

RAMADAN

The Muslim Holy Month of Fasting

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At a glance...

When → Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, based on the moon. The western dates of the holy month move about 10 days earlier every year. For example, in 2005, Ramadan began in early October, and in 2006, in late September. The end of the Ramadan month is the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, the three-day Festival of Breaking the Fast.

Why → The Qur'an was first revealed to the Muslim prophet Muhammad during the month of Ramadan. The month is a special time of worship, Qur'an reading, charitable acts, and individual reflection and purification. "Ramadan is the month during which the Qur'an

was revealed, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings, and the statute book. Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein" – from the Qur'an, chapter 2, verse 185.

Who → All Muslims who have reached puberty are required to fast. Exceptions include men and women who are too old to fast, those who are too ill, women in the advanced stages of pregnancy, and women who are menstruating.

How → The daily fast begins at "first light", well before sunrise, and ends at sunset. There is a public call to prayer at these times which signals Muslims to begin and end that day's fast. The five daily prayer times should be observed for that day's fast to have meaning. There is a meal before first light preceding the day's fast, called Suhur. At the end of the day, the fast is broken with dates and water before the sunset prayer time, followed immediately by the Iftaar meal.

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Rules on Fasting...

These actions break the fast, and so are not allowed during the days of Ramadan:

- Eating.
- Drinking.
- Smoking.
- Sexual intercourse.
- Vomiting.
- Menstruation.
- Taking medicines.
- Injections of nourishing substances.
- Blood transfusions.
- Kidney dialysis.
- Food being chewed when first light comes, if swallowed.

These actions do not break the fast, and so are permitted during the days of Ramadan:

- Injections that are not given to replace food and drink but are used to administer medications such as penicillin and insulin, or tonics, or vaccinations. But to be on the safe side, all these injections should be given during the night.
- Suppositories, eye-drops, ear-drops, having a tooth extracted and treating wounds.
- Puffers used for asthma.
- Having a blood sample taken.
- Blood from a bloody nose.
- Tasting food in order to determine whether or not to buy it, so long as it is not swallowed.
- Mothers chewing food for a baby, so long as it is not swallowed by the mother.
- Medicines used by gargling, so long as they are not swallowed.
- If a person has a tooth filled and only feels the taste of it in his throat.
- Having the ears syringed.
- Nose drops and nasal sprays – so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- Tablets that are placed under the tongue to treat angina and other conditions - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- Anything inserted into a woman, such as pessaries, douches, scopes or fingers for the purpose of a medical examination.
- Insertion of a scope or intra-uterine device (IUD or “coil”) and the like into the uterus.
- Insertion into the urethra – for males or females – of a catheter, opaque dye for diagnostic imaging, medication or solutions for cleansing the bladder.
- Dental fillings, tooth extractions, cleaning of the teeth, use of a toothbrush - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- Rinsing, gargling or applying topical mouth sprays - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- Oxygen.
- Anesthetic gases – so long as the patient is not given nourishing solutions.
- Medications absorbed through the skin, such as creams and patches used to administer medicine and chemicals.
- Insertion of a catheter into veins for diagnostic imaging or treatment of blood vessels in the heart or other organs.
- Use of a laparoscope (instrument inserted through a small incision in the abdomen) to examine the abdominal cavity or to perform operations.

- Taking biopsies or samples from the liver or other organs – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions.
- Gastroscopy – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions or other substances.
- Introduction of any instrument or medication to the brain or spinal column.

There have been actual rulings made, binding on all Muslims, for each and every one of the items in both of the above lists. These rules are, in turn, often fine-tuned so that the Muslim can know exactly where the boundaries lie as to what is permitted or not permitted, such as the following:

If a person unintentionally swallows something that is stuck between his teeth, or if it is so small that he could not tell it was there or spit it out, this is counted as being part of his saliva and it does not break his fast. But if it is big enough to spit out, he should spit it out. If he spits it out, this is OK, but if he swallows it, this breaks his fast. If it can be diluted in the mouth, in whole or in part, and it has an added taste or sweetness, it is haraam (bad) for him to chew it. If any of this substance reaches the throat, this breaks the fast. If a person spits out water after rinsing his mouth, his fast is not affected by any moisture or wetness that is left behind, because he cannot help it.

