

## Ramadan origins and fasting

Ramadan is a month-long religious observance by Muslims around the world that takes place during the month of Ramadan – the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. It is believed to be the month during which the Holy Quran was first revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

The word Ramadan is derived from the Arabic word, ramida or ar ramada for intense heat or scorched ground that probably characterized the initial Ramadan period, more than 14 centuries ago. It is considered the most venerated...



Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power), which falls during the last third, commemorates the revelation of the first verses of the Qur'an and is considered the most holy night of the year. Ramadan ends with the holiday Eid ul-Fitr, on which feasts are held. During the month following Ramadan, called Shawwal, Muslims are encouraged to fast for a further six days.

### Fasting - Sawm

The most prominent event of this month is the fasting (sawm) practiced by the most observant Muslims. Every day during the month of Ramadan, Muslims around the world get up before dawn to eat the Suhoor meal (the pre dawn meal) and perform their fajr prayer. They break their fast when the fourth prayer of the day, Maghrib (sunset), is due.

During Ramadan, Muslims are expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam and to avoid obscene and irreligious sights and sounds. The fast is intended to be an exacting act of deep personal worship in which Muslims seek a raised level of closeness to God Almighty. The act of fasting is said to redirect the heart away from worldly activities, its purpose being to cleanse the inner soul and free it from harm. In addition to fasting, Muslims are encouraged to read the entire Qur'an. Properly observing the fast is supposed to induce a comfortable feeling of peace and calm. It also allows Muslims to practice self-discipline, sacrifice, and sympathy for those who are less fortunate, intended to make Muslims more generous and charitable. Muslims can eat after the sun has set. Pregnant women, the elderly, the ill and children less than 12 years of age are all exempt from fasting as lack of food could damage health.

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### Keeping alive the Ramadan traditions

Ramadan is the time of piety, fasting and prayers; it is a time when traditions and customs come to the fore. Passed on from one generation to another, these noble traditions are now beginning to wane under the influence of modernity.

The Ramadan cannon is a tradition that has been kept alive despite all recent advancements in technology. Originating in Egypt, the Ramadan cannon became a practice that was embraced

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**Khoshaf**

An authentic Mediterranean drink made from soaked dried fruit.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup seedless raisin
- 1 cup dried apricot, pitted, halved
- 1/3 cup almonds, blanched, halved
- 1/3 cup pistachio nuts
- 1/3 cup walnuts
- 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons of orange blossom water

**Preparation**

Rinse raisins and dried apricot halves

under cold water, then place in a bowl, cover with 1 liter of cold water and let soak 2-3 hours. Put nuts in a bowl and cover with boiling water and let soak 45 minutes to soften them and freshen their taste. Transfer fruit and its macerating liquid to a serving bowl, and then add the sugar and orange blossom water. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Rinse and drain the nuts and add to the fruit, mixing well. Serve immediately or refrigerate.

# RAMADAN DRINKS

to keep you hydrated

**Carob (locust bean) drink**



Carob is the legume fruit of the Carob tree, Ceratonia siliqua. It is also known as Locust bean, and kharoob in Arabic. The fruit is consumed in Egypt as a snack, and used to make a refreshing, and popular, cold drink.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup carob pods, crushed
- 1 cup sugar

**Preparations:**

Place the crushed carob pods in a sauce pan with the sugar. Heat on medium, stirring constantly, until the sugar is caramelized. Add 8 cups of water, and bring to a boil. Set aside to cool. Strain through a muslin cloth. Refrigerate in a jug. To serve, add chilled water to taste.

**Sahlab**



**Ingredients:**

- 4 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon sahlab (orchid flour)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon rose water
- Cinnamon, ground, as a garnish on top

**Preparation:**

Place the milk in a saucepan and add the sahlab previously mixed with sugar. Stir and bring to a simmer, and keep stirring until thickened. Add the rose water and stir to mix. Transfer to cups and sprinkle with cinnamon. Serve with crackers or kaak. If the quantity of sahlab is not sufficient to thicken the mixture, add more, 1/2 tablespoon or up to one tablespoon. If unable to source the sahlab, substitute with cornstarch and double the quantity (4 to 6 tablespoons cornstarch)

**Jallab**

**Ingredients:**

- 3 tbsp Jallab syrup
- 1 tbsp golden raisins
- 1 tbsp pine nuts
- Crushed ice

**Preparation:**

Put the Jallab syrup in a tall glass, top with cold water and stir. Add as much crushed ice as you like. Top the drink with the raisins and pine nuts.



**Amar al-din**

A delicious drink that is traditionally enjoyed during Ramadan for iftar or suhur.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 package dry apricot in pressed sheet form
- 5 cups boiling water

**Preparation:**

Cut up the apricot sheets into 4 or 5 strips. Add water to cover. Soak until apricot dissolves in about 5 hours. Once apricot is fully dissolved, refrigerate. Serve cold.



## Keeping alive the Ramadan traditions

Continued from Page 1

by various other countries in the Arab World. Though it is of no practical use to this generation, thanks to internet and mobile apps, it is still preserved in many parts for its symbolic significance during the holy month.

Dating back to the early 1960s, the cannon was fired every day, since the first day of Ramadan, to convey the end of a day's fast, and the beginning of Iftar. Even though times have changed, and the tradition is quite old, it is very much anticipated

by all its spectators, and is held onto tightly by the observers of the Islamic world. A single shot announces the end of a fast, while two shots announce the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan, and Eid al-Fitr.

