

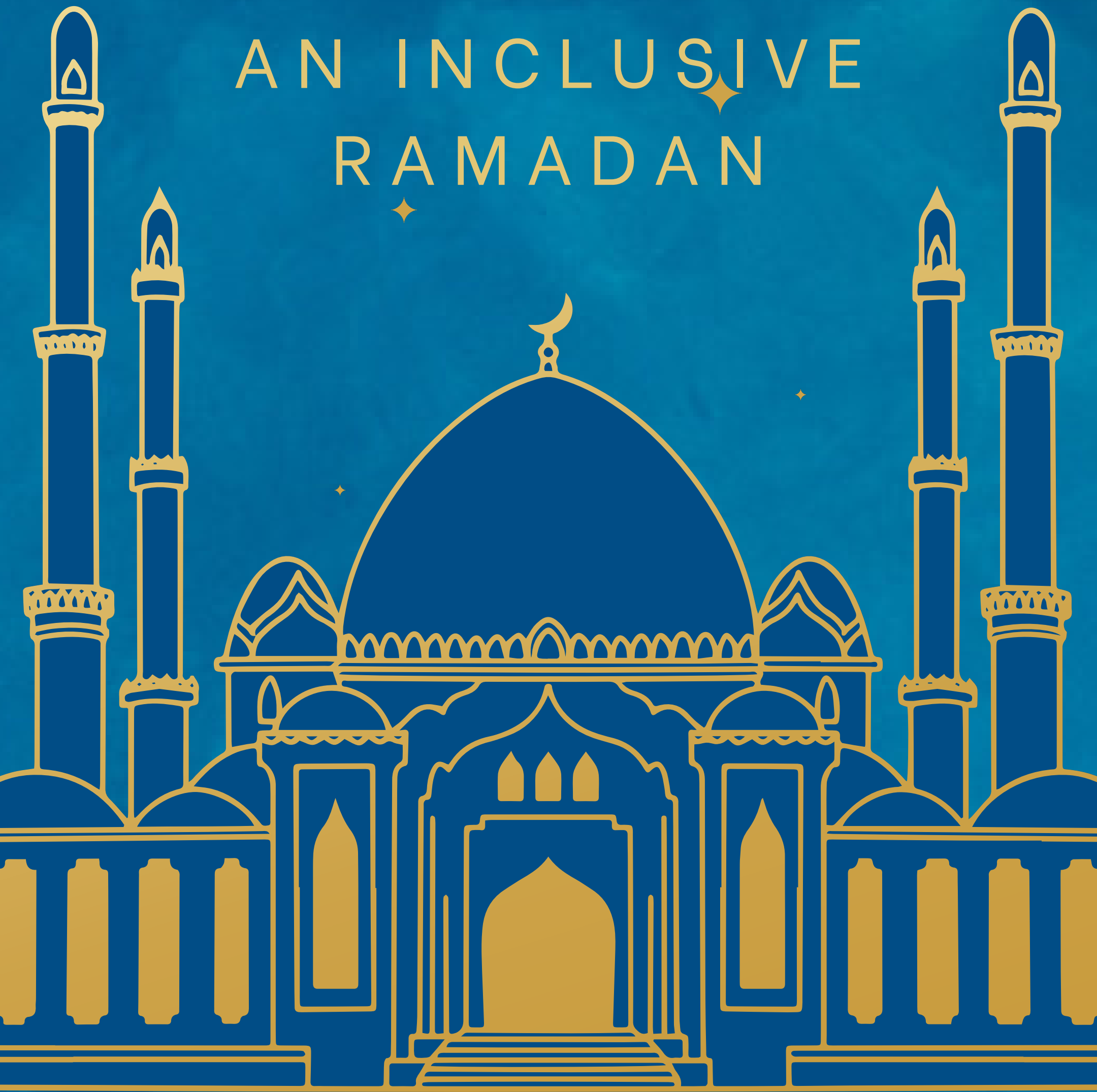


Golden Threads



Ramadan

A GUIDE FOR
AN INCLUSIVE
RAMADAN





**Golden
Threads**

Ramadan awareness, understanding and creating an inclusive workplace and community

This year, Ramadan will start on 11 March (subject to the sighting of the new moon) and lasts for 29 to 30 days.



