

Ramadan 2023

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)



What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is based on the lunar calendar.

It is a religious observance that helps to draw Muslims closer to God.

Ramadan lasts for 29 – 30 days.

Ramadan encourages Muslims to invest in social justice and to help the disadvantaged. It is a time for deep reflection and an opportunity to work on oneself ethically and spiritually.

During this time Muslims fast. This involves abstaining from food and drink from dawn until sunset.



How can non-Muslims be considerate?

It is helpful to respect and understand that Ramadan is a time for Muslims to practice self-restraint.

Remember that if someone is fasting their energy levels might be low. This should not be misinterpreted as a lack of effort or interest.

A colleague who is fasting might feel fatigued, hungry, and thirsty.

As an expression of etiquette, and interfaith empathy, try to be thoughtful.

Fasting allows Muslims to devote themselves to their faith. It teaches self-discipline and it reminds Muslims about the suffering of the poor.



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When is Ramadan?

Ramadan happens once a year and lasts around 30 days. This year it will be in spring starting around 22 March 2023.

Why is Ramadan in March?

The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle which is why it starts earlier each year (it shifts by around 11 days).

Why is Ramadan important?

It's a month for spiritual discipline and it helps Muslims to feel grateful for what they have.



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How long do Muslims fast for during Ramadan?

Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. This is around 14 to 16 hours a day.

Can you drink water or eat fruit and vegetables?

No, "not even water". When fasting during Ramadan Muslims do not eat or drink anything. This is why breaking the fast is a time of joy and involves daily pleasant meetings called Iftar.



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Is anyone Exempt from fasting?

Not everyone is able to fast such as expectant mothers, women on their periods, or people with medical conditions. If you see your Muslim colleague eating or drinking during Ramadan this may be the case.

What would be an appropriate greeting during Ramadan?

It means a lot when you wish Muslim colleagues a "*Happy Ramadan*".

On the last day of Ramadan, known as Eid-al-Fitr, the greeting changes to "*Eid Mubarak*".



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Is it offensive if I eat and drink next to someone who is fasting?

Muslims don't mind being around people eating/drinking. It is part of the self discipline they practice during fasting. Don't feel the need to apologise.

Is there anything that we can do to support our Muslim colleagues?

It would be kind and considerate to check our preference when meetings are scheduled. Our sleeping hours change, and we can't have caffeine, so we might seem tired. Muslims don't expect to get special treatment while fasting.



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Is it OK to ask questions about Ramadan?

No question is a bad question. Muslims appreciate your interest and curiosity about their faith. They love talking about Ramadan and are very happy to answer any questions you may have.



More information help and support

If you would like more information about Ramadan you can contact Fathima.ahmed@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Find out more and join [Our staff networks | Royal Borough of Greenwich \(royalgreenwich.gov.uk\)](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

If you need help, advice, and support visit our [Employee Assistance page](#)

