



Ramadan Etiquette

You will likely notice Muslims moving more slowly during Ramadan. Muslims around the world may move or react more slowly due to the effects of fasting. This is a time for non-Muslims to show compassion. Rather than be impatient if a question is not answered immediately, smile and be patient. Demonstrate understanding.

When possible, do not eat or drink in their presence during non-fasting hours. Do not offer a Muslim food or drink during Ramadan fasting hours believing it is necessary towards hospitality. During Ramadan a Muslim will appreciate the understanding and not take offense but rather relief at not being offered food or drink.

A non-Muslim is not expected or required to refrain from eating or drinking during Ramadan fasting hours. However it is recommended that a non-Muslim eat or drink away from the presence of the one who is fasting.

If a non-Muslim receives an invitation to share an iftar (the meal Muslims eat at the end of each day when breaking the fast) with a Muslim, accept with joy and honor! Be on time, if not a few minutes early. Iftar, breaking of the fast, is one time where it is okay to start eating whether any or all guests have arrived. A Saudi may feel obligated to wait for a delayed guest even if it meant delaying his or her own iftar.

A non-Muslim may prepare an iftar for a Muslim and especially if it is a Muslim away from home and/or family. If choosing to do so, ensure that all foods provided are halal and absolutely have no pork products in any ingredients. Additionally, have the food ready and waiting to eat for iftar.

Do not smoke or have alcoholic beverages in the presence or around a Muslim during Ramadan. Alcoholic beverages are always viewed as haram (forbidden) and smoking is generally stopped or limited by Muslims during Ramadan.

While Muslims may hug or kiss on cheeks during Ramadan, there are to be no physical or intimate relations while fasting. Intimacy may be resumed after breaking of the fast but not during the fasting hours. Therefore some Muslims may seem remote or distance themselves during the fasting periods.

It is a kind gesture to present Muslims with packages of dates or some type of sweet during Ramadan –and- after the fast has been broken.

Ramadan is an appropriate time to reach out to the Saudi students (and other Muslim students) who are away from their home countries and families. Because Ramadan is one of the most special and closest times for families, a warm gesture of friendship, understanding and compassion would be greatly appreciated.