



Ramadan Essentials: *Student Guide*

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Introduction

In the name of Allāh: the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: “Allah the Exalted and Majestic said: Every act of the son of Adam is for himself, except for fasting. It is (exclusively) meant for Me and I (alone) will reward it. Fasting is a shield. When any one of you is fasting on a day, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor raise his voice; or if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him, he should say: “I am fasting”.

By Him (Allah), in Whose Hand is the life of Muhammad, the breath of the fasting person is sweeter to Allah on the Day of judgment than the fragrance of musk. The one who fasts has two (occasions) of joy: one is when he breaks the fast, he is glad about the breaking of (the fast), and (the other) is when he meets his Lord he is glad about his fast.” (Sahih Muslim)

We have created this guide to help you navigate through the month of Ramadan. It's written for students by students and provides students and staff with practical tips, advice, and answers to frequently asked questions.

This project has been overseen and approved by Chaplain Mohammed Ullah and Imams and Shuyookh from local Masaajid, so that the guide can be referenced by students as a source of authority to aid in resolving any issues that they may face.

Some of the questions in this guide require more detailed and nuanced answers, and you may not find an answer to your specific question here. We advise you to consult your local trusted Imam or scholar for any follow up questions or clarifications. We understand that this is not a comprehensive guide, we have tried to give a brief outline of the rulings related to fasting in an accessible way, but we recognise there are a broad range of opinions.

May Allah SWT allow the month of Ramadan to be a time for us all to come together and allow it to be a means of benefit for us all in this world and the next.

Intentions

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Intentions

All acts of worship have to be accompanied by a proper intention - and intention is an action of the heart. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Actions are but by intentions, and everyone shall have but that which he intended." (Bukhari 1)

For Ramadan, the intention should be made at night, before the dawn comes. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever does not intend to fast before dawn, there is no fast for him." (Tirmidhi 730)

According to most scholars, you should make the intention to fast each night of Ramadan. However, some scholars believe that in the case of a repeated act of worship, it is sufficient to make the intention once at the beginning, unless the sequence of repetition is interrupted, in which case a new intention must be formed.

On this basis, if you have the intention of fasting on the first day of Ramadan that you will fast the whole month, that's enough to cover the whole month, as long as you don't have an excuse to break your fast and thus break this continuity, such as travelling during Ramadan. In that case, when you want to resume fasting you must form the intention of fasting again.

Tip: Just to be on the safe side, it is better to stay cautious and make the intention to fast every night before sleeping in Ramadan.

Pre-Ramadan

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Pre-Ramadan

Fasting isn't easy - at least not for everyone. So to avoid hunger and thirst being a massive shock to your system, start fasting now. People often ask: why is the first day of Ramadan the hardest? It's because most of the time we aren't physically prepared for it. We're used to a certain routine, and so when we start fasting, we get hungry, irritable, sometimes a headache, and anytime that we do get free, we'll probably end up falling asleep somewhere!

The time leading up to Ramadan is a perfect opportunity to get yourself spiritually, mentally, and physically prepared. Here's a brief overview of key aspects to consider during this phase.

Make Up Missed Fasts

- If you missed any fasts from previous Ramadans, prioritise making up for them during Sha'ban (the month before Ramadan).
- Make a list of how many fasts you need to make up and plan the days you want to fast on.

Praying (If you're not praying regularly)

- For those not accustomed to regular prayers, use this time to establish a consistent prayer routine.
- Start with manageable goals and gradually increase the frequency of prayers in the build up to Ramadan.

Stopping Bad Habits

- Use Sha'ban as an opportunity for self-reflection and identify any harmful habits that may stop personal development during Ramadan.
- Begin the process of breaking free from negative patterns, fostering a positive and spiritually uplifting environment

Sha'ban

- Sha'ban, the month preceding Ramadan, holds great significance, and it's a time for increased fasting, devotion and anticipation for the blessed month ahead.

Nisf Sha'ban

- Nisf Sha'ban, the 15th night of Sha'ban, is believed to be a night of forgiveness and mercy. It is an opportune time for more prayer and seeking forgiveness from Allah (swt) for our sins. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah looks down at His creation on the middle night of Sha'ban and He forgives all of His creatures, except for an idolater or one filled with malice." (Ibn Hibban 5665)

Fasting in Sha'ban

To prepare for Ramadan, our advice is to start fasting in Sha'ban. Fasting in Sha'ban is a sunnah too, it's the month the Prophet (pbuh) made a particular effort to fast in, in order to prepare for Ramadan.

Aishah (ra) said, 'I did not see the Messenger of Allah (saw) completing the fast of a month, but that of Ramadan, and I did not see him fasting more in any other month than that of Sha'ban'. [Muslim]

If you would like to fast in Sha'ban, you could fast on Mondays and Thursdays, as well as the three white days (13th, 14th, and 15th), as was the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh).

Spiritual preparation

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "Whoever does not leave evil words and deeds while fasting, Allah does not need him to leave food and drink." (Bukhari 1903)

We're supposed to restrain ourselves from more than just food and drink, and that includes sins, but also wasting time, endlessly scrolling on social media, and not making the most out of the limited time you have during the blessed month.

If you know there's something you fall short on, or need to cut out, then make sincere intention now to correct that, in preparation for Ramadan. Not "oh yeah I'll fix that once Ramadan comes", because we're not guaranteed to even reach tomorrow, let alone Ramadan.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "One might fast and he gets nothing from his fast but hunger. One might pray at night but he gets nothing from his prayer but fatigue." (Sunan Ibn Majah 1690)

To save us from this, let's prepare ourselves spiritually now. Renew your intentions before you do good deeds, and introduce daily remembrance of Allah in your life! Don't know where to start? Download the Dhikr and Dua app.



