



National Jewish Committee on Scouting Major Jewish Holidays



Jewish holidays begin the evening before the date on the English calendar because a Jewish "day" begins and ends at sunset (a lunar calendar), rather than at midnight (a solar calendar).

- This comes from the Creation story in Genesis Ch. 1: “*And there was evening, and there was morning, one day.*”
- Evening is when you can see 3 stars in the sky

Shabbat

- The only holiday mentioned in the 10 Commandments - *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy.* Ex. 20:8
- Shabbat is a day of rest and spiritual enrichment
- Starts Friday at sundown and ends Saturday at sundown
- In Hebrew – Shabbat



Rosh Hashanah

- It has 3 names:
 1. Rosh Hashanah - The head of the year
 2. Yom Ha-Zikkaron - The day of remembrance
 3. Yom Teruah - The day of the sounding of the shofar (which is a rams horn)
- It is a time to reflect back over the past year.
- Ask G-d for forgiveness for any wrong doing.
- Plan changes in the coming year.



Yom Kippur

- The holiest day of the Jewish Year (Sandy Kofax refused to pitch on Yom Kippur!).
- Traditionally on Yom Kippur, Jews:
 - Do not work
 - Spend time in Synagogue praying from prayer book called a Machzor.
 - Fast for 25 hours (no eating or drinking).
 - Refrain from fancy jewelry, leather, etc.
 - Wear white as a sign of purity.
 - Sound the Shofar (ram’s horn), concluding the holiday.



Purim

- The most festive holidays.
- Persian Jews were saved from extermination by Hamen.
- Celebrates good and Truth over Deception and evil.
- Have carnivals.
- Dress up in costumes.
- Sound noisemakers (grogger) to drown out the name Hamen.
- Eat *humantashen* (3 cornered pastries with fruit filling).



Sukkot

- Families and communities build a sukkah, a temporary, foliage-covered hut (or booth) that serves as a dwelling place, dining area, or social space during the week.
- The sukkah represents the temporary shelters inhabited by the Israelites after leaving Egypt



Simchat Torah

- Simcha Torah means "Rejoicing in the Torah"
- Celebrates the gift of the Torah from G-d to man
- Marks the completion of the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings.
- We read the last Torah portion then immediately read the first Torah portion
- Torah is a circle; it never ends.
- We celebrate by singing and dancing.
- We march around the temple



Tu B'Shevat

- The 15th day of the Jewish month of Shevat
- Known as the New Year for Trees and of ecology
- The changing of the season.
- A custom is to eat from the 7 Species (*shivat haminim*): wheat, barley, grapes (vines), figs, pomegranates, olives and dates (honey) (Deut. 8:8).



Passover

- Commemorates the Exodus from Egypt.
- Observed for 8 days.
- Eat only unleavened grain products (matzah).
- Partake in a festive meal (“Seder”) where the Exodus story is retold.



Shavuot

- The Festival of Weeks.
- The giving of the 10 Commandments
- It happened at Mt. Sinai.
- A harvest festival celebrated by eating dairy foods.
- A reminder of the land of Israel.
- A land flowing with "milk and honey“.



Tisha B'Av

- The 9th day of the Jewish month of Av.
- A day of mourning.
- Commemorate many tragedies of the Jewish people.
- The destruction of the 1st & 2nd Temples (the 1st by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the 2nd the Romans in 70 CE).
- A day to fast.
- Read from the Book of Lamentations.



Yom Ha'atzmaut

- Israeli Independence Day.
- Establishing the modern state of Israel.
- May 14, 1948 (4th day of the Jewish month of Iyar).



Yom HaShoah

- Holocaust Remembrance Day.
- A memorial day for those who died.
- "Shoah“: Hebrew word for Holocaust.

