



Year 8 Festivals key facts

Islam - Id ul-Fitr

You are expected to know all of the information in this booklet.
You will be assessed on this knowledge.

Ramadan and Id ul-Fitr

- Ramadan is a month of **fasting** – not eating or drinking during daylight hours.
- During the month of **Ramadan**, Muslims celebrate Muhammad receiving his first revelation from the angel Jibril on the Night of Power.
- Ramadan ends with a celebration known as **Id ul-Fitr**.
- 'Id ul-Fitr' means **'the festival of breaking the fast'**.
- The Id ul-Fitr festival begins at the first sight of the **new moon** in the sky.
- Muslims are forbidden from fasting on Id ul-Fitr.

Before Id ul-Fitr begins

- A few days before Id ul-Fitr begins, each Muslim family makes a donation known as **sadaqah ul-fitr** (charity of fast-breaking).
- Sadaqah ul-fitr is a donation of food like rice and dates given to less fortunate families so that they can feast and celebrate on the holiday.
- Muslim families will **buy new clothes** ready to wear at Id ul-Fitr.
- Muslims will **clean their houses** ready for the celebrations.
- Many Muslims will buy **gifts and cards** ready to give to friends and family when Id ul-Fitr arrives.

What happens at Id ul-Fitr?

- Id ul-Fitr is a time of prayer and celebration.
- There is a **special salah** (prayer) for Id ul-Fitr and it can only be performed in **congregation** (with other people). This often happens in an open field or a large hall. Muslims will wear their best clothes to this prayer.
- After Id prayers, a specially prepared **sweet dish** is eaten and the rest of the day is spent celebrating with friends and family.
- Muslims will often **decorate their houses**, eat **feasts** together and give each other **gifts and cards**.
- They will also give to **charity**. There will be a special sermon (khutbah) at the mosque to remind people how to pay **zakah**.
- On the first day of Id ul-Fitr, Muslim families usually go to the mosque to **thank God** that their fast is complete and for His support over the previous month in helping them to practice self-control. They are reminded by the imam that Muhammad promised that those who complete the fast will receive pleasure on earth and a reward from God on the Day of Judgement.





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Hinduism - Diwali

Diwali is also celebrated by Sikhs

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What happens at Diwali?

- Diwali is known as the festival of lights.
- To celebrate, houses are cleaned and then decorated with candles and colourful lights. Clay lamps, known as diyas, are lit.
- Houses will often be decorated with Rangoli artworks – patterns created on the floor using coloured rice or powder.
- Huge firework displays are held.
- During Diwali, Hindus often wear new clothes.
- Families and friends share sweets and gifts and there is also a strong belief in giving food and goods to those in need.
- Diwali coincides with the Hindu new year. Hindus will celebrate new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness.



What is the meaning of Diwali?

- Diwali has different meanings for different Hindus.
- For some Hindus, the glow of lights at Diwali symbolises the **sun's nourishing energy**, and is a reminder of their dependence on the Supreme Deity who created this world, sustains it and will eventually destroy it.
- Some Hindus light lamps at Diwali to help **Lakshmi**, the goddess of wealth, enter their homes and bring them good fortune.
- Other Hindus remember the events of the Ramayana at Diwali. For them, the lights are a reminder of **Rama and Sita returning home** after defeating the demon Ravana. They arrived on a moonless night. In order to guide the couple home and welcome them, the people of the city lit lamps. The large firework displays remember the celebrations which, according to the legend, took place upon Rama's return as locals set off their own version of fireworks.



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Judaism - Passover (Pesach)

You are expected to know all of the information in this booklet.
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What do Jews remember at Passover?

- At **Pesach** (Passover), Jews remember the night when the angel of death passed over Egypt, killing the firstborn sons of the Egyptians but sparing the Israelite boys.
- After this plague, the Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go, and Moses led them out of Egypt.
- This story reminds Jews of God's power and their **covenant** with Him.

What do Jews do to prepare for Passover?

- Before Pesach begins, Jews remove any products containing **yeast or leaven** (the substance that makes bread rise) from their homes. This is because the slaves who rushed to escape Egypt did not have time to collect any yeast to make their bread rise, so they escaped with flat bread.
- All firstborn males fast on the day before Passover begins. This is to celebrate their escape from the Plague of the First Born.

Celebrating Passover

- The Torah says to celebrate Passover for 7 days.
- On the first two nights of Passover, friends and family gather together for a seder meal. Seder means order – a ritual is followed.
- The only type of bread that Jews will eat during Passover is a flat bread called **matzot**.

The Seder meal

- All the food at this meal has a **symbolic meaning** and helps Jews remember the difficulties of their ancestors.



- **Bitter herbs** represent the bitterness of slavery.
- A green vegetable dipped in **salt water** symbolises the tears of the slaves.
- **Charoset** is eaten to symbolise the cement that the slaves were forced to make for the Egyptians. This could be a mixture of nuts, apples, dates and sweet wine.
- There is also a **roasted lamb shank bone**, which is not eaten. This bone represents the lambs that were sacrificed in the Temple before it was destroyed.
- An **egg is roasted** as a symbol of new life, but this is also not eaten.
- **Four glasses of wine** are drunk during the meal to remember God's four promises to Moses:
 - "Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord and I will bring you out from captivity; I will welcome you with an outstretched arm; I will make you my people and I will be your God.'"
- A **fifth cup** is poured and left for the **prophet Elijah**, who some Jews believe will return to announce the arrival of the Messiah at Passover. An empty chair will also be left for Elijah at the dinner table.



Year 8 Festivals key facts

Buddhism - Wesak

You are expected to know all of the information in this booklet.
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What do Buddhists remember at Wesak?

- Wesak is the most important festival for many Buddhists. In Western countries it is often called '**Buddha Day**'.
- The festival is a time to remember the Buddha's birth, his enlightenment (nirvana) and his death (parinirvana).
- There is no fixed date for Wesak and it is celebrated at different times in different countries.

What do Buddhists do at Wesak?

- Many Buddhists will clean and decorate their homes.
- In many countries, Buddhists visit their nearest temple or monastery for services and teaching.
- **Monks give talks** and lead the **chanting of mantras**, including the Three Jewels.
- The laity bring **gifts of flowers, rice, candles and incense**, which are placed by statues of the Buddha. This is to show respect and gratitude to the Buddha for his life and teachings,
- Some Buddhists also **pour water** over a statue of the Buddha. This is called 'The Bathing of the Buddha'.
- The Bathing of the Buddha symbolises the washing away of one's past misdeeds and is a reminder to Buddhists to purify their own minds from greed, hate and ignorance.
- In some countries, Buddhists will release caged birds. This represents letting go of troubles and wishing that all beings are well and happy.
- In Thailand and Indonesia, special Wesak lanterns are made from paper and wood.
- Many Buddhists will **donate to charity** or give free food and drink to those in need.

