

Ramadan and Eid in England 2023 roundup

Ramadan and the festival of Eid al fitr that follows have taken on an unprecedented prominence in English life this year.

It started with the lighting of Ramadan lights across Coventry street in London's west end, near Piccadilly Circus which has been famous for its city light displays and adverts since before WWII. The lights were formally switched on by Major of London [Sadiq Khan who said at the time](#) "I'm delighted that London is the first major European city to host a spectacular light display to mark Ramadan."



It is reported that the call to prayer has been permitted at

more mosques this year, amplified across our streets. This one in particular was of interest to me as I remember this mosque in Waltham Forest being built. We lived just behind the block of flats to the right of the minaret and would have heard this clearly in our garden.

Make no mistake folks ... This is London or [#Londonistan](#)? ... (I'm serious not joking) Central London , now you let me know how many Christian cathedrals are in central Islamabad ! tell me if this is normal ?? [#london](#) [#uk](#) enjoy the noise pic.twitter.com/zSEYDXnUjE

– William Smith 🇬🇧 🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬 (@IamWilliamS [April 13, 2023](#)

I posted last week about the violence at the unlicensed, unregistered [Ramadan evening market in Coventry Street](#) in Birmingham.

One officer suffered minor injuries, West Midlands Police said. Numerous reports of criminal damage are also being investigated, it added, after other missiles were thrown.

In established retail shops Ramadan has long been celebrated as the nightly feasting of Iftar dinners takes a lot of catering. I wouldn't say it was as big as Christmas (yet) but this year the juxtaposition with Easter has shown that for the retail trade Easter is now of lesser importance. As an example this is John Lewis in Kingston on Thames with a relatively modest display of presentation nuts, sweets and dates.



Tesco supermarket surpassed themselves with this year's campaign; a number of adverts including Alia's Worth the Wait Samosas

Some comments have been supportive. "How charming" and ["very touching"](#)

others critical ["no hijabs!"](#) getting the time of the fast breaking wrong, Muslims eat things other than samosas and don't all get their news from Mosque radio.

Something else is wrong. In any family gathering advertising Christmas or Easter food the family at the table will always be either black, or mixed. Favourite is an older white couple, a black son-in-law, some dual heritage children, and some black neighbours. In this advert the whole gathering is monocultural. No inviting of black Muslims, European Muslims, or the old white neighbours.



Tesco Food Love Stories | Alia's 'Worth The Wait' Samosas | Tesco



Ramadan images get sneaked into places. The masthead (left) of a news website last week. I don't remember a similarly placed cross the week before when it was Easter.

Adverts for Islamic charities are ubiquitous across London now and any large town with a substantial Muslim population (Birmingham Bradford) The Islamic charities seem to spend a larger proportion of their outreach budget on advertising than Christian ones. This is one I had not seen before on London Underground.

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Edgware Road

Baker Street

Great Portland Street

Euston Square

King's Cross St. Pancras

Farringdon

Barbican

Moorgate

Paddington

Bayswater

King Hill Gate

South

Sloane

St. James's Park

Westminster

Embankment

Blackfriars

Cannon Street

Bakerloo Elizabeth line

Jubilee

Metropolitan

District

Central

Trains to Heathrow

Marylebone 450m

Overground Euston 350m

Northern Piccadilly Victoria

Elizabeth line

Trains to Gatwick

Trains to Luton

Northern Elizabeth line

I can't get too uptight about Eid in the Square next week as Trafalgar Square does host all manner of things; today was the Sikh festival of Vaisakhi and Good Friday has been the venue for a Passion Play for several years. A very good one, as well.

But I do and will get cross about iftar meals and [Islamic prayer \(even if it was a mistake\)](#) in [Anglican Cathedrals](#). Interfaith is a good concept, but there must be limits. A Christian priest would not be permitted to lead prayer or celebrate Holy Communion in a mosque.



Last year the northern football team Blackburn Rovers were the first to offer their football pitch for Eid Prayers. This year [they did it again](#), as did Tranmere Rovers at their ground [Prenton Park](#)

There is a lot to be said for prayers in a large space purpose built for handling large numbers of people. On the one hand it is a supremacist display of dominance; on the other it is safer and less inconvenient for those who live nearby.

For example in Ealing streets around the [Lady Margaret Road](#) area were closed for Eid events and the police sternly warned residents to have their ID to hand to show officers so they could have entry to their own homes, but only via certain controlled routes.

Worst of all (of incidents I have heard about) was the inconvenience caused by the selfish driving and parking of visitors to a mosque in Essex. Unauthorised mosque 'marshals' stopped residents trying to reach their homes questioning

where they were going. Vehicles were parked on grass verges where parking is forbidden, and on the pavements blocking residents from getting in and out, and at unsociable times during the night and early morning.



The building in the top left hand corner is the [former leisure centre, now a de facto mosque](#); the homes of residents to the right are blocked by the cars parked on a narrow access road and pavement. One hears of inconsiderate parking from almost every town where there is a mosque. The claims at planning stage that worshippers will walk and cycle never happen. But I never hear complaints about residents near a synagogue or church.

Eid al-Adha is on June 28th (so long as Allah doesn't do anything creative with the moon) so let's see what that brings.

