Islamic Holiday Descriptions

# Name: Ashura, Muharram (Arabic)

## Pronunciation

* [Raa-muh-daan](https://www.howtopronounce.com/ramadan)

## Meaning

* Ashura is the 10th day of the 1st month of the Islamic lunar calendar, Muharram.
* For many Shia Muslims, this is a day of mourning, as Ashura commemorates the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson and the important leader (Imam), al-Husayn.
* For many Sunni Muslims, this is a day of (optional but recommended) fasting to commemorate the deliverance of the Prophet Moses (Musa) and the Israelites from Pharaoh (Fir‘awn).

## When?

* Ashura is the 10th day of the 1st month of the Islamic lunar calendar, Muharram, and shifts up roughly 11 days each year relative to the Gregorian calendar. Ashura is just one day; however, many Shia Muslims will commemorate the nine days and nights leading up to it, and many Sunnis will fast an additional day, either immediately before or immediately after Ashura.
* The date of Ashura may vary among Muslims by a day or two, depending on how and when the new crescent moon is ascertained.
* Ashura technically begins and ends at sunset.

## Common Observances/Celebrations:

* Many Shia Muslims will gather to mourn and reflect on the martyrdom of al-Husayn and his family and its implications.
* Many Sunni Muslims will fast by abstaining from food and drink from dawn to sunset.

## What to know as an instructor or supervisor:

* Shia Muslims partaking in mourning rituals may find it difficult to participate in activities scheduled on this day and night.
* Sunni Muslims who are fasting may find it difficult to participate in activities scheduled toward the end of the day, especially around the time of sunset, when they are ready to break their fast.

# Name: Eid al-Adha (Arabic)

## Pronunciation

* [Eed al-aad-ha](https://www.howtopronounce.com/eid-al-adha-1)

## Meaning:

* “The festival of the sacrifice”
* Eid al-Adha is one of the two major Islamic holidays (the other being Eid al-Fitr). It largely overlaps with the annual Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca.

## When?

* Starts on the 10th day of the 12th month of the Islamic lunar calendar and shifts up roughly 11 days each year relative to the Gregorian calendar. Eid al-Adha lasts at least 3 and at most 4 days (the length varies due to different schools of thought and customs); however, the communal prayer and celebration are typically held on the morning of the first day.
* The start and end dates of this holiday may vary among Muslims by a day or two, depending on how and when the new crescent moon is ascertained.
* Eid al-Adha technically begins and ends at sunset.

## Greetings:

* Eid Mubarak! (“a blessed Eid!” – Arabic)
* Eid Sa’eed! (“a happy Eid!” – Arabic)

## Common Observances/Celebrations:

* To celebrate Eid al-Adha, many Muslims will partake in a special communal prayer the first morning and enjoy meals with friends and family throughout the day.
* In many cultures, Eid al-Adha is a day of exchanging gifts.
* Following the example of the early Muslims, many Muslims will fast the day preceding Eid al-Adha; some will even fast the nine days preceding the holiday.

## What to know as an instructor or supervisor:

* Eid al-Adha is one of the two most important holidays on the Islamic calendar. Many students, staff and faculty will travel to be with family or friends during this festive time. They may also need to leave campus early on the day that Eid al-Adha begins in order to prepare for the holiday before it starts at sundown. And many will attend the communal prayer the next morning.
* Instructors and supervisors should avoid scheduling required tests, exams or other activities on Eid al-Adha.
* Students, staff, and faculty should be given the opportunity to reschedule any tests, exams or study or work activities that must be scheduled on Eid al-Fitr.

# Name: Eid al-Fitr (Arabic)

## Pronunciation

* [Eed al-fitter](https://youtu.be/Kd95a0_BjbU?si=aciohCoe--pbFlX4)

## Meaning:

* “The festival of the breaking of the (Ramadan) fast”
* Eid al-Fitr was one of the two major Islamic holidays (the other being Eid al-Adha). It marks the end of Ramadan.

## When?

* Immediately follows Ramadan in the Islamic lunar calendar and shifts up roughly 11 days each year relative to the Gregorian calendar. Eid al-Fitr lasts at least one day and as many as 3 days in certain cultures.
* The date of this holiday may vary among Muslims by a day or two, depending on how and when the new crescent moon is ascertained.
* Eid al-Fitr technically begins at sunset; however, the Eid al-Fitr communal prayer and celebration usually take place the next morning.

## Greetings:

* Eid Mubarak! (“a blessed Eid!” – Arabic)
* Eid Sa’eed! (“a happy Eid!” – Arabic)

## Common Observances/Celebrations:

* To celebrate the end of Ramadan, many Muslims will partake in a special communal prayer in the morning and enjoy meals and sweets with friends and family throughout the day.
* In many cultures, Eid al-Fitr is a day of exchanging gifts.

## What to know as an instructor or supervisor:

* Eid al-Fitr is one of the two most important holidays on the Islamic calendar. Many students, staff and faculty will travel to be with family or friends during this festive time. They may also need to leave campus early on the day that Eid al-Fitr begins in order to prepare for the holiday before it starts at sundown. And many will attend the communal prayer the next morning.
* Instructors and supervisors should avoid scheduling required tests, exams or other activities on Eid al-Fitr.
* Students, staff, and faculty should be given the opportunity to reschedule any tests, exams or study or work activities that must be scheduled on Eid al-Fitr.

# Name: Ramadan (Arabic)

## Pronunciation

* [Raa-muh-daan](https://www.howtopronounce.com/ramadan)

## Meaning

* The 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar (“Ramadan” literally connotes intense heat)

## When?

* Ramadan lasts 29 or 30 days (depending on when the new moon appears or is calculated to appear) and shifts up roughly 11 days each year relative to the Gregorian calendar.
* The start and end dates of Ramadan may vary among Muslims by a day or two, depending on how and when the new crescent moon is ascertained.
* Ramadan technically begins and ends at sunset.

## Greetings

* Ramadan Kareem (“a generous Ramadan” - Arabic)
* Ramadan Mubarak (“a blessed Ramadan” - Arabic)

## Common Observances/Celebrations:

* Ramadan involves fasting - abstaining from food and drink - from dawn to sunset. (It should be noted that certain practicing Muslims may not fast for various reasons, e.g. travel, illness, etc.)
* Evening meals among family and friends marking the breaking of the fast are common.
* Many practicing Muslims will also partake in special nighttime prayers and additional acts of devotion, such as reading from the Qur’an.

## What to know as an instructor or supervisor:

* Muslims who are fasting may feel not just hunger and thirst but also fatigue because of late-night prayers and pre-dawn meals.
* Muslims who are fasting may find it difficult to participate in activities scheduled toward the end of the day, especially around the time of sunset, when they are ready to break their fast.