

The Ideal Woman

It's all about getting better...



“O you who believe! Observing As-Sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)” [al-Baqarah 2:183]

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This is a package containing a guide to make this Ramadhaan Epic In sha Allaah. We ask Allah to put Barakah in it, and make it beneficial to all who read, and accept it from us as an act of Ibadah.

“Say: Surely My prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds” (Qur’an 6: 162)

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Ibadah Guide
- Iftar and Sahur Meal-Guide
- Health & Nutrition Tips
- Motivational Quotes
- Bonus!

Introduction

Alhamdulillah! The month of Ramadhaan is one of the greatest blessings for Muslims. Fasting in this month is the fourth among the five pillars of Islam, and an instruction by Allaah as stated in the Qur'an.

“O you who believe! Observing As-Sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)” [al-Baqarah 2:183]

Everything we have been commanded to do by Allaah, is only for the benefit of our own selves, and thus, fasting has a lot of benefits for us in addition to the innumerable reward we hope to receive from Allah and His pleasure.

Among these benefits are;

- Getting closer to Allah
- Having Taqwa (Piety/ Fear & conscious of Allah)
- Increase in Gratitude by remembering the poor and hungry
- Adopting good virtues like forgiveness, generosity, patience.
- Improving your health, to mention but a few.

And this is of course when we do it well, with the right intentions, right attitude and in the right way! Hence, the basic aim of this book in sha Allaah. May Allaah make it easy for us.

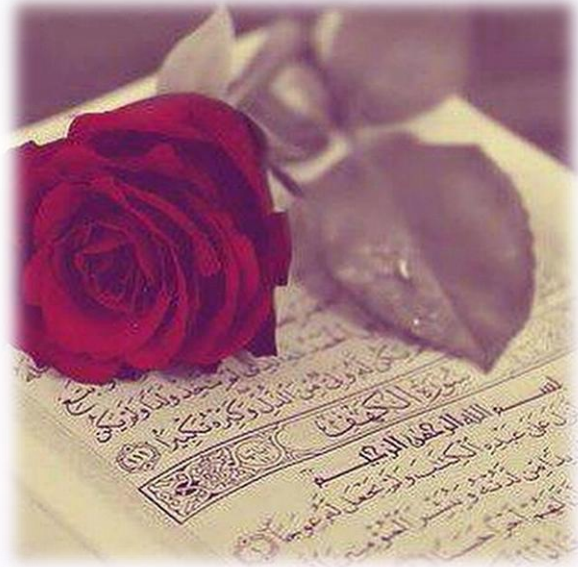
Ibadah Guide

Connecting with the Quran

The description of Ramadhaan began with making reference to the Qur'an.

“Ramadan is the month in which was revealed the Qur'an – a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the criterion (between right and wrong)”. Qur'an2:185

Hence, the importance of increasing one's recitation of the Qur'an in this Blessed Month.



But it is not just about reciting it; we need to also connect with it.

It was sent as a guidance and mercy; so let us build a relationship with it and try to understand it. It contains clear proofs and signs; so let us delve into these and fall in love with our Creator and His majesty. Ramadhaan became sacred because the Qur'an came down in it, so this is the best opportunity to discover why, what's so special about the Qur'an and how it transforms lives and softens hearts. Let's not just read, but understand, practice, and spread. There is no better time than now!

Ibadah Guide

Fulfilling the Obligatory Deeds

Salaah is the second pillar of Islam. Before adding any Nawaafil (Voluntary deeds), we must first fulfill the obligatory ones. Hence, this Ramadhaan, let us try to observe our Salaahs at their appointed times, with proper khushoo (humility and submissiveness).

“Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salat (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.” {Al-mu’minuun/1-2}



Practical Tips

- Always plan your daily activities to make time out for Salah, so you don't have to delay Salah for anything.
- Before starting Salah, take a moment to realize who you are about to pray to, and try to be focused with no distractions around.
- Remember Allah throughout your daily activities, so that it would be easier to remember and submit to Him in Salah with full attentiveness and humility
- Ask Allah, constantly, to grant you the ability to consistently observe your Salah on time and with Maximum khushoo.