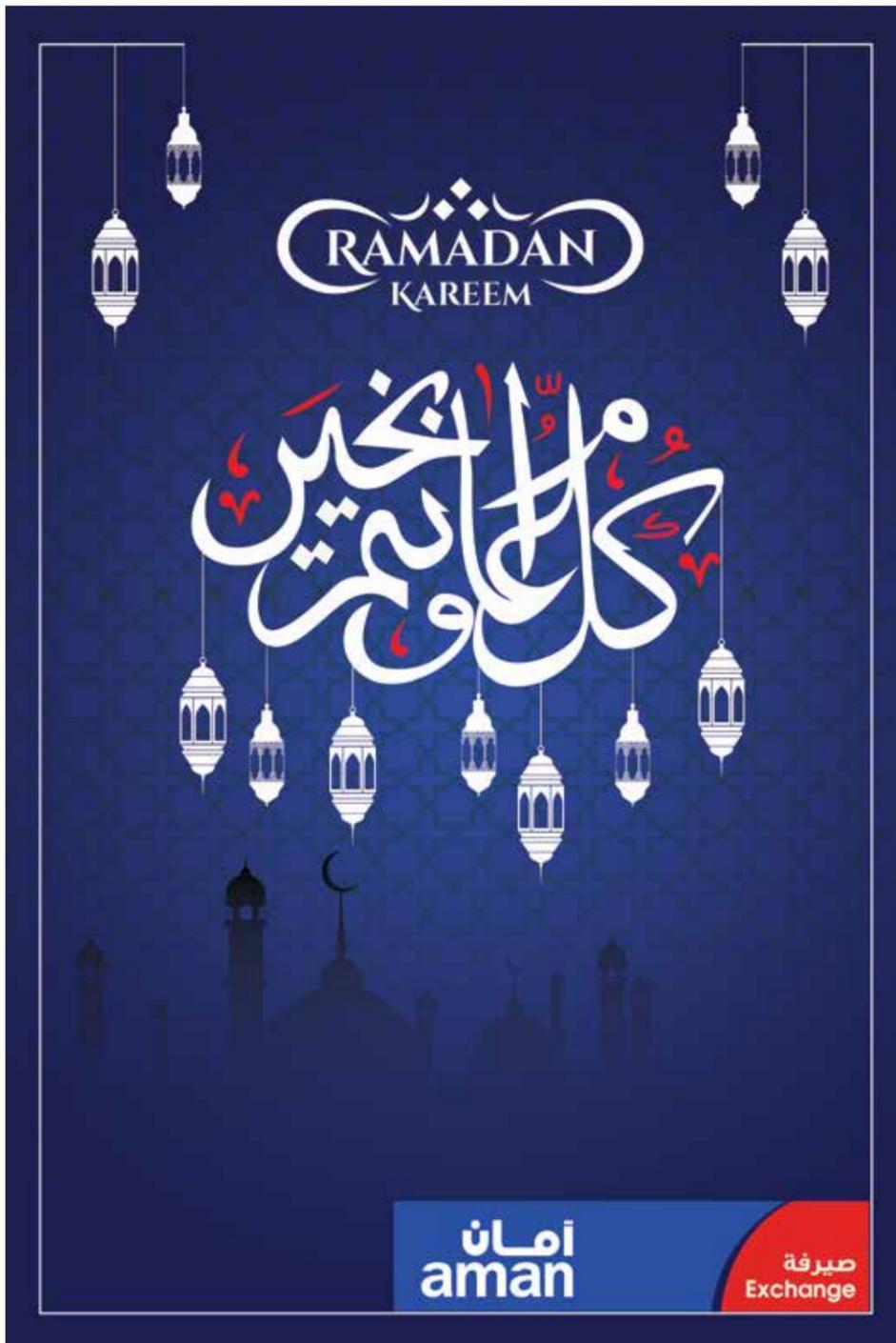
Kuwait too participates in this tradition. The firing of the 'Midfa al-Iftar', which takes place daily

at the Naif Palace in Kuwait City, not only attracts families and children, but is also broadcasted live on Kuwait television channels and radio. The firing, which is conducted by three guards in red livery, is usually held in the open yard of the palace decorated to honor the custom. A few other Kuwaiti traditions that have stood the passage of time include:

**Graish:** A traditional pre-Ramadan feast when family members and even neighbors gather before the commencement of the holy month.

**Girgian:** Similar to the Western 'trick or treat', children go from door to door trying to collect candies and nuts.

**Ghabqas:** Where friends and families gather to spend Ramadan evenings together. Although many of the customs and traditions have changed over the years, the spirit of Ramadan continues to thrive.



# Initiating your child into Ramadan fasting

*Children can be initiated into fasting during Ramadan if parents pay close attention to their constitution and eating habits. A gradual approach is the best way to help children understand the importance of fasting*

During Ramadan, many children also observe the fast. As they are young and getting accustomed to this discipline, it is important that they be taught the correct way to do so, especially when Ramadan occurs during the hot summer months. An active lifestyle, rising mercury and the demands of a growing body make children more susceptible to illness and fatigue during summer.



Children are not required to fast during Ramadan before the onset of puberty. However, some parents may encourage them to fast for a few days so they can mentally and physically get accustomed to the discipline and grow up knowing the values of the worship of fasting. The question is how long a child should fast, especially when Ramadan falls in summer leading to a longer day. This Ramadan, the sawm (fasting period) stretches for nearly 15 hours. Given that children are in a constant growth mode, developing bones, muscles and blood, needing more nutritious foods in proportion to their size (than adults) and that these foods have to be given in small and frequent amounts throughout the day, the issue of fasting requires a parent to pay attention to the child's constitution. This is compounded by the fact that many children have poor appetite and eat a limited number of foods or dilute their diets significantly with lesser nutrient foods. Children who have a weak constitution might not be able to fast. Similarly, children who are used to eating frequently or are extra active through the day can find fasting difficult. Determining the child's ability to fast is the responsibility of parents.

Common sense is a good place to start with and all parents should have a pragmatic approach to monitoring a child's fast:

- Get your child accustomed to eating smaller meals throughout the day before Ramadan to help them control their temptation to eat large meals.
- Closer to Ramadan, ease children off the number of meals a day so that their mind, body and appetite are all in tune for the coming fasting period.
- Be gradual in the way you initiate them into the month of fasting. In the beginning, children below ten years can be encouraged to fast until 10am. Then the period of fasting can be extended to the time of the noon prayer, and then until the time of the evening prayer.
- Keep them well hydrated during the non-fasting hours by giving them plenty of fluids. This is very important.
- It is also important to have a proper suhour (morning meal during Ramadan) so the children are able to undertake the task of fasting throughout

the day successfully. The suhour meal should be such that it keeps them going for the day. So a selection of slow-digesting fibre-rich foods such as wholewheat cereals, fruit and vegetables are an essential part of the meal.