70 of the rules for fasting during Ramadan:

Rules for traveling during Ramadan:

1. For a traveler to be allowed to break his fast, certain conditions must be met. His journey should be lengthy, or else be known as traveling (although there is a well-known difference of opinion among the scholars on this matter), and should go beyond the city and its suburbs. (The majority of scholars say that he should not break his fast before he passes the city limits. They say that a journey has not really begun until a person passes the city limits, and a person who is still in the city is “settled” and “present”.
2. The traveler is allowed to break his fast, according to the consensus of Muslims, whether he is able to continue fasting or not, and whether it is difficult for him to fast or

not. Even if his journey is easy and he has someone to serve him, he is still permitted to break his fast and shorten his prayers. (*Majmoo' al-Fataawaa*, 25/210)

3. If he is flying, once the plane has taken off and has gone beyond the city limits, he may break his fast. If the airport is outside his city, he can break his fast there, but if the airport is within his city or attached to it, he should not break his fast in the airport because he is still inside his own city.
4. If the sun sets and he breaks his fast on the ground, then the plane takes off and he sees the sun, he does not have to stop eating, because he has already completed his day's fasting, and there is no way to repeat an act of worship that is finished. If the plane takes off before sunset and he wants to complete that day's fasting during the journey, he should not break his fast until the sun has set from wherever he is in the air. The pilot is not permitted to bring the plane down to an altitude from which the sun cannot be seen just for the purposes of breaking the fast, because this would just be a kind of trickery, but if he brings the plane down lower for a genuine reason, and the disk of the sun disappears as a result, then he may break his fast. (From the fataawa of Shaykh Ibn Baaz, issued verbally).
5. Whoever travels to a place and intends to stay there for more than four days must fast, according to the majority of scholars. So if a person travels to study abroad for a period of months or years, then according to the majority of scholars he is regarded as one who is "settled" there and so he has to fast and pray his prayers in full. If a traveler passes through a city other than his own, he does not have to fast, unless his stay there is longer than four days, in which case he must fast, because the rulings that apply to those who are settled apply also to him. (See *Fataawa al-Da'wah* by Ibn Baaz, 977).
6. Whoever begins fasting while he is "settled" then embarks on a journey during the day is allowed to break his fast, because Allah has made setting out in general a legitimate excuse not to fast. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "... and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days..." [*al-Baqarah* 2:185]

7. A person who habitually travels is permitted not to fast if he has a home to which he returns, such as a courier who travels to serve the interests of the Muslims (and also taxi drivers, pilots and airline employees, even if their travel is daily – but they have to make up the fasts later). The same applies to sailors who have a home on land; but if a sailor has his wife and all he needs with him on the ship, and is constantly traveling, then he is not allowed to break his fast or shorten his prayers. If nomadic Bedouins are traveling from their winter home to their summer home, or vice versa, they are allowed to break their fast and shorten their prayers, but once they have settled in either their summer home or their winter home, they should not break their fast or shorten their prayers, even if they are following their flocks. (See *Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn Taymiyah*, 25/213).
8. If a traveler arrives during the day, there is a well-known dispute among the scholars as to whether he should stop eating and drinking. (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/212). But to be on the safe side, he should stop eating and drinking, out of respect for the month, but he has to make the day up later, whether or not he stops eating and drinking after his arrival.
9. If he starts Ramadan in one city, then travels to another city where the people started fasting before him or after him, then he should follow the ruling governing the people to whom he has traveled, so he should only end Ramadan when they end Ramadan, even if it means that he is fasting for more than thirty days, because Muhammad said: "Fast when everyone is fasting, and break your fast when everyone is breaking their fast." If it means that his fast is less than twenty-nine days, he must make it up after Eid, because the hijri month cannot be less than twenty-nine days. (From *Fataawa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz: Fataawa al-Siyaam*, Daar al-Watan, pp. 15-16)

Rules for sickness during Ramadan:

10. In the event of any sickness that makes people feel unwell, a person is allowed not to fast. "... and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe saum must be made up] from other days..." [*al-Baqarah 2:185*]. But if the ailment is minor, such as a cough or headache, then it is not a reason to break one's fast. If there is medical proof, or a person knows from his usual experience, or he is certain, that fasting will make his illness worse or delay his recovery, he is permitted to break his fast; indeed, it is disliked for him to fast in such cases. If a person is seriously ill, he does

not have to have the intention during the night to fast the following day, even if there is a possibility that he may be well in the morning, because what counts is the present moment.