Ibadah Guide

Making a lot of Duas

Dua (supplication) is one of the greatest forms of Ibadah (worship). Allaah commands us to make dua, and He loves those who constantly ask from Him.

So, call you (O Muhammad and the believers) upon (or invoke) Allah, making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone)... (Ghafir 40:14)



The virtues of making Dua are so numerous, that if we knew, we would never pass a moment without making dua in it. Our Supplication to Allah is an affirmation of our belief and the Essence of our Deen. Blessed periods like Ramadhaan provide us an opportunity to have even more reward for the duas that we make and increased chances of their acceptance. Hence, let us increase the amount of duas that we make, and form a habit of constantly making duas throughout our lives.

Practical Tips

- Make a list of the Duas you want to make this Ramadhaan; don't forget to include your parents, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbors and the Ummah at Large. The more duas you make for others, the more the angels make for you.
- Try to improve not just the quantity of your duas but the quality; reflect on every word and keep in mind that Allah is all able to grant them to you. Make dua with conviction.

Ibadah Guide

Practicing the Sunnah

The Sunnah is the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad (salAllaahu alayhi wa sallam). As muslims we are obliged to follow His teachings and examples in order to attain the acceptance and love of our Creator.



“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad {salAllaahu alayhi wa sallam}) you have a good example to follow, for him who hopes (in the meeting with) Allaah, and the last day, and remembers Allaah much [Qur’an, 33:21].

Sunnah Practices You Can Adopt This Ramadhaan

- 12 Raka’ats of Nawafil (Voluntary) prayer daily. {2 before the Fajr Prayer, 4 raka’at before and 2 after the Dhuhr Prayer, 2 after the Maghrib, and 2 after the Isha Prayer}¹
- Making a lot of Istighfaar (Dua for seeking forgiveness)
- Observing Qiyaamul Layl/Tahajjud (night prayer)
- Sleeping on your right side and with Wudhu (Ablution)
- Generosity and kindness to everyone.
- Using Miswaak (chewing stick)
- Exchanging gifts with Family, Neighbors and friends
- Having Modesty in speech and Actions
- And the simplest...wait-for-it ‘Smiling!!’ ☺

Ibadah Guide

Other Deeds with the right Intention

Part of the beauty of Islam is in the fact that every deed can be counted as an act of Ibadah, as long as it's done with the correct intention and in accordance with the conditions of Islam.



Narrated `Umar ibn Al-Khattab: "I heard Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) saying, "The (reward of) deeds, depend upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended." {Al-Bukhari}

Hence, actions ranging from our domestic chores to even sleeping could earn us rewards from Allaah if we carry them out with the right intentions.

Deeds that can earn us more reward with the right intention

- Cooking Sahur and Iftar for our Family and sharing with the poor and needy
- Running Errands for our parents
- Assisting our siblings with homework or any task
- Driving the kids to and from school
- Assisting our spouses in any way we can
- Pretty much any permissible good, & beneficial deed! 😊

So don't worry about these deeds taking so much of your Ibadah time, and have a positive attitude while at it! 😊

Ibadah Guide

Other Deeds with the right Intention

Practical Tips

- Always make your intention to seek Allah's pleasure and mercy
- Remember to always prioritize, Fardh (obligatory) deeds come first, so don't let these be an excuse to miss Salah or anything.



Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

Sahur

Sahur is the Meal eaten at pre-dawn, just before starting the fast. It is encouraged to take Sahur no matter how little, as it comes with blessings and makes the fast easier.

Anas (radiyAllahu anhu) reported that the prophet (salAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Take sahur for there is a blessing in it"



Most families eat Sahur together, just as they eat Iftar. Sometimes its quite exhausting to prepare both meals during the fasting period, with a line of other activities awaiting. But remembering the reward that comes with it, makes it a lot easier to handle.

