

## What's it like to study at Oxford and St Anne's as a Jewish student?

St Anne's College is known for its welcoming atmosphere, which includes welcoming students from diverse backgrounds. The college is a short walk from the Oxford Jewish Centre and Synagogue, which offers a hub for Jewish community life as well as kosher meals. In partnership with the Leg-Up Charity for Kids (LUCK), St Anne's has introduced the Tikvah Scholarships to support Jewish and Israeli undergraduates, aiming to foster intercultural understanding and provide financial aid. St Anne's College library has a strong collection of books on Hebrew and Jewish Studies, making it a valuable resource for students in related fields -- we also have a Professorial Fellow in Israel Studies, Professor Yaacov Yadgar, who acts as a Diversity Point of Contact for Jewish students.

This FAQ provides a wider overview of Jewish life in Oxford for prospective students. It covers daily life, security, food, and synagogues, so you can get a realistic picture of what to expect.

### 1. What is daily Jewish life like as a student?

- Vibrant but small community.
  - o The Oxford University Jewish Society (JSoc) is active, welcoming, and student-run, with regular events including Shabbat dinners, lunch-and-learns, social activities, and festival celebrations.
  - o Festivals (e.g. Sukkot, Purim, Pesach) are marked with communal meals, services, and activities.
  - o The Jewish community in Oxford is diverse, including British, Israeli, American, European, and other international students.
  - o Many students balance Jewish observance with full academic life, and the community is supportive of varying levels of practice.

### 2. Is it safe to be openly Jewish at Oxford?

- Yes, generally very safe.
  - o Oxford is a welcoming city, and Jewish students are visible and active in university life.
  - o The Community Security Trust (CST) maintains links with JSoc and the OJC, providing advice and support when necessary.
  - o Incidents of antisemitism are rare, and when they occur, they are taken seriously by both the University and Jewish community.
  - o Students are encouraged to report any concerns to JSoc or college welfare officers.

### 3. How do prospective students get in touch with the Jewish community?

- The best first contact is the Oxford University Jewish Society (JSoc):  
oxford.jsoc@outlook.com
- The Oxford Jewish Congregation (OJC) also welcomes student members and visitors:

connections@ojc-online.org

- The Diversity Point of Contact for Jewish Students at St Anne's College can also help you make connections with other Jewish Students. The current point of contact is Professor Yaacov Yadgar: [Yaacov.yadgar@st-annes.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Yaacov.yadgar@st-annes.ox.ac.uk)

#### **4. Are there resources for Jewish students during festivals and exam times?**

- Yes.
  - o Colleges and the University make efforts to accommodate religious observance, including rescheduling exams if they fall on Jewish holidays.
  - o JSoc and the OJC provide resources for celebrating festivals, including communal sedarim for Passover and sukkah access.
  - o Many Jewish students choose to remain in Oxford during festivals, where communal provision is strong.

#### **5. What about Shabbat observance?**

- Possible, with planning.
  - o Walking between colleges and the synagogue is manageable; Oxford is compact.
  - o College staff are generally understanding if you need help arranging keys or lights on Shabbat.
  - o JSoc organizes communal meals every Friday night, and often Shabbat lunch as well.

#### **6. Is kosher food available in Oxford?**

- Yes, but with some limitations.
  - o Oxford does not have a dedicated kosher grocery store, but there are regular deliveries from London suppliers (e.g. JustKosher, Kosher Kingdom). Students often arrange group orders.
  - o Supermarkets like Tesco and Sainsbury's stock a small selection of kosher products (matzah, bagels, some frozen goods).
  - o The Oxford University Jewish Society (JSoc) runs Friday night dinners and other kosher meals during term time.
  - o For self-catering, many students cook in their college kitchens using delivered ingredients.
  - o Dining in college halls is usually not kosher, but vegetarian and vegan options are widely available.

#### **7. Are there synagogues in Oxford?**

- Yes.
  - o Oxford Jewish Congregation (OJC): The main synagogue, located on Richmond Road, serves Orthodox, Progressive, and Masorti groups, with services every Shabbat and festivals.
  - o Students often walk to OJC from their colleges for Shabbat morning services. It is only a 10 minute walk from St Anne's College.
  - o JSoc runs regular Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat services and dinners in central Oxford, which are student-focused.

## 8. Is there an eruv in Oxford?

- No.
  - o Oxford does not have an eruv. Students who are strictly observant generally adapt accordingly.