

Eid al-Adha

Eid al-Adha is one of the most important holidays in Islam. This festival marks the day the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) showed his willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il (Ishmael) when God commanded him to do so. Eid al-Adha follows a lunar calendar and therefore takes place approximately 11 days earlier each year. In 2026, Eid al-Adha will begin at sundown on **May 26th** and end the evening of **May 27th**. Lunar calendars follow moonsighting; hence, Muslims may not celebrate Eid al-Adha on the same day nationally and internationally.

History of Eid al-Adha

Eid al-Adha is also known as the Feast of the Sacrifice. According to the Qur'an, Ibrahim had a dream in which he saw himself sacrificing his son Isma'il. Ibrahim perceived this to be a prophecy and a vision. Ibrahim and Isma'il agreed to follow it as a command from their Lord. At the last moment, however, God intervened and told Ibrahim not to sacrifice his son and that Ibrahim's dream was sent to him to test his faith. God gave Ibrahim a lamb to sacrifice in Ismail's place. His willingness to sacrifice his son is celebrated as a testament to his faith in God.

Observance of Eid al-Adha

Muslims observe Eid al-Adha in a variety of ways. In Muslim countries, the day is usually celebrated as a public holiday. Around the world, Muslim households sacrifice a lamb, goat, or occasionally a larger animal like a cow or camel as a reminder of the sacrifice Ibrahim was prepared to make. The animal sacrifice has to follow halal and merciful slaughtering methods, which may be done by a halal butcher if the owner witnesses it. A third of the meat is eaten by the family, a third is given to friends, and a third is given to the poor. Those who cannot sacrifice an animal due to legal restrictions on animal sacrifice, or who prefer to provide meat to those in need, may donate the equivalent amount of money to a charitable organization or ask a charitable organization to perform the sacrifice and distribute the meat for them.

In addition to this ritual of sacrificing and giving out the meat, Muslims observe Eid al-Adha by going to the mosque for a congregational prayer. This communal prayer, which is followed by a sermon, takes place the morning of Eid day and is called *Salat al-Eid*.

Muslims usually dress in their best clothes on Eid al-Adha (often new clothes are purchased for this occasion, particularly for children) and spend the day visiting with friends and family. In the United States, communities often rent halls, parks, or fairgrounds and hold activities for children, including rides, games, face painting, and serve food and drinks.

Eid al-Adha falls during the *hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. According to Islamic teachings, every Muslim who is physically and financially able is expected to make the *hajj* at least once in their lives; doing so is one of the Five Pillars of Islam (the five requirements to their faith that all Muslims are expected to fulfil).

Scheduling

Since Eid al-Adha is a significant holiday, many Muslims may wish to take off work on this day. As with all holidays, it is important to remember that there are many ways to celebrate the Eid. Invite your employees to share how they personally observe Eid al-Adha. If you are doing business in an office that is based in a Muslim majority country, be proactive about finding out whether that office is open on the Eid.

As noted above, Eid al-Adha is determined using the lunar calendar, so its date on the Gregorian calendar changes each year and may differ depending on the region and country. Supervisors should be alert and check the date of Eid al-Adha in advance. To avoid scheduling conflicts, supervisors can circulate the holiday dates in advance or program them into online meeting tools.

Muslim employees who wish to make the *hajj* may request a longer leave of absence. Employers should work with their employees to determine how this request may fit into work obligations and be flexible around providing this accommodation when possible.

Greetings for Eid al-Adha

If you would like to recognize Eid al-Adha with your colleges and friends, you can say, “Eid Mubarak,” which means “have a blessed Eid.”

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