

# The meaning of Ramadan

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The sacred Islamic month of Ramadan, during which all healthy, capable Muslims fast, began on October 15 in North America. The start and end dates of Ramadan may vary because they are linked with the sighting of the new moon. Therefore, Ramadan could last either 29 or 30 days, depending on the lunar sighting.

Each day during Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sensual pleasures during the daylight hours. They eat a small meal before dawn called *sahur*, and break their fast at sunset, known as *iftar*. The purpose of fasting is to cultivate self-discipline, spirituality, and increase charity for the poor and needy.

Ramadan is a very important time for the worldwide Muslim community. The month is marked with more prayers, religious devotion and contemplation of our relationships with God and our fellow human beings.

After breaking their fasts, many Muslims attend evening congregational prayers at their local mosques, called *tarawih*. During *tarawih* prayers, the Quran, the Muslim holy scripture is recited from the first chapter and by the last day of Ramadan, the final chapter of the Quran is recited. Thus, the whole Quran is recited during Ramadan.

The end of Ramadan is marked by *Eid ul-Fitr*, or the "Festival of Fast-Breaking." On this day, Muslims will meet for special morning congregational prayers and spend the day in celebration with family and friends.

An estimated 3,500 Muslims in Saskatchewan will be observing the month of Ramadan, 650,000 Muslims in Canada, and close to 1.2 billion Muslims around the world.

If anyone has questions about Ramadan, Islam or the Muslim community, contact MPJ at (306) 535-0155, visit us online at [www.mpjsask.org](http://www.mpjsask.org) or make a trip to your local mosque.

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