Meals You Can Prepare For Sahur

Sandwiches or Toast:

Sandwiches or toasts are easy to make, and can easily go down with a glass of fruit juice, tea or even water.

There are different types of sandwiches you can make depending on which is easiest for you and it would only take a few minutes.



Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

Meals You Can Prepare For Sahur

Swallows “Tuwo” with Soup

The Swallow is an African traditional meal, usually eaten with different kinds of soups. They are also easy to prepare and can even be made at night, to be warmed at the time of Sahur.



Steps to Prepare Tuwo

Depending on the kind of tuwo you are making (i.e whether its with semolina, rice, cassava flour or tapioca “garri”); the methods differ slightly. For all but tapioca “garri” (which is used to make “eba”) and rice (which is used to make “tuwon shinkafa”), all you need is to boil some water in a pot and have your flour sieved and combined with a little amount of water to make a paste. If you are about to use 3 cups of flour for instance, one of these should be used to make the paste.

Once the water is boiling, add the paste and stir continuously till the water is thick, then cover to let it cook a little bit more (perhaps for about 3-5 minutes). Stir again and add your remaining flour till it becomes thick enough (but not too thick because it will thicken further upon cooling), then cover for another 2-3 minutes, and its ready.

For the tuwon shinkafa and Eba, the only difference is there is no need to make the paste. You add the garri as soon as the water boils and keep stirring till it cools off. And for the rice, you can add it even before the water starts to boil so the rice can get cooked as well.

Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

Soups that can be eaten with these Swallows are; Beans Soup, Vegetable Soup, Okra Soup, among others. These soups can also be made prior to the morning of sahur and kept refridgerated. They can also be made in a large quantity to be used twice or even thrice.

Waking up to only having to warm the Tuwo and Miya (soup) for sahur can be so relieving and time-saving. And its definitely a meal your whole family would enjoy and which would make their fasting easier.

Noodles

Noodles are about the easiest meals to prepare. You can make your instant noodle in less than 10 minutes and serve your family with the nice tasty meal.



You may also add some vegetables, (onions, pepper, carrots) as well as boiled eggs to make it more nutritious.

The kinds of foods we eat for sahur would vary by the family and perhaps personal preference. For me, I love to make noodles more often than not, and a few times, I would take cereals depending on how full I am from iftar or how much time I have. Nonetheless, having some certain stock, like the cereals, bread, eggs, noodles, pasta, and potatoes would make it a lot easier to select something easy to make within this short time. The aim afterall is to have something that'll give you some energy to kickstart the day without getting tired very easily.

Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

Iftar

Iftar is the meal eaten at the time of breaking the fast. It is sunnah to break our fast at the earliest time, as soon as the maghrib adhaan is heard. Hence, its important to have our meals all set before then so we can have time to prepare for maghrib, and then settle down to eat the proper meal afterwards.

Having our meals well-organized and set before maghrib also affords us the time to settle and make a lot of duas at the time of iftar, as this is one of the best times to make dua.

Abu Huraira said the Messenger (salAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "The supplications of three groups of people's are not rejected; the du'aa (Supplication) of the fasting person when he is breaking his fast, the du'aa of the just Imam and the du'aa of the oppressed."

[Tirmidhee, Ibn Majah and Ibn Hibbaan]

Hence, we must grasp this priceless opportunity to ask Allaah for all our needs, the best of this life and the next.

Meals you can prepare for Iftar

For iftar, I usually make a food timetable. This is because somewhere along the line, the hype of eating all sorts of exotic food dies down and we're left with no variety and just plenty of repetitions. Now, this is not bad at all Alhamdulillah, but we also need to maintain the healthy meals and this helps us to save time, money and energy because we would've planned prior to the time for cooking and got the necessary foodstuff in stock. Time used to think of what to cook, and to go to buy those foodstuff would be used for other productive things.

Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

My iftar meal timetable often looks like this;

Days of the week	Starter	Main course	Fruits	Drink
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
saturday				
Sunday				

For starters, these could include light foods like dates, salad, beancakes (kosai), masa, pancakes, etc. but generally, some might just prefer to start with fruits (After the dates ofcourse) in which case, this category might not be necessary.

