

Oxford College accused of 'cancelling' St George's Day after row over Eid dinner on April 23

From the [Telegraph](#)

Magdalen College held an annual banquet to commemorate England's legendary patron saint before the pandemic, with dons, fellows and students enjoying a traditional feast among its spires.

But this year, the college will host a formal dinner for Eid, the Islamic festival marking the end of Ramadan, on St George's Day and no other formal meals or dinners to mark England's patron saint will take place.

The move has sparked an unholy row, with dons hitting out at Magdalen's president Dinah Rose KC for the "barking mad" decision to miss the occasion. *That there is a row and criticism is the only thing stopping me from despairing.*

In an email, sent to hundreds of lecturers and students and seen by the Telegraph, Prof Nick Stargardt, the college's vice-president, invited guests to "celebrate Eid with a festive dinner in the Hall" adding that "the meal will follow Muslim customs: the meat dish will be halal and no alcohol will be served".

It is taking place on April 23 despite Eid falling two days earlier on April 21, on which the college is hosting a separate vegetarian dinner, alongside other midweek dinners.



While the college claims it does not have a St George's Day tradition, the Telegraph has seen records which show the college hosted dinners dedicated solely to St George's Day in each of the four years prior to the pandemic, from 2016 to 2019.

One don at Magdalen College, who wished to remain anonymous, told the Telegraph: "The cancelling of St George's Day is yet another example of the deep antipathy that the leaders of so many of Britain's academic institutions seem to feel towards the country that built and maintains them."

A spokesman for Magdalen College said: "Sunday 23 April is the first day of the new term. We are happy to support the request made by Muslim students in the College to hold a dinner to mark Eid on that day. . .There is no College tradition of a formal dinner for St George's Day."