Life With Allah
Connecting to The Creator

Mental preparation

It's also good to think about mental preparation. Basically: get your head together now.

Do you have exams or deadlines during Ramadan? Ok, so what can you do now to reduce the impact that's going to have on your worship?

Do you have a really bad sleeping schedule? Ok, so how are you going to arrange your sleep to fit around taraweeh, studies, your prayers, and the rest of life?

Get a plan of action now. Schedule your nightly Ramadan donations now, why wait until Ramadan starts? Delete TikTok. Delete Netflix. Don't wait until Ramadan to start your spiritual preparation.

Write it down your plan of action straight after reading this if you have to. Start now, and reap the rewards during Ramadan inshallah.

General FAQs

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General FAQs

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the 9th, and one of the holiest months in the Islamic Calendar. It is a month of fasting, refraining from eating and drinking - yes not even water - reflection and self-purification. It is a month that Muslims look forward to and seek to develop themselves in. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the 5 pillars of Islam and an obligation for all Muslims (with some exceptions), so forms a really important part of a Muslim's calendar.

“Ramaḍān is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the decisive authority. So whoever is present this month, let them fast. But whoever is ill or on a journey, then 'let them fast' an equal number of days 'after Ramaḍān'. Allah intends ease for you, not hardship, so that you may complete the prescribed period and proclaim the greatness of Allah for guiding you, and perhaps you will be grateful.”

(Quran 2:185)

When is Ramadan?

The start and end of Ramadan is dependent on the sighting of the crescent of the new moon, and lasts between 29 or 30 days.

Therefore, there are different scenarios for the start and end dates of Ramadan and when Eid Al- Fitr will be celebrated, as shown below:

Start of Ramadan*	First day of fasting	Last day of fasting (and date of Eid Al-Fitr)
Evening of Tuesday, 17 February 2026	Wednesday, 18 February 2026	29 Days: Wednesday, 18 March 2026 (Eid al-Fitr: 19 March 2026) 30 Days: Thursday, 19 March 2026 (Eid al-Fitr: 20 March 2026)
Evening of Wednesday, 18 February 2026	Thursday, 19 February 2026	29 Days: Thursday, 19 March 2026 (Eid al-Fitr: 20 March 2026) 30 Days: Friday, 20 March 2026 (Eid al-Fitr: 21 March 2026)

Why do Muslims fast?

“O, Believers! Fasting is prescribed for you - as it was for those before you - so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah”

(Quran 2:183)

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is prescribed for Muslims in order to attain Taqwa - commonly translated as God-consciousness. The linguistic meaning of Taqwa is a shield or protective barrier. It is to protect yourself from what angers Allah. The term taqwa comes from the Arabic root *ق و ي* which means “protection” from something harmful.

In addition, fasting also has many health, spiritual and communal benefits. It builds discipline in abstaining from food and drink, which helps increase compassion towards the less fortunate, as well as reinforcing the importance of gratitude.

Who is exempt from fasting?

- **The sick***:

- For temporary, non-chronic conditions; one may make up the fast (a day for a day) at a later time, when health improves or a situation changes (e.g. after completing a course of medication)
- For permanent or chronic conditions; one may make a charitable donation in lieu of fasting (Fidyah). The amount should be sufficient to feed one person twice a day, for each fasting day that is missed. Before Ramadan, Muslims are advised to consult with a doctor about the safety of fasting in individual circumstances.

- **The traveller:**

- Fasting is optional for those who are travelling, based on how far one is travelling and also for what period one will be in residence in a set place.

- **The elderly:**

- There is consensus that it is permissible for the elderly, who are physically unable, to not fast.

*Includes people who are physically unable to fast or for whom fasting will delay their healing/extend their sickness.

Who has to fast?

Fasting is mandatory for every Muslim who has reached the age of puberty and is mentally healthy, and able to do so. Those with chronic or acute medical conditions, and children before adolescence, are exempt from fasting. Pregnant and nursing women, menstruating women, or women in the post childbirth period, as well as the sick, and those who are travelling long distances can postpone the fasts.

What breaks your fast?

- Eating and drinking intentionally - If you eat or drink forgetfully, the fast is still valid and can be continued
- Smoking/vaping - These are considered to invalidate the fast as they involve taking something into the body through the mouth.
- Vomiting intentionally
- Sexual intercourse
- Bleeding due to cupping
- Menstruation and post natal bleeding
- Masturbation (which leads to ejaculation)

When can you lawfully break your fast (before Iftar time)?

- You may lawfully do so if you genuinely believe that continuing the fast would cause physical harm due to severe thirst or hunger.
- If one begins the Ramadan fast while settled/ in residence, then sets out to travel, they are still permitted to break the fast if they find that they are no longer able to.

What happens if I need medication?

Typically speaking, the following medications won't break your fast:

- Inhalers
- Nasal sprays/drops
- Mouthwash, oral spray, or gargle
- Nitro-glycerine tablets that are placed under the tongue
- Injections - with the exception of intravenous feeding
- Substances absorbed into the skin (e.g., medicated plasters, patches, ointments, and creams)
- Ear and eyedrops

This list is not exhaustive. You should check with a local scholar about other medications that you may take during Ramadan.

