

Eid al-Fitr 2019

Eid al Fitr, meaning 'Festival of Breaking the Fast', celebrates the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Eid is announced at the beginning of the tenth month of the Islamic calendar called Shawwal, which follows the month of Ramadan. The sighting of the moon is therefore important in announcing the start of a new lunar month.

This year, Eid begins on June 4 and ends on June 5, marking the Ramadan 29 – or the 29th day of fasting – which falls on June 3. Muslims worldwide will celebrate the religion's 1,440th end of fasting.

Eid follows Ramadan, which marks the month in which the *Qur'an* was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammed, who Muslims consider the final prophet and who they honour by adding the term 'peace be upon him'.

There are two Eids in Islam. *Eid al Fitr*, also referred to as the smaller Eid, and *Eid al Adha* or 'Festival of the Sacrifice' which is the bigger Eid.

Muslims celebrate Eid to show thankfulness to Allah for allowing them to finish and be able to fulfil their obligation by fasting, completing good deeds in the month that Muslims consider as being better than 1,000 months.

Eid is also an opportunity for Muslims to show thankfulness to God in the hope of having past sins forgiven and an opportunity to wipe the slate clean.

A few days before Eid, every adult Muslim, who has food in surplus to requirement, irrespective of whether they could fast or not, has to pay Zakat al Fitr, which is a small amount of money that is then redistributed so that people in need can also enjoy Eid.

On the day of Eid, Muslims prepare by taking a shower, wearing perfume and donning new clothes. Across the world, Muslims will dress in their best traditional clothes in a show of global diversity.

Before heading to the special congregational prayer that Muslims observe on Eid, the Prophetic tradition recommends that Muslims should eat something sweet, usually dates before leaving the house.

As Muslims make their way to the prayer they will praise God by saying '*Allahu Akbar*', meaning 'God is great'.

While very young children do not fast, Eid is also when they will receive gifts, sweets and money from family members.