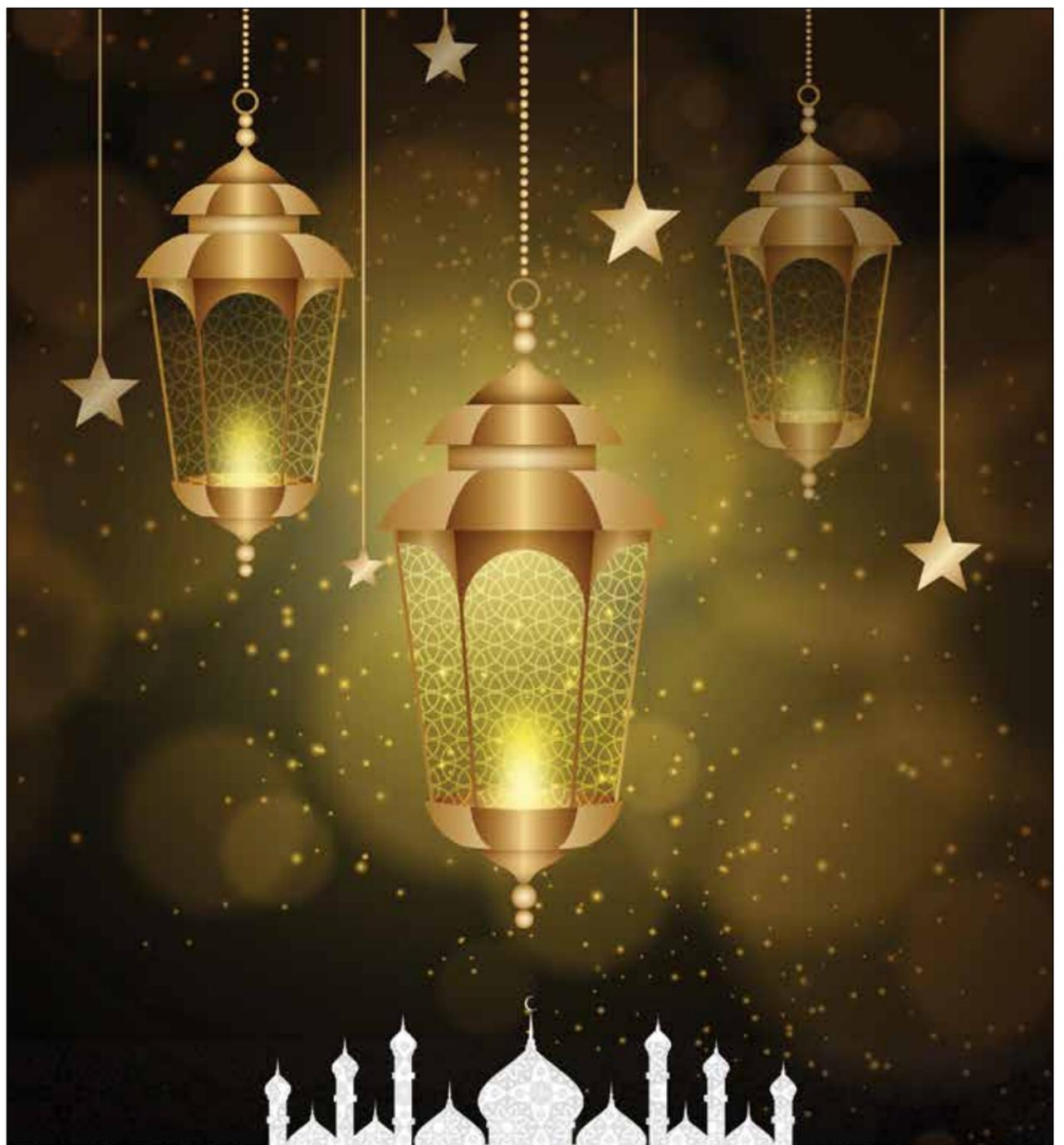
- In the days prior to the fasting, gradually cut down on their consumption of salt and sugar as these increase thirst and cravings. Do not cut back on these all of sudden as it could lead to headaches, stomach aches and a general feeling of discomfort.
- Avoid forcing your children to overeat, since this may cause indigestion and bloating. Avoid giving them too many fried and spicy foods. They may increase gastric acidity.
- Avoid consumption of carbonated drinks during iftar (time of breaking fast) as these drinks can produce gas and cause discomfort.
- Glucose is the body's primary fuel source and is derived from the food we eat. When denied glucose for more than four to eight hours, the body turns to the liver for glycogen for fuel. This fuel will last for up to 12 hours before the body needs to turn to glycogen stored in the muscles. If glucose is still denied, muscle wasting is prevented by temporarily switching to fat as the fuel source. This is what happens in a fasting state. So if the child is fasting only for a part of the day, his body can cope well and thus he can successfully fast throughout the month.
- If a child is on prescription medication, the dosage of the medication has to be specially regulated during the fasting period. When no foods are introduced into the body, medications are absorbed at a much higher rate and can actually do more harm than good. It is important that you speak to your doctor before making your child fast. Ideally, it is preferred that these children do not fast but they may be keen to do so as they see other children their age observing the fast.

#### The advantages of fasting

How do children benefit from fasting? In addition to learning patience, tolerance, strengthening their will and increasing their perseverance, fasting works as a multidimensional experience in which a total body

transformation occurs. During fasting, the body cleans its system because it is not expending energy through its digestive organs. The blood is detoxified. The release of toxins from the colon, kidneys, bladder, lungs and skin clears out complications that have arisen from a bad diet and an unhealthy lifestyle. Children who are introduced to fasting at a young age can reap more benefits from this spiritual and physical experience.

- The ground rules remain the same for older children. The body must be well nourished and well hydrated throughout Ramadan. Regardless of gender, physical and mental demands, eating reduced quantities of food during Ramadan doesn't have any adverse effect if the diet is balanced. As long as children eat a variety of food in moderation during suhour and iftar, they can undertake the fast and carry on with your normal routine without any problem.



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## Eat low-GI foods during Ramadan

*With Ramadan here, it is important to pay attention to your meal planning for Iftar and Suhour. After breaking your fast, you must eat in a manner that allows your body to deal with the food in an easy way.*

One of the most effective ways to keeping your body happy is to pick foods with Low Glycemic Index. In other words, eat foods that will not raise your sugar levels dramatically as that can place stress on your system. A glycemic index (GI) is the value obtained by monitoring a person's blood sugar after eating a food. The value varies slightly from person to person and from one type of food to another.

But generally, a food is said to be low GI when the value is 55 or less. A food with High GI has a value of 70 or more. For instance, High-GI foods are watermelon (80), dates (103) and honey (58 GI medium).

