


How I Celebrate

UTS Multicultural Women's Network

2023





The UTS Multicultural Women's Network acknowledge the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, the Boorooberongal people of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal people and the Gamaygal people upon whose ancestral lands the UTS campus stand. We pay respect to Elders past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands and recognising their continuing connection to land, waters, country, and community. We acknowledge the historical oppression of land, language, and culture of First Nations People and commit to the decolonising journey we all share.



Multicultural
Women's Network

WHAT?

The Multicultural Women's Network aims to showcase significant cultural events through our e-booklets.

WHY?

To acknowledge the cultural diversity of UTS. Using an assets-based approach of amplifying how people celebrate, this project aims to empower people to feel proud of their cultural backgrounds, as well as to celebrate the cultural diversity of our UTS community.

WHO?

This is for UTS staff, students and anyone else you think would benefit from learning more about cultural events.



This month, we're spotlighting

Ramadan & Eid al-Fitr



What is Ramadan?

“The 9th and holiest month of the Islamic year, Ramadan is a time when Muslims from all over the world dedicate themselves to working on their spirituality.”

“As part of this month of spiritual rejuvenation, Muslims worldwide fast during daylight hours (consuming no food or water) as a form of worship to bring them closer to God. Families and friends unite to break their fast together, after sunset during *iftar* or before dawn during *suhour*.”

“During Ramadan, most Muslims try to avoid negative acts or their personal vices, whilst instead practicing positive acts, exercising self-control and showing compassion for those less fortunate than themselves.”

[Click here for the source of this information](#)

What is Ramadan?

"It is a holy month for all Muslims globally, started per the lunar calendar and ends per the lunar calendar. Fasting is from dawn until sunset which is between morning and sunset prayers named *Fajr* and *Maghrib*."

"*Laylatul Qadr*, the night of power, which falls on one of the last ten days of Ramadan. This night was not made clear and so some either try to estimate it based on differing pieces of evidence and increase their acts of worship on those days."

"This night is of significance as it is the night that the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. This night is worth more than 1000 months of worship and can help a person enter heaven."

Nour El-Houda El-zmeter

UTS Equity Ambassador / Athena Swan Project
Officer

Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion

Fasting is not just about abstaining from eating and drinking

Using the feeling of hunger to be grateful for the bounties we have.

Hasan Godhrawala

Risk Partner | Risk Unit

Office of General Counsel, Chancellery

Fasting of ALL forms: of food, water, gossiping/back biting, disrespecting parents/family members and other inappropriate behaviours that may hurt others or oneself.

Bethlehem Mekonnen

Student Equity - Transition Support Officer

Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion

Most important things about Ramadan from our UTS community

Humble beginnings

Additional dedication to prayers

Fasting

Increasing and enhancing your connection with Allah (God)

Connecting with members of my community

Spiritual mind-fullness

Ramadan is the month where you let go of your daily routine and indulge yourself in prayers, good deeds & pure thoughts. Abstaining from sins and try to be the best person that you can be for the month.

Self-reflection and re-prioritisation of the things that really matter in life.

Worship of Allah

Hasan Godhrawala



Stories from our UTS community

Reflections on Ramadan...

The prayers I performed out of habit during Ramadan that summer unexpectedly took on a new dimension. I felt a sense of urgency, asking desperately for faith, for answers to the emptiness and loneliness without me, and something began to shift.

One night the meditation of prayer that I performed ritualistically opened a galaxy inside of me. Minutes felt like days and the world around me felt like a gossamer silk thread of unreality: a kind of peace and stillness expanded and filled me.

In the eyes and face I saw that night in the mirror, I sensed for the first time a soul. It was luminous. I knew this soul was equal to anyone else's and everyone had one. How shallow my skin felt with this vastness within me, how narrow my prejudices and the prisms of gender, class and race. The world felt alight, trees and people humming with auras.

Walkley award winner, Sarah Malik, UTS Alumni
Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts in Communication
(Journalism) (Honours)

From her book *Desi Girl: On feminism, race, faith and belonging*, pp. 30-31

Think about a time you were at your happiest celebrating Ramadan. A moment where you felt alive, well and most fulfilled. Tell me about this moment....



