

Celebrating Diversity in Ramadan Traditions Around the World

Source: <https://www.muslimaid.org/media-centre/blog/celebrating-diversity-in-ramadan-traditions-around-the-world/>

Ramadan is the month that brings people and communities together. It is characterised by sharing, giving, and embracing the spirit of diversity. Islam is followed by around two billion Muslims around the world. Most of them bring their own unique culture to honour the month of Ramadan and other special occasions. While the acts of worship are the same for everyone, the way to show excitement and joy differs for many.



What countries celebrate Ramadan?

Different countries and cultures celebrate the blessed month according to their own particular customs and traditions. Some of the countries participating in Ramadan 2025 include Türkiye, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Iran, and the UAE. While countries with Islam as the state religion observe Ramadan officially, many Muslims take part in Ramadan traditions across the globe. Muslims in Western countries celebrate the holy month with traditional fervor and dedication. Ramadan celebrations are upheld across the UK, Canada, the US, and some European countries.

Ramadan food traditions around the world

Every culture has special dishes that are normally cooked for Iftar and Suhoor because of their nutritious value or years of tradition. In South Asian homes, the Iftar meal includes samosas, pakoras or onion bhajis as starters. It is followed by biryani, curried chicken, meat or vegetables with chapattis or rice—some people like fish for their Iftar meal.

In Egypt, people enjoy “Khchaf,” a fruity jam made with dates, figs, and other fruits for breakfast or Suhoor. Qatayef is the cherished dessert of Egypt during the month of Ramadan. A bit like pancakes but stuffed with nuts, it is a remarkable Middle Eastern treat.

Turkish people like baklava for a special Iftar or Eid. Freshly baked Ramazan pidesi is also a top favorite which is enjoyed with Turkish coffee. In Uzbekistan, patir, a crispy and buttery bread baked in a traditional tandoor oven, is relished during Ramadan. Harira, a soup-like dish from Morocco, and the brioche-like bread called Ma'arouk in Syria also delight the taste buds of the fasting people in Ramadan.

Other customs of Ramadan

Ramadan traditions around the world add to the vibrant ambience in communities during the glorious month. One of the common customs prevalent in Muslim countries is the announcement that happens at Suhoor time to wake people up for Suhoor. In Pakistan, young people go around houses in groups encouraging people to wake up in good time by chanting inspirational quotes. In some areas, people beat drums or sing prayers to do the same. Some of these people wear traditional clothes and hats; for example, the drummers in Türkiye dress in a traditional Ottoman costume, including a fez and vest.

Another part of Ramadan culture is the marking of Iftar time. Cannons fire to announce Iftar time in Syria. In some other countries like Pakistan, sirens installed by local councils announce the commencement of the time of breaking the fast. Mosques also announce the arrival of Iftar time over loudspeakers, followed by the call to prayer.

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March 2025 Calendar

Deaf History Month
National Women's History Month

- 5 – Ash Wednesday (Western Christianity)
- 8 – International Women's Day
- 13-14 – Holi (Hindu festival)
- 13-14 – Purim (Judaism)
- March 13 - April 15 – Deaf History Month (US)
- 17 – St. Patrick's Day (Christianity)
- 18-21 – Native American Awareness Week (US)
- 20 – Naw-Ruz (Baha'i New Year)
- 20 – Spring Equinox (Pagan)
- 26 – National Science Appreciation Day (US)
- Feb 28 - March 31 – Ramadan (Islam)
- 30-31 - Eid al-Fitr (Islam)
- 31 – Cesar Chavez Day (US)

Increased access to Asian American language assistance needed during emergencies

Source: https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/increased-access-asian-american-language-assistance-needed-emergencies?mc_cid=a3c4cc273e&mc_eid=229624d6a8

UCLA study of L.A. wildfires calls for improved multilingual disaster communications to overcome language barriers.

Effective communication can be a challenge during and in the aftermath of any disaster, but as the recent wildfires pushed the limits of Los Angeles County, the gap caused by language barriers puts some populations at even greater risk.

Nearly 50,000 Asian Americans resided in the evacuation zone areas, with over 12,000 of them needing language assistance, according to [a new data brief](#) by UCLA researchers and AAPI Equity Alliance. The authors found that the diversity of the dozens of languages calls for targeted, multilingual emergency preparedness, response and recovery strategies that go beyond a one-size-fits-all approach.

“Knowing the language needs of Asian Americans ensures that they have access to life-saving information and that any efforts foster an inclusive disaster response,” said Paul Ong, research professor and director of the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge.

These language needs are part of a broader challenge in Los Angeles County, where over half a million of the more than 1.4 million Asian American residents are classified as having limited English proficiency, or LEP, which the U.S. Census Bureau defines as the ability to speak, read, write or understand English less than “very well.”