What happens if I eat accidentally?

- Eating or drinking unintentionally during fasting does not break your fast. As long as you stop once you remember, your fast is still valid.
- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever forgets he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast for it is Allah Who has fed him and given him to drink." (Al-Bukhari 6669).

What happens if I am travelling?

The majority of scholars view that fasting whilst travelling is permissible. If you're fasting whilst travelling, it counts and you do not have to make it up.

Not fasting whilst travelling is also allowed and is a concession granted by Allah. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) both fasted and broke the fast when travelling, as did his Companions. However, you must be travelling the distance at which it becomes permissible to shorten the prayers, and travelling for a permissible purpose.

Allah says in the Quran: "but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days" (2:184).

What happens if I miss a fast?

If you fail to fast during Ramadan, or break your fast during it for a legitimate excuse, such as sickness, travel or menses, you have to make up the fasts that you missed. this is called Qadha.

If you intentionally miss a fast, or break it without a valid reason, you should pay Kaffarah, repent to Allah and make up the fasts you missed.

Kaffarah is a charitable compensation made by Muslims for intentionally breaking any fasts during the holy month of Ramadan, without a valid reason.

To atone for the intentionally broken fast, you must fast continuously for 60 days.

However, if you are unable to do that, then you have to feed 60 poor people at a rate of £5 per person (the cost of an average meal in the UK). As a result, this amounts to £300 for each missed/intentionally broken fast.

What happens if I get angry and swear?

Cursing does not break your fast but it does detract from your reward. If someone angers you when you are fasting, you should avoid arguing and say "I am fasting".

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "If one of you is fasting, let him not utter obscenities on that day or raise his voice, and if anyone reviles him or wants to pick a fight with him, let him say 'I am a person who is fasting.'" (Muslim 1151)

Common Qs From Students

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Common Qs From Students

"Is it true that if I smoke or drink, my fasts aren't valid for 40 days?"

This is a common question every year and it's essential to clear up a common misunderstanding about consuming intoxicants. According to a hadith, 'Whoever drinks wine, his prayer is not accepted from him for 40 days. If he repents, Allah forgives him...' (Tirmidhi).

It's also believed that this includes fasting as well. Some common intoxicants include alcohol, drugs, or any substance that alters our state of mind. There's a misconception that if we indulge in these substances, our prayers and fasts become meaningless. However, it's crucial to understand that while our actions may have spiritual consequences, the obligation to fast remains unchanged. This means you still have to fast and pray - when you are sober.

This hadith serves as a reminder of the gravity of consuming intoxicants, indicating that our prayers may not be accepted for a period of time. Nonetheless, we must continue to fulfill our obligations and seek forgiveness through sincere repentance. None of us know if Allah will accept our fasts or salah but we remain hopeful in Allah's mercy, trusting that our efforts to repent and seek forgiveness will be rewarded. It is not an excuse nor valid reason to not fast.

"Is it true that if I don't have suhoor I can't fast?"

Even if you miss suhoor, you are still required to fast. Skipping suhoor or oversleeping for Fajr prayer does not exempt you from fasting; you must continue with your fast.

If you fear you may miss suhoor and the fast may be harder for you, eat something before you sleep or have something next to your bed (date and water) so you can quickly have something if time is tight.

“Is it true that brushing my teeth with toothpaste breaks my fast?”

It's a common misconception that brushing teeth (with or without toothpaste) breaks the fast automatically, however it's permissible to use a toothbrush during fasting, as long as caution is taken not to swallow anything.

Using toothpaste while fasting is allowed as long as you don't swallow it. Swallowing toothpaste or its taste would break the fast. To be safe, use toothpaste sparingly and avoid swallowing it.

Mouthwash should also be used cautiously, opting for alcohol-free varieties. If unsure, it's best to brush before suhoor ends.

Despite this, some choose not to brush their teeth whilst fasting due to the following hadith - The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, 'The smell emanating from the mouth of the one fasting is better with Allah than the smell of musk.' (Tirmidhi).

In summary, we should always maintain oral hygiene for ourselves and others around us. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emphasised the importance of oral hygiene during fasting, and frequently used a miswak whilst fasting himself.

There are miswak toothbrushes available for students who would like them - please contact the Muslim Chaplain for more details (his email is at the beginning of this guide).

“It's ok to chew gum during Ramadan”

Some understandably think chewing gum whilst fasting is ok because nothing is being swallowed - but it still has sugar and flavouring that are impossible to avoid swallowing - hence it's forbidden during the fasting hours.

“You can't swallow your own saliva whilst fasting”

You can swallow your own saliva while fasting. It's a natural reflex for all of us, occurring unconsciously throughout the day. Ensure you're not intentionally collecting saliva in your mouth to swallow and not in excess.

“Non-Muslims can't eat in front of Muslims during fasting hours”

It's heartwarming to see non-Muslims being considerate of us during fasting hours. However, they're not obligated to refrain from eating in our presence. Let's not inconvenience them by asking them to eat elsewhere. Remember, our willpower is stronger than the temptation of food in front of us.

"If Shaytan is locked up, why do we still sin?"

You might wonder, if Shaytan is locked up during Ramadan, why do we still sin? The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains." (Bukhari 3277) So yes, during Ramadan, Shaytan is restrained. However, it's essential to recognize that his influence isn't completely erased.