The best food to break our fasts with are dates, as it's the sunnah of the prophet salAllaahu alayhi wa sallam.

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to break his fast with fresh dates before praying; if there were no (fresh dates) then with dry dates, and if there were no (dried dates) then he would take a few sips of water.

(Narated by Abu Dawood, no. 2356; al-Tirmidhi, 696; classed as hasan in al-Irwa', 4/45)

Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

The main course could be any meal of your choice, I usually include meals like jollof rice, rice and stew, fried rice, potato pottage, spaghetti (jollof, or with stew or sauce), yam and egg sauce, moi moi...the list is endless, its all up to you. Just keep in mind to have a nice healthy meal, and try to avoid too much fries; for your meat/chicken/gizzard/anything, you may want to opt for grilling as a healthier option sometimes. And It'll be great to always add a lot of vegetables in the meals, we're all the way on #teamhealthy now 😊 #easytosay I know. But lets try anyway.

For the fruits, thats also totally up to you. But there are some that you can buy and which would last you a few days in sha Allaah, and others that might get spoilt after a few hours or a day. Depending on this, and the availability of a refridgerator, you can plan the fruits to buy and the quantity. Its no problem if we have only one type of fruit for iftar, and some days, even none at all. But if we can afford to, it's a very healthy part of our iftar 😊

And for the drinks, its most often zobo or water for me, occassionally, I get to make natural fruit juice or buy some fruit juice, but I would not recommend any kind of soda or gaseous drinks at this period. For the coke fans...lets just say, you get the point 😊

Timing is very important with pretty much everything, including cooking our iftar. I usually start about 2 and a half hours to the time, so as to get everything all set atleast 30 minutes before maghrib. Yet another benefit of having your meal timetable is that it helps you prepare prior to the time, for things that might need defrosting, refridgeration (perhaps the drinks), marinating, and so on.

Iftar & Sahur Meal-Guide

Practical Tips

- Just a little secret you may already know; if you want to enjoy something so much, share it with others. I personally don't always enjoy meals I have to eat alone..and what better time to share than in Ramadhan when the reward is in multiple folds??
- If you wish to host an iftar dinner, that would be beautiful and rewarding in sha Allaah, but you must take care not to be wasteful and extravagant lest the aim be defeated. We should also try to include those who are more genuinely in need of the food, like the poor and hungry. Fact is, most of our friends would have iftar with or without our invitation, but there are many out there who fast without knowing or having what to break their fasts with.
- Imagine the reward you will get from feeding such a person, and all the other benefits that come with it, like bringing joy and smiles to their faces, saving them (with the permission of Allaah), from the pangs of hunger, and earning the pleasure of Allaah.

It was narrated that Zayd ibn Khaalid al-Juhani said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever gives iftaar to one who is fasting will have a reward like his, without that detracting from the reward of the fasting person in the slightest." [Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 807; Ibn Maajah, 1746. Classed as saheeh by Ibn Hibaan, 8/216 and by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami, 6415.]

[Providing food for others also creates love and friendship with those who are given the food, which is a means of entering Paradise, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "You will not enter Paradise until you truly believe, and you will not truly believe until you love one another." Narrated by Muslim. It also fosters the practice of sitting with righteous people and seeking reward by helping them to do acts of worship for which they gain strength by eating your food.]

Health & Nutrition Tips

As mentioned earlier, in addition to the spiritual benefits, Ramadhaan fasting has a number of health benefits as well as potential health complications, depending on our practices during the period. In order to get these benefits and avoid the complications here are some tips/guidelines to keep in mind.

