

What Is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic (lunar) calendar and is observed by Muslims worldwide. It commemorates the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Because the Islamic calendar follows the moon cycle, Ramadan shifts approximately 10–11 days earlier each year. In the UK, Ramadan in 2026 is expected to begin on the evening of Wednesday 18 February, with the first full day of fasting on Thursday 19 February, subject to confirmed moon sightings.

Why Do Muslims Fast?

Fasting during Ramadan (Sawm) takes place from dawn (Fajr) to sunset (Maghrib). Muslims refrain from food, drink (including water), smoking and intimate relations during fasting hours.

The purpose is spiritual reflection, self-discipline, empathy for those experiencing poverty, gratitude and strengthening faith. Exemptions apply for children, elderly people, those who are ill, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and travellers.

What Does Ramadan Look Like?

- Suhoor – Pre-dawn meal before fasting begins.
- Iftar – Meal at sunset to break the fast, traditionally with dates and water.
- Taraweeh – Special nightly prayers during Ramadan.
- Charity – Increased giving (Zakat and Sadaqah).
- Laylat al-Qadr – The holiest night, observed in the last ten nights.
- Eid al-Fitr – Celebration marking the end of Ramadan.

How Allies Can Support

- Avoid scheduling mandatory lunch meetings.
- Offer flexibility with working hours.
- Provide quiet spaces for prayer.
- Avoid assumptions about energy levels.
- Include Ramadan in EDI communications.
- Use inclusive greetings such as 'Ramadan Mubarak'.

Why This Matters for Inclusion

Recognising Ramadan demonstrates religious literacy, cultural humility and a commitment to belonging. Inclusive practice ensures Muslim colleagues, students and service users feel seen, valued and respected.

Workplace Ramadan Allyship Checklist

- Acknowledge Ramadan in internal communications.
- Avoid mandatory lunch or food-centered meetings.
- Offer flexible start/finish times where possible.
- Provide access to a quiet space for prayer or reflection.
- Be mindful of workload and scheduling demands.
- Avoid making assumptions about who is or isn't fasting.
- Encourage respectful curiosity and cultural awareness.
- Plan inclusive social events mindful of fasting hours.
- Recognise Eid in organisational calendars.



SUMMARY: RAMADAN AWARENESS

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic (lunar) calendar and is observed by over 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide.

It is a sacred month focused on reflection, prayer, charity and community.

What Happens During Ramadan?

- Muslims fast from dawn (Fajr) until sunset (Maghrib).
- No food or drink (including water) is consumed during fasting hours.
- Increased prayer, spiritual reflection and charitable giving.
- The month ends with Eid al-Fitr – a joyful celebration.

Why It Matters

Ramadan is about self-discipline, gratitude, empathy for those experiencing hardship, and strengthening community bonds. It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

How You Can Be Supportive

- Be mindful of fasting colleagues or students.
- Avoid scheduling mandatory food-centered meetings during fasting hours.
- Offer flexibility where possible (e.g. adjusted hours).
- Provide a quiet space for prayer if appropriate.
- Use respectful greetings such as 'Ramadan Mubarak'.
- Creating inclusive environments during Ramadan demonstrates cultural awareness, religious literacy and a commitment to belonging