Throughout the year, Shaytan has been working tirelessly to sway us towards disobedience. Therefore, his impact may still linger in our hearts and actions. While the devils' influence is diminished during Ramadan, human nature and free will remain significant factors. Ramadan is a time for spiritual introspection and self-discipline, but it doesn't absolve us of our responsibility to make conscious choices.

Despite the restraining of Shaytan, we may still fall into sin due to our inherent weaknesses and susceptibility to temptation. Ramadan offers us the opportunity to strengthen our resolve, seek forgiveness for past transgressions, and strive for self-improvement. It serves as a reminder that although external influences may be restricted, our internal struggles and choices continue to shape our behaviour. Embracing the gift of Ramadan entails acknowledging our vulnerabilities, seeking guidance, and actively working towards spiritual growth and purification.

"Is it true that masturbation breaks my fast?"

Masturbation (if you ejaculate) during fasting invalidates the fast and you have to make up for that day later on. The person must also immediately repent and continue to abstain from food and drink and other prohibitions for the rest of the day. Qadah (making up the fast) is due but not Kaffarah. Masturbation without ejaculation does not break the fast.

Fasting is not just about abstaining from food and drink; it also requires abstaining from sinful behaviours. Engaging in masturbation breaks the spiritual purity and discipline of fasting, and it should be avoided during Ramadan or any other period.

The reason is that the release of sperm (or sexual vaginal secretions in the case of women) comes as a result of desire and sexual excitement, which is haram during the hours of fasting in Ramadan. Also a lot of the time this includes the viewing of illicit and indecent images and leads to further sins.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Allah said: The Fast is for Me and I will give the reward for it, as he (the one who observes the fast) leaves his sexual desire, food and drink for My Sake." (Bukhari 7492)

However, if someone releases sperm (or sexual vaginal secretions in the case of women) due to a sexual (wet) dream or without desire, it will not break the fast.

FAQs For Sisters

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FAQs For Sisters

Should menstruating women fast?

No, women should not fast during their menstrual period. If a woman starts her period during the day while fasting, she must stop fasting for that day and make it up later. If she starts menstruating during the time between sunset and sunrise, she shouldn't begin fasting for the following days until her period has ended, by the consensus of Muslim scholars.

When should the fast be broken if a woman started her period?

As soon as a woman realises she has started her period, she should break her fast because it is no longer considered valid. However, the Hanafi school of thought holds the position that she should continue fasting until maghrib, though she still needs to make up the fast at a later date.

Should pregnant/breastfeeding women fast?

Pregnant or breastfeeding women who do not have any health concerns for themselves or their unborn baby should fast. However, the vast majority of scholars state that if a nursing or pregnant woman fears for herself or her child, then she doesn't have to fast and she just needs to make up the fasts at a later date.

Whilst menstruating, what other acts of worship can a woman do?

During menstruation, there are still many opportunities for a woman to connect with Allah. Rather than feeling excluded from worship, refraining from ritual prayer and fasting can be seen as an act of submission to Allah's command. A woman praying while pure is an act of worship, and her refraining from prayer while menstruating is also an act of worship.

Additionally, there are other acts of worship that can be done during this time, such as:

- Remembrance (Dhikr) of Allah
- Sending salawat on the prophet pbuh
- Giving charity
- Listening to the Quran (Further information on reciting the Quran can be found later on in this section)
- Making duaa
- Showing kindness to others

When can a woman make up missed fasts - why make them up?

Making up missed fasts is an important part of fulfilling one's religious obligations. As soon as Ramadan is over, women can begin to make up their fasts, as highlighted in a hadith narrated by Aisha: "We endured those menses and we were ordered to make up missed fasts, but we were not ordered to make up missed prayers." (Muslim 335)

Can women pray taraweeh?

Yes, it is recommended for women to pray taraweeh in congregation at the masjid or at home. Participating in taraweeh can provide a valuable opportunity to connect with Allah and engage in longer prayer.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Do not prevent the female slaves of Allah from coming to the mosques of Allah. When a wife of one of you asks for permission to go to the mosque, she should not be refused this permission." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Praying at home is also permissible and was recommended by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "The best Mosque for a woman is the inner part of her home." (Musnad Ahmad & Tabrani).

Can women go to the masjid whilst menstruating?

While the majority of scholars agree that it's not acceptable for a woman on her period to stay in a masjid, it is permitted for her to pass through if she has a need to do so. It's essential, however, to remember what the term 'masjid' means.

A 'masjid' is a designated area exclusively used for prayer, reserved for Muslims. Prayer rooms at universities or areas in government buildings, shopping centres, etc., are not considered masjids. Most mosques also feature communal areas that are not meant exclusively for prayer, such as community halls, lobbies, seating areas, classrooms, gardens, libraries, reception, and so on. These areas are not classed as being a masjid, even if they are sometimes used for prayer. If the space is not entirely dedicated to prayer i.e., congregational prayers for all five daily prayers, then it is not considered to be a masjid and so menstruating women are able to stay in these areas.

Some scholars, namely Imam Abu Yusuf from the Hanafi School and Al Muzani, maintain that women on their periods may still stay in the masjid, but this is a minority opinion, and it is better to err on the side of caution.

Can women read the Quran whilst menstruating?

There are two valid opinions regarding whether a menstruating woman can recite the Quran:

1. Opinion according to the majority of scholars: a menstruating woman is not allowed to recite the Quran.
2. Opinion of Imam Malik, Ibn Taymiyyah and some others: a menstruating woman is able to recite the Quran.

