

Dear Colleagues,

Below is the May Religious/Ethnic Holiday calendar. Please note that some holidays in this time frame include fasting or other religious practices associated with dietary traditions.

As a reminder, CUNY's policy on religious accommodation allows students to request and be granted academic and attendance accommodations based on religious belief. A link to the policy is posted here: [VI. Religious Accommodations – The City University of New York \(cuny.edu\)](#)

VI. Religious Accommodations

A. Requests for Accommodations

- 1. Students requesting a religious accommodation should contact the Office for Student Affairs at the College or unit in which they are enrolled. The Chief Student Affairs Officer, or a designee, and the student will engage in an interactive process with the goal of finding an acceptable accommodation.*
- 2. Consistent with New York State Education Law § 224-a, students who are absent from school because of a religious belief will be given the equivalent opportunity, without any additional fee charged, to register for classes or make up any examination, study or work requirements missed because of such absence on any particular day or days.*

As a frame of reference for anticipating student requests for religious accommodations, CUNY's Interfaith Council has developed the following "Religious & Ethnic Holidays Calendar," which serves as a helpful resource

[\(https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/religious-ethnic-holiday-calendar/\)](https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/religious-ethnic-holiday-calendar/).

For questions about CUNY's policy on religious accommodations or to add additional observances, don't hesitate to get in touch with Sophia McGee, Director of Intercultural Student Engagement and Dialogue, at sophia.mcgee@cuny.edu.

Thank you for your support and enduring commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at CUNY.

| Religious/ Ethnic Group | Holiday | Description | Obligations/ restrictions affiliated with the holidays | Date | Traditions or Practices |
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| Asian American and Pacific Islanders | Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month | Recognizes the contributions and celebrates the culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. | N/A | 5/1 - 5/30 | During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, communities celebrate the achievements and contributions of Asian and Pacific Americans with community |

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| | | | | | festivals, government-sponsored activities, and educational activities for students. |
| Jewish | Jewish American Heritage Month | Recognizes the history of Jewish contributions to American culture, acknowledging the diverse achievements of American Jews. | N/A | 5/1 - 5/30 | Each May, hundreds of organizations and Americans of all backgrounds join together to discover, explore, and celebrate the vibrant and varied American Jewish experience from the dawn of our nation to the present day. |
| Bahai | 12th Day of Ridvan | This annual festival marks the anniversary of the days Baha'u'llah spent along the River Tigris in Baghdad. This is a 12-day festival – the first, ninth, and twelfth days hold special significance. | N/A | 5/1 - 5/2 | Every year during the twelve days of Ridvan, when Baha'is gather and pray silently. They affirm Baha'u'llah's teachings of world unity, symbolically honoring the garden of humanity in all its diversity and beauty. |
| Christian Eastern Orthodox | Good Friday | The day Jesus was crucified. | Please be aware that individuals observing Good Friday may be more fatigued than usual. Please refrain from requiring presence where food is being served during fasting hours, and be generally mindful of | 5/3 | Many Orthodox Christians commemorate the day by attending numerous church services and strict fasting. Orthodox Christians usually refrain from doing much work on this day in remembrance of Christ's great sacrifice. There is very strict fasting and limited food consumption. |

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| | | | being respectful of individual needs. | | |
| Mexican/ Mexican American | Cinco De Mayo | In 1862 Mexican forces defeated French occupational forces in the Battle of Puebla. | N/A | 5/5 | The day is celebrated with parades, speeches, and reenactments of the 1862 battle. |
| Christian Eastern Orthodox | Easter | The celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead. | N/A | 5/5 | The most important prayers are in the early hours of Easter Sunday when celebrations begin, church bells ring and fire crackers go off to mark Christ's resurrection. After the fasting of Lent, traditions often revolve around food. |
| Jewish | Yom Hashoah | Holocaust Remembrance Day | N/A | 5/5 eve - 5/6 eve | Commemorations are held at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and at Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem. |
| Christian | Ascension Day | Also known as Holy Thursday, celebrated 40 days after Easter/Pascha, it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven. | N/A | 5/9 | Ascension Day is typically observed by a three-day procession, followed by a feast that includes its procession with torches and banners. |
| Israeli/Jewish | Yom Hazikaron: Memorial Day | Yom Hazikaron is Memorial Day in Israel. In addition to memorializing fallen soldiers, it is common to mourn the lives of civilian victims of terrorism. | N/A | 5/12 sunset - 5/13 sunset | There are sometimes Yom Hazikaron observances, including remembrances and moments of silence, on college |

