

What is Hijab (Ladies Headdress and Modesty)?

Hijab is an Arabic word meaning barrier or partition.

There are 3 common versions of headdress worn by most Muslim women.

They are the Hijab, Niqab and the Burqa. The Hijab is by far the most common worn by Australian Muslim's however some choose a more conservative option such as the Niqab or Burqa. Whilst it is a religious requirement for Muslim women to wear a covering of some sort, some women choose not to wear the hijab.

In Islam women's headdress is a principle of modesty. Some Muslim women choose to wear garments covering everything except the hands, face and feet with loose, non-revealing cooling material. Modesty rules are open to interpretation with some women covering every part of the body except the eyes. Some believe only their hair or cleavage is compulsory to cover while others do not observe any special dress rules.

Other modesty considerations may include avoiding situations where a Muslim woman is secluded with a male. Whilst this may not at times be possible or suitable, consideration is always appreciated. Similarly, some Muslim women prefer not to have physical contact with another male including a simple handshake. It is important to note that not all Muslim women avoid such contact and situations.

In the English speaking world, use of the word hijab has become limited to mean the covering on the head of Muslim woman.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/hijab_1.shtml#top)

Some common terms used:

Allah – Arabic name for God used by Muslims all over as well as Arab Muslims and Christians alike

Assalamu Alaikum – “Peace be upon you”, a greeting used when Muslims meet each other

Halal – permitted

Haram – Forbidden such as alcohol, pork and any of its derivatives, any animal slaughtered in a way other than what Islam prescribes, gambling, relationships outside marriage

Hijab – the veil used by Muslim women to cover their hair and chest area

Niqab—veil that covers face showing only eyes

Burqa—full face and body covering

Imam - Religious leader

Niqab
Veil that covers face, showing only eyes

Burka
Full face and body covering, associated with Afghanistan

Hijab
General term for modest dress code. Also refers specifically to scarf which covers the hair



What is Islam?

Brief Information for Employers



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What does Islam mean?

The Arabic word “Islam” means surrender to the will of God and is derived from a word meaning “Peace”.

Muslims believe that by definition, Islam is a religion which was preached by every prophet from Prophet Adam (Peace be upon him) to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him)

Sources of knowledge for Muslims

There are two sources from which Muslims can refer.

- The **Quran** - which Muslims believe is the direct word of God - in Arabic this cannot be challenged.
- Authentic **Hadith** - sayings or actions of the Prophet Peace Be Upon Him

The Muslim Community in Australia

The Muslim Community in Australia is made up of diverse people from all over the world.

The majority of Muslim Australians are born in Australia

They speak a range of languages such as Arabic, Turkish, Persian (Farsi), Bosnian, Dari, Albanian, Urdu, Hindi, Kurdish, Pashtu, etc.

Common Stereotypes

All Muslims are Arabs

All Arabs are Muslims

Despite the stereotype that all Muslims are of Arab or Middle-Eastern background, less than 20% of Australian Muslims were born in Middle Eastern or Arab countries

Five Pillars of Islam:

- Belief in Oneness of God (Allah) and that Prophet Muhammad is his last Messenger
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Zakat – similar to income tax
- Hajj – Pilgrimage to Mecca (one of Islam’s holiest sites) completed once in a person’s lifetime if financially, physically and mentally capable. Hajj falls in last month of the Islamic calendar

Prayer— performed five times a day and is obligatory upon Muslims

Prayer times:

- Fajr - before sunrise
- Zuhr - around midday after sun crosses the midpoint
- Asr - mid-afternoon
- Maghrib - sunset
- Isha - approx. 1 - 1 1/2 hours after Maghrib

Prayer is seen as leaving the material world and re-connecting with God

We perform ablutions before prayers and this includes washing hands, feet, and face (preferable to have a tap/sink separate from toilet space)

We face towards Mecca in our prayers

The obligatory prayers take about 10 minutes each to perform and can be done during lunch (for Zuhr), Afternoon tea (for Asr)

Friday prayers are very important for Muslims. This may take about an hour as it consists of sermon, prayer and time taken to go to the nearest congregation for Friday prayers.. Can negotiate with employee to start early or finish late to make up for time taken to go for the prayers.

Ramadan – ninth month in the Islamic Calendar. It is obligatory on Muslims to fast in this month. However, there are a few exceptions such as elderly, pregnant women, travellers, ill persons (these can make up the missed fasts later)

Fasting means abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual activity from dawn until sunset. Smoking is also prohibited during fasting!

An employee who observes Ramadan shouldn’t have any adverse effect on the employer/business however they may choose not to partake in work lunches/morning teas/functions and may show effects of fatigue through reduced sleep and food/drink consumption

FYI

The Islamic calendar is a Lunar calendar (similar to Chinese, Thai and Hindu) and therefore fasting, zakat and hajj changes from one year to next within the Solar/Gregorian calendar by about 11 days.

Also, feasts and important events vary from year to year.

There are two important feasts for Muslims. These are Eid-ul-Fitr (after fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (after the rituals of pilgrimage are completed)