



RAMADAN
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What is Ramadan?

For the world's 1.6 billion Muslims, Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to the prophet Muhammad. Ramadan is the fourth of the five pillars of the Islam faith. The others are: 'Shahada' (Faith), 'Salat' (Prayer), 'Zakat' (Charity), 'Hajj' (Pilgrimage to Mecca).

Because of variations between the Islamic calendar and the Roman calendar, Ramadan falls on different dates each year. This year it starts on 6 June and will end 30 days later on 5 July.





Where is it usually
celebrated?

**Muslims all around
the world celebrate
Ramadan.**

What happens during Ramadan?

Fasting – known as “Sawm or Siam” – during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, which means they refrain from consuming food, drinking liquids and smoking. Times of sunset and sunrise vary in different countries and at different latitudes. Longer summer days mean when Ramadan falls during the summer months – as it will this year – the number of fasting hours increases.

Fasting is obligatory for adult Muslims, except those who are suffering from an illness, traveling, the elderly, pregnant, breastfeeding, diabetic or women going through their menstrual cycle. Children are also not obliged to fast.



When do people eat during Ramadan?

Fasting encourages Muslims to experience the hardships endured by those who are less fortunate and to sympathise with people who are poor or going hungry. Ramadan is therefore a month for charity, forgiveness and kindness to others.

During Ramadan there is the concept of “sadaqah”. According to this tradition Muslims donate money to help the vulnerable part of the population.

Suhoor and Iftar

Fasting hours are announced early in the morning every day during Ramadan, through the ‘Salat el Fajr’ – or morning prayer. In Muslim communities, the mosque announces the call to prayer through its loudspeakers, and the call is timed to coincide with sunrise, and is therefore the official beginning of the fast every day.

Suhoor: This is the meal served very early in the morning before sunrise. Food should be consumed before the morning’s call to prayer that signals the beginning of the fast.

Iftar: This is the meal served in the evening right after sunset. Similar to the Suhoor, the call to prayer at sunset announces the official end of the day’s fasting hours, and is announced by the Mosque to let people know they can now begin eating.

