

Late Summer/Autumn

Winter

Spring

Summer



Rosh Hashana



Yom Kippur



Sukkot



Shemini Atzeret



Hannuka



Tu B'Shvat



Purim



Pesach



Omer Counting



Shavuot



9th B'av

Harvest

Pray for Rain

Soil prepreation / planting

Pray for Dew

First Fruits / Harevst

Jews celebrated Rosh Hashana in Israel 1,000 years ago!



READ MORE:



Rosh Hashana ראש השנה

Hebrew Date(s):
1-2 Tishrei

What is Rosh Hashana?

Rosh Hashanah (RH) means **"Head of the Year"**. It is the Jewish New Year, but instead of having parties, we engage in deep reflection and prayer.

RH is the **beginning of the Tishrei Festivals**. A 5th-century mosaic at Hulda (Central Israel) represents these festivals with a Shofar for RH, an incense shovel for Yom Kippur, and a lulav for Sukkot.



The 10 days between RH and Yom Kippur are known as **"Days of Awe"**, when God reviews the actions of every person and decides what the coming year will bring.

The most **recognizable sound** of RH is **the shofar**, or a ram's horn. Its powerful blast is meant to wake people up spiritually and remind them to think about their choices.

Different names for Rosh Hashana

The Jewish New Year

Rosh Hashana
English

ראש השנה
Hebrew

Day of
Judgment

יום הדין
Yom Ha'din

Day of
Remembrance

יום הזכרון
Yom HaZikaron

Day of the
Shofar Blast

יום תרועה
Yom Teruah

Rosh Hashana in Biblical Texts

Leviticus 23:24-25: "In the **seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a rest, a remembrance of the blast of horns, a holy gathering**".

Numbers 29:1: "On the first day of the seventh month you shall **hold a sacred gathering...** it shall be a **day of shofar blasts** for you."

The Catalan Mahzor (RH prayer book) is 600 years old and survived the Spanish Expulsion of 1492 and Nazi Germany. The prayers are almost exactly the same as they are today!



Why Rosh Hashana Matters

✓

Spiritual Return and Renewal: RH teaches that every person has **the power to change**. Jewish tradition calls this ***teshuvah***, which means “**returning**”—turning back toward God.

✓

Universal theme: RH marks the birthday of the world and the creation of Adam and Eve. The holiday is seen as **a day of judgment for all of humanity**, not just for the Jewish people.

✓

Prayer focus: The *Musaf Amidah* prayer includes three special sections—***Malkhuyot*** (God’s kingship), ***Zikhronot*** (remembering that God reviews our actions), and ***Shofarot*** (the shofar blasts). We ask God to remember the Jewish people for good and to bring about a better world.

✓

Community and responsibility: RH is observed together as a community, highlighting that individuals are also **responsible for one another**.

Key Rituals

1

Shofar Blowing: The shofar is blown 100 times by a trained shofar blower (ba’al tekiah) in the synagogue. The different calls—**tekiah** (1 long blast), **shevarim** (3 medium blasts), and **teruah** (9 short blasts)—each carry a different emotional meaning.

2

Tashlich - “casting off”: In the afternoon, we gather at an outdoor body of flowing water and symbolically “**cast away**” our sins by tossing in breadcrumbs or pebbles. The ritual is connected to the verse “*You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*” (Micah 7:19).

3

Festive Meal with Simanim (Symbolic Foods): We gather for a special holiday meal with symbolic foods representing blessings for the new year, including apples and honey for a sweet year, pomegranates for increased merit, and a fish or ram’s head to inspire us to lead with strength and purpose.



Rosh Hashana in Ancient Israel

In **Temple times** in Jerusalem, RH was celebrated by the entire community with **special animal offerings (*korbanot*)** brought on the altar.

The **shofar was blown in the Temple courtyard**. The Levites sang special psalms including Psalm 81: “*Blow the shofar at the new moon, when it is hidden, on our feast day.*”

It marked the **official beginning of the civil year in ancient Israel** and had both sacred and practical importance in daily life.

Today in Israel – Modern Connections



In Israel today, RH is a **national holiday** when schools and businesses close. Jewish Israelis of all backgrounds—religious and secular alike—gather with family for the holiday meals.

Thousands of people gather for prayer at the **Western Wall (*Kotel*)** in Jerusalem in the very place where the Temple once stood.



A 1,500-year-old Hebrew inscription quoting Isaiah 66:14 on the Western Wall echoes hopes of redemption: “*And when you see this, your heart shall rejoice...*”

Secular Israelis spend part of the **holiday in nature**, connecting the season of renewal to the beauty of the land itself.



If you could “toss away” one habit or mistake from the past year like in the *Tashlich* ritual, what would it be? What would you hope to do differently in the year ahead?



For more information
on Rosh Hanana

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