It's always advisable to eat a low-GI diet as much as possible, but you need not to eliminate high GI foods altogether. The trick is to avoid eating high GI foods. Combine them with low GI foods, which will give you an intermediate GI, overall. When you are fasting, your metabolism slows down and calories requirements drop. With a low budget of calories, you need to invest them in the best sources to gain maximum benefit. Avoid empty calories that have no nutritional value. The lower the GI, the slower the food is converted to sugar and the longer it satisfies your hunger. To help your body cope and perform well through the day, eat more fibre-rich food at Suhour. This will keep you feeling full for a longer time. To be alert throughout the day and concentrate at work, eat a high-protein diet at Suhour.

Selecting low GI foods helps maintain normal blood sugar, minimises hunger pangs, satisfies appetite and optimises brain power and mental focus during the day.

If you cannot avoid eating high GI food such as white rice (GI 87), balance it with grilled chicken or vegetables.

The other rule to observe before embarking on a fast is to avoid eating foods high in sodium such as canned or processed foods and pickles as they will make you thirsty.

Is all this talk of high and low GI foods intimidating you? Don't worry, it's not at all complicated. You do not need to know the glycemic index of all foods to take a sensible middle path. Follow the rule of thumb that all vegetables are low GI foods - between 10 to 47 GI.

**Fruits:** They are hydrating as well as nourishing. Watermelon can help summer fasting. The fruit is mostly water and sugar and is packed with essential rehydration salts magnesium, calcium, sodium and potassium so it can actually hydrate you more effectively than water. Other fruits for these long days of summer are: oranges, berries, grapefruit, cantaloupe, coconut water, pineapple, grapes and mango. Eat at least 2 to 3 fruits everyday.

**Brown rice:** The difference between brown rice and white rice is not just the colour. Brown rice is packed with a double punch of being a concentrated source of fibre and selenium and eating it reduces the risk of colon cancer. Whole brown rice (rice bran oil) reduces LDL (bad) cholesterol. Its beneficial

role is also seen in metabolic syndrome, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and bone health.

**Eggs:** An excellent Suhour meal, they are high in protein to keep us full, and in choline (a water-soluble nutrient) to boost brain health and memory.

**Fibrous vegetables:** These help increase the feeling of fullness. Broccoli, lettuce, spinach, cabbage, peas, beet root, carrots, corn, cauliflower, peppers, cucumber - all pack a punch of antioxidants, phytochemicals with a range of health benefits. At least 3 to 4 servings of vegetables should be eaten every day.

**Fish:** A rich source of protein as well as healthy fats, EPA and DHA, which is not only heart-healthy but also helps boost concentration during the fasting hours, also found in walnuts and flaxseeds.

**Buttermilk:** This cooling drink is known to reduce body heat during scorching summers. It's a thirst quencher and prevents dehydration, a rich source of calcium, phosphorus, B12, protein, potassium. Easily digested, it also populates the digestive system with good bacteria, preventing digestive troubles and enhancing the immune system during the fasting days.

**Soups:** Great for Iftar. They are hugely refreshing and nutritious - a quick shot of thirst-slaking liquid with hunger-relieving solid nutrition that prepares the body and soul for the prayers that follow, before the proper evening meal. It helps restore water and mineral balance in the body after the long hours of fasting.

**Chicken:** A major source of lean and high quality slow-digesting protein to keep us full, it also provides a broad spectrum of nutrients. It is a rich source of B vitamins specially B3 and B6, supports the immune system, alleviates depression and keeps the blood sugar in the normal range, and is rich in selenium which plays a role in preventing cell damage.

**Oats:** High in fibre and a great choice for Suhour. The fibre in oats will help prevent constipation and stomach upset during fasting. A filling smoothie would be with whole banana (magnesium and potassium), yogurt (protein), almonds (vitamin E and healthy fat) and oats (fibre and whole grain).

**Dates: The Iftar staple**  
The body's immediate need at the time of Iftar is to get an easily available energy source in the form of glucose for every living cell, particularly brain and nerve cells. Dates are good source of sugars. They contain a unique blend of glucose and fructose and have a very high potassium content (about 64 per cent more than bananas), a key rehydration mineral. They have a nutrient called beta-D glucan which is a soluble fibre that has health benefits and can increase the feeling of fullness.

## Avoid burnout

*Fasting can take a toll on your body and mind. You may feel constantly tired, unable to concentrate and sometimes moody and upset. Here are some ways to help you make the most of fasting while making it easier for you to stay focused.*

**Have small meals:** You get tired in the day because the last time you ate was at bedtime and/or Suhour. This tiredness is due to the lack of food intake. Food energizes the mind and body, and without it you feel lethargic and find it hard to focus. To reduce your level of tiredness, have a small meal at Iftar as opposed to a big one which will make you even more lethargic. Follow the Iftar with small meals at two-hour intervals until bedtime or Suhour. This provides you with added endurance the following day.



**Avoid caffeine:** If you get headaches and cannot focus it may be because you are not getting your regular caffeine fix, such as tea or coffee. The caffeine escalates blood circulation to your brain, and when you suddenly withdraw from such a stimulant, you get headaches and your ability to focus and concentrate is greatly reduced. In the evenings, after Iftar, substitute your regular drinks with herbal teas, such as chamomile or mint tea. And remember, for the next year it would be best to gradually reduce your intake of caffeine over the weeks leading to Ramadan.

**Take regular breaks:** Studies have shown that we can only fully focus for 40 to 50 minutes in a stretch. After that the focus level begins to sag. Take regular ten minute breaks every 40 minutes or so. Wash your face with cold water, do wudu (ablution), and take a short walk outside to freshen up and stimulate your mind and body. You can even time this with your prayer breaks to make best use of the day.

**Schedule new sleep time:** With all the late meals and early Suhoors this Ramadan, your sleep pattern is greatly disrupted. Having Iftar late in the evening, followed by small meals every two hours and an early morning Suhour can throw your body into disorder. Alter your sleeping pattern in order to have a healthy sleep. For example, you can sleep early and wake up 30 minutes before Suhour, so you can have a light meal. Getting a good night's sleep will help you focus better and reduce tiredness. If possible, fit in an afternoon nap.

**Light stretching:** Do some light stretches when you wake up or whenever possible during the day. By stretching your body, you get a boost of energy and circulate the much needed oxygen to your brain. Make sure you go for a short walk during work breaks.

