



# FACT SHEET

U.S. Embassy Seoul  
Information Resource Center



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Office of the Press Secretary  
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## Presidential Message: Ramadan, 2007

September 7, 2007

I send greetings to Muslims observing Ramadan in America and around the world.

Ramadan, the holiest days of the Islamic faith, begins with the first light of dawn and commemorates the revelation of the Qur'an to the prophet Muhammad. During the days of fasting, prayer, and worship, Muslims reflect and remember their dependence on God. Ramadan is also an occasion for Muslims to strengthen family and community ties and share God's gifts with those in need.

America is a land of many faiths, and our society is enriched by our Muslim citizens. May the holy days of Ramadan remind us all to seek a culture of compassion and serve others in charity.

Laura and I send our best wishes. Ramadan Mubarak.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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## Celebrating Ramadan in America



Muslim girls break the fast with dates before saying prayers at an *iftar* at the Islamic Center of Passaic County in Paterson, New Jersey. (© AP Images)

As the holy month of Ramadan begins on September 13, Muslims in America come together in mosques, on university campuses and in homes to observe the season of introspection and celebration.

During Ramadan, disagreements are put aside in the spirit of fellowship, and Muslims refrain from eating or drinking during daylight hours and break their fast at nightly iftar dinners at sunset. Iftar dinners are often community gatherings at which Muslims invite family and friends to join in the festive meal.

In 2007 Ramadan concludes with Eid al-Fitr, a special break-the-fast meal, on October 12.



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## What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is a month in the Islamic calendar that has been specifically designated for greater religious adherence and reflection. People are most familiar with the fasting that takes place during the month. And that is certainly an important aspect of it. Just as important is greater religious adherence and greater goodwill towards other men and women.

## Why do you fast?

It is an example set by prophet Muhammad and an obligation commuted upon by all observant Muslims. The meaning behind it is to strengthen one's self-discipline as well as remind people of the experience of those less fortunate than themselves.

Before sunrise you have a meal called "Sahoor." From dawn to sunset one is to abstain from eating food and drinking water.

At sunset you break your fast traditionally with a date and water. You pray and then you have a full meal, called "Iftaar," and it starts all over again the next morning.

## When did Ramadan start this year?

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar and so in a geographic area Ramadan does not start until the new moon is officially sighted. Different places have different visibility so it could vary a day or so.

## Tell me about Iftaar?

The Iftaar is the evening meal that breaks the fast. It is usually a time of congregating with friends and family - inviting folks to your house or going over to someone else's house. It is a time of increased friendship and brotherhood.

The meals vary - anything goes.

We stop and remember our friends. You receive a lot of invitations from people you haven't seen in a long time. It revives the feeling of spirit in the Muslim community. It brings people together.

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## Useful Links

- [Celebrating Ramadan in America](#), USINFO Webpage
- [For U.S. Muslims, Ramadan Is Reminder To Help Local Communities; Muslim nonprofit groups aid the needy, participate in interfaith events](#), USINFO, September 19, 2007
- [Muslims Find Spiritual Home at Midwestern Mosque](#), USINFO, September 13, 2007
- [Ramadan, 2006](#), The White House Webpage
- [Muslim Life in America](#), E-Journal

## USINFO Webchats:

- [Muslim Seema Matin To Discuss How Americans Observe Ramadan](#)  
Webchat: September 26, 2007 10:00 a.m. EDT (1400 GMT)
- [Mohamad Bashar Arafat To Discuss How Americans Observe Ramadan](#)  
Webchat: October 5, 2007 9:00 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT)

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<http://usinfo.state.gov>

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