There is consensus amongst the scholars that a menstruating woman is not allowed to touch the physical Arabic copy of the Quran (also known as a mushaf) due to its sanctity. Fortunately, there are alternative ways in which she can read the Quran without physical contact.

How can a menstruating woman read the Quran without touching it?

1. Use an electronic device such as a phone, laptop or tablet as these are not considered to be a mushaf.
2. Use a tafseer (explanation) or translation as this is not considered to be a mushaf.
Even if the tafsir or translation book contains the Arabic Quran inside it, as long as the non-Quranic text makes up at least half of the book, she is able to touch it.
3. If reading from the mushaf, use a barrier such as gloves, cloth, towel or a pen.

Can menstruating women go to Eid Salah?

- It is encouraged for all women, including those menstruating, to attend the Eid salah / khutba (sermon). If a woman is menstruating, it is recommended that she refrains from entering the prayer area (musalla), but she should still participate in takbir and supplication.
- The Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) said “menstruating women should come out (on the Eid day). But the menstruating women should keep away from the Musalla. And all the women should participate in the good deeds and in the religious gatherings of the believers.” (Bukhari 324)

Worship During Ramadan

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Taraweeh

“Whoever prays qiyaam in Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.” (Bukhari 37)

What does Taraweeh mean?

The terms Tahajjud, Witr, Taraweeh and Qiyaam al Layl are used for optional night prayers:

- Qiyaam - umbrella term for optional prayers at night.
- Taraweeh - optional (Sunnah) night prayer consisting of 20 units (rakaat), generally prayed in congregation after the Isha prayer specifically during Ramadan.
- Tahajjud - optional (Nafl) night prayer generally prayed individually during any time of the year, consisting of any number of rakaat.
- Witr - odd number of rakaat prayed at the end of optional night prayers.

Length

Taraweeh prayers began during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), and were made a regular, communal prayer of 20 rakaat of taraweeh and 3 rakaat of witr during the Caliphate of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

There are differences of opinion in terms of the length of night prayer during Ramadan. Taraweeh is prayed in sets of two rakaat each, in the same way as you would pray your normal salah. There are some narrations of the Prophet (pbuh) that would support the opinion that Taraweeh is twenty rakaat, and some narrations that would support the opinion that Taraweeh is completed by praying eight rakaat. The opinion that Taraweeh is twenty rakaat has been narrated by all four Sunni schools of fiqh.

Depending on the opinion that you follow (or depending on how tired you are) you can choose to pray eight rakaat or twenty rakaat (or any even number of rakaat), as Taraweeh is prayed in sets of two rakaat each. (If you pray two rakaat, you will no doubt be rewarded for it, however two rakaat alone would not be classed as a complete Taraweeh).

The most important thing is that these prayers should be a means to bring you closer to Allah, so you should try to find out the meaning of what you are reciting in your prayers and make sure that you pray calmly and with full focus.

The quality of your taraweeh

Recitation

You can recite any part of the Quran during your Taraweeh prayers - there is no specific obligation to recite a specific part of the Quran.

Some people like to recite the whole Quran in their Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan. This means if you go to a masjid, you may find that the Taraweeh prayers are long (usually lasting over an hour), as they will complete approximately one juz (1/30) of the Quran in one day. This is a great way to complete the recitation of the Quran in your salah during the month of Ramadan, so it can be highly rewarding.

Holding the Quran

There is a difference of opinion on this, as some scholars say you are allowed to hold the Quran, translation, or use your phone during Taraweeh. If it helps your concentration, you are allowed to hold the Quran or translation or use your phone to follow along. Many scholars say that prayer does not become invalidated by looking for a long time at a book (ie the Quran) if you're reading it in your mind, so long as you do not actually utter the words.

Al-Bukhari reported from Aishah (ra) that Thakwaan - her slave - used to pray as her Imam reading from the mushaf.

However others, in the Hanafi school, believe holding a Quran and reading along from it is considered to be excessive action, which invalidates the prayer and must therefore be avoided.

Tip: We should all strive to learn Arabic to understand the Quran and its meanings, so that it will be easy for us to ponder it and focus properly in prayer, and that saves the need to carry a mushaf (physical copy) and look at it whilst praying.

Praying at the mosque vs at home

There is reward for praying Taraweeh prayer in congregation in the mosque and home.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "Verily, whoever stands for prayer in Ramadan with the Imam until he is finished, it will be recorded as if he prayed the entire night." (Tirmidhi 806)

What about if I start praying some rakaat in the masjid and complete at home?

That's absolutely fine, you can pray some in the masjid and some at home.

Tip: If you're going to the masjid to pray Taraweeh, just remember that there is reward in listening to the Quran as well, so if you are feeling tired then simply sitting quietly is better than making noise and talking. Others will be there to focus on their worship with Allah, so it's important that you don't disrupt them.

Laylatul Qadr

What is Laylatul Qadr?

Laylatul Qadr, or the Night of Power, is one of the most important nights of the Islamic calendar. Allah placed the virtue of this night higher than a thousand months, as mentioned in Surah al-Qadr:

"Indeed, 'it is' We 'Who' sent this 'Quran' down on the Night of Glory. And what will make you realize what the Night of Glory is?. The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months. That night the angels and the 'holy' spirit descend, by the permission of their Lord, for every 'decreed' matter. It is all peace until the break of dawn." (Quran 97:1-5)

Thus, every deed performed during this night is greater in virtue and reward than 1000 months - that's 30,000 / 83 years. More than an entire lifetime for most of us, so if our worship is accepted during this night, it'll be as if we have worshipped our whole life.

