine to thirty days, from one sighting of the [crescent moon](#) to the next.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

Fasting from dawn to sunset is *fard* (obligatory) for all adult Muslims who are

not [acutely](#) or [chronically ill](#), [travelling](#), [elderly](#), [breastfeeding](#), [diabetic](#), or [menstruating](#).<sup>[15]</sup> The predawn meal is referred to as *suhur*, and the nightly feast that breaks the fast is called *iftar*.<sup>[16][17]</sup> Although *fatwas* have been issued declaring that Muslims who live in regions with a [midnight sun](#) or [polar night](#) should follow the timetable of [Mecca](#),<sup>[18]</sup> it is common practice to follow the timetable of the closest country in which night can be distinguished from day.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup> The spiritual rewards (*thawab*) of fasting are believed to be multiplied during Ramadan.<sup>[22]</sup> Accordingly, Muslims refrain not only from food and drink, but

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also [tobacco products](#), [sexual relations](#), and [sinful behavior](#),<sup>[23][24]</sup> devoting themselves instead to *salat* (prayer) and recitation of the [Quran](#)

## HISTORY

The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Quran; a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, a number of other days. Allah desires for you ease; He desires not hardship for you; and

that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that perhaps you may be thankful. <sup>[Quran 2:185]</sup>

Muslims hold that all [scripture](#) was [revealed](#) during Ramadan, the [scrolls of Abraham](#), [Torah](#), [Psalms](#), [Gospel](#), and [Quran](#) having been handed down on the first, sixth, twelfth, thirteenth (in some sources, eighteenth)<sup>[42]</sup> and twenty-fourth

Ramadans,<sup>[year needed]</sup> respectively.<sup>[43]</sup> Muhammed is said to have received his first quranic revelation on *Laylat al-Qadr*, one of five odd-numbered nights that fall during the last ten days of Ramadan.<sup>[44]</sup>

Although Muslims were first commanded to fast in the second year of *Hijra* (624 CE),<sup>[43]</sup> they believe that the practice of fasting is not in fact an innovation of [monotheism](#)<sup>[45]</sup> but rather has always been necessary for

believers to attain [tagwa](#) (the [fear of God](#)).<sup>[46]</sup>[\[Quran 2:183\]](#) They point to the fact that the [pre-Islamic pagans](#) of Mecca fasted on the tenth day of [Muharram](#) to [expiate sin](#) and avoid [drought](#).<sup>[47]</sup>[\[self-published source\]](#) [Philip Jenkins](#) argues that the observance of Ramadan

fasting grew out of "the strict [Lenten](#) discipline of the [Syrian Churches](#)," a postulation corroborated by other scholars, including theologian [Paul-Gordon Chandler](#),<sup>[48]</sup><sup>[49]</sup> but disputed by some Muslim academics.