Language assistance needs vary among Asian American communities

LEP rates for those whom English is often a second language can vary widely across Asian American ethnic groups. Several groups have significantly higher rates — the highest being Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean Americans with each exceeding 45%, far greater than the county average of 36% among all Asians.

The brief also finds that older Asian Americans face substantially higher rates of LEP at 61% among those 65 and older, compared with younger generations at 15% for those aged 5 to 24. This disparity is largely driven by generational differences, as younger Asian Americans are more likely to be U.S.-born and receive education in the United States.

“Language accessibility for older generations is especially important,” said Melany De La Cruz-Viesca, deputy director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. “Often disaster recovery program descriptions rely on jargon, while the services can be too complicated to understand and use. This can make these groups also susceptible to scams.”

Dozens of languages are represented in the L.A. wildfire evacuation zones

When examining the evacuation zones from the Eaton, Palisades, Hurst and Hughes fires, 26% of the combined total Asian population in those areas had limited English proficiency. The researchers found that the Palisades has the highest proportion at almost 30%, while the Eaton zone has over a quarter of its Asian residents classified as LEP.

The Eaton evacuation zone had the largest share of Asian Americans impacted by the fires, with nearly 39,000 individuals, comprising approximately one-fifth (18%) of the area’s residents.

The most commonly spoken Asian languages in the combined evacuation zones are Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese. However, dozens of other Asian languages are also represented and vary by evacuation zone, which points to the broad range of language needs in these communities.

“Asian Americans have been overlooked by efforts for emergency preparedness, putting at risk our community who are already most vulnerable,” AAPI Equity Alliance executive director Manjusha Kulkarni said. “Government emergency response plans must prioritize communities with language needs and partnerships with grassroots organizations. Together, we can better prepare and protect hard-to-reach communities.”

Steps to enhance multilingual communication and improve accessibility

The researchers emphasized that the crisis caused by the wildfires presents an opportunity for advocates and decision-makers to rethink and strengthen emergency response strategies in order to build a more inclusive and equitable framework for disaster response. The data brief highlights several key recommendations:

- **Identify language needs** – Regularly assess language assistance needs in fire evacuation zones using census, school and community survey data. Partner with researchers with expertise in Asian American communities to conduct detailed analyses and anticipate language barriers before disasters occur.
- **Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate communication** – Develop in-language emergency materials tailored to the specific linguistic needs of affected communities.

- **Strengthen partnerships with community organizations** – Collaborate with trusted, community-based organizations that serve limited-English proficient populations to improve outreach and response.
- **Community oversight and engagement** – Create citizen oversight groups and facilitate local discussions, utilizing Asian language translators, to address barriers in disaster recovery and rebuilding.
- **Institutionalize long-term improvements** – Implement multilingual alert systems and integrate language access planning into broader emergency response frameworks.

According to the authors, data-informed and intentional action from government agencies, emergency responders and community organizations is needed to ensure that all residents — regardless of language ability — are fully included in recovery and rebuilding efforts.

The report is part of a series from the Center for Neighborhood Knowledge, in partnership with other research units at UCLA, including the Asian American Studies Center and the Latino Policy and Politics Institute, that [examine the wide range of impacts](#) of the January wildfires on Los Angeles communities, paying particular attention to different racial and ethnic groups.

New Staff Profile: Sharon Carolina Hom

Sharon Carolina Hom is from Quito, Ecuador. When she was little, Compassion International started a sponsorship program for the children in her town. Around the same time, a Peace Corps center opened, and her family, along with others, would host the incoming volunteers. She remembers being amazed to hear them speaking a different language and feeling excited whenever letters arrived from sponsors around the world. This experience inspired her to learn English.



After graduating from high school, Carol studied Business Administration in college while also taking English classes. Because of this, she was able to work as a translator, interpreter, and sponsorship analyst. It was fulfilling for her to see people connect with each other, overcoming language barriers, and witnessing those who could help reach those in need.

In 2018, she moved to California and worked in administration for five years. One day, a friend mentioned that hospitals always needed medical interpreters, so she decided to research further. Since this was a new field, it was important for her to study and become certified. She earned her certification from NBCMI in September 2024. Around the same time, an opportunity arose for a Medical Interpreter position at UC Davis Health, and she applied. She was very excited when she received the news that she had been accepted.

Carol is grateful to be part of an environment filled with camaraderie and people willing to help. Every day, she feels humbled by the many cases the MIS team interprets and privileged to contribute to something greater than herself.

In her spare time, she likes reading, watching videos about learning languages, going on walks, and spending time with her family.

Welcome to UC Davis Health family, Sharon! We are happy to have you onboard!