**Eat a balanced diet:** Do your best to eat complex carbohydrate foods for sustained energy. For example, you should eat brown rice and pasta, fruits and vegetables. Complex carbohydrates release energy throughout the day. It is better to skip processed foods and refined carbohydrates, such as sugar, chocolate and cakes.

**Stay motivated:** Remember that Ramadan is a time for reflection, repentance and devotion to Allah. Remind yourself that you are gaining spiritual reward by fasting and this will help you stay motivated.





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## Ways to Kick Bad Habits

**F**ew things are more difficult than eliminating bad habits, since they have become part of our daily routines and personality. It takes days of patience and practice to break old habits.

However, the good news is, Ramadan offers a perfect and natural environment for moral training. In addition to the physical discipline during the month of Ramadan, the increased spiritual exercise and connection with Allah, can transform your habits for life.



**Acknowledge your bad habits:** First step is to admit you need to change. If you are in a state of denial, you won't recognize that you have a bad habit to change.

**Pick a habit for this month:** Prioritize your bad habits and focus on one for this month. If you are committed to changing at least one habit, you will see remarkable results.

**Realize that it is in us to change:** You can break any bad habit if you really want to. No one else can change your habits, if you do not want to.

**Intention and plan to change:** A healthy process of change in character requires a gradual pace, which entails planning. Develop concrete milestones to measure your progress.

**Replace a bad habit with a good one:**

Completely eliminating a habit is more challenging than replacing it with a more productive habit. Moreover, it is crucial to replace the lost natural needs, such as the need to socialize and to be entertained with something healthy. For instance, it is easier to replace your addiction to TV with a physical workout or reading the Quran.

**Change your Environment:** Resist the negative peer pressure by finding a better company of friends. Collective action to change is very powerful.



**Think of yourself as a new person:** This simple psychological shift in your thinking about your own image can do wonders. Tell yourself, "I cannot continue this ill-behavior. I am better than that. I am stronger. I am wiser."

**Reward success:** The most fundamental law in all of psychology is the "law of effect." It simply states that actions followed by rewards are strengthened and likely to recur. Setting up formal or informal rewards for success greatly increases your chances of transforming bad habits into good ones, and is



far more effective than punishing yourself for bad habits or setbacks.

**Get help:** Tell someone about your effort to change if it helps. He or she may keep you on track and may offer some good advice. Read books that will encourage you to do virtuous actions.



**Resolve to continue on:** Giving up bad habits or learning good habits requires regular maintenance and determination. It is a long, ongoing process, and is more difficult than

the first few steps of change. So ensure that you follow up.

**Develop a relapse strategy:** How do you ensure not to return to your bad habit you are trying to change? Some people donate money to a good cause every time they return to sinning or a bad habit. This reminds them of the 'cost' of going back to old bad habits. Others try physically demanding acts to deter them from reverting to old ways.



## Saving food during Ramadan

*Reducing food loss and waste is a moral and social obligation on everyone at all times. However, this takes on added significance during the holy month of Ramadan when we need to be even more aware of the millions of poor people around the world who do not have enough to eat. Not wasting food is also essential to ensuring global food security and decreasing the environmental footprint of food systems.*

Do your part and start right now, reduce the amount of food you waste during this month and beyond with the following tips.

**Freeze food:** The freezer is your best friend when it comes to reducing food waste. It can be used to freeze leftovers, including those piles of rice you ended up with last Iftar, which are always handy to have on hand for days when there is no time to cook. However, the freezer is also a perfect solution for foods that expire quickly such as meat, chicken and fish. It is even possible to freeze grated cheese, eggs (separate the white and yolks), chopped up vegetables and fruits, or milk and yogurt.



**Store food correctly:** Do you keep your vegetables in the fridge or outside and what about the fruits? How do you store bread? It is important to know the answer to these and other questions about food storage to ensure a long shelf life. Did you know, for instance, that vegetables, except for onions, garlic and potatoes, are best kept in the fridge and that bananas should be kept outside the fridge but away from other fruits, as they make other fruits ripen faster? Inform yourself about food storage to reduce waste.

**Use old products wisely:** Have those

mangoes, despite your careful storage, gone wrinkly? Are your carrots soft and limp? Do not throw them away! Instead, use ripe fruits for smoothies and old vegetables for soup, sauce, or pizza. Revive your carrots and celery by placing them in a glass of water in the fridge. Use sprouted potatoes by simply cutting off the sprouts before use. Freeze milk, yogurt, and fresh cheese until a later date, or add dairy approaching their expiry date to your smoothie.

**Share food with neighbors:** Since Ramadan is about helping those around you and especially the less fortunate, if

you prepare too much food for Iftar or Suhoor every day, why not share your meal with the janitor or driver? Or give your neighbor some of that mouthwatering cake you made for your family? Of course if everyone starts giving each other meals and we do not decrease the amount of food we buy, we still do not diminish waste, but sharing some food is a great way to live the spirit of Ramadan.

**Organize a leftover Iftar or Suhoor:** If your family is like most, chances are you cook Iftar every single day, while leftovers are piling up in the fridge. One way to finish them up is by having a leftover Iftar and Sahoor every few days. This will save you time, money, effort, and food waste. Thanks to the internet, it is not difficult to find out what to do with leftover items in the fridge. In no time you will find delicious ideas for anything in your fridge approaching its "Use By" date. And if you cannot find anything, you can always freeze products until an idea comes up.

**Make a shopping list:** While you cannot avoid shopping while hungry during the day in Ramadan and end up with tons of purchases you did not need or want to buy, buying your groceries without a list may have the same effect. Next time, check your pantry and fridge before heading to the store and write down the stuff you need to buy. Also, plan what you would like to cook throughout the week and limit yourself to buying the things you need for these meals.



