

It takes inner strength for Muslim food truck owners to fast during Ramadan

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Adel Saeed moved to the U.S. from Egypt 41 years ago. He has owned and operated a halal food truck in New York City for 20 years. He says he will never break his fast, even if he is offered "millions and millions of dollars." Photo by: Shirin Jaafari/PRI

Fasting can be hard for anyone. Fasting is when someone does not eat. Usually, it is done for religious reasons.

Some people fast even when they are around food all day. That's because their job is to make and sell food.

Aymann Ismail is a reporter. He is also Muslim. Muslims practice the religion of Islam. Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is a major world religion.

Ismail wondered how hard it is for Muslim food truck owners. Like him, they fast during Ramadan.

Ramadan usually happens in May and June. It lasts a month. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat during the day. They eat before the sun rises and after the sun sets.

Putting Themselves To The Test

Ismail was born to Egyptian parents. He grew up in New Jersey. Now he lives in New York City. Ismail wanted to speak to Muslims who own food trucks.

"New Yorkers are hungry," Ismail says. "There's a food truck on every corner."

Many of those food trucks serve halal food. Halal means it is prepared using the rules Muslims follow. Ismail says almost all of the halal food trucks are owned by Muslims.

So, how can someone serving food all day avoid eating? Ismail learned it takes inner strength. "These people are putting themselves to the test," he says. They do it because it is their job.

Adel Saeed knows how hard it is to give up something he enjoys. Saeed was born in Egypt. He has been in the United States for 41 years. He follows the rules of Ramadan strictly. He said he will always fast. He would fast even if offered a million dollars or more not to, he said.

Fasting Is Not That Hard For Some

Ismail believes being tested is the best part about fasting. He said Muslims also avoid bad habits like smoking during Ramadan.

Reza is a Muslim man. Reza has been running a food truck in New York City for more than 40 years. It is not hard for him to cook all day and fast. He is used to the smell of chicken.

"Every day chicken, chicken," he says with a chuckle. He laughs because he is around chicken more than his wife.

Ismail says he's seen his neighbors hide from him while they eat lunch. They don't want him to see the food. He says that's not what Ramadan is about.

What makes being human special is that everyone is different, he says. He thinks Ramadan is a chance for people to learn about others. "We don't need people to feel bad for us," Ismail said. "We love it, I love it."

Quiz

1 Read the following paragraph from the introduction [paragraphs 1-5].

Ramadan usually happens in May and June. It lasts a month. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat during the day. They eat before the sun rises and after the sun sets.

Which question is answered in this paragraph?

- (A) Where do Muslims usually eat during Ramadan?
- (B) What kind of food do Muslims eat during Ramadan?
- (C) How much food can Muslims eat during Ramadan?
- (D) When are Muslims supposed to eat during Ramadan?

2 Read the first paragraph of the article.

Fasting can be hard for anyone. Fasting is when someone does not eat. Usually, it is done for religious reasons.

What is the BEST definition of "fasting" based on the context clues?

- (A) doing something that is hard
- (B) not eating food
- (C) doing something very quickly
- (D) not being religious

3 Read the following paragraph from the section "Fasting Is Not That Hard For Some."

Reza is a Muslim man. Reza has been running a food truck in New York City for more than 40 years. It is not hard for him to cook all day and fast. He is used to the smell of chicken.

Which sentence explains HOW Reza feels about being a Muslim food truck owner during Ramadan?

- (A) Reza is a Muslim man.
- (B) Reza has been running a food truck in New York City for more than 40 years.
- (C) It is not hard for him to cook all day and fast.
- (D) He is used to the smell of chicken.

4 Read the following paragraph from the section "Fasting Is Not That Hard For Some."

Ismail believes being tested is the best part about fasting. He said Muslims also avoid bad habits like smoking during Ramadan.

Which phrase could replace the word "avoid" WITHOUT changing the meaning of the paragraph?

- (A) like to start
- (B) try to repeat
- (C) stay away from
- (D) have a hard time with