

Ramadan at MSU: A Brief Guide for 2021

Beginning in mid-April, many MSU students and employees will begin the month-long fast of Ramadan. As we work toward promoting a more inclusive Spartan community, here are some facts to consider:

- ➔ Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is widely considered the month in which the Qur'an (Koran), the Islamic holy book, was first revealed. This year, Ramadan will begin at sunset on April 12, give or take a day (depending on when the new moon is sighted), and will last 29 or 30 days. As the Islamic year is approximately 11 days shorter than the Gregorian year, Ramadan in 2021 will begin around April 1.
- ➔ Fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the "five pillars" of Islam. The Qur'an (2:183) states that fasting was prescribed so that believers may attain God consciousness. Accordingly, Ramadan is widely regarded as a month of spiritual growth.
- ➔ Practicing Muslims who are able to do so are expected to abstain from eating, drinking (including water), and sexual relations from dawn to sunset each day of the month. Many Muslims will also perform various prayers and acts of devotion, especially at night, sometimes past midnight. And as many adherents also wake up early for predawn meals, they may experience not just hunger and thirst but also fatigue.
- ➔ Those who are ill, traveling, or unable to fast for other reasons are exempt from the Ramadan fast. Those who are able to do so are expected to make up the missed days at a later time.
- ➔ The end of Ramadan is marked by the Islamic holiday Eid al-Fitr ("the festival of the breaking of the fast"), which will begin this year at sunset on May 12, give or take a day. Eid al-Fitr is one of the two major Islamic holidays, the other being Eid al-Adha ("the festival of sacrifice"), which overlaps with the annual Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). This year, Eid al-Adha will begin at sunset on July 19, give or take a day.
- ➔ For more information on Ramadan, see <https://theconversation.com/why-ramadan-is-called-ramadan-6-questions-answered-77291>.
- ➔ Questions? Please feel free to contact Mohammad Hassan Khalil, Director of the Muslim Studies Program and Professor of Religious Studies at Michigan State University (khalilmo@msu.edu).