When is Laylatul Qadr?

The night falls within the last 10 days of Ramadan, and because the exact date is unknown, we are advised to strive hard throughout that time to catch this blessed night, especially during the odd nights. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Search for the Night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan." (Bukhari 2017)

What should I do on Laylatul Qadr?

Here are a few ways you can make the most of this night:

- Solitude - spend the night by yourself if you can, away from any distractions. Have a private meeting between yourself and Allah.
- Prayer - The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever prays during the night of Qadr with faith and hoping for its reward will have all of his previous sins forgiven." (Bukhari 2014)
- Dua - ask Allah and don't be shy. The Prophet (pbuh) advised A'ishah (ra) to say: "O Allah, You are Most Forgiving, and You love forgiveness; so forgive me" on Laylatul Qadr (Tirmidhi)
- Charity - be generous in giving for the sake of Allah. (Consider signing up to automate your donations by scanning the QR Code below!)



MY 10 NIGHTS

Zakat al-Fitr

What is Zakat al-Fitr?

Zakat ul-Fitr, also known as Fitrana, is a mandatory charitable contribution given by Muslims before Eid ul-Fitr. It serves as a means of purifying ourselves and providing for those in need, ensuring that everyone can partake in the festivities of Eid. The amount of Zakat al-Fitr is typically equivalent to the cost of staple food items for one person for one day. This can vary depending on your region and food prices - currently around £5.

Zakat ul-Fitr is not mandatory for you if you do not possess the minimum amount of wealth (Nisab) required for Zakat, which includes your basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and other essentials.

The purpose of Zakat ul-Fitr is to enable the less fortunate members of society to celebrate Eid with dignity and joy, ensuring that they have enough to eat and can enjoy the festivities alongside you.

Zakat ul-Fitr should be paid before the Eid prayers, ideally a few days in advance to ensure it reaches those in need in time for Eid celebrations.

You should distribute Zakat ul-Fitr to the needy and deserving members of your community, including the poor, the destitute, and those struggling to make ends meet.

For many who may have limited financial resources, paying Zakat ul-Fitr is still obligatory if you possess the means to do so. However, there are considerations for students facing financial constraints. You may seek assistance from your families, communities, or student organisations to fulfil this obligation.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) obligated Zakat ul-Fitr as purification of the fasting person from vain talk and misbehaviour, as food for the poor. Whoever pays it before the Eid prayer, it is accepted as Zakat. Whoever pays it after the Eid prayer, it is part of voluntary charity. (Sunan Abi Dawud 1609)

What's the difference between Zakat and Zakat al-Fitr?

For more information on Zakat, check out the National Zakat Foundation.



National Zakat
Foundation™

Eid

What is Eid ul-fitr?

Eid ul-Fitr is often referred to as the 'Smaller' or 'Minor Eid' in comparison to Eid ul-Adha, which is known as the 'Greater' or 'Major Eid'.

Eid ul-Fitr, also known as the 'Festival of Breaking the Fast', is one of the most important religious holidays celebrated by Muslims worldwide. It marks the end of Ramadan and falls on the first day of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, following the sighting of the new moon, which varies depending on the region. This celebration signifies the completion of a spiritual journey, encouraging gratitude for the strength and guidance received during Ramadan. It fosters a sense of unity and solidarity among Muslim communities, bringing together families and friends for joyous festivities.

Central to Eid ul-Fitr is the obligatory charitable contribution known as Zakat ul-Fitr, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their means, can partake in the celebrations. On the day of Eid, Muslims gather for special prayers, exchange greetings, share meals, and engage in acts of generosity and kindness towards others. Overall, Eid ul-Fitr serves as a time for Muslims to express gratitude, strengthen bonds, and celebrate the values of compassion and unity central to Islam.

Taking time off

The University has a procedure for applying for additional leave. The regulations will have been discussed at your induction, but are also accessible on the student site throughout the year. If you are unsure where to find this, reach out to your Muslim Chaplain, or department.

When taking time off for Eid ul-Fitr, the procedure is as follows. Once the date of the month of Ramadan is known, you must fill in any relevant forms or email the appropriate person, notifying the school of the two potential dates that Eid may land on.

For example, if Ramadan is announced for the 1st of March, we know Eid will definitely fall on either the 30th or the 31st of March, so you will need to include those two days in your communications. If only one of the days fall within a teaching day, then you should still contact the University as a precaution.

Spending Eid away from home

(If you have friends who are away from family during Eid, make an effort to reach out to them and include them in your Eid day as much as possible.)

- Community - find out which local mosques are doing Eid prayers and organise to go with friends.
- Events - check out when and where the Eid festivals and other events will be and make sure to attend to join in the fun, and bring any friends along too.
- Family - check-in with your family wherever they are, whether it's a video call or a message, so you can celebrate together in some way.
- Atmosphere - make your accommodation or house feel like Eid as much as possible, put some decorations up, play nasheeds, as well as any other Eid traditions you normally do.

Reflecting on Ramadan...

Once Ramadan is over, take some time to thank Allah for the blessings of Ramadan, and allowing you to see it through. One of the signs that our actions in Ramadan are accepted is if we continue with the good habits we picked up.

For example, the most obvious deed we performed in this month was fasting. So a key indicator that our fasting was accepted is to see how well we are able to continue our fasting throughout the year, even if it's only a couple of days a month.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) encouraged us to fast 6 days in Shawwal, the month directly after Ramadan so that we will gain the reward of fasting an entire year.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever fasts during the month of Ramadan and then follows it with six days of Shawwal will be (rewarded) as if he had fasted the entire year." (Bulugh al-Maram, Hadith 32).

