

Islamic Calendar Facts

The Islamic year has twelve months that are based on a lunar cycle. Islamic months begin at sunset of the first day, the day when the lunar crescent is visually sighted. Since the sighting of the crescent new moon can fluctuate based on atmospheric conditions, actual dates may vary by 1 or 2 days from when predicted. The lunar year is approximately 354 days long, so the months rotate backward through the seasons and are not fixed to the Gregorian calendar.

Months of the Islamic Year

Each month in the Islamic year has a meaning to it. Following are the translations. Access the corresponding Gregorian dates for the 2023-24 calendar year via this website: <https://www.islamicfinder.org/islamic-calendar/>

1. **Muharram** - "Forbidden" (*haram*) – It is forbidden to fight during this month. Prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussain and his entire family was brutally killed during the first ten days of this month.
2. **Safar** - "Empty" or "Void" – so called because houses were empty while the occupants were gathering food or waging war
3. **Rabi al-Awwal** - "First spring"
4. **Rabi al-Thani** - "Second spring"
5. **Jumada al-Awwal** - "First of dry or parched land" – first month of summer
6. **Jumada al-Thani** - "Second of dry or parched land" – second month of summer
7. **Rajab** - "To respect" - another holy month when fighting is prohibited
8. **Sha'ban** - "To spread and distribute" – so called because this was the time people spread out to find water
9. **Ramadan** - "Intense heat" - the first verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during this month and Muslims spend the month fasting. Ramadan is derived from an Arabic word meaning "to burn". This month symbolizes the burning of sins and purifying the soul. Every day, between dawn and sunset, many Muslims abstain from eating and drinking.
10. **Shawwal** - "To be light and vigorous" or "To raise or uplift"
11. **Dhu al-Qi'dah** - "The month of rest" – the month when people prepare for the pilgrimage and no warfare or fighting is allowed
12. **Dhu al-Hijjah** - "The month of Hajj" - the month of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and the last month when no warfare or fighting is allowed

Important Dates/ Holidays in the Islamic Year

All holidays begin at sundown on the evening before the date given. The Islamic calendar is based on lunar observation; thus, the dates below may vary by one or two days. Dates apply to North America.

- **Ramadan** – March 10-April 9, 2024
- **Eid-ul-Fitr** (Marks the end of Ramadan, celebrated with a big feast) – April 9, 2024
- **Hajj** (The annual pilgrimage to Mecca which lasts about five days) – June 14-June 19, 2024
- **Eid-ul-Adha** (The festival of sacrifice, celebrated after Hajj) – June 16, 2024
- **Muharram** – July 19, 2023
- **Ashura** (The tenth day of Muharram) – July 29, 2023
- **Eid Mawlid-al-Nabbi** (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday) – September 26-27, 2023



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