

### Throwing stones:

Throwing stone pebbles is part of the annual Islamic Hajj pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. Pilgrims fling pebbles at three walls called jamarat. Twenty-one pebbles are gathered by each pilgrim from Muzdalifah. Seven pebbles are thrown each night for three nights.

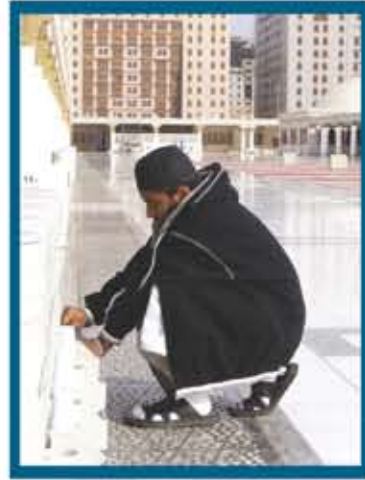


### Sacrifice at Minah:

Pilgrims sacrifice an animal (usually a sheep or goat). This is in honor of the Prophet Abraham when he was about to sacrifice his son as an act of faith. The meat of the sacrificed animal is not wasted - much of it is distributed inside and outside of Saudi Arabia.



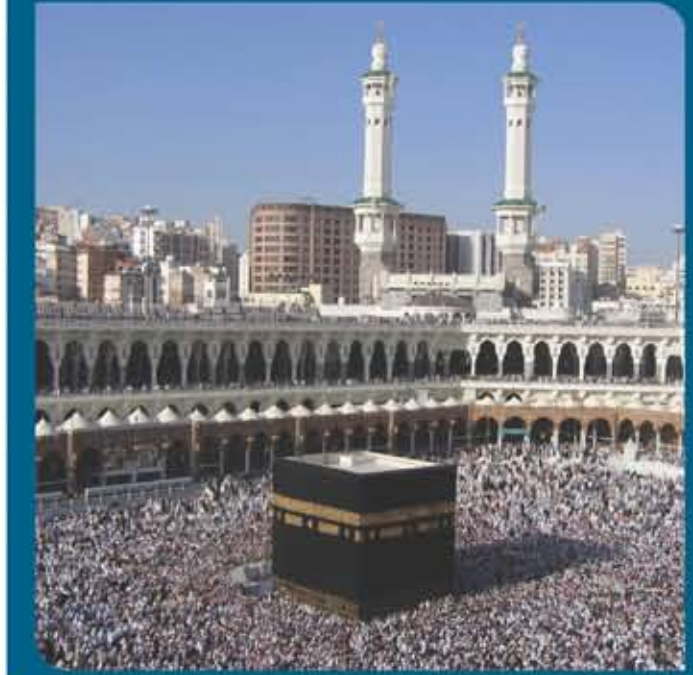
**Drinking Zamzam water:** According to Islamic belief, Zamzam is a miraculously-generated source of water from God when the wife of Prophet Abraham was abandoned in the desert of Mecca with her infant son, Ismail. She ran between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times searching for water, her crying son began kicking the ground when water gushed out. The flow of the water is believed to be eternal.



### Farewell Circumambulations:

Pilgrims return to Mecca to make seven circumambulations around the Kaaba. Once the circumambulations are completed, Ihram restrictions are lifted and Hajj is complete.

**Eid al-Addha:** During the Hajj, Muslims worldwide celebrate the Eid al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice. Eid-al-Addha is observed for several days starting with the sacrifice at Minah made by the pilgrims and continuing a couple of days after the conclusion of the Hajj.



# HAJJ AND EID ALADHHA

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## Hajj and Eid Aladhha

Hajj literally means to "set out for a place." However, Hajj in Islam refers to the annual pilgrimage that Muslims make annually to the Holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, to perform religious rites as defined by the prophet Muhammad. Hajj is the largest gathering in the world, with a range of 2-3 million people a year attending.

The Hajj is the fifth of the five pillars of Islam. Hajj takes place annually during the twelfth month of the Islamic year. The Islamic calendar is based on lunar months, so the actual date moves forward about 11 days each year in relation to the solar calendar. Participating in Hajj is a religious obligation that every Muslim must fulfill in her/his lifetime, if financially and physically able to do so.

## Ministry of Hajj

The Ministry of Hajj is responsible for the provisions and facilities for pilgrims' journeys to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Madinah. The Ministry of Hajj makes every effort to provide the best services to all Hajj pilgrims from the moment of their arrival, until their departure from the holy mosques. The economic, cultural, and political importance of Hajj, with 2-3million visitors from around the world, has become even more important with the advancements of transportation and telecommunications.

To facilitate the increasing numbers of pilgrims to Hajj, the Saudi Arabian government will continue with massive investments in furthering the infrastructure of Mecca. There are ambitious plans to expand the capacity of the Grand Mosque by 35% by the year 2020.

Other expansion projects that will plan for industrial and development projects by the Ministry will total about \$12 billion dollars.

## Hajj Rituals

### Ihram:

Ihram are the garments worn by Muslims during their Hajj pilgrimage. Men's garments often consist of two white unhemmed sheets. The top is draped over the torso and the bottom is secured by a belt. Women's clothing is usually a long white loose dress, or clothing that is loose and modest. The purpose of Ihram clothing is for everyone to look as one as Muslims believe that in the eyes of God everyone is equal.



### Circumambulation of the Kaaba:

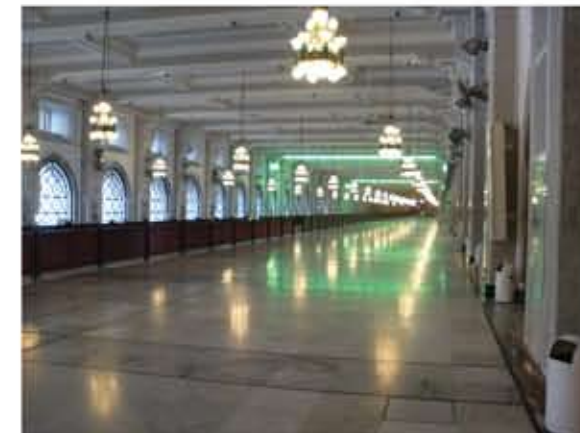
Pilgrims walk seven times round the Kaaba in an anti-clockwise direction. The Kaaba is the most sacred of all Islamic sites. The Kaaba is located within the Great Mosque in Mecca, and was constructed from granite from the hills near Mecca. The Kaaba is also known as the House of God, it is the center of the circumambulations ritual.

The Kaaba is covered by a black silk and gold curtain known as the kiswah, about two-thirds of the way up runs a band of gold-embroidered calligraphy with Qur'anic text. Muslims throughout the world face the Kaaba during prayers, which occur five times a day.



### Walking between Safa & Marwa:

Pilgrims walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times. These hills are located in the Holy Mosque in Mecca. This act is done in honor of Hajira, the wife of Prophet Abraham.



## Standing at Arafat:

The Day of Arafat falls on the 2nd day of pilgrimage rituals. At dawn of this day, pilgrims will make their way from Mecca to a nearby hillside called Mount Arafat. It was from this site that the Prophet Muhammad gave his famous farewell Sermon in his final year of life. During the entire day, from dawn until sunset, Muslim pilgrims stand in prayer for God's forgiveness.



## Night at Muzdalifah:

Muzdalifah is a valley between Mina and Mount Arafat in which pilgrims on Hajj spend the night in the open. It is here they gather pebbles to hurl during the next three days.