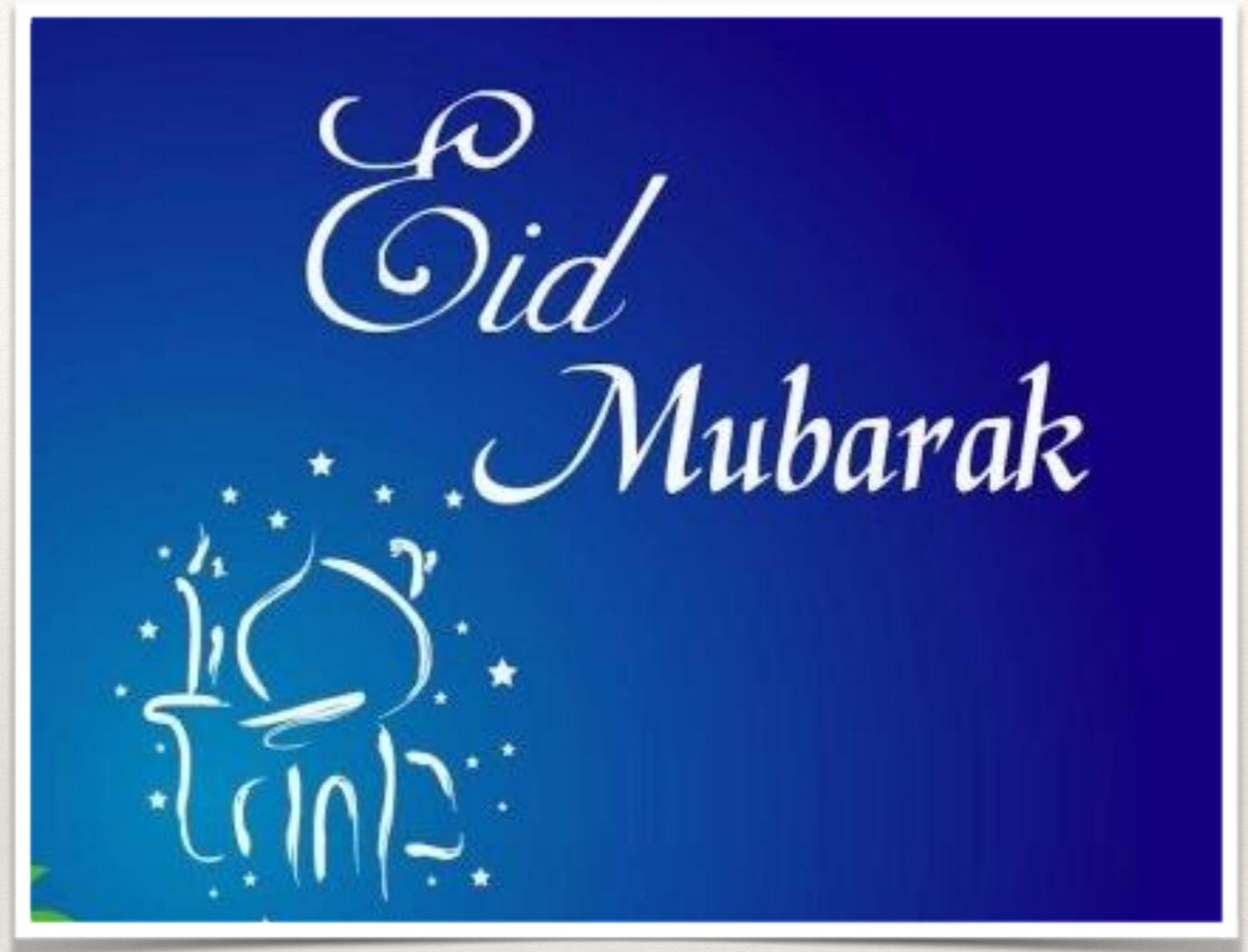
Eid ul Fitr

The end of the Ramadan month is marked by a big celebration called 'Eid-ul-Fitr', the Festival of Breaking of the Fast.

Muslims are not only celebrating the end of fasting, but thanking God for the help and strength he gave them throughout the previous month to help them practise self-control.

The greeting on that day is “**Eid Mubarak**”.

The date of the Eid is based on the observation of new moon by local religious authorities, so the exact day of celebration varies by country. However, in most countries it is celebrated on the same day as Saudi Arabia (7 July 2016).



What impact will Ramadan have on the people in the camps in Greece and our programs?

As fasting during Ramadan is **not obligatory for children***, they can have their meals three times a day as before. If a child wants to fast, of course, s/he is allowed to.

It is completely acceptable to ask a child or teenager if they are fasting or not. With adults it is safe to assume that most will be fasting, unless they indicate otherwise.

With adults and children who are fasting, it is important to plan low-key activities that do not require a lot of physical effort. Please keep in mind as well, that energy levels will be highest in the morning (after Suhoor), and at their lowest mid afternoon (3-5pm, before sunset).

In Muslim communities, the working hours during Ramadan are reduced to accommodate people's needs – for example in many cases, offices shut at 3pm instead of 5pm, to allow people the opportunity to go home, rest and get ready for Iftar.

As their parents and rest of the adults in the camp might fast during daylight it would be good to keep the food distribution in a place where the food can not be seen, or where those not fasting (maybe non-muslims or others unable to fast) are not consuming it in front of everyone else who is fasting.

If you're working in the camps, please keep your food and drinks in a place that is not visible, do not smoke around adults/children and not to offer them any food or drinks.

*In some countries 15-year-old children are considered adults.



What impact will Ramadan have on the people in the camps in Greece and our programs?

Ramadan is as much about kindness and charity as about generosity and communal life. In many Muslim communities Suhoor and Iftar are communal meals that involve friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers. For example, families in one neighborhood often alternate the preparation of meals and everyone is invited. In some cities and towns, meals are served in the streets and people from the neighborhood sit and eat around long tables. This also makes it possible for the homeless and poor to participate in the feast.

There is therefore a lot of pride in the preparation of the elaborate Ramadan meals. So it is expected that fasting Muslims trapped in transit facilities in Greece and the Balkans with limited resources will feel embarrassed with their situation, particularly during the month of Ramadan.

It's likely people will feel helpless as they can't provide their children with an adequate meal, or with things as simple as new clothes for the 'Eid' – which falls at the end of the month. Also, in case food distribution schedules are not adapted to address needs of fasting and non—fasting migrants and refugees, it might mean those fasting will not be able to break their fast at sunset, or get a meal before sunrise. All of this is bound to increase tension in camps, as people become even more frustrated with their current situation.

