



# #LibDemIftar Briefing

## 1. What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the holiest month of the Islamic calendar as it is believed to be the month during which the Qur'an<sup>1</sup> began to be revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over 1400 years ago.

## 2. What happens during Ramadan?

From dawn till dusk Muslims are obliged to abstain from all forms of food and drink (including water), smoking, sexual relations, lying, backbiting and any other manifestations of bad character. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam<sup>2</sup>.

There are two primary ends sought through the practice of fasting. One is to increase consciousness of God, through discipline, self-reflection and increased worship. The other is to increase one's capacity for real empathy with the less fortunate, through experiencing something of their hunger. As such, Muslims are encouraged to increase their good acts in Ramadan, such as giving to charity, and practicing virtues such as generosity, patience and forgiveness.

## 3. What is Iftar?

Iftar is the breaking of the fast, often a communal activity. Many Muslims will break their fast with dates and water, pray the obligatory sunset prayer and then return to a fuller meal. It is an important occasion, with many Muslim cultures having special dishes exclusively prepared for Ramadan,

## 4. How will things be different this year?

Daily congregational prayers in the mosque and community iftars are a hugely important part of the Ramadan experience, which will not be possible this year due to Covid-19 related restrictions. This is unprecedented and will be a crushing blow for many Muslims who were eagerly anticipating the Ramadan community spirit but will be following government advice by social distancing as much as possible. See section 5 on a great way to show solidarity with your Muslim friends and neighbours!

## 5. #LibDemIftar

We invite you to join Ed Davey, Layla Moran, Siobhan Benita and other members of the Lib Dem party in taking part in a Ramadan fast on **Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> of April!** You will need to follow the conditions mentioned in section 2 from dawn to sunset (times provided below). Not only will this be a great display of community solidarity with the Muslim community, it is a great personal challenge which can be done whilst in isolation! The inspiration behind the hashtag, is the fact that Muslims traditionally use dates to break their fast, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

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<sup>1</sup> The Qur'an is the scripture of Islam, Muslims believe it was revealed by God, via his archangel Jibril (Gabriel), to the Prophet Muhammad over a 23 year period. It occupies a central role in the life of many Muslims, with portions being recited in the 5 daily prayers. Many Muslims have memorised the entirety of the text, which spans some 600 pages in its most modern editions.

<sup>2</sup> The five pillars of Islam are: 1) declaration of faith (Shahada); 2) five daily prayers (Salah); 3) fasting during Ramadan (Sawm); 4) charitable giving (Zakah); 5) performing the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime (Hajj).

We want to get this trending on social media, especially twitter, so please do share your experiences of the day, whether it's a photo, vlog, or a written reflection. Tweet using the hashtag #LibDemIftar and tag @MuslimCouncil (Muslim Council of Britain) and your local mosque.

Below is a rough timetable for the day, which contains the key moments for social media engagement and some suggested tweets, although please feel free to come up with your own!

Activity	Time	Suggested social media messages
<b>Pre-dawn meal</b> <i>We recommend you wake up for a pre-dawn meal, ensure that you have plenty of water and something nutritious to eat!</i>	4:03am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing for my first ever fast. Muslims doing Ramadan in isolation, you are not alone! Thanks to @HinaBokhariLD for this great initiative #LibDemIftar</li> <li>Never woken up so early for a meal before! #LibDemIftar</li> </ul> <b>Include a picture of yourself eating your pre-dawn meal!</b>
Breakfast time	9am-11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Craving my Coffee/Tea right now, but it will have to wait until sunset #LibDemIftar. Please support me by donating to (insert preferred charity)</li> <li>Fasting for Ramadan in solidarity with my Muslim friends, and all those who are struggling with hunger #LibDemIftar. Please support me by donating to (insert preferred charity)</li> </ul> <b>Include a picture of yourself with your empty coffee/tea mug!</b>
Lunch time	12-2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fighting through the hunger pangs as my stomach asks for lunch! #LibDemIftar. Thinking of all those battling hunger on a daily basis. Please help them by donating to (insert preferred charity)</li> </ul>
Nearly there!	5-7pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's been a tough day, but experiencing this level of hunger has been eye-opening - we must do more to help the hungry (insert preferred charity) #ADateALibdem</li> <li>Looking forward to my delicious iftar meal! #LibDemIftar</li> </ul> <b>Include a picture of what you are having for Iftar!</b>
<b>Iftar – sunset meal</b> <i>Try to have a nutritious meal, and don't try to eat too much too soon!</i>	8:19pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed my first ever Ramadan fast #LibDemIftar! Huge amount of respect for Muslims doing this daily for a month. Grateful for everyone's support so far, last chance to donate to (insert preferred charity)</li> <li>Just broke my fast! # LibDemIftar! I feel relieved and grateful. Grateful for everyone's support so far, last chance to donate to (insert preferred charity)</li> </ul> <b>Include a picture of yourself eating your sunset meal!</b>
Post-fast		We would love to hear your reflections on the day – please share your thoughts on how the day went, either by recording a <b>vlog</b> , or writing a <b>blog post</b> , and sharing these via social media.

This not a religious act - purely a way to understand and relate with those who are hungry and to be in solidarity with Muslims.

**Please note that participating in this is voluntary and you should only take part if you are feeling fit and healthy. We advise anyone taking part to consult with a doctor or GP, especially those with medical conditions. If you feel unwell at any point during the fast, please stop.**

## **6. Donate to charity**

As mentioned above, charitable giving is a big part of Ramadan – if you will be taking part in fasting, it is a great opportunity to get some people to sponsor you for a charity. We suggest focusing on donating to charities tackling food poverty – this is an issue you will be able to relate to directly as you experience your fast, and food poverty affects hundreds of thousands of people in the UK. The Covid-19 outbreak has put huge pressure on foodbanks, and they could really use our support. This also goes well with the Lib Dem’s commitment in 2019 to enshrine a legal right for food to all. We have suggested a couple of charities tackling food poverty below, but you are welcome to choose another charity of your choice.

1. The Trussel Trust (@TrussellTrust)
2. FareShare (@FareShare)