

# Healthy eating in Ramadan

There are plenty of ways to keep up with your healthy eating habits during Ramadan, even when you are fasting during daylight hours.

## What to eat and drink at iftar

When first breaking the fast in the evening, aim to drink plenty of fluids, and eat foods that contain wholegrains or naturally occurring sugars for long-lasting energy. This includes:

- **Lots of water!**
- Broth based soup with lentils, beans and / or grains
- Fresh, frozen or tinned fruit in natural juices (instead of tinned fruit in syrup)
- 100% fruit juices, or smoothies
- Dried fruit like dates, apricots, figs, raisins or prunes
- Low fat, plain Greek-style yoghurt
- Low fat cow's milk or plant-based alternative milk (soy milk, almond milk) with added calcium





## Managing cravings

After a long fast, it's natural to feel like overeating or have a craving for processed foods and drinks that may contain added fat and sugar. Where possible, try to nourish your body with nutritious foods from the five food groups that contain essential nutrients your body needs. This is especially important during Ramadan if you only have an allocated time to eat and drink. Preparing meals ahead of time can help you stick to your healthy eating habits.



## What to eat and drink after breaking the fast

Depending on your family's traditions, the meals you eat after breaking the fast may vary. Where you can, try to include a balance of foods from the five food groups.

Aim to include:

- Lean meats or poultry cooked in a healthy way (grilled or baked rather than fried)
- Pulses such as lentils, beans and chickpeas
- A variety of different coloured vegetables
- Unprocessed carbohydrates such as boiled potatoes, steamed rice or wholegrain breads
- A variety of fresh, frozen and dried fruits
- Reduced-fat milk, cheese, yoghurt or plant-based alternatives with added calcium
- **And lots of water**



## Examples of meals



Curries with grilled meat, chicken, or fish, vegetables and beans / lentils, served with rice



Chapattis and low fat, plain Greek-style yoghurt



Stuffed vegetables (e.g. bell peppers with lean minced meat and quinoa)



Grilled or baked chicken or fish served with vegetables

## What to eat and drink at suhoor

Even though it may be tempting to sleep in, having something to eat and drink pre-dawn is important to make sure you stay hydrated and full throughout the day of fasting. Aim to drink plenty of fluids, fluid-rich foods and eat high-fibre wholegrains to help you feel full. These foods will also help with digestion and keep your bowels regular.

This includes:

- High fiber breakfast cereals with no added sugar (e.g. wheat biscuits or untoasted muesli)
- Oats or porridge
- Wholegrain toast, pita bread or chapattis
- Starchy grains like rice or couscous
- 100% peanut or almond butter
- Low fat, plain Greek-style yoghurt
- Low fat cow's milk or plant-based alternative milk (soy milk, almond milk) with added calcium
- A variety of fresh, frozen and dried fruits
- **Lots of water**



## Cooking tips for Ramadan



Measure the amount of oil used in cooking (1 teaspoon per person per dish).



Remove all visible fat and skin from meat before cooking.



Reduce the amount of coconut oil, full fat milk and cream used in cooking. Try eating more tomato-based sauces or add low-fat natural yoghurt or low-fat evaporated milk to make a sauce creamier.



Aim to eat less fried or oily foods (e.g. curries with lots of oil added, pastries, samosas, fried dumplings). Replace fried foods with steamed, grilled or baked versions.



Enjoy sweet desserts occasionally e.g. ghulab jamun, rasgulla, balushahi, baklawa.



### Don't forget to move your body!

Ramadan may influence some changes to your usual activity routine but it's still important to move your body when you can during this time.

Try to:

- Do some light exercises such as going for a walk after iftar.
- Walk all or part of the way to gatherings or Taraweeh prayers in the evening.
- Do some low intensity movements that won't make you feel thirsty during the day, like some yoga or stretches.



# Reference list

**World Health Organisation** (2024). Stay healthy during Ramadan. <https://www.emro.who.int/noncommunicable-diseases/campaigns/stay-healthy-during-ramadan.html>

**Muslim Aid Serving Humanity** (2024). Great tips for healthy eating in Ramadan. <https://www.muslimaid.org/media-centre/blog/great-tips-for-healthy-eating-in-ramadan/>

**British Nutrition Foundation** (2024). A healthy Ramadan. <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/putting-it-into-practice/food-seasons-and-celebrations/a-healthy-ramadan/>