



## Ramadan

Ramadan is observed by many Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting from dawn until sunset. This means not eating or drinking during daylight hours.

The daily fast is broken at sunset with a special meal called Iftar, usually starting with dates and water, followed by a larger meal. Before dawn, Muslims have a pre-fast meal called Suhoor. Sometimes this means getting up very early.

Ramadan is a time for reflection and devotion to God. Many Muslims believe that during this month, the Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad, making it a particularly holy time.

Muslims are encouraged to spend as much time as they can on reading and reflecting on the Qur'an during Ramadan and engage in extra prayers, especially at night, known as Taraweeh. Many Muslims give to charities during this time and help people in need.

Ramadan ends with the festival of Eid al-Fitr, a day of feasting and celebration. Often Muslims thank God for the strength He gave them throughout the month of fasting and gather with family and friends for prayer and celebration.



Fasting during Ramadan is really important to me. It's not just about not eating or drinking, it's also about self-discipline, self-reflection and getting closer to Allah. It's a time for me to focus on my spiritual growth, be more charitable, and think of those in need. Fasting helps me appreciate what I have and strengthens my willpower. The end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, is a joyful time where we celebrate and spend time with family and friends.





## Kosher

Kosher refers to the set of food laws followed by Jewish people that are based on writings in the Torah. These laws determine which foods should and should not be eaten and how they should be prepared. The word 'kosher' means 'fit' or 'appropriate' in Hebrew.

Only certain types of animals are considered kosher. Mammals that chew their food multiple times and have split hooves, like cows and sheep, are allowed as well as poultry like chicken and turkey. Although many meat and dairy products can be eaten, they cannot be eaten or prepared together. Shellfish and most seafood are not kosher and therefore are avoided. Fruits and vegetables are kosher but they must be inspected for bugs, which are not kosher.



Kosher is based on the commandments found in the Torah. The kosher laws are seen by some Jewish people as a way to be physically and spiritually healthy and to help maintain Jewish identity. They are not just about food but also about following a spiritual discipline as written in their religious texts.

These laws have been interpreted and expanded upon by rabbis (Jewish leaders and teachers) over the centuries, who have added additional guidelines and practices to help keep the laws in the modern world.



Kosher laws, rooted in Jewish tradition, guide me in what I eat and how I prepare food. For me, it's not just about following dietary laws, it connects me with my community, heritage and beliefs.



I enjoy some special Jewish food but I don't keep kosher, it's just not important to me and not practical for my lifestyle. Being Jewish is about a sense of belonging to a diverse community and this can be expressed in many ways, including but not limited to what we eat.





## Lent

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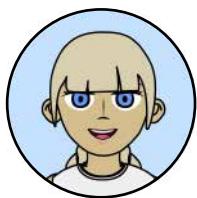
Lent is a special time in the Christian calendar that lasts for 40 days, starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday. It is a time when many Christians think about Easter, when they celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

During Lent, some Christians choose to give up something like chocolate or watching TV. This is a way to remember when Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert. It is also a time when many people try to be better and think of others.



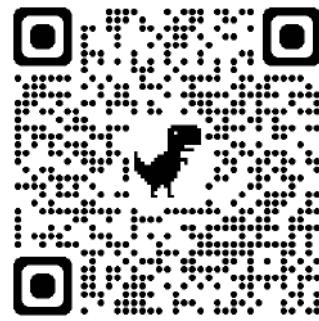
The day before Lent begins is Shrove Tuesday; traditionally pancakes are made and eaten on this day to use up ingredients that would not be eaten during the time of fasting.

For some Christians, Lent is a time for extra prayer and thinking about the life of Jesus. They may use this time to grow closer to God and think about how they can live better lives. For some, Lent is also about helping others. This could mean giving to charity, helping people in need or being kind to others.



I used to give things up for Lent, but didn't find it helpful. I try to take something up, like reading the Bible instead. I'm not very good at fasting as it makes me grumpy and I find it hard to concentrate.

Sometimes during Lent, I choose not to eat chocolate or crisps until Easter. This is so that I can think about what Jesus gave up for me by dying on the cross and the sacrifice he made. Occasionally, I have fasted for an entire day so that I can really focus on God whilst praying for him to help with a certain situation or person in need.





