

What is 'Eid ul Fitr?

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims observe a fast from food and drink and participate in pious activities such as charitable giving and peace-making. It is a time of intense spiritual renewal for those who observe it. At the end, Muslims throughout the world observe a joyous three-day celebration called *Eid al-Fitr* (the Festival of Fast-Breaking).

Eid al-Fitr falls on the first day of Shawwal, the month following Ramadan in the Islamic lunar calendar. It is a time to give charity to those in need and celebrate with family and friends the completion of a month of blessings and joy.

In the last few days of Ramadan, each Muslim family gives a monetary or food donation to the poor (known as *sadaqah al-fitr*) to ensure that the needy can have a holiday meal and participate in the celebration.

On the day of 'Eid, Muslims gather early in the morning in outdoor locations or mosques to perform the 'Eid prayer which consists of a sermon followed by a short congregational prayer.

After the 'Eid prayer, Muslims usually scatter to visit various family and friends, give gifts (especially to children), and make phone calls to distant relatives to give well-wishes for the holiday. These activities traditionally continue for three days.

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