- Always target having a balanced diet for sahur and iftar. Your meals should contain foods from all the major food groups; (fruits and vegetables), (grains/cereals/potatoes), (meat, fish or other alternatives), (milk & dairy foods), (fat & sugar containing foods)
- Try to Include complex carbohydrates and fibre-rich foods such as semolina, wheat, beans, millet, potatoes, green beans and fruits as they help produce energy throughout the long hours of fasting
- Break your fasts always with dates and plenty of water as they provide a lot of energy and a revitalising effect.
- Don't overfill yourself during iftar or sahur as this could lead to weight gain.
- Opt for grilling, baking, boiling, simmering or roasting more often rather than frying. Try to avoid deep frying and excessive use of oil.
- Try to avoid caffeine-containing drinks such as coffee, cola and some teas, as they stimulate fast water loss through urination. (caffeine is a diuretic).
- If you are on medication for indigestion or heartburn, don't forget to take your drugs at the time for sahur as sometimes, stomach acid (which leads to heartburn) can be secreted at the thought or smell of food. Avoiding oily and very spicy foods, as well as caffeine can help control the heartburn as well.

Health & Nutrition Tips

- Headaches can occur due to stress, lack of sleep, hunger, dehydration, addiction or low sugar levels during Ramadhaan. Not missing the sahur, taking enough fluids, eating a moderate and balanced diet and having enough rest can help reduce chances of having such headaches. Having dates for iftar also helps to replenish blood sugar levels.
- Sleeping throughout the day and staying up all night is a habit for most of us in Ramadhaan. However this causes fatigue and is counter-productive. If you sleep at most an hour after Taraweeh (say, 10pm) and wake up by 3:00am, you would have slept for 5 hours which would afford you some energy for tahajjud, sahur and other activities. You may take a nap between dhuhur and asr also, but try not to sleep for the most part of your days in Ramadhaan as they are also important for ibadah as we've mentioned earlier.

Motivation Quotes!

Prior to Ramadhaan, most of us are so excited and eager to start fasting and boosting our imaan already with the numerous acts of ibadah we have all planned. That's Superb! 😊 But what happens at Ramadhan 09? Or for those who are successful enough to keep it up till Ramadhaan 16...it becomes same old same old, we start to lose the zeal, we're slacking bit by bit...especially for those of us who have a routine of work to do throughout the day, like go to school/work, come back and start making iftar, sleep, wake up for tahajjud, eat sahur, and the circle continues...so what to do? How do we keep it up till the very end and beyond? How do we reap all the benefits without feeling like "Oh I Could've done more, I didn't do my best". How do we make sure to take home something after Ramadhan is gone? Well, the good news is we don't have to do this all alone Alhamdulillah 😊 and with the help of Allaah, nothing is impossible.

Here are some quotes to keep you going....

"Simple daily disciplines – little productive actions, repeated consistently over time – add up to the difference between failure and success" – Jeff Olson

"the ultimate reason for setting goals is to entice you into becoming the person it takes to achieve them" – Jim Rohn

"the fragrance always remains in the hand that gives the rose" – Hada Bejar

"never let your Salah be a mindless routine. Pray to reflect, to review and more importantly to remember"

Narrated `Aisha (radiyAllahu anha): Allah's Messenger (salAllahu alayhi wa sallam)said, "Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah's is the most regular and constant even though it were little." [bukhari]

Motivation Quotes!

“its not enough to have a dream, unless you are willing to pursue it. Its not enough to know whats right unless you’re strong enough to do it. Its not enough to learn the truth, unless you also learn to live it. Its not enough to reach for love, unless you care enough to give it.” – Samuel Smiles

“when you make dua with firm conviction, know that Allaah is Al-mujeeb and Al Aleem...He has heard and will respond to you, at the best time, in the best way, just have tawakkul (trust in Him) and do not lose patience”

“it is difficult to be patient but to waste the rewards of patience is worse” – Abu Bakr (radiyAllahu anhu)

“before you look at the thorn of a rose, look at its beauty. Before you complain about the heat of the sun, enjoy its light, before you complain about the darkness of the night think of its peace and quiteness”

“when a person forgives and forgets, the flames of anger are extinguished, and his or her soul is cleansed from the effects of anger and hatred. That is the level of ihsaan which earns Allah’s love for those who attain it”

“things turn out best for those people who make the best out of the way things turn out” –Art Linkletter

“you get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself” – harvey S firestone

“the best way to achieve your goals is to help others achieve their goals” – ZigZaglar

“Smiling in your brother’s face is charity. So is enjoining good and forbidding evil, giving directions to the lost traveller, aiding the blind and removing obstacles from the path”

“everytime is a good time to remember Allaah”

“helping one person may not change the world, but it may change the world of that one person”

“Anyone can do good deeds; but only a truthful person can leave sins” – Shaykh-ul-islam ibn taymiyyah (rahimahullah).