I deeply enjoyed when I could read the Quran and take the time to try to understand and internalise some of the depth of its verses. We believe the Quran is words directly from our only god Allah sent to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) through revelation to guide him and all those who choose to follow him.

Nour El-Houda El-zmeter
UTS Equity Ambassador | Athena Swan Project
Officer
Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion



Hasan Godhrawala

It's a strange one because the most fulfilling Ramadan I have ever had was the Ramadan of 2020 during the first COVID lockdown. I had taken time off work, and with being confined to the home, **I was able to dedicate a lot of time to prayers, something that is just not possible in the regular working day.** I felt the most connected and at peace in that month during Covid, and truly felt fulfilled.

The lack of social gatherings...meant I could focus a lot of my resources on charitable works which was immensely satisfying.



“

Hasan Godhrawala

[I had] the strength to look past the pandemic and the adversity the world was facing and really find peace and solace in observing Ramadan. Not only did it serve as a good distraction, but probably the only time in my life, I have felt that I truly did what I am supposed to do during the month of Ramadan. I **strongly believe that the prayers and dedication in that month as well kept all my near and dear ones safe during a very dark period of our time.**

”



A large portion of Ramadan is spent breaking your fast with other people, whether with friends, family or relatives. The feasts we have spread out on our tables, the comradery, the eagerness to dig in and the familial environment you'll always find yourself in are such a warming environment to be in.

Nour Al Hammouri

Bachelor of Advanced Science (Pre Medical Student), President of the UTS Students' Association, and the Faculty and Academic Board member for Science.

Think about a time you were at your happiest celebrating Ramadan....



What role do you and others play in your story?

During Ramadan, individual worship of Allah is encouraged, the first third being filled with Mercy, followed by forgiveness and lastly being saved from the punishment of hell in the afterlife. Some do choose to worship Allah together also.



...my mother makes all sorts of food to break our fast on. Towards the end of Ramadan, to prepare *maa'mul*, the rest of my family would be tasked with separate roles of preparing the semolina and dates mixture overnight, the nut mixture, separate the semolina into portions, using moulds to press the semolina with either dates or nuts and then baking them in the oven.

Nour El-Houda El-zmeter

What is Eid al-Fitr?

Marks the end of
Ramadan

Eid al-Fitr is celebrated during the first three days of *Shawwal*, which is the tenth month in the Muslim (lunar) calendar. This means that the timing of Eid al-Fitr (and Ramadan) is different every year as it is based on the lunar cycle.

The translation of “Eid al-Fitr” from Arabic to English is “festival of breaking the fast.”

[Click for more information](#)



Most important things about Eid al-Fitr from our UTS community

Giving charity to those less fortunate

Eid prayer

Gifts!

Giving gifts to the younger members of the family

Wearing new or nice clothes

Spending some alone quality time with just your family at Eid Lunch

Taking time to connect & socialise with close friends and family

Celebrating with family and friends



Bethlehem Mekonnen

When celebrating Eid, we perform a special congregational prayer (*salah*). Performing this special *salah* is a bit different from performing the usual five daily prayers. Hence, I cherish this moment. What makes this extra special for me is when attending the mosque- Lakemba Mosque in particular, the entire road is blocked off because there are just SOO many people. **I find this beautiful, all of us praying amongst one another, regardless of our race, age, SES etc.** There is an increased sense of connectedness to our fellow brothers and sisters in Islam (*ummah*).





Nour Al Hammouri

...everyone is dressed in new clothes, shoes and fresh haircuts, all eager to attend Eid Prayer and be around their own people - catching up with family and friends. You finally get to have food at a normal time, and it just feels so good.



Additional Resources

- Understanding Ramadan and Supporting Your Muslim Colleagues, <https://bit.ly/3G7hyVP>



- SBS podcast, 'My Ramadan' with host, Sarah Malik: <http://bit.ly/3lVnPNr>





**Ramadan
Mubarak &
Eid
Mubarak!**



Multicultural
Women's Network

JOIN US!

Supporting women at UTS to
reach their full potential



For more information,
email:
mwn@uts.edu.au

**This booklet
was created
by Dr. Elaine
Laforteza**



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