



Ramadan begins around the world

Nearly 2 billion Muslims worldwide are celebrating the holy month of Ramadan, which started on the evening of April 2 and ends on May 2 this year. Muslims (people who follow the religion of Islam) believe that it was during Ramadan in the year 610 when Allah (God) first revealed the Quran (Islamic religious text) to Islam's founder, the Prophet Muhammad.

During Ramadan, people fast (do not eat or drink) during the day and break the fast at sundown with a meal called Iftar. Fasting is a way to practice patience and show empathy for those without food or water. Children, the elderly, sick people, and pregnant women do not have to fast. Ramadan is a time to strengthen faith through reflection and prayer, and people are encouraged to give to charity and go to mosques (places of worship).

The end of Ramadan is Eid al-Fitr, a three-day festival that includes special prayers, meals with relatives, and an exchange of gifts. With pandemic restrictions lifted in most places, people can gather in person this year.



Breaking the Ramadan fast



DID YOU KNOW?
About 99% of human DNA is the same as that of chimpanzees and bonobos.

A double helix of DNA

Scientists fully map human DNA

For the first time, scientists have a complete blueprint of the human body. On March 31, a group of nearly 100 researchers from around the world called the Telomere-to-Telomere consortium (T2T) published the first full human genome.

A genome is like a map of a living thing's genetic material—the information passed from parent to child that instructs how the child develops. This information is carried in a chemical called DNA. Each DNA molecule's spiral "double helix" shape is made up of four building blocks, referred to by the letters A, C, T, and G, which combine to "spell out" the instructions for life. About 3 billion pairs of letters form the genome of a human being.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Human Genome Project attempted to sequence (map out) a genome by piecing it together like a puzzle.

With the technology they had, they could find about 500 pairs of letters at a time. However, some areas were too hard to figure out, and when researchers released the first draft of a human genome in 2003, it included only 92% of the DNA.

The T2T scientists used two new technologies to sequence more letters at once and put them together more accurately, producing a "gapless" human genome. It will help with research into how humans age and develop, what causes certain diseases, and what makes one person different from another. Scientists hope that maps of people's genomes could one day be used to create personalized medical treatments.

"We are one step closer to understanding what it all means," said Adam Phillippy, the lead author of the study.



IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A WELL-DESERVED RETIREMENT

Betty Reid Soskin, the oldest active park ranger in the US, retired at age 100. For more than 15 years, she was a guide at a World War Two historical park in California. The "exciting and fulfilling" work brought meaning to her life, she said.



Betty Reid Soskin



Sumo oranges

A SWEET SENSATION

A TikTok with 8.4 million views has people across the US snapping up Sumo oranges. The video shows a woman at a grocery store raving about the bumpy fruit to other people in the checkout line. One TikTok user described her as "a ray of light spreading citrus joy."

CREATING A TOY FOR A CAUSE

Toymaker Joe Trupia wanted to raise money to help people in Ukraine, so his company, Citizen Brick, made a tiny Lego-based figure of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The toy sold out within hours, and Trupia gave \$145,000 in proceeds to a group sending medical supplies to Ukraine. "I just felt that I had to act using what I had," Trupia told *The Washington Post*.



The Zelensky figure