Muslims across the world regardless of race, ethnicity or culture are connected by taking part in this month of spiritual renewal.

In order to create an inclusive and equitable workplace, an understanding of Ramadan is key to supporting your colleagues through the fasting period.

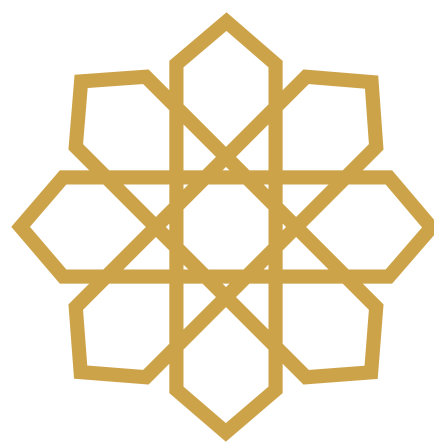
It is also essential to understand how best to support and include our partners, customers and stakeholders during this fasting month.



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What is Ramadan?

- Fasting is one of the **five pillars of Islam**
- It is an act of worship where one refrains from food and drink (Including water) from sunrise to sunset – **for 1 month**
- As Muslims follow a lunar calendar, the timings of Ramadan vary from year to year. This year the fasting day will be approximately thirteen to fourteen hours. It will start at approx. 4am and finishes between 6pm to 7pm. The timings increase by a few minutes every day which corresponds with the days getting longer. We also need to bear in mind this year that the clocks go forward about 3 weeks into Ramadan – which will make the fast longer.
- Ramadan is so much more than not eating; it is also a **time of reflection, discipline, abstaining from bad habits, extra prayers, charity, acts of kindness and connection with family and community.**





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The science of fasting

- Fasting can be good for your health, for example it can help with cholesterol, heart disease and obesity



- 30 days of fasting in this way can rest the system, improve gut health and detoxify your body
- The intermittent fasting trend is based on the science of fasting for good health
- It takes a month to form new habits, therefore fasting in Ramadan can help you to set a new healthy eating regime



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What is Iftar?

- Iftar is the meal at the breaking of the fast.
- For iftar, Muslims try to follow the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH*) tradition of breaking fast with dates and water.
- The dates provide energy and the water rehydrates.
- Following this, special tasty and nutritious foods are prepared this month which differ across all Muslim traditions.





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Ramadan and community

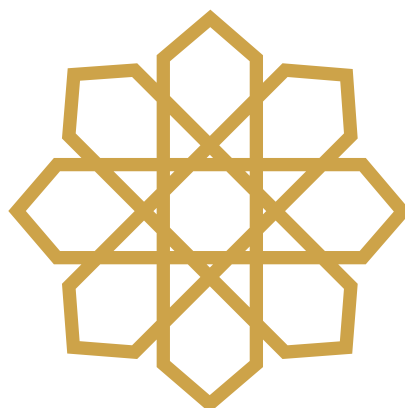
- The community aspect, especially the **iftar meal** and **night prayers** (tarawih) are a **VERY important** part of this special month.

- It really is a whole community endeavour from young children who choose to fast, through to all ages, obviously depending on health and energy levels.



- Not ALL Muslims choose to fast, or CANNOT fast for a variety of reasons including health, pregnancy and old age, however they can still get involved in the charity, spiritual and community aspect of the month.

- No one is excluded, and it's a very inclusive experience.





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Ramadan: The last 10 days

- The last ten days of Ramadan are especially significant, as there is a special night within this time period when the Qur'an (Muslim Holy book) was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH*)
- Therefore, Muslims will perform extra prayers during these ten days, and sometimes they even choose to enter a period of spiritual seclusion.