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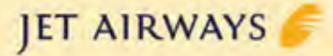
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**PRAYER TIMINGS - KUWAIT**

DAY	RAMADAN	DATE	IMSAK	FAJR	SUNRISE	DHUR	ASR	MAGRIB	ISHA
Thursday	01	May 17	3:12 AM	3:22 AM	4:55 AM	11:44 AM	3:20 PM	6:34 PM	8:04 PM
Friday	02	May 18	3:11 AM	3:21 AM	4:54 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:35 PM	8:05 PM
Saturday	03	May 19	3:10 AM	3:20 AM	4:54 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:36 PM	8:06 PM
Sunday	04	May 20	3:10 AM	3:20 AM	4:53 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:36 PM	8:06 PM
Monday	05	May 21	3:09 AM	3:19 AM	4:53 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:37 PM	8:07 PM
Tuesday	06	May 22	3:08 AM	3:18 AM	4:52 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:37 PM	8:07 PM
Wednesday	07	May 23	3:07 AM	3:17 AM	4:52 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:38 PM	8:08 PM
Thursday	08	May 24	3:07 AM	3:17 AM	4:51 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:39 PM	8:09 PM
Friday	09	May 25	3:06 AM	3:16 AM	4:51 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:39 PM	8:09 PM
Saturday	10	May 26	3:06 AM	3:16 AM	4:51 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:40 PM	8:10 PM
Sunday	11	May 27	3:05 AM	3:15 AM	4:50 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:40 PM	8:10 PM
Monday	12	May 28	3:04 AM	3:14 AM	4:50 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:41 PM	8:11 PM
Tuesday	13	May 29	3:04 AM	3:14 AM	4:50 AM	11:45 AM	3:20 PM	6:41 PM	8:11 PM
Wednesday	14	May 30	3:03 AM	3:13 AM	4:49 AM	11:46 AM	3:20 PM	6:42 PM	8:12 PM
Thursday	15	May 31	3:03 AM	3:13 AM	4:49 AM	11:46 AM	3:20 PM	6:43 PM	8:13 PM
Friday	16	June 01	3:02 AM	3:12 AM	4:49 AM	11:46 AM	3:20 PM	6:43 PM	8:13 PM
Saturday	17	June 02	3:02 AM	3:12 AM	4:49 AM	11:46 AM	3:20 PM	6:44 PM	8:14 PM
Sunday	18	June 03	3:02 AM	3:12 AM	4:49 AM	11:46 AM	3:21 PM	6:44 PM	8:14 PM
Monday	19	June 04	3:01 AM	3:11 AM	4:48 AM	11:46 AM	3:21 PM	6:45 PM	8:15 PM
Tuesday	20	June 05	3:01 AM	3:11 AM	4:48 AM	11:47 AM	3:21 PM	6:45 PM	8:15 PM
Wednesday	21	June 06	3:01 AM	3:11 AM	4:48 AM	11:47 AM	3:21 PM	6:45 PM	8:15 PM
Thursday	22	June 07	3:01 AM	3:11 AM	4:48 AM	11:47 AM	3:21 PM	6:46 PM	8:16 PM
Friday	23	June 08	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:47 AM	3:21 PM	6:46 PM	8:16 PM
Saturday	24	June 09	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:47 AM	3:21 PM	6:47 PM	8:17 PM
Sunday	25	June 10	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:48 AM	3:22 PM	6:47 PM	8:17 PM
Monday	26	June 11	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:48 AM	3:22 PM	6:48 PM	8:18 PM
Tuesday	27	June 12	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:48 AM	3:22 PM	6:48 PM	8:18 PM
Wednesday	28	June 13	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:48 AM	3:22 PM	6:48 PM	8:18 PM
Thursday	29	June 14	3:00 AM	3:10 AM	4:48 AM	11:48 AM	3:22 PM	6:48 PM	8:18 PM

\*Ramadan start date may vary, depending on the local sighting of the moon.

# RAMADAN RECIPES

Traditionally, the Ramadan fast is broken with the consumption of a few dates and some water, but this is not mandatory. In places where dates are not easily available, people compensate with other traditional foods. After breaking their fast, Muslims everywhere have a more hearty meal to energize the body after its day-long fast. Here are a few recipes to try out this Ramadan.

## Kanafa

**K**anafa is a Middle Eastern dessert consisting of a base layer of cheese mixed with milk or semolina topped off with a crispy layer of dried noodles and syrup.

### Ingredients:

- 450g Shredded phyllo dough
- 450g Ricotta cheese
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/3 cup white sugar
- 360g unsalted butter
- For the syrup:
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon rose water (optional)

### Preparation:

- Preheat an oven to 200 degrees C.
- Use a food processor to finely chop the frozen, shredded phyllo dough. The strands should be about the size of a grain of rice. Pour the dough into a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together the ricotta, mozzarella, and 1/3 cup sugar.
- Place the butter in a large liquid measuring cup or bowl with a spout. Heat the butter in a microwave until completely melted, and let it sit for several minutes until thick white foam has formed on top. Clarify the butter by using a spoon to skim off the foam.
- Carefully pour the butter into the bowl of phyllo dough. Avoid pouring in the white milk solids at the bottom of the clarified butter. Use your hands to mix the butter and dough together. Make sure that the butter



is absorbed by taking handfuls of the dough and rubbing it between your palms.

- Evenly spread the buttered phyllo dough into a 22 x 33cm pan and firmly press it into the bottom and edges. Spread the cheese mixture onto the dough, avoiding the edges of the pan.
- Bake in the preheated oven until the cheese is slightly golden and the edges of dough are brown and bubbly, 30 to 35 minutes.
- While the kanafa is baking, prepare the syrup. Combine the water and 1/2 cup sugar in a small saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and stir in the lemon juice. Simmer, stirring constantly, until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is thickened, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat and add the rose water; set aside.
- Remove the kanafa from the oven. Place a large platter or baking sheet over the baking dish. Using oven mitts, carefully invert the baking dish onto the platter so the phyllo is on top. Pour the syrup over the kanafa. Cut into pieces and serve while hot.

## Hummus



### Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup Dry chickpeas
- 1/4 cup Dried soybeans
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 onion (quartered)
- 1 cup Vegetable broth
- 3 cups Water
- 2 cloves Crushed garlic
- 1 Fresh lemon
- 2 tablespoon Soy sauce

- Black pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup Tahini (Sesame seed oil)
- 1/4 cup Chopped fresh parsley

### Preparation:

- Wash the garbanzos and soybeans properly. Put garbanzos and soybeans in a pressure cooker along with the bay leaf and onion. Add vegetable broth and sufficient water to cover the beans (check once the manufacturer's instructions for the minimum requisite amount of liquid).
- Cover the saucepan with the lid and bring the pressure up to high. Then reduce the heat to the lower level and cook for 1 hour, maintaining high pressure. Allow the pressure to go down naturally.
- Drain the beans but reserve the liquid. Put the beans in a food processor. Add the garlic, lemon juice, soy sauce, black pepper, and tahini and process the mixture until it is smooth. You may also include some of the cooking liquid for a thinner consistency according to your need. Transfer to a bowl and sprinkle with a topping of parsley.

