

Background

Ramadan is a spiritual month for Muslims that is marked by special observations such as fasting and nightly prayer.

This year in the New York area, many Muslims will begin observing Ramadan from sunset on Friday, April 1st and end observing the month at sunset on Sunday, May 1st. Observation of the start and end dates may vary by one day depending on different locations and on different schools of thought within the Islamic tradition. Ramadan is on a lunar calendar and moves up 11 days annually.

Many practicing Muslims observe fasting and additional nightly Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan. Many Muslims also commemorate certain special nights in this month. Fasting is typically observed by abstaining from food and water from dawn to sunset throughout the month of Ramadan. Taraweeh prayers last for about an hour every night during Ramadan and are generally considered to be highly recommended rather than mandatory.

For Administration and Faculty

- As noted, Ramadan is calculated to begin on Friday night, April 1st and end on Sunday May 1st. (Ramadan will conclude right before the last day of classes on Monday, May 2nd.)
- Students observing the fast may ask for a 15 minute break during class to pray and eat a snack if their class coincides with sunset. This year, sunset during Ramadan will range from 7:22 PM at the beginning of month to 7:52 PM at the end of month.
- Due to fasting practices, some Muslim students may request religious accommodations for alternative exam times.
- Imam Ebad Rahman (er2714@columbia.edu), Columbia's Muslim Life Coordinator, is available to assist faculty who receive requests for accommodations.
- Students on campus can dine in or take campus meals to-go to break their fast, and can be encouraged to take additional food for the pre-dawn meal. Dawn in New York on April 2nd is 5:21 AM and will be a minute or two earlier every day thereafter. Dawn at the end of the month will be at 4:30 AM.

For Students

- Students seeking religious accommodations for their observation of Ramadan should contact their professors as soon as possible.
- For questions about Ramadan or religious accommodations, please contact Columbia's Muslim Life Coordinator, Imam Ebad Rahman at er2714@columbia.edu.

Programming

Muslim Life at Columbia is offering iftar dinners on the first weekend of the month and every Monday and Thursday of April in the Earl Hall Auditorium (117th Street and Broadway). Students are also welcome to join the nightly taraweeh prayers in the same location. There will be an Eid al-Fitr prayer and celebration on campus on the morning of Monday, May 2nd.

Dining

Students who are on the Columbia meal plan can pick up to-go meals for suhoor (predawn meal) from Hewitt Hall in Barnard, and Diana's Café. Iftar meals can be eaten at the dining halls or taken to-go. Students without a meal plan can pay for a meal through dining dollars or by credit cards.