Guidance For Teachers

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Guidance For Teachers

We recommend the following tips for staff and teachers supporting Muslim students or colleagues fasting during the month of Ramadan.

- Do not make assumptions about who may or may not be observing Ramadan – Islam is a faith that welcomes people of all races and backgrounds.
- Remember that some Muslims may be exempt from fasting so be mindful and sensitive and we advise not to ask why a Muslim student or colleague is not eating and/or drinking.
- If Muslims observing Ramadan feel comfortable doing so, encourage them to give short presentations and have discussions about Ramadan and how the school can best support them.
- Fasting can affect people in different ways (for example, some people may understandably become a little quieter or slightly tired at times).
- Offer accommodations for students and colleagues who may need adjustments during fasting such as a quiet place for prayer, and avoid scheduling exams or class parties that involve food during Ramadan.
- There is uncertainty around what day Eid ul-Fitr will fall on as it depends on the sighting of the moon which is only known on the last day of Ramadan, so please be accommodating of students and colleagues requesting multiple days off school.
- Please remember that Religion is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, and therefore please do all you can to ensure flexibility, inclusion and compassion is shown to Muslim students and colleagues that are fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.
- It's ok to ask questions about Ramadan and why Muslims fast. Use this opportunity to learn more about Ramadan – be curious and educate yourself, so you can support your Muslim students and colleagues.

Tips During Ramadan

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Things To Do While Fasting

- ✓ Delay the Suhoor until the latest time - eat close to fajr time to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh).
- ✓ Have Iftar ASAP - break your fast when Maghrib starts, with dates and water per Sunnah.
- ✓ Break your fast with dates and water.
- ✓ Seeking Laylatul Qadr - increase your good deeds in the last 10 nights.
- ✓ Recite Qur'an, give to charity, pray Taraweeh and do lots of Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and dua.

Things to Avoid While Fasting

- ✗ Avoid listening to music and general time wasting.
- ✗ Avoid swallowing phlegm or saliva excessively during fasting.
- ✗ Avoid sins of the tongue - lying, backbiting, swearing or arrogant talk.
- ✗ Incorrect behaviour - bad manners or lack of tolerance towards other people.

Student Specific Tips

Conserve your energy

If you have an exam or a long session coming up in the day, make sure that you conserve your energy in the morning and avoid any hard activities.

Food & drink

- Eat healthy foods
- Drink plenty of water at night
- Avoid overeating

Maintain good sleeping habits

Having a nap when you come back from university is a good energy booster.

An Ideal Daily Ramadan Routine

Suhoor

It's important to wake up before dawn to have the pre-dawn meal, known as Suhoor. This meal will give you energy during the day, and it's recommended to have a balanced meal. Then pray Fajr prayer, ideally in congregation (for the brothers specifically) to get 25x more reward! (Bukhari 620)

Daytime

Try and go about your normal daily routine, including work, studies, and other activities whilst observing the fast in the best way. During the day, it's really important to avoid anything that breaks the fast, so being conscious of the fact you're fasting throughout the day really helps.

Iftar

Break your fast at Maghrib time with something light such as dates and water, then Maghrib prayer, followed by a meal with family and friends - to make Ramadan have that communal feel we all love.

Isha

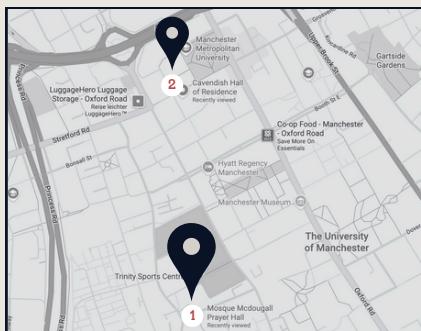
Then pray Isha at the mosque, which will then be followed by the Taraweeh prayers. This is the special Ramadan night prayer, consisting of 8 to 20 cycles and is usually performed in congregation at the mosque.

Night

After Taraweeh prayer, it's great to get in some more worship, such as reading the Quran, making supplications, and giving to charity. Many mosques also organise special Ramadan programs, lectures, and Quran recitation sessions during this time.

Community Spaces!

Feeling that community spirit during the month of Ramadan cannot be underestimated, that's why we've collected information on the local community spaces... Including information on Suhoor, Iftar, Qiyaam and Taraweeh. The spaces are all around Manchester so do take a look and get involved!