## Badam Sherbet



### Ingredients:

- 2 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1 cup Finely ground almonds (badam)
- 1/2 cup Confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons Rose water

### Preparation:

Mix the milk, almonds, confectioners' sugar, and rose water in a food processor. Mix together for approximately one minute, until thoroughly mixed and smooth.

## Mujdarra

Mujdarra is a traditional Middle Eastern dish made with lentils and caramelized onions.

### Ingredients:

- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large white onion, sliced into rings
- 1 1/3 cups uncooked green lentils
- 3/4 uncooked long-grain white rice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup plain yogurt or sour cream (optional)

### Preparation:

- Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in the onions, and cook about 10 minutes, until browned. Remove from heat, and set aside.
- Place lentils in a medium saucepan with enough lightly salted water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer about 15 minutes.



- Stir rice and enough water to cover into the saucepan with the lentils. Season with salt and pepper. Cover saucepan, and continue to simmer 15 to 20 minutes, until rice and lentils are tender.
- Mix half the onions into the lentil mixture. Top with yogurt or sour cream and remaining onions to serve.

## Kebab Massalam

### Ingredients:

- 500g Ground lamb
- 2 chopped green chili peppers
- 1 chopped onion
- 2 tablespoon crushed coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoon plain yogurt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric- 1/2 teaspoon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Salt to taste
- 5 bamboo skewers (15cm) soaked in water for 20 minutes
- 2 red bell peppers, seeded and cut into 5cm pieces



heat source and preheat the oven's broiler. Lightly grease a broiling pan.

Combine together the lamb, garlic, chili peppers, onion, coriander, yogurt, turmeric, lemon juice, and salt with hands until they are very well mixed. Roll the mixture into 15 meatballs. Separate

chunks of red bell pepper and thread three meatballs onto each skewer. Position them onto the broiling pan.

Broil for 5 minutes before turning the skewers over. Prolong the broiling for approximately 5 minutes until no longer pink in the center.


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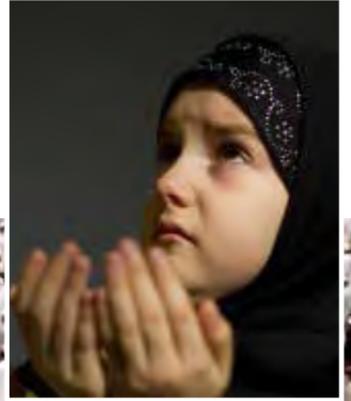
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# Ramadan Rules & Regulations



**F**asting during the holy month of Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam, which Allah the Almighty made obligatory on Muslims. "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may gain Taqwa (piety)" (2: 183)

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "He who fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven." (Bukhari)

On the imminent arrival of the month of Ramadan, we look at some of the rules and regulations associated with fasting to be aware of the mandates, prohibitions and permissible actions during this very Holy Month.

Ramadan is a unique opportunity for Muslims to seek forgiveness and repentance from Allah and to earn enormous reward. The Arabic word for fasting is 'sawm' (plural: siyam) and literally means 'to refrain'. But in the Islamic context, the word 'sawm' refers to refraining from food, drinks and sexual activity from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan. Fasting in the month of Ramadan is mandatory on every Muslim who has reached the age of puberty, is able and sane. However, fasting during the Holy Month is more than just abstaining from all the things that nullify fasting from the break of dawn (Fajr) till sunset (Maghreb). Coupled with the intention of fasting as an act of worship, the most significant aspect of 'siyam' is the development of Allah-consciousness (Taqwa) in the heart and the soul of a fasting Muslim.

Fasting is a special act of worship between humans and God since no one else knows for sure if this person is actually fasting. Thus God says in Hadith Qudsi that "Fasting is for me and I only will reward it".

**The Prophet of Allah is reported to have said:**

- "If one does not abandon falsehood in words and deeds, Allah has no need for his abandoning of his food and drink." (Al-Bukhari)
- Every day during the month of Ramadan, true Muslims fast from the break of dawn, which is also the start of the Salat ul Fajr and fast till sunset or with the call of Salat ul Magrib.

**Fasting involves:**

- The intention to fast that must be made every day before dawn. The intention (niyyah) may be made during night before going to sleep, or it can also be made at the time of Suhoor, the food taken before fasting at dawn. Suhoor is usually taken as close as possible to the time of Fajr prayer.
- Abstaining from food, liquids, sexual activity and other immoral activities throughout the day, from dawn to sunset
- It is desirable to break the fast as soon as possible after sunset with the call to Salat ul Magrib. Breaking the fast with dates or water is a tradition of the Prophet.

**Those exempted from Sawm**

The following exemptions apply to those who

are unable to fast, either because of elderly age or due to being chronically ill. Such persons are required to feed at least one poor person every day in Ramadan, for which they missed fasting. Pregnant women and those nursing may postpone their fasting to a later time. Similarly, the ill and those traveling can also defer their fasting.

**Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqara:**

- 'But if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period should be made up by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties.'
- Women during the period of menstruation or of post childbirth confinement are required to forego fasting during these periods and should make up for it later, a day for a day.

**What does not break the Fast:**

- If anyone forgets that he is fasting and eats or drinks, he should complete his fast, for it is only Allah who has fed him and given him drink
- Unintentional vomiting
- Swallowing things which are not possible to avoid, such as one's saliva, street dust, smoke and other unavoidable things
- Brushing the teeth
- Injection or intra-venous which is solely medical and not nutritional.

**Breaking of fast under exceptional conditions:**

- Muslims are permitted to break the ordained

fast of Ramadan when there is danger to their health. In this situation a Muslim should make up his fast later at any other time of the year.

- Invalidation of fasting is made up by Qada (only making up for missed days) or Qada plus Kaffarah (a penalty).

