

# Ramadan

## Ramadan night economies: Commerce after sunset

As the call to Maghrib prayer echoes across Gulf skylines and families gather to break their fast, a parallel transformation begins to unfold in cities throughout the Middle East. What appears tranquil during daylight hours shifts dramatically after sunset. Streets fill, markets glow, cafés hum with conversation and shopping districts bustle well past midnight. Economists and urban planners increasingly refer to this phenomenon as the “Ramadan night economy” — a seasonal reconfiguration of commercial life shaped by faith, culture and social rhythm.

During Ramadan, daily routines adjust to accommodate fasting hours. While daytime business activity may slow in some sectors, commercial energy does not diminish; it simply migrates into the night. Retail outlets extend operating hours, restaurants prepare for peak demand after iftar, and transport systems adapt to serve a population whose most active hours begin after dusk.

### Retail Peaks and Seasonal Spending

Across major Gulf cities, retail performance often strengthens during Ramadan, particularly in the final ten nights leading up to Eid al-Fitr. Families prepare for the celebration with purchases ranging from traditional garments and perfumes to luxury goods and gifts. Many brands launch exclusive Ramadan collections, incorporating



A worker serves a drink at a restaurant during Ramadan in Al-Sadriyah district of Baghdad

modest designs and subtle cultural motifs that resonate with the season.

Shopping malls transform into illuminated gathering spaces rather than mere commercial hubs. Decorative lanterns, themed displays and extended hours create an atmosphere that blends festivity with refinement. Analysts note that Ramadan spending patterns tend to focus not only on personal consumption but also on gifting — reinforcing social ties through generosity.

E-commerce platforms have also reported steady growth in Ramadan sales in recent years.

Consumers increasingly combine tradition with convenience, ordering clothing, home décor and specialty foods online while reserving in-person visits for social outings.

### Hospitality and Culinary Expansion

The hospitality sector experiences one of the most visible surges during Ramadan nights. Hotels, particularly in regional capitals, curate elaborate iftar and suhoor experiences that draw residents, diplomats and international visitors alike. Lavish buffets featuring regional specialties, live cooking stations

and refined settings reflect the importance of hospitality in Arab culture.

Restaurants often shift operational strategies to focus on evening service. Reservations peak within the first hours after sunset and again close to midnight for suhoor gatherings. Temporary Ramadan tents — elegantly designed spaces blending tradition with contemporary luxury — emerge across hotel grounds and waterfront promenades.

For many establishments, Ramadan represents both an economic opportunity and a reputational showcase. Service

quality, ambiance and culinary authenticity are carefully curated to align with the spiritual tone of the month while meeting elevated expectations.

### Transport, Logistics and Urban Planning

Behind the visible vibrancy of Ramadan nights lies a complex logistical adaptation. Public transport authorities frequently extend metro and bus schedules to accommodate late-night commuters. Ride-hailing services see increased demand in the hours following iftar, particularly near commercial centers and mosques.

Supply chains also adjust. Food distributors operate on altered timetables to ensure fresh deliveries ahead of evening service peaks. Supermarkets restock during off-peak hours to prepare for concentrated night-time purchasing patterns.

Urban planners observe that Ramadan offers a unique case study in temporal city management — where infrastructure and services pivot to support a society operating on reversed rhythms for an entire month.

### Balancing Spirituality and Commerce

Religious scholars consistently emphasize that commercial activity during Ramadan should remain aligned with the principles of moderation and ethical conduct. While night economies thrive, the essence of the month remains spiritual reflection, charity and

discipline.

In many Gulf countries, philanthropic campaigns intensify alongside commercial expansion. Businesses frequently pair promotional campaigns with charitable contributions, supporting food drives and community initiatives. This dual dynamic — commerce intertwined with compassion — reflects the distinctive character of Ramadan markets.

### A Seasonal Yet Enduring Influence

Though the Ramadan night economy is seasonal, its impact extends beyond the month itself. Hospitality innovations, retail strategies and digital engagement tools introduced during Ramadan often influence business models throughout the year.

More profoundly, the phenomenon demonstrates how faith shapes economic patterns in tangible ways. Rather than diminishing productivity, Ramadan redistributes it, aligning commerce with cultural rhythm. The marketplace adapts to spirituality, and the city recalibrates itself around collective devotion.

As midnight approaches in Gulf capitals and families continue their gatherings beneath lantern-lit tents and illuminated skylines, the Ramadan night economy stands as a testament to the region's ability to harmonize tradition with modern enterprise — where faith does not pause commerce, but reshapes it after sunset.

## NMS Bahrain Students Translate Ramadan Spirit Into Action

Manama

Embracing the true spirit of compassion, generosity, and community service during the holy month of Ramadan, New Millennium School – Bahrain organized a meaningful charity drive in support of those in need. As part of this noble initiative, the school donated boxes of essential grocery items to Al Eslah Society, a non-governmental organization dedicated to social welfare and charitable activities across the Kingdom.



The funds for this initiative were raised through a “Charity Drive of KG I to Grade XII students”. The enthusiastic participation and collective effort of the students made the event a great success. The donated boxes were

formally handed over to representatives of the Al Eslah Society, who visited the school on 26th February, 2026.

Chairman Dr. Ravi Pillai, Managing Director Mrs. Geetha Pillai, and Principal Dr. Arun Kumar Sharma conveyed their heartfelt wishes on the occasion of Ramadan and commended the students for their generous contribution. They appreciated the initiative as a reflection of the students' strong sense of social responsibility and commitment to serving the community.

### Ramadan Recipe

### Vegetarian Stuffed Grape Leaves

Servings: 8 | Time: 2 hrs

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups warm water
- 1 cup uncooked medium-grain white rice
- 5 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 6 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 4 large onions (about 2 lb. 10 oz.), finely chopped (about 8 1/2 cups)
- 1 large bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1 large bunch fresh dill, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 teaspoons dried mint

- (such as Burlap & Barrel)
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
  - .50 teaspoon black pepper
  - 45 jarred brined grape leaves, rinsed
  - 2 cups water
  - 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

#### Directions

1. Stir together 2 cups warm water, rice, and 1 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl; let soak 20 minutes. Rinse and drain rice.

2. Heat 1/4 cup oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add onions, and cook, stirring often, until softened, about 20 minutes. Add drained rice, and cook, stirring often, 5 minutes. Add parsley, dill, dried mint, sugar, black pepper, and remaining 4 teaspoons salt; cook, stirring often, 1 minute. Remove from heat. Spread 1 grape leaf out on a work surface, veins facing up. Place 1 heaping tablespoon rice mixture in center of leaf. Fold stem end up around filling, and fold in the sides. Roll grape leaf up until filling is

completely encased. Repeat with remaining grape leaves and filling.

3. Tightly pack stuffed grape leaves in a single layer in bottom of a 12-inch saucepan. Place any remaining stuffed leaves on top. Pour in 2 cups water, lemon juice, and remaining 2 tablespoons oil over the top. Cover pan with a heatproof plate (do not use pan lid); cook over medium 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low; cover plate with pan lid, and cook 40 minutes. Remove from heat. Remove lid and plate; let stand 10 minutes.

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