#1 McDougals Prayer Hall

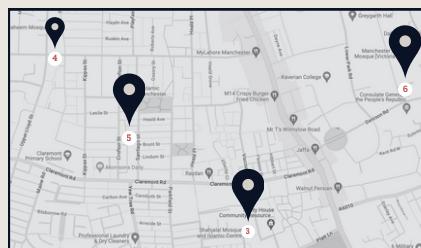
Burlington Street, M15 6WP

Iftar Taraweeh

#2 Cavendish Prayer Hall

Cavendish Street, M14 6BG

Iftar* Taraweeh**



#3 Shahjalal Mosque

1A Eileen Grove, M14 5WE

Iftar Taraweeh

#4 Masjid Ibrahim

39 Upper Lloyd Street, M14 4HY

Iftar Suhoor
 Taraweeh Qiyaam

#5 Masjid al-Furqan

42 Great Southern St, M14 4EZ

Iftar Qiyaam
 Taraweeh

#6 Manchester Central Mosque

20 Upper Park Road, M14 5RU

Iftar Suhoor (last 10 nights)
 Taraweeh

Mawlawi Kurdish Cultural Centre

Parsonage Street, M15 5WD

Iftar Qiyaam (last 10 nights)
 Taraweeh

Masjid at-Taqwaa

230 Plymouth Grove, M13 0AS

Iftar Suhoor
 Taraweeh Qiyaam

British Muslim Heritage Centre

College Road, M16 8BP

Iftar Qiyaam (last 10 nights)
 Taraweeh

Masjid Salaam

40 Ratby Street, M16 7DJ

Iftar Suhoor (last 10 nights)
 Taraweeh

*Iftar - not every day, please check Manchester Metropolitan University Islamic Society socials for Iftar days.

**Taraweeh - only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Conclusion

So, there you have it, the first edition of The Ramadan Essentials: Student Edition! We hope that the content covered in this guide has provided you with answers and practical advice to make your Ramadan as easy and beneficial as possible whilst whilst studying.

As Muslims, we should be confident enough to speak up for ourselves and ask for support and reasonable accommodations when we need it. In most cases, reasonable adjustments can easily be made. Even in situations in which there may not currently be a solution, it is our responsibility to make sure that our voices are heard, so that these issues can be identified and tackled.

We appreciate that additional issues may arise that haven't been covered by this guide. If they do, please get in touch using the contact information found at the very beginning.

We pray that this guide highlights the beauty, purpose and wonderful opportunity Ramadan presents. Whilst in education we can definitely make the most of Ramadan and everything it has to offer. Fasting is for Allah, the one deed and reward that He Has reserved for Himself, so this should be something we go above and beyond for over anything else.

We ask Allah to accept our fasts and worship, and bless us with many more Ramadans. Ameen.

What Breaks My Fast?

The Cause	The Ruling	The Condition
Smelling or applying liquid-based perfumes or incense	Doesn't break the fast	It is permissible to smell incense in a room or elsewhere as long as you do not inhale and ingest it
Bleeding from the mouth or nose	Doesn't break the fast	Swallowing blood should be avoided
Using an asthma inhaler	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Removing a tooth	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Undergoing a blood test	Doesn't break the fast	Unless the extraction of blood equates to the same amount of blood extracted from cupping
Masturbation	Breaks the fast	If the person doesn't ejaculate then he needs to repent from the sin of masturbating, however the fast is still valid
Nose drops	Doesn't break the fast	Unless the taste of the drops reaches the throat or stomach
Nosebleeds	Doesn't break the fast	Unless the cause of bleeding happens intentionally
Tasting food	Doesn't break the fast	It is permissible for the one preparing the meal to taste food using the tip of the tongue whilst taking precaution in not swallowing anything
Nutritional injections	Breaks the fast	Nutritional injections are considered similar to food
Fainting	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Using cosmetics or make-up	Doesn't break the fast	-----

What Breaks My Fast?

The Cause	The Ruling	The Condition
Lying, swearing or using bad speech	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Using toothpaste or mouthwash	Doesn't break the fast	However it is preferable to avoid using strong toothpaste or mouthwash as they may reach the throat
Vomiting	Doesn't break the fast	Unless vomiting happens intentionally
Kissing and Hugging	Doesn't break the fast	This is only allowed if it does not lead to sexual arousal. The emission of prostatic fluid does not break the fast unless resulted in ejaculation
Sexual relations	Breaks the fast	-----
Wet Dream	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Cutting hair or trimming the nails	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Having a shower or bath	Doesn't break the fast	If the person swallows water unintentionally, the fast is still valid and he doesn't have to make up the fast
Applying henna	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Swimming or diving into water	Doesn't break the fast	-----
Cupping	Breaks the fast	The one cupping and the one undergoing cupping both break the fast
Using Medical Eye drops	Doesn't break the fast	Doesn't break the fast even if the taste of drops reaches the throat

Glossary

Suhoor	An early morning (pre-dawn) meal taken before fasting begins; referred to as <i>sehri</i> in south-asia.
Fajr	The morning prayer, following the suhur meal and performed before sunrise.
Maghrib	The prayer performed during sunset, and the point at which a fast is broken.
Iftar	A fast-breaking meal.
Isha	The final obligatory prayer of the day, performed in the night.
Tarawih	Supererogatory evening prayers, encouraged as a Prophetic tradition inside Ramadān.
Laylatul Qadr	The 'Night of Power' which occurs on one of the last nights of Ramadan; on which falls abundant mercy from the Heavens and righteous actions are magnified in their reward.
I'tikaf	Spiritual retreat practiced by some to devote themselves solely to worship; though more common in Ramadan, this can be practiced at any time of the year.
Qur'an	The holy book of Muslims, the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad via the Angel Gabriel.
Eid ul-Fitr	'Eid al-Fitr is the celebration following Ramadan; there are two Eids in the Muslim calendar Ritual washing required for prayer.
Wudu'	Ritual washing required for prayer.
Zakat	Obligatory charity.
Fidya	When a fast is missed through necessity, such as being ill or pregnant, and it cannot be made up after Ramadan, Fidya is payable. The requirement is to provide one person with two meals, for each day that a fast is missed.
Kaffarah	When a fast is deliberately broken without a valid reason, and the person cannot fast at a later time, Kaffarā is due. The requirement is to provide one person with two meals a day, for two months

