

Ramadan 2023 Information Sheet

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 Wednesday, March 22nd and end observing the month at sunset on Thursday, April 20th. The 30 day lunar month is normally commemorated with an Eid holiday celebration, falling for many on Friday, April 21st. 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 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 Wednesday night, March 22nd and end on Thursday, April 20th.
- 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, for most Sunni Muslims, sunset during Ramadan will range from 7:11 PM at the beginning of month, to 7:41 PM at the end of month. Shia Muslims generally observe their break of the fast about 10-15 minutes after the given sunset times.
- Due to fasting practices, some Muslim students may request religious accommodations for alternative exam times.
- Imam Ebad Rahman (imam@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. The time for beginning one's fast (dawn) in New York at the start of the month of Ramadan will be at 5:39 AM and will be a minute or two earlier every day thereafter. Dawn at the end of the month will be at 4:47 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 imam@columbia.edu.

Programming

Muslim Life at Columbia is offering a number of iftar dinners 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 Friday, April 21st.

Dining

Students who are on the Columbia meal plan can pick up to-go meals for suhoor (predawn meal) from John Jay, 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.