11. If fasting will cause unconsciousness, he should break his fast and make the fast up later on. (*al-Fataawa*, 25/217). If a person falls unconscious during the day and recovers before sunset or after, his fast is still valid, so long as he was fasting in the morning; if he is unconscious from first light until sunset, then according to the majority of scholars his fast is not valid. According to the majority of scholars, it is obligatory for a person who falls unconscious to make up his fasts later on, no matter how long he was unconscious. (*Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer*, 1/412, 3/32; *al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaytiyyah*, 5/268). Some scholars issued decrees to the effect that a person who falls unconscious or takes sleeping pills or receives a general anesthetic for a genuine reason, and becomes unconscious for three days or less, must make up the fasts later on, because he is regarded as being like one who sleeps; if he is unconscious for more than three days, he does not have to make up the fasts, because he is regarded as being like one who is insane. (From the fataawa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally).
12. If a person feels extreme hunger or thirst, and fears that he may die or that some of his faculties may be irreparably damaged, and has rational grounds for believing this to be so, he may break his fast and make up for it later on, because saving one's life is obligatory. But it is not permissible to break one's fast because of bearable hardship or because one feels tired or is afraid of some imagined illness. People who work in physically demanding jobs are not permitted to break their fast, and they must have the intention at night of fasting the following day. If they cannot stop working and they are afraid that some harm may befall them during the day, or they face some extreme hardship that causes them to break their fast, then they should eat only what is enough to help them bear the hardship, then they should refrain from eating until sunset, and they have to make the fast up later. Workers in physically demanding jobs, such as working with furnaces and smelting metals, should try to change their hours so that they work at night, or take their holidays during Ramadan, or even take unpaid leave, but if this is not possible, then they should look for another job, where they can combine their religious and worldly duties. "*And whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He*

will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he could never imagine.” [al-Talaaq 65:2-3 – interpretation of the meaning]. (Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 10/233, 235)

13. The sick person who hopes to recover should wait until he gets better, then make up for the fasts he has missed; he is not allowed just to feed the poor. The person who is suffering from a chronic illness and has no hope of recovery and elderly people who are unable to fast should feed a poor person with half a *saa*’ of the staple food of his country for every day that he has missed. (Half a *saa*’ is roughly equivalent to one and a half kilograms of rice). It is permissible for him to do this all at once, on one day at the end of the month, or to feed one poor person every day. He has to do this by giving actual food – he cannot do it by giving money to the poor (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah*, 10/198). But he can give money to a trustworthy person or charitable organization to buy food and distribute it to the poor on his behalf.
14. If a sick person does not fast in Ramadan, waiting to recover so that he can make the days up later, then he finds out that his sickness is chronic, he has to feed a poor person for every day that he did not fast. (From the fataawa of Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen). If a person is waiting to recover from his illness and hopes to get better, but then dies, there is no “debt” owed by him or his heirs. If a person’s sickness is considered to be chronic, so he does not fast and feeds the poor instead, then advances in medical science mean that there is now a cure, which he uses and gets better, he does not have to make up the fasts he has missed, because he did what he had to do at the time. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah*, 10/195)
15. If a person is sick, then recovers, and is able to make up the missed fasts but does not do so before he dies, then money should be taken from his estate to feed a poor person for every day that he missed. If any of his relatives want to fast on his behalf, then this is OK, because it was reported in *al-Saheehayn* that the Muhammad said: “Whoever dies owing some fasts, let his heir fast on his behalf.” (From *Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah*, volume on Da’wah, 806).

