

YouTubers: My Ramadan experience – transcript

Transcript for My Ramadan experience

As-salamu alaykum! Hello, everyone! Today's video for the British Council's LearnEnglish Teens website and their YouTube channel is going to be all about my experience of Ramadan 2017.

So, I wanted to talk about some of the challenges and some of the really awesome things that I have experienced so far observing Ramadan.

So, the first challenge has to be the first couple of days starting Ramadan. It was the hardest year this year because it just so happens that Ramadan has fallen on the period in which the days are getting longer in the UK because, you know, summer is starting to approach in full swing and the days are getting longer rather than shorter. The first couple of days are always the hardest for me because my stomach has to adjust to the amount of food I eat and also my eating times. If you're unfamiliar with how fasting works, Muslims cannot eat food from the time when the sun rises until after it sets, so here in the UK the sun fully sets around nine o'clock or nine fifteen in my area. Each area has its own, er, specific time and that increases basically every day by a couple of minutes so every day the fast is getting slowly but surely slightly longer.

The next challenge is waking up very early in the morning to eat, so that I can have something er ... substantial and nutritious to get me through the day. I wake up at about quarter to two, er, to make sure that I can eat as much as possible and drink as much as my bladder can hold, but often when I wake up I am a little bit grumpy because I've just slept for, like, three hours, erm, so, I'm sorry, Mum!

Trying to go back to bed after I wake up to eat in the morning before the day begins for fasting is another personal challenge for a couple of reasons. Number one – I tend to go to bed now later because I eat at a later time, and then I stay awake for a bit just to let my food digest, and then, of course, I wake up early in the morning and I eat for about an hour, so I lose about two hours' sleep, which, you know, makes me grumpy sometimes. On top of that, erm, as I said, I try to drink as much water as I can when I wake up early in the morning before the fast begins for the day and so that often results in me having to wake up throughout the early morning to use the toilet.

That said, there are a lot of awesome moments that I have experienced so far this Ramadan. One of the biggest ones for me has to be that it is a time for spiritual reflection and repenting. It's a time where I can sit down and reflect on how I want to improve myself and also reconnect with God, erm, and just focus on my spiritual journey.

Another way that Ramadan has helped me to reflect is by making me realise how fortunate I am. Breaking my fast at the end of the day and experiencing that hunger throughout the day makes me realise how many people around the world are living on a daily basis hungry. And it makes me appreciate how lucky I am that at the end of the day I do have something to break my fast because that hunger for some people is an everyday occurrence.

It also makes me reflect on my food consumption and I try to reduce the amount of food I waste. I try to eat portions that I know, or cook portions, that I know I will eat and definitely save leftovers. Another great thing about Ramadan is that it has made me realise the importance of perseverance and strength. I, the other day, went to a back-to-back Zumba class, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that I could exercise for two hours without feeling exhausted after the lesson – and it really taught me that you don't know how much inner strength and inner power you have until you push yourself to the limit, and even fasting throughout the day, you know, not drinking any water or having any food and being able to get through your day, normally, is a testimony to how much inner strength we have and sometimes we just need to tap in to that.

So, I hope you've enjoyed this video. If you are fasting this Ramadan, please comment below and let me know what have been your personal challenges, as well as the rewards that you've reaped from this Ramadan so far. For all of you who are observing Ramadan this month, Ramadan Kareem and good luck with the fasting. I wish you all a beautiful and lovely day and I'll see you in my next one. Bye!!