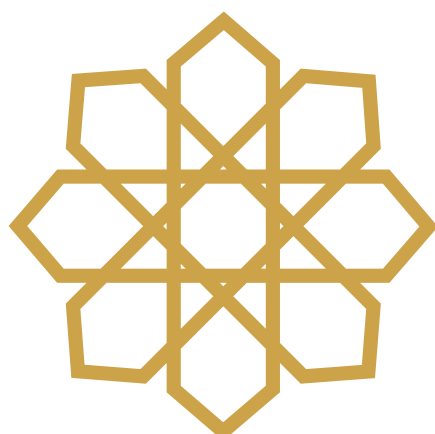
ليلة القدر

Lalilatul Qadar is the Night
better than a thousand months

(QURAN, 97:3)



QURAN
READING

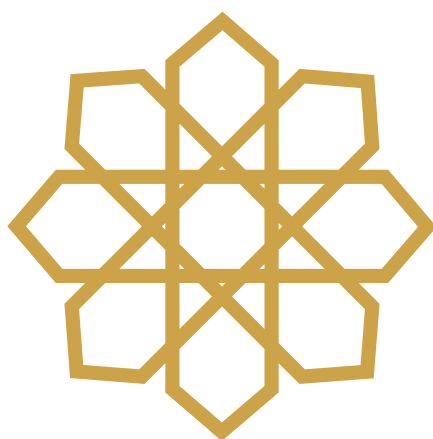




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Ramadan and spirituality

- Ramadan is about **resetting the normal rhythm** and slowing things down, so there is time to focus on the spiritual core.
- Muslims will try and adapt to the pace; making time for **extra prayers, meditation** and many try to read the whole Qur'an over Ramadan.
- When the month is over, there is sense of sadness because of all the benefits and blessing that Ramadan brings.
- The end of the fasting period is marked by a massive community festival known as **Eid-ul-Fitr**.
- Traditionally, Eid is celebrated for three days and in Muslim countries these days are a public holiday





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Ramadan buzz

- Ramadan is also a really exciting time.
- Research has indicated that more Muslims actively fast in Ramadan than pray or observe their religion throughout the year.
- Muslim countries have a variety of traditional customs to celebrate Ramadan
- British Muslims also have their own unique ways of celebrating the month.
- There is a real vibe associated with Ramadan, and towns come alive at the time of breaking fast or 'iftar'
- Last year, Piccadilly Circus in Central London was home to the first-ever Ramadan Lights, and they are set to return this year as well.



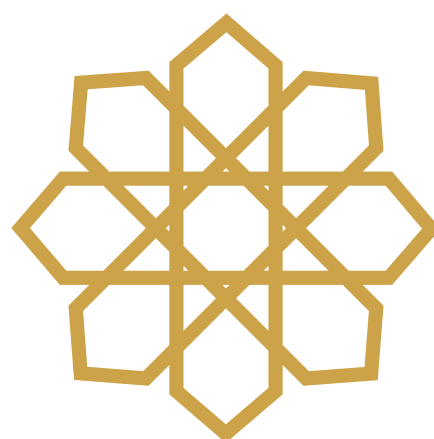
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Being inclusive and supportive this Ramadan

- Being supportive of Muslim colleagues and stakeholders begins with understanding what Ramadan is – hopefully this fact sheet helps
- Muslims observe their prayers five times a day, and may need to take a couple of minutes break to pray during the work day
- In regards to working with residents and partners, meetings or events that take place near the breaking of the fast or during the last 10 days of Ramadan, or on Eid – will mean low attendance (if any) from Muslims. This is something to think about if you want to be inclusive.
- To get a feel of Ramadan, please do attend one of the many free iftar events that will be taking place all across London.



***PBUH means Peace Be Upon Him**

(C) Nadia Khan