

MUSLIM HERITAGE MONTH

RESOURCE GUIDE



2025



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Each January, the state of New Jersey celebrates Muslim Heritage Month (MHM). This entails cultural celebrations, educational programming, and recognition of New Jersey's large Muslim communities' contributions toward the state's economic, social, and political prosperity. The NJ Muslim Heritage Month Coalition, a local grassroots umbrella movement that initiated MHM's recognition in 2023, envisioned it as a series of cultural celebrations, communal gatherings, educational programming, workshops, and professional networking events.

Accordingly, the Rutgers Law Center for Security Race and Rights (CSRR) has developed a resource guide to assist school districts seeking to expand educational programming about the rich heritage and diverse experiences of New Jersey's over 325,000 Muslim residents.

The Muslim Heritage Month Resource Guide directly advances school districts' educational mission to deepen student cultural competency, critical thinking skills, and global awareness. It also advances anti-bullying and anti-bias educational goals at a time when Muslims have experienced unprecedented bias incidents. The Council on American Islamic Relations of New Jersey (CAIR-NJ), for instance, has reported sharp increases in Islamophobic speech and incidents across the state since 2021.

The Muslim Heritage Month Resource Guide is designed for high school students interested in learning about the rich histories, cultures, and experiences of Muslims in the United States whose national origins encompass the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and African American. A wide array of books, articles, documentaries, and multimedia provide teachers with resources for teaching about these diverse communities' contributions, challenges, and intersectional identities to foster understanding and inclusion. The resource guide is organized as follows: 1) Organizations, 2) Books, 3) Educational Videos, 4) Documentaries, 5) Television, Comedy and Poetry, and 6) Podcasts.

Organizations

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

Website: <https://adc.org/>

A civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage.

Arab American Institute (AAI)

Website: <https://www.aaiusa.org/>

AAI organizes the 3.7 million Arab Americans across the country to ensure an informed, organized, and effective constituency is represented in all aspects of civic life.

Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Website: <https://www.cair.com/>

CAIR engages in media relations, lobbying, education, and advocacy to ensure a Muslim voice is represented. Additionally, CAIR seeks to empower American Muslims and encourage their participation in political and social activism.

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)

Website: <https://www.ispu.org/>

ISPU provides research and education about American Muslims to support well-informed dialogue and decision-making.

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

Website: <https://isna.net/>

An Islamic organization in North America that contributes to the betterment of the Muslim community and society at large.

Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

Website: <https://icna.org/about/>

ICNA focuses on educating its growing membership about Islam.

Muslim Girl

Website: <https://muslimgirl.com/>

Muslim Girl features articles that relate to young modern women all over the globe and kickstart an open honest dialogue about Islam in today's society.

Muslim Heritage Month Coalition

Website: <https://mhmcoalition.org/about-us/>

The NJ MHM Coalition works to connect the Muslim and wider communities by fostering cultural sensitivity, education, and awareness. This is accomplished through community engagement initiatives like resource-sharing workshops and festivals, as well as school toolkits designed to deepen understanding of Muslim cultures and experiences.

Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)

Website: <https://www.mpac.org/>

MPAC works to promote and strengthen American pluralism by increasing understanding and improving policies that impact American Muslims.

South Asian Youth Action

Website: <https://www.saya.org/>

SAYA is a youth development organization providing holistic, impactful, free, year-round programming to underserved New York City youth.

The Muslim Network

Website: <https://www.themuslimnetwork.org/about/>

The Muslim Network aims to build united, inclusive New Jersey Muslim communities across all backgrounds.

Books

You Truly Assumed (2022) by Laila Sabreen

A beautiful portrayal of the multitude of ways to be Black and Muslim while navigating our contemporary world.

Home is Not a Country (2021) by Safia Elhillo

A powerful novel-in-verse captures one girl, caught between cultures, on an unexpected journey to face the ephemeral girl she might have been.

This Is What America Looks Like: My Journey from Refugee to Congresswoman (2020) by Ilhan Omar

An intimate and rousing memoir by progressive trailblazer Ilhan Omar—the first African refugee, the first Somali-American, and one of the first Muslim women, elected to Congress.

All American Muslim Girl (2019) by Nadine Jolie Courtney

As Allie witnesses ever-growing Islamophobia in her small town and across the nation, she begins to study her faith, practicing it, and facing hatred and misunderstanding for it.

I Was Their American Dream: A Graphic Memoir (2019) by Malaka Gharib

Malaka Gharib's graphic memoir tells the story of her experience as a first-generation American of Filipino and Egyptian descent.

Muslims and the Making of America (2016) by Amir Hussain

"There has never been an America without Muslims"—so begins Amir Hussain, one of the most important scholars and teachers of Islam in America. Hussain, who is himself an American Muslim, contends that Muslims played an essential role in the creation and cultivation of the United States.

Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States (2016) by Su'ad Abdul Khabeer

Interviews with young Muslims in Chicago explore the complexity of identities formed at the crossroads of Islam and hip hop.

Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age (2016) by Amani Al-Khatahtbeh

Founder of MuslimGirl.com shares her harrowing and candid account of what it's like to be a young Muslim woman in the wake of 9/11

I Speak for Myself: American Women on Being Muslim (2011) edited by Maria M. Ebrahimji and Zahra T. Suratwala
40 American women under the age of 40, share their experiences of their lives as Muslim women in America.

Minaret: A Novel (2007) by Leila Aboulela

Leila Aboulela's American debut is a provocative, timely, and engaging novel about a young Muslim woman—once privileged and secular in her native land and now impoverished in London—gradually embracing her orthodox faith.

Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City (2002) by Sunaina Marr Maira

Coming of age in a city remarkable for its diversity and cultural innovation, Indian American and other South Asian youth draw on their ethnic traditions and the city's resources to create a vibrant subculture.

Educational Videos

American Muslims: Facts vs. Fiction (2024) by Unity Productions Foundation

Addresses the persistent stereotypes and misconceptions of American Muslims by presenting the most up-to-date from public opinion surveys and social science research.

How South Asian Muslims and Mexican Americans United in the 1920s (2024) by PBS

Asma Khalid travels to Sacramento and Phoenix to piece together the story of a man named Mir Dad, a South Asian Muslim who arrived in the United States in 1917 and made a home in the American Southwest. She also discovers how Mir Dad joined a growing number of South Asian and Mexican American couples who built their lives together in the 1920s and 30s, forming blended communities whose descendants still treasure their mixed heritage today.

How Muslims Influenced Thomas Jefferson and America's Founders (2024) by PBS

Did you know that Thomas Jefferson owned a copy of the Qur'an? That George Washington owned enslaved people who were Muslim? And that a Muslim diplomat broke his Ramadan fast in the White House in 1805? These are some of the facts that Aymann Ismail (staff writer, Slate Magazine) discovers as he explores the role that Muslims played in the imagination of America's founding generation

Is This One of America's First Mosques? | American Muslims: A History Revealed (2024) by PBS

In this film, host Aymann Ismail tells the story of two of these people, a woman named Mary Juma and her husband Hassen who homesteaded in North Dakota in the early 1900s. Traveling across the Midwest, Aymann explores how the community that Mary and Hassen founded constructed one of the first purpose-built mosques in the country, keeping their traditions alive while creating a new identity on the American frontier.

What Is Islam? What Do Muslims Believe? (2020) by I.A.Y.T.D.

This video is an overview of the religion of Islam and what Muslims believe in, covering the differences between Shiite and Sunni. How prevalent Islam is worldwide, and the core tenets that most Muslims believe.

What Is Islamophobia? (2020) by Yaqeen Institute

This animation breaks down different forms of Islamophobia, how to recognize it when it occurs, and the impact it has on Muslims worldwide.

What It Means to be Muslim American (2020) by What Does it Mean to be America

Because of their religion, people may fear or distrust. Muslim American students talk about challenges they face and how they try to educate others.

What it's Like to be Muslim in America (2020) by Dalia Mogahed

Muslim scholar Dalia Mogahed challenges stereotypes and calls for empathy over prejudice in understanding her faith.

Being Muslim in the U.S. (2018) by Pew Research

A look inside the beliefs and attitudes of Muslims in America; it features data from Pew Research Center's 2017 survey, as well as the personal stories of Muslims from across the United States.

The Story Behind Marvel's Muslim-American Superheroine (2018) by G. Willow Wilson

In this talk, Wilson discusses writing for a new generation and draws parallels between the millennial and Muslim experiences in a society at odds with their existence.

Liberal Islamophobia (2018) on TEDxTalks

Izdihar Bailey draws attention to the fact that all humans are susceptible to misinformation-and how universal ignorance can lead to what she calls "liberal Islamophobia.

I'm Bored of Talking About Muslim Women (2017) on TEDxTalks

Why are women's rights seen as being central to the discourse on Islam? And why are we so fascinated with Muslim women? These are some of the crucial questions Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan invites us to think about in her quest to dismantle oppressive structures in society.

The Beauty and Diversity of Muslim Life (2015) by Bassam Tariq

Bassam Tariq is a blogger, a filmmaker, and a halal butcher -- but one thread unites his work: His joy in the diversity, the humanness of our individual experiences.

What Does my Headscarf Mean to You? (2015) by Yassmin Abdel-Magied

In this funny, honest, empathetic talk, Yassmin Abdel-Magied challenges us to look beyond our initial perceptions, and to open doors to new ways of supporting others.

