

New York University
Ramah College Network
Summary of Survey Results

General Demographics

Eight Ramahniks at New York University responded to the survey. The students have attended one or more of the following Ramah camps or programs: Berkshires, California, New England, Nyack, Poconos, Wisconsin, and Seminar.

The Search Process

The Impact of Ramah on the College Decision

Many of the Ramahniks who responded to this survey expressed that Ramah strongly impacted their decision to attend NYU. One student wrote: “As Ramah has greatly affected my sense of Judaism in my life, I knew I wanted to attend a school with a strong Jewish community and, in particular, a community with Ramahniks. My best friends now at college are Ramahniks of other camps.”

Other Schools Considered

Boston University, George Washington University, Brandeis University, Binghamton University, Columbia University, Barnard College, Brown University, Tufts University, Wesleyan University, Northeastern University, University of Michigan, Ithaca College

Attributes Looked for in a School

Most of the Ramahniks at NYU who responded to this survey indicated that they were looking for a school in a big city. Academic interests were also taken account when these students looked for schools, as well as a strong Jewish community and an active student body.

Best Aspects of the School

Students overwhelmingly responded that living in the heart of New York City is the best thing about attending New York University. As one student went on to explain, “I enjoy spending my time outside of the dorm exploring the city, seeing Broadway shows, and going to concerts.” The diverse population of NYU is also viewed as one of the best aspects of NYU: “The friends I have made at NYU as a result of all the different places that are here to make friends are truly great, fun, one of a kind people.”

Jewish Life on Campus

Kosher Dining Options

One student explained how kosher dining works at NYU: “There is a great kosher dining hall that serves lunch and dinner everyday. Tuesdays and Thursdays are dairy and all other days are meat. On Shabbat, Chabad and the Hillel building also have meals.” Shabbat dinners at both Chabad and Hillel are free. Students had very positive things to say about the kosher food at NYU: “I find that the food is relatively diverse,” and “the food is very good, especially on meat days!” In addition to the kosher options at NYU,

students enjoy the availability of kosher restaurants in New York City: “there are a few in walking distance to the school, but there are also tons just a subway ride away.”

Worship/Services

There are Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, and Chabad service options at New York University. Students estimate that about 50 students attend Conservative services on Friday nights, and about 20 students attend Conservative services on Shabbat morning. Most of the Ramahniks who responded to this survey reported that they enjoy services at NYU, indicating that “there are lots of options and they are all student run” and that “the people associated with them are dedicated.” Like many schools with large Jewish communities, NYU’s Jewish student population is somewhat divided: “I personally do not like how I feel segregated from other denominational services on campus. Services, and meals somewhat, are separate as well and this does not create a comfortable community for everyone.”

Jewish Studies

New York University has a large Jewish Studies department, which offers a number of interesting course options. Students recommend all of the Hebrew language courses, “Holocaust and the Third Reich,” “Early History of G-d,” and “Archaeology of Ancient Egypt.” Additionally, “there is a Communications Studies course taught in Hebrew about the Israeli media.”

Jewish Social Life

There are many Jewish students at NYU, which are alternately described as both “active and excited” and “a bit cliquey.” One student explained the Jewish social life at NYU: “There is a very large Jewish community on campus and so there are always different activities offered by various Hillel groups. The Jewish Fraternity, AEPi, is also very active and has a presence on campus.” Another student wrote that although there is a large Jewish population at New York University, “not everyone is active. It is important to get involved in order to make other Jewish friends. At times the Jewish community may seem small, but by getting involved with Hillel it is easy to meet other Jewish students.”

Hillel Activities

Hillel at NYU offers religious services, social programs, Israel programming, study opportunities, and social action (tzedeck) opportunities. Students used overwhelmingly positive adjectives to describe Hillel, which is called the Bronfman Center: “very active,” “well funded,” and “wonderful.” One student wrote: “The Bronfman building is a beautiful, five-story town house. It is small, but can hold a lot of people. It is always welcoming and has great places for various activities.” Another student advised: “I love having Hillel on campus, but it can seem exclusive at first. It is important to try and get involved at the beginning of the semester and continue trying to meet people throughout the year through Hillel.”

Other Options for Jewish Social Life

New York City provides a great alternative for Jewish social life. One student wrote: “There are synagogues all over the city that would love to have you involved.” Another student wrote: “There are multiple Jewish organizations based here that are always looking for interns or volunteers.”

Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Activity on Campus

None of the students have ever encountered antisemitism at NYU. Most of the students have also never encountered anti-Israel sentiment on campus: “I have found NYU to be friendly towards Israel.” One student wrote that despite some anti-Israel, activity, “the Jewish voice is heard on this campus.”

Ramahniks’ Advice to Prospective Students

New York University Ramahniks encourage prospective students to consider that NYU is truly a city campus, so students need to be independent and ready to make their own community. Students who love Manhattan and everything that it has to offer should definitely look into NYU.

“It’s a place where you have to be an independent person who can look for opportunities instead of waiting for them to come to you. If you’re this type of person, NYU and NYC can offer an amazing Jewish experience.”

“It is important to know that NYU is a very large school, and without a defined campus it can be hard to find a community. NYU is all about making your own community, but is can be very overwhelming. It is also important that you know that you can remain focused because there are so many great opportunities all over New York City on a daily basis.”

“If you love Manhattan, then you’ll love NYU!”

To receive contact information for Ramahniks at New York University (or another college on the Ramah College Network), please email Shana Zions at ramahdesk@jtsa.edu. Please include your name, your Ramah affiliation, and the college(s) for which you would like contact information.