16. The very elderly who have lost their strength and are getting weaker every day as death approaches, do not have to fast, and they are allowed not to fast so long as fasting would be too difficult for them.
17. Those who have become senile and confused do not have to fast or do anything else, and their family does not have to do anything on their behalf, because such people are no longer counted as responsible. If they are of sound mind sometimes and confused at other times, they have to fast when they are OK and they do not have to fast when they are confused. (See *Majaalis Shahr Ramadan* by Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, p. 28).

Rules concerning the time to start fasting:

18. Once the entire disk of the sun has disappeared, the fasting person should break his fast, and not pay any attention to the red glow that remains on the horizon, because the Muhammad said: “Once night comes from there and the day disappears from there, and the sun has set, the fasting person should break his fast.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1954; the issue is also mentioned in *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa*, 25/216).
19. Muhammad would not pray the sunset prayers until he had broken his fast, if only with a sip of water. (Reported by al-Haakim, 1/432; *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, 2110). If a fasting person cannot find anything with which to break his fast, he should have the intention in his heart to break his fast, and he should not suck his finger, as some of the common people do. If a person is certain, or thinks it most likely, or is not sure whether he broke the fast before the proper time, he should make up the fast later on, because the basic principle is that the day is still there and has not ended. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah*, 10/287). He should beware of relying on the word of small children or untrustworthy sources, and he should also beware of the time differences between different cities and villages when he hears the call to prayer on the radio and so on.
20. When first light comes – which is the white light coming across the horizon in the East – the fasting person must stop eating and drinking straightaway, whether he hears the call to prayer or not. If he knows that the call to prayer is at first light, he has to stop eating and drinking as soon as he hears the call to prayer, but if the call to prayer comes before first light, he does not have to stop eating and drinking when he hears it. If he does not know the usual practice for the call to prayer in that place, or there are differences

among various local calls to prayer, and he cannot determine the time of first light for himself – as is usually the case in cities because of lighting and buildings – he should take the precaution of referring to a printed timetable, so long as he is sure that the calculations on which it is based are not incorrect.

21. The Muslims living in cities where there is a distinct alternation of night and day in every twenty-four hour period are obliged to fast, no matter how long the day is, so long as that distinction between night and day is there. In some places there is no such distinction between night and day; Muslims in these places should fast according to the times in the nearest city in which there is a distinct alternation of night and day.

Rules concerning breaking the rules:

22. Anyone who eats and drinks deliberately during the day in Ramadan with no valid excuse has committed a grave major sin, and has to repent and make up for that fast later on. If he broke the fast with something haraam (bad), such as drinking alcohol, this makes his sin even worse. Whatever the case, he has to repent sincerely and do more good deeds, fasting and other acts of worship, so as to avoid having any shortfall in his record of obligatory deeds, and so that Allah might accept his repentance.
23. If a person sees someone else who is eating because he has forgotten that he is fasting, he should remind him.
24. Those who need to break their fast in order to save someone whose life is in danger, may break their fast and should make it up later on. This applies in cases where someone is drowning, or when fires need to be put out.
25. If a person is obliged to fast, but he deliberately has intercourse during the day in Ramadan, of his own free will, his fast is broken, and he has to repent. He should still fast for the rest of the day, but he has to make up the fast later on, and offer expiation.
26. If a person has intercourse during the day on more than one day during Ramadan, he must offer expiation for each day, as well as repeating the fast for each day. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/321).

