Rosh Hashanah
ראש השנה

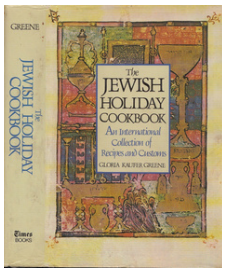
MOUNT ZION



Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, marking the creation of the world. It is a time for both joy and reflection. We celebrate the opportunities that come with starting anew, and we use this beginning as an opportunity to reflect on the past year and set intentions for the coming year. "Rosh" literally means "head;" "Hashanah" means "the year."

Featured Cookbook

The Jewish Holiday Cookbook: An International Collection of Recipes and Customs
By Gloria Kaufer Greene
A comprehensive kosher cookbook featuring both Ashkenazic and Sephardic dishes, including 32 Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur recipes.
Check out this cookbook and others from our Mount Zion library!



Fun Fact!

Eating a new fruit is a way to emphasize the start of the new year. You can use either a seasonal fruit that you haven't eaten since its season began, or a fruit you've never tried before. When we light the candles and recite *kiddush*, we recite the *shehechiyanu*, a blessing of gratitude for reaching a milestone moment as part of *kiddush*. Eating a "new fruit" adds extra oomph to reciting this blessing.

Order of Operations

On Rosh Hashanah, we have the opportunity to offer so many blessings! Like Shabbat and other holidays, we mark sacred time through lighting candles and blessing the day over wine or grape juice. In addition, we eat a round challah, apples and honey, and sometimes a new fruit. It can be confusing to know what to do first! Before you begin - and you can do this days in advance - prepare your table. If you will be watching services from home, set up your sacred space for viewing.



1. Light the candles and say the blessing.
2. (Bless children with *Birkat Kohanim*/Priestly Blessing.)
3. Recite *kiddush* for Rosh Hashanah over wine/grape juice.
4. Dip an apple slice in honey and say blessings; eat apple and the new fruit.
5. Uncover the challah and say the blessing.
6. Eat the festive meal!

Blessings available at reformjudaism.org or scan QR Code.

> As the years pass [and I grow older], it is more and more important to me to greet and celebrate an approaching New Year with respect. To honor the life I have lived, with all my mistakes. To greet each new day... to embrace sorrow when it arrives, to "live" the time that I have... And to forgive myself when I can't quite manage this, so that I can start the next day imagining the wonder and possibilities that may come.
>
> -Kathleen Riley, Mount Zion member

Jewish Calendar

Elul
Av
Tammuz
Sivan
Iyar
Nisan
Adar
Shevat
Tevet
Kislev
Cheshvan
Tishrei

Featured Tradition

Adding *simanim* for the new year

Some people have the tradition of eating foods that symbolize our hopes and prayers for the new year. These are called *simanim* (literally "symbols") and are often based in puns. Some examples include:

- A fish head (or head of lettuce): for wishing we'll be more like the "head" and less like the "tail" in the coming year.
- Beets ("*selek*," in Hebrew which can also mean "to remove decisively"): for defeating our 'enemies'
- Carrots (in Hebrew "*gezer*," related to the word "*gezera*" meaning "decree"): for hoping that God judge us with positive decrees

What punny foods can you come up with to symbolize your hopes?

Why a round challah?



During the High Holy Days (from Rosh Hashanah through Simchat Torah), we eat a round challah. There are several reasons why. Here are a few:

- It reflects the cyclical nature of years and seasons.
- It resembles a crown, symbolizing the sovereignty of God. (Pro tip: Lay flowers around your challah to make it look more like a crown!)
- It is an infinite circle, reminding us that the opportunity for repentance is never-ending.

> *Being part of the Psalm 27 study group at Mount Zion gets me thinking in all kinds of ways. Every time I read the psalm, there's something different in it. This year, I won't be surprised when Rosh Hashanah comes because I'm counting up to the day through this Elul practice.*
>
> -Mandy Roll-Kuhne, Mount Zion member

Sermons

Read our rabbis' sermons on **forgiveness, how to apologize, hope, ethical wills, gratitude, facing uncertainty, and more: mzion.org/pray/sermons.**

Kavanah (intention) Corner



Sometimes, we can get so pulled into the logistics of a holy day that its meaning gets left behind. Here are some prompts to get you thinking about the meaning behind the holy day. Journal about them, discuss them with a friend, or tape them to your fridge to remind yourself to think on these.

- What do you hope for in the new year?
- What are mistakes from the past year that you were able to learn from? What might you do differently in the coming year?
- What relationships (with people, places, or communities) do you want to cultivate this year?