

Ramadan True or False

Introduction

How familiar are you with the Islamic practice of Ramadan? This true/false activity will help participants understand Ramadan, including some fun traditions that may surprise you!



Getting Started

- Be prepared to show a [one-minute YouTube video](#) during question 15.
- [This publication](#), mentioned in question 20, has many interesting health tips as well as Ramadan practice suggestions. If you'd like to include this in your activity, make copies for residents and hand them out at the end of the activity to stimulate further discussion.

True or False?

1. The Gregorian calendar and the Islamic calendar are identical.

Answer: False. The Islamic calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, and the Islamic year is approximately 354 days long.

2. Ramadan is a month in the Islamic calendar.

Answer: True. The month of Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and it is the month in which the Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. Because of the difference between the Gregorian and the Islamic calendar, Ramadan may be celebrated at any time of the solar year. For example, back in 1975, it was celebrated in September.

3. Ramadan is a month-long celebration with food and festivities.

Answer: False. Ramadan is a month of fasting, prayer, worship, and acts of charity.

4. People do not eat or drink during the entire month of Ramadan.

Answer: False. People abstain only from dawn to dusk.

5. After the sun sets during Ramadan, people often have shared, generous meals.

Answer: True. Iftar is the name of this meal, which can continue until well into the night. Sometimes the meals are set in large tents in public places, and all are welcome to join.

6. During Ramadan, people often eat a meal just before sunrise.

Answer: True. This meal is called suhur and was encouraged by the Prophet himself to avoid crankiness while fasting during the day.

7. Ramadan begins at the same time across the globe.

Answer: False. Ramadan begins when the first sliver of moon is sighted, and this occurs at different times in the world. In the UAE, there is a Moon Sighting Committee. Elsewhere, villages near each other may see the moon at different times, and Ramadan may even begin on a different day. Still other Muslim communities begin their celebration when the sighting is declared in Saudi Arabia. It is confusing to non-Muslims and new Muslims, but those familiar with the religion embrace this as a unique part of the tradition.

8. In Islamic countries, everyone must fast during Ramadan.

Answer: False. Pregnant and nursing women, women with menses, children under the age of 14, and those with health issues are exempted. Also exempted are those who do not practice the Muslim faith, although many non-Muslims fast during this time as a way of sharing in the culture.



9. It is considered inappropriate to eat in public during Ramadan.

Answer: True. Restaurants are typically closed, and if one does eat, it must be done in private, out of sight of others.

10. During Ramadan, you may drink water during the fasting time.

Answer: False. During the fasting time, people fast from all food and drink, including water. This is challenging in hot countries! People are also expected to fast from marital relations, smoking, and from immoral activities such as gossip, lying, and slander. (Imagine a month where no one could lie, gossip, or be unkind to one another!)

11. It's okay to chew gum while fasting during Ramadan.

Answer: False. Gum chewing and taking medicine (unless medically necessary) is prohibited from dawn to dusk.

12. The point of Ramadan is to prove to your neighbors that you are devout.

Answer: False. Ramadan is for people to have a closer relationship with Allah, and Islam emphasizes that the fast is for Allah alone. It is similar to the Christian practice of Lent.

13. It is important to give to charity and to do good works during Ramadan.

Answer: True. The focus during Ramadan is Zakat, i.e., giving to charity. Acts of generosity are required, and Muslims reflect on those who are less fortunate, giving generously and being compassionate to the poor. Ramadan is a time to increase understanding about human suffering and to take concrete steps to help those who are hungry and impoverished.

14. Ramadan ends with a big celebration.

Answer: True. Eid al-Fitr, or the feast of fast-breaking, is a celebratory time for families and often includes gift-giving. A popular gift is the Good Card, which is a gift card for charity, where the recipients get to donate to the charity of their choice.

15. There is a night for children to trick-or-treat during Ramadan.

Answer: True. However, this is only a night for treats, not tricks! On the 15th night of Ramadan, children dress up in traditional clothing and go door-to-door with sacks, singing in exchange for sweets and nuts.

Play this lovely [one-minute video](#) that shows the tradition.

16. Muslims must read the entire Quran during Ramadan.

Answer: False. Most mosques add a ritual prayer, called Tarawih, to the end of one of the mandatory prayer times (Isha prayer), and the ritual prayer usually includes the reading of 1/30th of the Quran, so that at the end of Ramadan, the entire Quran has been read. But this is not required, merely suggested.

17. Muslims are encouraged to spend the last 10 days of Ramadan in the mosque.

Answer: True. The practice of remaining in the mosque to pray is called Itikaf, and it is encouraged for a full day or more during Ramadan (and other times of the year). Men and women alike may practice Itikaf, leaving the mosque only to tend to bodily needs, including eating and drinking after dusk.

18. The Night of Power is the night the Quran was revealed to Muhammad.

Answer: True. Muhammad said that Laylat al-Qadr, translated as “Night of Power,” “Night of Destiny,” or “Night of Decree,” occurred during Ramadan, though he did not say on what night it happened. Tradition places it in the last 10 days of Ramadan, and it is often commemorated on the 27th night. People often pray throughout the entire night of Laylat al-Qadr, reciting the Quran. It is also traditionally a night to ask for forgiveness.

19. “Ramadan mubarak!” is a traditional greeting during Ramadan.

Answer: True. If you want to make your Muslim neighbors feel welcome, greet them with “Ramadan mubarak,” which means “Blessed Ramadan,” or “Ramadan kareem,” which means “Happy Ramadan” or “Generous Ramadan.”

20. The meals of iftar and sahur are marked by rich, indulgent food.

Answer: False. The fast of Ramadan emphasizes healthy eating. Here is an [official publication](#) that provides information to those observing Ramadan.