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| | | This is not specifically a Jewish holiday, although some American Jews do observe | | | campuses among groups of Jewish students. |
| Israeli/Jewish | Yom Ha'atzmaut: Independence Day | Yom Ha'atzmaut is Independence Day in Israel. This is not specifically a Jewish holiday, but some American Jews do observe. | N/A | 5/13 sunset - 5/14 sunset | There are sometimes Yom Ha'atzmaut observances, including barbecues and concerts, on college campuses among groups of Jewish students. |
| Christian | Pentecost | Also known as Whitsunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter/Pascha commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and women followers of Jesus. Marks the birth of the Christian Church. | Please be aware that individuals observing Pentecost may be more fatigued than usual. Please refrain from requiring presence where food is being served during fasting hours, and be generally mindful of being respectful of individual needs. | 5/19 | For some Protestants, the nine days between Ascension Day, and Pentecost are set aside as a time of fasting and universal prayer in honour of the disciples' time of prayer and unity awaiting the Holy Spirit. Similarly among Roman Catholics, special Pentecost novenas are prayed. |
| Bahai | Declaration of the Bab | This day celebrates the declaration of Bab as the messenger of God. | N/A | 5/22 sunset - 5/23 sunset | Baha'is celebrate the Declaration of the Báb by gathering together and sharing prayers, stories, and reflections. It is one of the nine holy days in the Bahá'í Faith which means that work and school are suspended. |

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| Buddhist | Vesak Day | There are a variety of cultural traditions celebrating Buddha's Birthday. Many Buddhist cultures celebrate the birth, Awakening, and death of the Buddha on Vesak Day. | N/A | 5/23 | Many Buddhists will go to their local temple and some might even stay there throughout the day and night of the full moon. Many will do good deeds, take part in chanting and meditation, reflect on Buddhist teachings, bring offerings to the temple and share food with people. |
| Buddhist | Visakha Puja | Also known as Vesak or Buddha Day, it marks the birth, spiritual awakening and death (nirvana) of the historical Buddha. | N/A | 5/23 | Buddhists often decorate their homes and visit their local temples. Observers are encouraged to refrain from slaughtering and to avoid eating meat on this date. |
| Jewish | Lag B'Omer | Celebrates the end of a divine-sent plague and/or Roman occupation during Rabbi Akiva's lifetime (died c. 135 CE). | N/A | 5/26 | Throughout the world celebrants gather on the night and during the day of Lag BaOmer to light fires. A large celebration is held at the Tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son Rabbi Eleazar in Meron, where hundreds of thousands usually celebrate with bonfires, torches, song, dancing, and feasting. |
| Bahai | Ascension of Bahauallah | This day commemorates the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Bahá'í faith, | N/A | 5/27 sunset - 5/28 sunset | The day is often marked with prayers about eight hours after sunset (early morning). |

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| | | Bahá'u'lláh, and a celebration of his teachings. | | | Bahá'ís are asked to abstain from alcohol. There are no dietary restrictions. |
| Eastern Christian | All Saints' Day | In Orthodox churches observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost, it commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints. | N/A | 5/30 | All Saints Day is marked as a special feast day. In many churches, it is customary to have a "book of remembrance" in which people write the names of their loved ones to be prayed. |