Documentaries

How Islam Influenced Black Americans in 1920s Chicago (2025) directed by PBS

The 1920s saw a revival in Islam among Black Americans fleeing poverty and persecution in the Jim Crow South.

Fighting for Freedom: The Little-Known Story of Muslims and the Civil War (2024) directed by PBS

Muslims have been present at every defining moment in American history, including the Civil War. Malika Bilal (Senior Presenter., Al Jazeera English) tells the recently discovered story of Muhammad Kahn, an immigrant from Afghanistan who traveled to the United States in 1861, fought in the Union Army, and left behind a 200-page pension file documenting his experiences.

American Muslims: A History Revealed (2024) directed by PBS



American Muslims: A History Revealed is a series of six short documentary films that reveal and explore the early history of Muslims in America.

An Act of Worship (2022) directed by Nausheen Dadabhoy
Follows three Muslim women activists who have come of age since 9/11.

The Great Muslim American Road Trip (2022) directed by PBS
Follows a Muslim American couple on a cross-country journey along historic Route 66.

American Muslim (2019) directed by Adam Zucker
Zucker's film examines the daily lives of five Brooklyn Muslims and discusses a number of contentious issues: stereotyping, sex segregation, 9/11, and civil rights.

The Feeling of Being Watched (2018) directed by Assia Boundaoui
The documentary uncovers one of the largest FBI terrorism probes conducted before 9/11 and reveals its enduring impact on the community.

Watched (2018) directed by Katie Mitchell
This short documentary is an intimate and moving exploration of the profound and far-reaching impact of surveillance on Muslim American individuals and communities.

Desi: South Asians in New York (2017) directed by PBS
Desi is a groundbreaking tribute to the diversity and dynamism of the 200,000 South Asians living in New York City.

Out of Status (2007) directed by Pia Sawhney and Sanjna N. Singh
In *Out of Status*, directors examine the actions of immigration policy after 9/11.

Television, Comedy, and Poetry

Growing up Muslim in America (2023) (Tik Tok: Mahappinessiskey)
Spoken word about navigating identity as a Muslim in America.

America, I Am Your Mozlem (2019) written by Sana Mayat
Slam poetry about being Muslim in the United States.

Hassan Minhaj, Homecoming King (2019) directed by Christopher Storer
A 2017 stand-up comedy special who shares hilarious and sometimes sorrowful stories of his experience as a Muslim Indian-American in suburbia navigating puberty, dating, racism and whiteness in America.

Sudanese American Spoken Word Artist On Being Muslim In America (2019) by Now This
This chilling spoken word poem by Bayadir Mohamed-Osman expresses the discrimination and prejudice Muslim women face in the U.S.

Why Are Muslims So... (2015) By Brave New Voices
A slam poetry performance by two Muslim young women to share an excellent introduction to Islamophobia in American society.

Amreeka (2009) directed by Cherien Dabis
Amreeka is the story of a mother, Muna, and her son, Fadi, and their transition from Palestine to America in the early 2000s.

Podcasts

786 Boulevard by Nouri Sardar and Hasnain Ali

This quirky podcast is perfect for exploring discussions of pop culture, film and art within Muslim communities, with fresh insights into pop culture and the Islamic faith.

American Muslim Project by RIFELION

American Muslim Project is a weekly podcast featuring the Muslims shaping America.

Everyday Stories About Palestinians Living All Over The World by Palestinians Podcasts

Dr. Nadia Abuelezam created a forum for Palestinians to share their own narratives through live storytelling events.

Hijabi Diaries by Malaika

This podcast invites ordinary Muslim women to talk about their lives, work, families, and dreams, why they wear the hijab, and what it's like to be a Muslim woman in America in the context of widespread Islamophobic prejudice on the rise.

King of the World by RIFELION

A seven-part podcast series about a Pakistani American teenager who comes of age post-9/11 and, in his adulthood, examines the collective narrative of belonging for Muslims in America.

Missheard Podcast by Zara and Hafsa

This is 2 regular Muslim girls talking life, deen and everything in between. Here at MissHeard, we understand that women often fade into the background.

Race and Rights Podcast by Sahar Aziz (Center for Security, Race and Rights)

The Race and Rights podcast explores the myriad issues that adversely impact the civil and human rights of America's diverse Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities here as well as abroad.

The Mindful Muslim by Inspired Minds

The Mindful Muslim is an Inspired Minds podcast that hosts raw, open, and honest conversations on various topics within the sphere of mental health, psychology, Islam and spirituality.

Young and Muslim by Jibreel Salaam and Mohamed Hassan

Two best friends give their take and personal experiences in a hilarious fashion that shares the truth of the young Muslim American experience.