



Green Ramadan

While consuming less and conserving our resources, let's focus more on our own spiritual development and contributing to the larger social good

BY ISNA GREEN INITIATIVE TEAM

RAMADAN, THE MONTH OF MERCY and blessings, is also the time for coming together as a community for *taraweeh* prayers and *iftars* (2:183). Such events have become Ramadan traditions in North America. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of food and water is wasted due to the lack of effective conservation and recycling efforts despite “And do not waste [God’s bounties]: Verily, He does not love the wasteful” (6:141) and “Never waste water, even you are at a running stream (“Sunan Ibn Majah,” 425).

In line with “He is the one Who made you guardians/inheritors of Earth” (35:39), ISNA’s Green Initiative Team has been promoting environmentally friendly practices to fulfill this responsibility.

The Green Ramadan Campaign, a spiritually and socially rewarding part of this initiative, is about becoming more environmentally conscious, socially responsible and compassionate to those around us as we emulate Prophet Muhammad’s (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) deeds.

This is our sixth year of enlisting mosques/ Islamic centers nationwide to remember and protect our planet that, through God’s grace,

produces that which nourishes our bodies and our community spirit. Interacting mindfully with our environment manifests our faith. As we fast during this blessed month, let’s reaffirm our sense of self-restraint and accountability to the Creator, the Provider of Sustenance.

An FAO study says, “Every year, consumers in rich countries waste almost as much food (222 million metric tonnes [245 tons]) as the entire net food production of sub-Saharan Africa (230 million metric tonnes [255 tons])” (www.fao.org/save-food/resources/keyfindings/en). A 2012 Natural Resources Defense Council paper estimated that as much as 40 percent of America’s food supply ends up in dumpsters.

Let’s also remember that less consumption means less waste. Islam teaches us that protecting the environment is an expression of worship. May God help us seek His pleasure by having a better and greener Ramadan this year. Our social responsibility also demands that we strive to eradicate injustice and discrimination and that we portray, through our words and actions, the right image of our religion.

This is a good time to become involved

in civic activities in the broader community. Invite non-Muslims to your *iftars* so they can get to know us better. Donate food to local homeless shelters. Provide food, other materials and support to Muslim inmates in your area, for they have the least facilities and resources to observe Ramadan.

Let’s modify our habits, adopt environmentally friendly practices and work for the greater social good for everyone from now on. Let’s make this blessed month a better and greener one by doing all or at least some of the following actions individually and collectively:

- **Reduce food waste and overconsumption.** Eat more fruits and vegetables and less meat. Remember that the Prophet ate mostly grains, dates, water, milk, honey, vegetables and fruits. Take only what you can finish, eat moderately and don’t waste food, for, as Miqdam ibn Ma’d reported, “The Prophet said, ‘The son of Adam cannot fill a vessel worse than his stomach, as it is enough for him to take a few bites to straighten his back. If he cannot do it, then he may fill it with a third of his food, a third of his drink, and a third of his breath’” (“Sunan al-Tirmidhi,” 2380).

- **Reduce and recycle.** Recycle material, especially plastic water bottles. Plastics now take up 25-30 percent of our landfills. In the U.S., about 1,500 plastic water bottles are used every second (Washington Post, Sept. 23, 2014). Minimize your use of plastic, because it’s impacting both climate change and our health negatively. Most plastics end up in a landfill and take a very long time to

decompose. Replace them with quick degradable/paper products and start bringing your own utensils. Avoid all Styrofoam products for, being non-recyclable and non-biodegradable, they'll still be around a 1,000 years from now!

- **Adopt a reusable water bottle/mug.** Always avoid using plastic disposable bottles, for an estimated 80 percent of them are not recycled! Bring your own reusable bottle to all *iftar* and *taraweeh* events.

- **Save energy and water.** Replace light bulbs with energy-saver bulbs. Schedule your facility for an energy-efficiency audit. Consider installing solar panels to reduce the use of fossil fuels. Conserve water even while making *wudu*'.

- **Khutbah.** Ask your *khateeb* to at least deliver one Friday *khutbah* during Ramadan on the Islamic imperative to conserve and protect the environment and the significance of contributing to the greater social good.


THIS IS OUR SIXTH YEAR OF ENLISTING MOSQUES/ISLAMIC CENTERS NATIONWIDE TO REMEMBER AND PROTECT OUR PLANET THAT, THROUGH GOD'S GRACE, PRODUCES THAT WHICH NOURISHES OUR BODIES AND OUR COMMUNITY SPIRIT. INTERACTING MINDFULLY WITH OUR ENVIRONMENT MANIFESTS OUR FAITH.

- **Plant or expand a garden.** Ramadan is a good time to plant trees and vegetable gardens at home and the mosque. Start growing at least some of your own food, and remember that planting a tree is a charity.

- **Social good and outreach.** Celebrate this month by joining civic activities. Contribute to the larger social good by volunteering at homeless shelters, collecting food for food pantries, joining community social projects, inviting non-Muslims to community and home dinners and taking care of Muslim inmates in the nearby jails.

- **Involve children.** Children need to learn these values, so find ways for them to participate in age-appropriate Ramadan activities. For example, they can act as Green ambassadors during community dinners.

This year, "Earth Day" coincides with Ramadan. ISNA's Green Initiative Team is partnering with Interfaith Power & Light (<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org>), a national organization striving for a better environment, to observe Earth Week. The Green Ramadan Campaign is part of it.

Register your mosque/Islamic center as a "Green Ramadan Campaign" participant at www.isna.net/greenramadan. After Ramadan, tell us about your efforts and achievements. The mosque/Islamic center that achieved the most goals will be recognized as the winner, and each participant will receive a certificate of participation. Through the courtesy of the Pen and Ink Foundation (<http://ain.foundation/>), the Arbor Day Foundation (<https://www.arborday.org>) will plant a tree sapling on behalf of each registrant in an area that needs reforestation. Make sure to register so we know that you participated! 

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GREEN RAMADAN

The Masjid Development Infographic Series



As Muslims, we should be sensitive to the harm that we do to our environment. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we live in harmony with nature and implement practices and policies that are environmentally friendly. Let us live up to our role as stewards of the Earth.



1. Conserve food during iftars and avoid being wasteful by giving excess food to people in need. Conserve water, especially during wudu. Follow the tradition of our Prophet (peace be upon him).
2. Use relatively quick degradable paper products for iftars, instead of using the usual Styrofoam cups and plates.
3. Recycle materials, especially plastic water bottles. Other recyclable materials include: paper, cardboard, newspapers, aluminum, milk bottles, soda bottles, yogurt tubs, and margarine/butter tubs.
4. Replace all light bulbs in the masjid with energy saver bulbs to conserve electricity.
5. Plant a tree or start a garden to improve the landscaping and also help the environment.
6. Give a khutbah on the Islamic imperative to conserve and protect the environment.

Ramadan Kareem
to you and your community!

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