

Muharram (1 Muharram)

The Islamic New Year

The month of Muharram marks the beginning of the Islamic liturgical year. The [Islamic year](#) begins on the first day of Muharram, and is counted from the year of the [Hegira](#) (*anno Hegirae*)—the year in which Muhammad emigrated from [Mecca](#) to [Medina](#) (A.D. July 16, 622). The new year in 2008 marks the beginning of A.H. 1429. The Islamic new year is celebrated relatively quietly, with prayers and readings and reflection upon the hegira.

Mawlid al-Nabi (12 Rabi 1)

Prophet Muhammad's Birthday

This holiday celebrates the birthday of [Muhammad](#), the founder of [Islam](#). It is fixed as the 12th day of the month of Rabi I in the Islamic calendar. *Mawlid* means birthday of a holy figure and *al-Nabi* means prophet. The day is commemorated with recollections of Muhammad's life and significance. Fundamentalist Muslims, such as the [Wahhabi](#) sect, do not celebrate it.

Eid al-Fitr (1 Shawwal)

The Celebration concluding Ramadan

[Ramadan](#), the month of fasting, ends with the festival of Eid al-Fitr. Literally the "Festival of Breaking the Fast," Eid al-Fitr is one of the two most important Islamic celebrations (Eid al-Adha is the other). At Eid al-Fitr people dress in their finest clothes, adorn their homes with lights and decorations, give treats to children, and enjoy visits with friends and family. A sense of generosity and gratitude colors these festivities. Although charity and good deeds are always important in Islam, they have special significance at the end of Ramadan. As the month draws to a close, Muslims are obligated to share their blessings by feeding the poor and making contributions to mosques.

Eid al-Adha (10 Dhu'l-Hijjah)

The celebration concluding the Hajj

Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice, commemorates the prophet [Abraham's](#) willingness to obey [Allah](#) by sacrificing his son Ishmael.

According to the [Qu'ran](#), just before Abraham sacrificed his son, [Allah](#) replaced Ishmael with a ram, thus sparing his life.

One of the two most important Islamic festivals, Eid al-Adha begins on the 10 day of Dhu'l-Hijja, the last month of the [Islamic calendar](#). Lasting for three days, it occurs at the conclusion of the annual [Hajj](#), or pilgrimage to [Mecca](#). Muslims all over the world celebrate, not simply those undertaking the hajj, which for most Muslims is a once-a-lifetime occurrence.

The festival is celebrated by sacrificing a lamb or other animal and distributing the meat to relatives, friends, and the poor. The sacrifice symbolizes obedience to Allah and its distribution to others is an expression of generosity, one of the [five pillars of Islam](#).

In the Year of the Hegira

A.H. 1426	A.H. 1427	A.H. 1428	A.H. 1429
Muharram (Islamic New Year)			
Feb. 10, 2005	Jan. 31, 2006	Jan. 20, 2007	Jan. 10, 2008
Mawlid al-Nabi (Muhammad's Birthday)			
April 21, 2005	April 11, 2006	March 31, 2007	March 20, 2008
Ramadan begins			
Oct. 5, 2005	Sept. 24, 2006	Sept. 13, 2007	Sept. 2, 2008
Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan ends)			
Nov. 4, 2005	Oct. 23, 2006	Oct. 13, 2007	Oct. 2, 2008
Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice)			

Jan. 10, 2006 Dec. 31, 2006 Dec. 20, 2007 Dec. 9, 2008

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