27. If a man wants to have intercourse with his wife but he breaks his fast by eating first, his sin is more serious, because he has violated the sanctity of the month on two counts, by eating and by having intercourse. It is even more certain in this case that expiation is obligatory, and if he tries to get out of it, that only makes matters worse. He must repent sincerely. (See *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/262).
28. Kissing, hugging, embracing, touching and repeatedly looking at one's wife or concubine, if a man is able to control himself, is permissible, because it is reported that Muhammad used to kiss and embrace his wives whilst he was fasting, but he was the most in control of his desire.
29. If a person is engaged in the act of intercourse and dawn comes, he is obliged to stop, and his fast will be valid, but if he continues having intercourse until after dawn, he has broken his fast, and he must repent, make the fast up later, and offer expiation.
30. If morning comes and a person is in a state of impurity following sexual intercourse, this does not affect his fasting.
31. A person who vomits deliberately, by sticking his finger down his throat or applying pressure to his stomach, or deliberately smelling a repulsive odor, or looking at something that could make him vomit, is obliged to make up the fast later on. If he feels that he is about to vomit, but then it subsides by itself, this does not break his fast, because it is not something that he can control, but if the vomit comes into his mouth and he swallows it back down, this does break the fast. If a person feels sick in his stomach, he does not have to suppress the urge to vomit, because this could cause him harm.
32. If a person suffers from a nosebleed, his fast is still valid, because this is something that is beyond his control. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/264).
33. If he has gum ulcers or his gums bleed after using the siwaak tooth stick (traditional tooth brush), it is not permissible for him to swallow the blood; he has to spit it out. However, if some blood enters his throat by accident, and he did not mean for that to happen, there is no need to worry. Similarly, if vomit rises in his throat then goes back

down to his stomach without him intending for this to happen, his fast is still valid. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/254).

34. With regard to mucus coming from the head (nose and sinuses) and phlegm coming from the chest by coughing and clearing the throat, if it is swallowed before it reaches the mouth, this does not break a person's fast, because it is a problem which all people have; but if it is swallowed after it reaches the mouth, this does break the fast. However, if it is swallowed unintentionally, it does not break the fast.
35. Inhaling water vapors, as may happen to people working in desalination plants, does not break the fast. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/276).
36. It is disliked to taste food unnecessarily, because this carries the risk that the fast may be broken. Examples of cases where it is necessary to taste food include a mother chewing food for an infant when she has no other way to feed him, tasting food to make sure that it is OK, and tasting something when making a purchase. It was reported that Ibn 'Abbaas said: "There is nothing wrong with tasting vinegar or anything that one wishes to buy." (Classed as hasan in *Irwa' al-Ghaleel*, 4/86; See al-Fath, commentary on *Baab Ightisaal al-Saa'im, Kitaab al-Siyaam*).
37. If a fasting person is injured or suffers a nosebleed, or gets water or petrol in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast. If he gets dust, smoke or flies in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast either. Things that one cannot avoid swallowing, like one's own saliva, or dust from grinding flour, do not break the fast. If a person gathers a lot of saliva in his mouth then swallows it on purpose, this does not break the fast, according to the most correct opinion. (*al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudaamah, 3/106).
38. If tears reach one's throat, or if a person applies oil to his hair or moustache, or uses henna, and then detects the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast. Using henna, kohl or oil does not break the fast. (See *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/233, 25/245). This also applies to creams used to moisturize and soften the skin.

39. There is nothing wrong with smelling pleasant fragrances, using perfume or applying scented creams and the like. There is nothing wrong with a fasting person using incense, so long as he does not use it as snuff. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/314).
40. It is better not to use toothpaste during the day, and to leave it till night-time, because it is too strong. (*Al-Majaalis*, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p. 72).
41. Smoking breaks the fast, and it cannot be used as an excuse not to fast. How can a sin be taken as an excuse?!
42. Immersing oneself in water or wrapping oneself in wet clothes in order to cool down does not break the fast. There is nothing wrong with pouring water over one's head to obtain relief from heat and thirst. Swimming is disliked, because it might make one break the fast (by swallowing water). If a person's work involves diving and he can be sure that he will not get water in his mouth, there is nothing wrong with this.
43. If a person eats, drinks or has intercourse, thinking that it is still night, then he realizes that dawn has already broken, there is no harm done, because the verse in the Qur'an clearly states that it is permissible to do these things until one is sure that dawn has come. "Allah has permitted you to eat and drink so long as there is any doubt in your mind." (*Fath al-Baari*, 4/135; this is also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 29/263).
44. If a person breaks his fast, thinking that the sun has already set when it has not, he must make up the fast later on, because the principle is that it is still day, and a fact that is certain cannot be rejected in favor of something doubtful. (Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah thought that it was not necessary for a person in this situation to make up the fast).
45. If dawn breaks and a person has food or drink in his mouth, it is agreed that he should spit it out, and his fast is valid. This is like the ruling on one who eats or drinks because he forgets, then remembers he is fasting – if he hastens to spit out the food or drink in his mouth, his fast is still valid.

