

Ramadan in Xinjiang



Published on April 3, 2025

Document Date: Tue, Aug 26 2025 04:35:22 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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Xinjiang is located in northwest China, a region of breathtaking beauty. Just as it is said about

Lahore “One who has not seen Lahore has not been born”—a similar saying exists about Xinjiang:

“One who has not seen Xinjiang has not seen China.” In terms of area, it is China’s largest province,

covering 1.66 million square kilometers. This province shares borders with eight countries,

including Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Xinjiang is the closest part of China to Pakistan. When it is said that the friendship between China and Pakistan is as high as the mountains, it refers to the lofty Karakoram range that stretches between Xinjiang and Pakistan. By overcoming these challenging mountains, both countries jointly built the Karakoram Highway (KKH).

Xinjiang is the starting point of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. As a central hub of the Silk Road and the One Belt, One Road initiative, this corridor plays an important role in enhancing social stability, economic development, and the living standards of the common people. The provincial capital is Ürümqi. Since ancient times, people of various cultures and religions have coexisted here harmoniously. There are 56 ethnic groups residing in the region, including Uyghurs, Han, Kazakhs, Mongols, Hui, Kyrgyz, and others, with the Uyghurs being predominantly Muslim.

As a Muslim-majority province, Xinjiang has often been the focus of international media attention. Over the past few decades, Western media has continuously circulated misleading and exaggerated reports about Xinjiang, aiming to encourage separatist groups and disrupt the peaceful situation there. I had the opportunity to visit Xinjiang a year ago and closely observe conditions on the ground. There are more than 24,000 mosques in Xinjiang. The Eidgah Mosque in

Kashgar is the largest mosque in the region. I was fortunate to examine the mosque in detail and even had the honor of praying there. Built in 1442, the mosque—more than five and a half centuries old—has been preserved in its original state due to excellent maintenance. The Chinese government pays special attention to the decoration and upkeep of the mosque. When I met the mosque's Imam, he informed me that special Taraweeh prayers are organized during Ramadan and that large numbers of people attend the Friday and Eid prayers. This is what I witnessed firsthand.

According to some media reports, Muslims in Xinjiang are denied religious freedom, are forbidden from fasting, and are not allowed to hold Taraweeh prayers. Other reports even claim that major religious sites and mosques are being demolished—accompanied by digital aerial images that allegedly show mosques once existing and now destroyed. However, these images, which can easily be generated on a computer, lack clear evidence. Detailed research shows that the actual situation on the ground is entirely different.

In March 2025, the recent Ramadan passed. On YouTube, numerous videos about Xinjiang were available—most produced by European and American vloggers. Ironically, this Western propaganda is being countered by their very own vloggers. For example, a British PhD student recorded a video in front of a mosque in Ürümqi, showing large numbers of people engaged in

prayer. Another vlogger toured a special Ramadan bazaar in Ürümqi, where stalls offered dates, prayer beads, caps, colorful foods, fruits, and dried nuts. In this bazaar, Uyghur Muslims wearing traditional caps were seen shopping. The vibrant activity in the market clearly indicates how joyfully and freely Ramadan is celebrated.

Another vlogger showcased the interior of Kashgar's mosque just before Iftar, where both men and women were seen preparing for the meal in a large hall, with tables laden with delicious food. Fasting individuals were busy with preparations for breaking their fast. A Pakistani student produced a report on Kashgar, noting that during his studies, he faced no difficulty performing Taraweeh prayers, as a nearby mosque organized regular sessions. He mentioned that for Ramadan, the mosque was splendidly decorated with beautiful carpets and sparkling lanterns. He prayed Taraweeh consistently throughout Ramadan and later enjoyed delicious food from the nearby Ramadan bazaar.

Yet another vlogger visited the Kashgar Ramadan bazaar, where stalls offered mouthwatering kebabs made from mutton and beef, buns filled with minced meat, dumplings, noodles, fresh fruit juices, dried nuts, and dates. Alongside large numbers of Muslims, even non-Muslim Chinese were seen visiting these bazaars during Ramadan to enjoy the delightful foods.

One foreign vlogger documented the daily life of a Uyghur family in Ürümqi during

Ramadan—recording their activities from Suhoor to Iftar. After a delicious Iftar, the family attended Taraweeh prayers at the local mosque and then went shopping at the bazaar. Before Ramadan, mosques in Xinjiang are specially decorated; new, thick carpets are laid out, and mosques are illuminated. Air conditioning and heating are arranged according to the season, ensuring that locals can comfortably perform their religious duties.

At the end of Ramadan, Eid is celebrated with great enthusiasm. Muslims rise early in the morning, and homes and markets are specially decorated for Eid. Wearing new clothes, men, women, children, and the elderly all head to the mosques, where Eid prayers are held. This year, too, large congregations for Eid prayers took place in Xinjiang's mosques, with a significant number of Uyghur Muslims in attendance. The Imam delivered an Eid sermon, followed by prayers. After the prayers, outside the mosques, men, women, and children—wearing traditional caps and new attire—expressed their joy through traditional dances, as captured in various vlogger videos. Their beaming faces clearly show that they observed fasting during Ramadan with ease and freedom and then celebrated Eid with great joy. Elders were seen giving Eidi (Eid money) to children, while people embraced one another and exchanged Eid greetings. Some vloggers also produced videos showcasing Eid traditions in Uyghur households, where relatives gathered to celebrate and enjoy delicious food.

No report anywhere substantiates claims that Muslims are being prevented from fasting or that mosques are being closed. The radiant faces of Xinjiang's Uyghur Muslims, who joyfully celebrate Ramadan, the sparkling mosques, the echoing calls to prayer, the lively Ramadan bazaars, the spiritually uplifting gatherings during Suhoor and Taraweeh, and the large congregations at Eid prayers all stand in clear opposition to the misleading propaganda spread by certain media outlets.