## Hindu vegetarianism

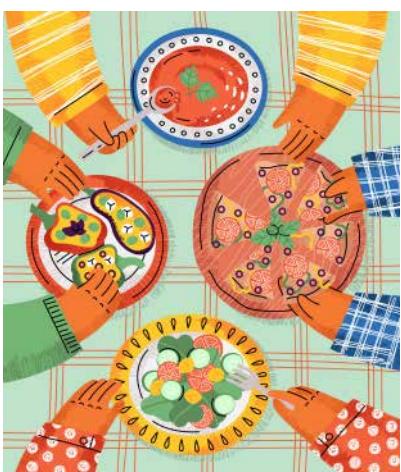
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Many Hindus follow a vegetarian diet as part of the idea of ahimsa, which means non-violence or harmlessness.

This idea encourages respect for all living beings and so avoiding meat is seen as a way to live without causing harm to animals. It is also believed, by some Hindus that harming other living beings can create bad karma, which affects their future lives.

Some Hindus believe that vegetarian food is more pure and better for spiritual and physical cleanliness. They think that eating meat can negatively affect their mind, body and spiritual development.

Various Hindu scriptures promote or support a vegetarian diet. While not all Hindu texts prohibit meat consumption, many recommend it for a more pure and content lifestyle.



Not all Hindus are vegetarians and practices can vary widely among different regions, communities and individuals. Some people who are Hindu choose to eat a vegetarian diet only during certain Hindu festivals and rituals, where meat, fish and eggs are often avoided.

Many people who are not Hindu also choose to be vegetarian as they think it is better for the environment and do not like the thought of harming animals.



Being vegetarian is a key part of my life and beliefs. I follow a vegetarian diet because I believe in ahimsa, which means 'non-violence'. To me, this means not harming any living creature, including animals.



In our scriptures, there are teachings that suggest a vegetarian diet is better. Even though not all Hindus are vegetarian, for me, it's a way to live a life that respects all forms of life and follows Hindu teachings. These days it is easy to be vegetarian as there's so much choice on offer.





## Yom Kippur

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Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. It is a day dedicated to self-reflection, prayer and seeking forgiveness from God for wrongdoings in the past year.

On Yom Kippur, some Jewish adults fast for 25 hours, from sunset on the eve of Yom Kippur until nightfall the next day. The fast is a way to focus on prayer and reflection. Also, many Jewish people will not work during this time as it is a day dedicated entirely to spiritual matters and rest.

For some, the day is marked by synagogue services, including the reading of the Torah and special prayers. The service concludes with a closing prayer, followed by the blowing of the Shofar, a ram's horn, which marks the end of the fast.

Yom Kippur is about forgiveness and making amends. It is a time to start afresh with a clean slate and fasting is just part of this.



On this day, I fast and spend a lot of time in synagogue, praying and reflecting on my actions over the past year. It's a time for me to think about how I can improve myself and how I can make amends for any wrongs I've done. When I am fasting, I find that I am able to focus my mind and soul on God.





## Halal

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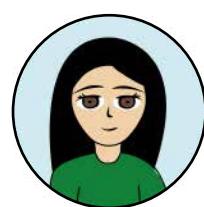
Halal refers to what is allowed or lawful in traditional Islamic law as interpreted in the Qur'an. Halal guidelines are seen as a way to maintain physical health and cleanliness, which are important aspects of Muslim life for some people.

Halal is often used to describe food, for example, meat must come from an animal that has been killed according to specific guidelines, which include a prayer dedicating the slaughter to God. Pork and its by-products, as well as alcohol, are strictly forbidden in a Halal diet. Many Muslims do not drink alcohol as it is not considered halal.

Halal does not only mean not eating certain foods, it can also include lifestyle choices - everything from how businesses are run to relationships. Choosing halal may be part of a wider commitment to live a life that is responsible, ethical and mindful of God's laws. It is a daily reminder of a Muslim's duties and moral values.

For some, observing halal practices helps maintain a sense of community and identity. It is a shared aspect of life that unites people in their daily practices and beliefs.

Keeping halal is something my family have always done so it is part of my culture. It would feel strange to eat or drink something that is not halal.



I only eat foods which are Halal. This means there are certain meats which I choose not to eat and I also avoid alcohol. I do this because it is something I believe God asked me to do and the Prophet Muhammad showed in his life.