Motivation Quotes!

"if we knew the spiritual blessings in serving & being dutiful to our parents, then we would never be neglectful of them"

"make dua to Allah, for every small and large request, even if its just to find a place to park your car. Not only does Allah never get bored of your duas, He also counts them among the greatest acts of worship"

"when you say 'hasbunAllah wa ni'mal wakeel' you've taken something out of the realms of this dunya and placed it into the court of Allah" –Yasmi bint Shafiq

"Do not hesitate to pray for others as that increases the chances of having your own prayers answered too"

"No sadness lasts forever nor any felicity, nor any state of poverty or one of luxury. If you are the owner of a heart that is content, then you and the owner of the world are equivalent"

"every accomplishment starts with a decision to try"

"be the change you wish to see"

"Allah is gentle and He loves gentleness. He rewards for gentleness what is not granted for harshness and He does not reward anything else like it."

"Insist on doing what is right, and do it with kindness" – shaykh kamal el mekki

"It's not about perfect. It's about effort. And when you bring that effort every single day, that's when transformation happens. That's how change occurs."

"Don't stop when you are tired, stop when you are done!"

Bonus!

Now this is my special gift to you 😊 Some duas to learn and constantly make throughout Ramadhaan.

Some Du'as to make After fardh Salah:

"Astaghfirullaah x3 Allaahumma Antas salaam wa minkas salaam, tabarakta yaa dhul jalaal wal islam" (I seek forgiveness from Allaah, O Allaah, you are peace and fromm You is peace. Blessed are You, O Owner of majesty and honor)

"laa ilaa ha illallaah, wahdahu laa shareeka lahu, lahul mulku wa lahul hamdu, wa huwa 'alaa kulli shay'in qadeer. Allaahumma laa maan'ia lima atayta, wa laa mu'tiya limaa mana'ata, wa laa yanfa'u dhal-jadd minkal jadd" (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah alone, He has no partner, His is the dominion and His is the praise, and He is able to do all things. O Allah there is none who can withhold what you give, and none who can give what you have withheld; and the might of the mighty person cannot benefit him against You)

"SubhanAllaah x33, Alhamdulillah x33, Allaahu Akbar x33"

"Allaahumma inee 'as'aluka 'ilman nafi'an, wa rizqan tayyiban, wa 'amalan mutaqabbalan." (O Allah, I ask You for knowledge that is of benefit, a good provision and deeds that will be accepted)

Ayatul Qursiyy – from suratul Baqarah, Qur'an chapter 2, verse 255.

Dua to make while breaking the fast:

"Dhahaba al-'zama' wa abtallat al-'urooq wa thabata al-ajr in sha Allaah (the thirst is gone, the veins have been moistened and the reward is assured, if Allaah wills)."

What to say if you encounter the Night of al-Qadr

"Allahumma innaka afuwwun tuhibbu al-afwa fa'fu anna" (Oh Allah you are forgiving, and you love forgiveness, so forgive me)

Dhikr for throughout the day (to be recited as much as possible)

"SubhanAllah wa bi hamdihi, subhanAllahil Azeem" & "Astaghfirullah wa atuubu ilayhi"

I pray this publication benefits all those who read it, and may we be able to maximize the benefit and reward of this Ramadhān. I request from anyone who reads this and finds it beneficial to please share with as many people as you can. May Allaah accept it and bless it, and may we all be united under His shade and mercy and in Jannatul Firdaus

- Your sister in Islam, Fatima Adamu.