Rules for women:

46. A woman who has reached the age of puberty, but is too shy to tell anyone, so she does not fast, has to repent and make up the days she has missed, as well as feeding a poor person for each day, as an act of expiation for delaying her fast, if the following Ramadan comes and she has not yet made up those days. Her case is like that of a woman who fasts the days of her period out of shyness, and does not make them up later.
47. If a woman does not know exactly how many days she has missed, she should fast until she is fairly certain that she has made up the days she had missed and not made up from previous Ramadans, and offer the expiation for delaying for each day. She can do this at the same time as fasting or separately, depending on what she is able to do
48. A woman should not fast – except during Ramadan – if her husband is present without his permission, but if he is traveling then it does not matter.
49. If a woman knows that her period will come tomorrow, she should still continue her intention and keep fasting; she should not break her fast until she actually sees the blood.
50. It is better for a menstruating woman to remain natural and accept what Allah has decreed for her by not taking any medication to prevent her from bleeding. She should be content with what Allah accepts from her of breaking her fast during her period and making those days up later. This is how the Mothers of the Believers and the women of the salaf were. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/151). Moreover, there is medical evidence to prove that many of the things used to prevent bleeding are in fact harmful, and many women have suffered from irregular periods as a result of taking them. However, if a woman does that and takes something to stop the bleeding, then fasts, this is OK.
51. If a pregnant woman miscarries and the fetus is unformed or has no discernible outline of any part of the body, such as a head or hand, then she has to fast, if she is able, otherwise she can break her fast and make it up later on. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/224). Once she becomes clean after having an operation to clean the

womb (D&C), she should fast. The scholars stated that the embryo is considered to start taking shape after 80 days of pregnancy.

52. If a breastfeeding woman fasts during the day and sees a spot of blood during the night, although she was clean during the day, her fast is still valid. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/150)
53. According to the most correct opinion, a woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding is regarded as being like one who is ill, so she is permitted not to fast, and she only has to make up the days that she missed, whether she fears for herself or for her child. If a pregnant woman fasts and experiences some bleeding, her fast is still valid; this does not affect her fast at all. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/225).
54. In the case of a woman who is obliged to fast, if her husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramadan with her consent, then the ruling that applies to him also applies to her. If, however, he forces her to do that, she should do her best to resist him, and she does not have to offer expiation. Ibn 'Aqeel (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "In the case of a man who has intercourse with his wife during the day in Ramadan whilst she is sleeping, she does not have to offer expiation." But to be on the safe side, she should make up that fast later on. (Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was of the opinion that this did not invalidate her fast at all).
55. A woman who knows that her husband cannot control himself should keep away from him and not adorn herself during the day in Ramadan.

Other rules:

56. Students' exams are no excuse for breaking one's fast during Ramadan, and it is not permissible to obey one's parents in breaking the fast because of having exams, because there is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/241).
57. For those who are fighting an enemy or are being besieged by an enemy, if fasting would make them too weak to fight, they are allowed to break the fast, even if they are not traveling. If they need to break their fast before fighting, they can break their fast.

Muhammad said to his Companions once, before fighting: "In the morning you are going to meet your enemy and not fasting will make you stronger, so do not fast." (Reported by Muslim, 1120, 'Abd al-Baaqi edn. This is also the preferred opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. The scholars of Damascus also issued decrees to the same effect when their city was attacked by the Tatars)

