

Key aspects briefly summarized

- The Islamic calendar is a strictly lunar calendar (Hijra calendar), the months are lunar months with a duration of 29 or 30 days.
- 12 months form a lunar year, this is with 354 or 355 days 10-12 days shorter than a solar year.
- Ramadan is the month of fasting for Muslims and is in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It "wanders" through the solar year and begins about 10 days earlier each year.
- Muslims distinguish between the major (Hajj) and the minor (Umrah) pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Islamic holidays and calendars are determined according to the lunar cycle. The Islamic calendar is a strictly lunar calendar and includes 12 lunar months. Each month lasts as long as a lunar phase between two new moons, i.e. 29 or 30 days. The beginning of the month starts with the visible appearance of the moon (new moon), therefore the calendar is set differently in several countries and in reality, there may be slight variations in the dates given below (+/- 1 day). The year moves back annually by about 11 days against the previous month. Thus, in total, the Islamic calendar consists of only 354 days.

Ramadan (fasting month)

In this month, Mohammed revealed the first verses of the Koran. The month of fasting is the ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar and falls on a different date in the Western calendar each year. The fasting period in the month of Ramadan begins daily at dawn and ends at sunset. During this time, eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse are not permitted. Iftar (dinner) is the daily culmination of eating and drinking. The obligation to fast applies to all Muslims from sexual maturity, which for girls is determined by the first menstrual period and for boys by the first ejaculation. For children, voluntary fasting is encouraged but not compulsory. Old, sick and weak people, persons with chronic diseases (e.g., diabetics), as well as pregnant, breastfeeding and menstruating women are exempt from this obligation. Fasting is especially dangerous to health when it falls during the hot season. In case of danger to life, the fasting must be interrupted -also according to Islamic rules. Ramadan ends in the first three days of the following month, Shawwal, with the festival of breaking the fast (Eid al-Fitr), also known as "Sugar Feast".

Year (AD)	Beginning of Ramadan	Feast of Breaking the Fast ("Eid Mubarak" Bayram)
2026	18. february	20. - 22. march
2027	8. february	9. - 11. march
2028	28. january	27. - 29. february
2029	16. january	14. - 16. february

Hajj (great pilgrimage) and Umrah (small pilgrimage)

Hajj is the actual, prescribed pilgrimage to all the holy places in Mecca. As the fifth pillar of Islam, it is one of the rules of life for Muslims. It can be performed only in a certain period and it can be started at the earliest on the 1st of Shawwal. The pilgrimage season includes the months:

- Shawwal (10th month of the Islamic calendar, beginning after the fasting month of Ramadan)
- Dhu l-Qa'da (11th month)
- Dhu l-Hijjah (the first 10 days of the 12th month)

The **preferred Hajj period** begins 10 days after Ramadan in the month of Dhu l-Hijjah. It lasts about 5 days. The climax is the Feast of Sacrifice (Id al-Adha).

Umra is the easiest pilgrimage to Mecca. This journey can be made at any time of the year.

Further Information

- see also factsheet «[Hajj/Umrah Pilgrimage - Saudi Arabia](#)»
- www.mondsichtung.de
- www.islam.de