

The Nine Days (July 24-August 1)

The first nine days of the month of Av are days of increased mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem, culminating with the highest level of mourning on Tisha B'Av. During the Nine Days, some Jews do not:

- Eat meat or drink wine or grape juice, except on Shabbat or at certain celebrations like a Bris
- Do laundry (except for babies)
- Swim
- Remodel or expand a house
- Plant trees for shade or fragrance
- Buy, sew, or knit or wear new clothes
- Cut their nails (starting the Saturday night before the fast until after Tisha B'Av)
- Listening to music

To learn more about the 9 Days, watch this video:

The Temple of Jerusalem



Tisha B'Av (August 1)

Tisha B'Av (the 9th of Av) is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. The establishment of this day as one of sorrow began in the times of the Torah (in the book of Numbers 13-14) when the scouts brought back a false report about the Land of Israel. As a punishment, the Israelites were told they would not enter the Land of Israel and would wander in the desert for 40 years until their generation died out. Their descendants would then enter the land. The Israelites cried and mourned for this loss.

"The spies went out on the 29th of Sivan. And it is written, 'They returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days.' They returned on the 8th of Av. And it is further written, 'All the congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept that night.' Rabbah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: That night was the night of the ninth of Av. Said G-d to them: You have wept without cause; therefore I will set aside this day for a weeping throughout the generations to come. (Talmud, Taanit 29b)

Since then, many tragedies have befallen the Jewish People on Tisha B'Av:

- Destruction of the 1st Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE
- Destruction of the 2nd Temple by the Romans in 70 CE
- Expulsion of Jews from England in 1290
- Expulsion of Jews from Spain 1492

Unlike the month of Adar (Purim) when we increase our joy, "When the month of Av enters, we reduce our joy" (Talmud, Taanit 26b)

On Tisha B'Av some Jews don't:

- Eat
- Drink
- Bathe, apply lotions or creams
- Wear leather shoes
- Have marital relations

In addition, until midday, Jews will sit on the floor or on low stools as they do in a house of mourning. Tisha B'Av is never observed on Shabbat. If the 9th of Av falls on a Saturday, the fast is postponed until the 10th of Av. To learn more about Tisha B'Av, watch this video:



Tu B'Av (August 7)

Tu B'Av (the 15th of Av) is a joyous day on the Jewish calendar; it is a day for love. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no better days for the people of Israel than the Fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur, since on these days the daughters of Israel/Jerusalem go out dressed in white and dance in the vineyards. What were they saying: Young man, consider whom you choose (to be your wife)?" (*Taanit*, Chapter 4) Today, Tu B'Av is celebrated in Israel as a day for romance, much like Valentine's Day in other countries.