58. If a person's reason for not fasting is obvious, such as illness, there is nothing wrong with him eating or drinking openly, but if the reason is hidden, such as menstruation, it is better to eat and drink in secret, so as not to attract accusations and the like.
59. If a person does not know that Ramadan has started until after dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and he has to make that day up later on, according to the majority of scholars, because Muhammad said: "There is no fasting for the one who does not have the intention to fast from the night before." (Reported by Abu Dawood, 2454).
60. If a prisoner or captive knows that Ramadan has begun by sighting the moon himself or by being told by a trustworthy person, he has to fast. If he does not know when the month is beginning, he must try to work it out for himself and act according to what he thinks is most likely. If he later finds out that his fasting coincided with Ramadan, this is fine according to the majority of scholars, and if his fasting came after Ramadan, this is fine, but if his fasting came before Ramadan, this is not acceptable, and he has to make up the fast. If part of his fasting coincided with Ramadan and part of it did not, what coincided with it or came after it is fine, but what came before is not OK. If the matter never becomes clear to him, then his fasting is fine because he did the best he could, and Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. (*Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 28/84).
61. Don't sin while fasting. "When any of you is fasting, let him not commit sin...". (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1904)
62. Don't lie while fasting. "Whoever does not stop speaking falsehood and acting in accordance with it, Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink." (Al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1903)

63. Fasting is an obligation on every adult, sane, settled [i.e., not traveling] Muslim who is able to fast and has nothing such as [menstruation] or post-natal bleeding to prevent him or her from doing so. A person is deemed to have reached adulthood when any one of the following three things occur: emission of semen; growth of coarse pubic hair around the private parts; attainment of fifteen years of age. In the case of females, there is a fourth, namely menstruation; when a girl starts her periods, she is obliged to fast even if she has not yet reached the age of ten.
64. Start young. "Children should be instructed to fast at the age of seven, if they are able to, and some scholars say that a child may be smacked at the age of ten if he does not fast." (See *al-Mughnī*, 3/90)
65. If a kaafir (non-Muslim) becomes a Muslim during one of the days of Ramadan, they should refrain from eating for the rest of the day, because they are now among those who are obliged to fast, but they do not have to make up for the days of Ramadan that they have missed, because at that time they were not among those who are obliged to fast.
66. If a child reaches puberty during one of the days of Ramadan, they should refrain from eating for the rest of the day, because they are now among those who are obliged to fast, but they do not have to make up for the days of Ramadan that they have missed, because at that time they were not among those who are obliged to fast.
67. If an insane person comes to his senses during one of the days of Ramadan, they should refrain from eating for the rest of the day, because they are now among those who are obliged to fast, but they do not have to make up for the days of Ramadan that they have missed, because at that time they were not among those who are obliged to fast.
68. The insane are not responsible for their deeds (their deeds are not being recorded), but if a person is insane at times and sane at other times, he must fast during his periods of sanity, and is excused during his periods of insanity. If he becomes insane during the day, this does not invalidate his fast, just as is the case if someone becomes unconscious because of illness or some other reason, because he had the intention of

fasting when he was sane. (*Majaalis Shahr Ramadan* by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.28). A similar case is the ruling governing epileptics.

69. If someone dies during Ramadan, there is no "debt" on him or his heirs with regard to the remaining days of the month.
70. If someone does not know that it is obligatory to fast Ramadan, or that it is haraam (bad) to eat or have sexual intercourse during the day in this month, then according to the majority of scholars, this excuse is acceptable, as is also the case for a new convert to Islam, a Muslim living in Daar al-Harb (non-Muslim lands) and a Muslim who grew up among the kaafir (non-Muslims). But a person who grew up among the Muslims and was able to ask questions and find out, has no excuse.

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Some beliefs about the Ramadan fast...

- Whoever breaks the fast during Ramadan without a legitimate excuse has committed a serious major sin. Muhammad, describing a dream he had, is quoted as saying: "Then I was taken to another place, and I saw people hanging from their hamstrings, with the corners of their mouths torn and dripping with blood. I said, 'Who are these?' They said, 'The people who broke their fast before it was the proper time to do so.'" (*Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/420).
- Al-Haafiz al-Dhahabi said, "Among the believers it is well-established that whoever does not fast in Ramadan without a valid excuse is worse than an adulterer or drunkard; they doubt whether he is even a Muslim at all, and they regard him as a heretic and profligate." (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/265).
- Shaykh al-Islam said: "If a person does not fast in Ramadan knowing that it is haraam (bad) but making it halaal (good) for himself to do so, kill him." (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/265).

