



Reasons and Seasons to Celebrate 2017

We are truly lucky to be able to celebrate Jewish holidays throughout the year. So if you like to find reasons to create merriment in your home, Judaism provides!

Here are 2017 dates for the main holidays, along with a nugget of information about each:

2017 dates

Tu B'Shevat. The New Year for Trees.

Sunset, Friday, February 10 through nightfall, Saturday, February 11

- Celebrates when the sap begins to rise in trees in Israel, like almond trees
- Explore: Eating fruits and nuts that grow in Israel, like grapes, figs, olives, dates, pomegranates and almonds.

Purim. The Feast of Lots.

Sunset, Saturday, March 11 through nightfall, Sunday, March 12

- Celebrates the story in the Book of Esther in which Esther risks her life to save the Jews from evil Haman
- Explore: Making costumes to wear at services

Passover. Hebrew name: Pesach.

Sunset, Monday, April 10 through nightfall, Tuesday, April 18

- Holiday of freedom and spring, celebrating the deliverance of our ancestors from slavery in Egypt
- Explore: Holding a Seder where you sing songs and taste foods that symbolize the journey from slavery to freedom

Shavuot. Feast of Weeks.

Sunset, Tuesday, May 30 through nightfall, Thursday, June 1 (one day only for Reform Jews and in Israel)

- Holiday celebrating receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai and the end of the spring harvest season

- Explore: Decorating your home with fresh flowers and greenery

Rosh Hashanah. The Jewish New Year.

Sunset, Wednesday, September 20 through nightfall, Friday, September 22

- Time for serious reflection, as well as big family meals
- Explore: Dipping pieces of round challah and apples into honey, hoping for a sweet year

Yom Kippur. Day of Atonement.

Sunset, Friday, September 29 through nightfall, Saturday, September 30

- Considered by many to be most serious day of the Jewish calendar (although Shabbat is the holiest)
- Explore: Watching and listening to the shofar (ram's horn) blast in synagogue

Sukkot. Feast of Booths.

Sunset, Wednesday, October 4 through nightfall, Wednesday, October 11

- Harvest festival during which some families eat meals in their sukkah, an outdoor structure through which you can see the stars
- Explore: Building a sukkah or even just eating outside

Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah. Rejoicing in the Torah.

Sunset, Wednesday, October 11 through nightfall, Friday, October 13

- A festival in the synagogue to celebrate reading the last section of Torah, before starting from the beginning again
- Explore: Joining parades in the synagogue, waving special flags and carrying Torah scrolls

Hanukkah. Festival of Lights.

Sunset, Tuesday, December 12 through nightfall, Wednesday, December 20

- Joyous celebration commemorating religious freedom and the miracle of the oil that should have lasted only one day, but lasted for eight days
- Explore: Lighting a menorah and playing dreidel