**The following are the things that require Qada only:**

- Eating or drinking intentionally. This includes non-nourishing items taken by mouth
- Deliberately causing one to throw up
- The beginning of menstruation or post-childbirth bleeding even in the last moment before sunset
- Ejaculation for reasons other than sexual intercourse
- Intending to break the fast before sunset even if one changes his mind, since intention is one of the pre-requisites of the validity of fasting
- Eating, drinking or having intercourse after dawn on the mistaken assumption that it is not dawn yet. Similarly, engaging in these acts before Maghrib on the mistaken assumption that it is already sunset.

**Things that not only require Qada but also Kaffarah are the following:**

- Sexual intercourse during the fasting period from dawn to dusk, requires an additional fasting for 60 continuous days. If one is not able to do so then he must feed sixty poor people — one average meal each.

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As we approach the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Muslims must prepare to answer a flurry of questions by people unaware of what it really means.



# Common FASTING MYTHS debunked



**F**asting, or 'sawm' as it is known in Arabic, is one of the five pillars of Islam and a very spiritual time for Muslims all around the world.

But to some, there is an air of mystery surrounding the practice and confusion about what exactly the rules are. Here are some common misconceptions and explanations that quash the misplaced beliefs:

**Myth: Fasting helps lose weight**

**Fact:** Fasting is not aimed at weight loss nor does it help you lose weight. While breakfast generally jump-starts metabolism and helps burn fat faster, fasting reduces overall calorie intake and tells the body that the calories absorbed are less than the ones needed. This pushes the body to slow down the metabolism and conserve energy to remain efficient, activating the body's natural protective mechanism to resist what it perceives as starvation. This

slows down the calorie-burning rate, which, at the contrary, might lead to weight gain.

**Myth: A heavy suhour will help you fast easier**

**Fact:** Suhours should not be heavy. Big meals loaded with calories and fat, regardless of their amount, cannot compensate for energy lost during long fasting hours. Even if we eat more than normal, there is the tendency to feel low on energy on the next fasting day because of the deprivation of food. The key to surviving a whole day of fasting is eating the right foods. Suhour has to be balanced in carbohydrates, protein and good fat, that is egg omelet with vegetables and whole-grain slices of bread plus green vegetables or a little bit of mashed avocados. The most important thing is not to consume fried foods and foods high in salt during suhour in order to prevent excessive thirst the next day.

**Myth: Fasting eliminates toxins from the body**

**Fact:** Eating does not create toxins in one's body. It is eating the wrong food items and consuming unhealthy meals that gives the body oxidative stress. For instance, while fasting, having simple sugars (Arabic sweets, cakes, juices) and eating a lot of fried food will not help in removing toxins from the body.

The most important thing, whether fasting or not, is to limit unhealthy food and maintain a diet rich in antioxidants. This fights free radicals that cause illnesses, malaise and diseases. Make sure to consume super foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, salmon, avocado and more. Fasting alone is not enough to remove toxins. It has to be accompanied by a healthy and balanced diet.

**Myth: It is not safe to exercise when fasting**

**Fact:** Exercising while fasting can be safe if one can work out

on empty stomach. The only problem with exercising while fasting is that the body is not receiving energy from food. What might happen is depletion of muscles to produce energy that is already stored in the muscles as glycogen.

If you want to exercise while fasting, you can do it directly before Iftar and then replenish your energy needs from the food, or after consuming a light Iftar (1-2 hours post meal) and then again have a post-workout meal rich in protein and carbohydrates to replenish your energy levels. It is also imperative to seek the advice of your health care provider prior to starting any exercise routine.

## Ramadan Origin and Fasting

Continued from Page 1

Muslims also pay Zakat (only applicable if one can afford it) during the month. For those who qualify to pay Zakaat, as per the Islamic Nisab (that is those whose wealth exceeds their necessities), of the leftover of their wealth earned in that Islamic calendar year. Although Zakat can be paid any time of the year, it has to be calculated on a year to year basis, and many Muslims use Ramadan as the month for calculation and disbursement.

Ramadan is also a time when Muslims are to slow down from worldly affairs and focus on self reformation, spiritual cleansing and enlightenment, establishing a link between God Almighty and themselves by prayer, supplication, charity, good deeds, kindness and helping others.

Since it is a festival of giving and sharing, Muslims prepare special foods and buy gifts for their family and friends and for giving to the poor and needy who cannot afford it, this can involve buying new clothes, shoes and other items of need. There is also a social aspect involved - the preparing of special foods and inviting people for the Iftar meal (the meal to break the Fast). In many Muslim and non Muslim countries with large Muslim populations, markets close down in the evening to enable people to perform prayers and consume the Iftar meal (the meal to end the fast) - these markets then re-open and stay open for a good part of the night. Muslims can be seen shopping, eating, spending time with their friends and family during the evening hours.

**Events of Ramadan**

Laylat al-Qadr, literally the "Night of Decrees" or "Night of Measures" or "Night of Power", is the anniversary of two very important dates in Islam that occurred in the month of Ramadan.

Muslims believe that it was the night of the Laylat al-Qadr that the Quran's first verse was revealed. The exact night of the Laylat al-Qadr is only known to God and Muhammed but he chose to keep it to himself so that Muslims won't pray only that night. That is why Muhammad indicated that it was one of the last ten odd nights of Ramadan.

The Islamic holiday of Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of the fasting period of Ramadan and the first day of the following month, after another new moon has been sighted.

The Eid falls after 29 or 30 days of fasting, as per the lunar sighting. Eid ul-Fitr means the Festival of Breaking the Fast, a special celebration is made. Food is donated to the poor (Zakat al-Fitr), everyone puts on their best, preferably new, clothes, and communal prayers are held in the early morning, followed by feasting and visiting relatives and friends. The prayer is two rakaahs only, and it is an optional prayer as opposed to the compulsory 5 daily prayers. According to one current school of thought (Ankaboot), it is suggested that North American Muslims arrange their work-schedule for Eid by requesting the two most likely days of Eid as Holidays or simply as days off from work. This allows for quality family time, and is akin to the Christian/North American tradition of taking Christmas and Christmas Eve off as holidays. This also allows for time off to celebrate the Eid prayer at a mosque and with family. The fast always ends after 29 or 30 days of fasting, and thus the request would be for the 29th and 30th day after the start of the fast.

Muslims are encouraged to fast six days in Shawwal, the month following Ramadan that begins after Eid ul-Fitr; these days need not be consecutive. According to hadith, one who fasts the month of Ramadan and six days during Shawwal will be rewarded as though he fasted the entire year.



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