Muhammad is reported to have said the following about the Ramadan fast:

- Allah will reward fasting and multiply the reward without measure, as He says: "Except for fasting which is only for My sake, and I will reward him for it." (al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1904; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/407).
- The prayer of the fasting person will not be refused. (Reported by al-Bayhaqi, 3/345; *al-Silsilat al-Saheeh*, 1797)
- Fasting will intercede for a person on the Day of Judgment and will say, "O Lord, I prevented him from his food and physical desires during the day, so let me intercede for him." (Reported by Ahmad, 2/174. Al-Haythami classed its isnaad as hasan in *al-Majma'*, 3/181)
- Fasting is a protection and a strong fortress that keeps a person safe from the Fire. (Reported by Ahmad, 2/402; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/411; *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 3880)
- Whoever fasts one day seeking the pleasure of Allah, if that is the last day of his life, he will enter Paradise. (Reported by Ahmad, 5/391; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/412)
- In Paradise there is a gate called al-Rayyaan, through which those who fast will enter, and no one will enter it except them; when they have entered it will be locked, and no-one else will enter through it." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, no. 1797)
- When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 3277)
- Fasting for Ramadan is equivalent to fasting for ten months. (See *Musnad Ahmad*, 5/280; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/421)
- Whoever fasts for Ramadan out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, no. 37)

- At the breaking of every fast, Allah will choose people to free from Hellfire. (Reported by Ahmad, 5/256; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/419)
- Suhur (the daily meal before the fast) is blessed food, and it involves being different from the people of the Book (Christians). What a good way to break the fast for the believer is dates." (Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2345; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/448)
- The person who is fasting should avoid all kinds of haraam (bad) actions, such as backbiting, obscenity and lies, otherwise his reward may all be lost. (Reported by Ibn Maajah, 1/539)

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Thoughts on the modern deterioration of Ramadan observance from a respected Muslim web site...

Among the things that can destroy one's good deeds and bring bad deeds is allowing oneself to be distracted by quiz-shows, soap operas, movies and sports matches, idle gatherings, hanging about in the streets with evil people and time-wasters, driving around for no purpose, and crowding the streets and sidewalks, so that the month of worship, for many people, becomes the month of sleeping in the day so as to avoid feeling hungry, thus missing their prayers and the opportunity to pray them in congregation, then spending their nights in entertainment and indulging their desires. Some people even greet the month with feelings of annoyance, thinking only of the pleasures they will miss out on. In Ramadan, some people travel to kaafir (non-Muslim) lands to enjoy a holiday! Even the mosques are not free from such evils as the appearance of women wearing makeup and perfume, and even the Sacred House of Allah is not free of these ills. Some people make the month a season for begging, even though they are not in need. Some of them entertain themselves with dangerous fireworks and the like, and some of them waste their time in the markets, wandering around the shops, or sewing and following fashions. Some of them put new products and new styles in their stores during the last ten days of the month, to keep people away from earning rewards and good deeds.

Not allowing oneself to be provoked, because the Muhammad said: "If someone fights him or insults him, he should say, 'I am fasting, I am fasting.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari and others. *Al-Fath*, no. 1894) One reason for this is to remind himself, and another reason is to remind his adversary. But anyone who looks at the conduct of many of those who fast will see something quite different. It is essential to exercise self-control and be calm, but we see the opposite among crazy drivers who speed up [to get home or to a restaurant to eat] when they hear the call to prayer that signals the end of the day's fast.

The wise person wants to eat to live, not live to eat. The best type of food is that which is there to be used, not that which is there to be served. But people indulge in making all kinds of food (during Ramadan) and treating food preparation as a virtual art form, so that housewives and servants spend all their time on making food, and this keeps them away from worship, and people spend far more on food during Ramadan than they do ordinarily. Thus the month becomes the month of indigestion, fatness and gastric illness, where people eat like gluttons and drink like thirsty camels, and when they get up to pray, they do so reluctantly, and some of them leave after the first two rak'ahs (series of postures).

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