

# HOW TO CELEBRATE PURIM



“Celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar every year as the days when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into celebration. These were to be days of feasting, celebration, and sending presents of food to one another and giving gifts to the poor.”  
— Esther 9:21-22

Purim is one of the *most festive holidays* of the Jewish year. The Bible even commands that it be a time of *feasting and celebration*. Purim commemorates how God delivered the Jewish people from an evil plan to destroy them.

## HOW PURIM GOT IT'S NAME

Haman cast a lot, or a Pur, day after day for twelve months against the Jews before he went to King Ahasuerus.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS



**King Ahasuerus**  
(King Xerxes)

ruled Persia and Media from India to Ethiopia. His wife, Queen Vashti, refused to join the king at his party and was banished. Beautiful young women were prepared for the king to select his new queen.



**Esther**

The King chose Esther, a Jewish maiden who kept her heritage secret. God made Esther queen “for such a time as this” and used her to deliver the Jewish people from annihilation...



**Mordecai**

Esther’s adoptive guardian overheard a plot to kill the king and told Esther; she warned the king, and the traitors were hanged. The account was written in the king’s records, but nothing was done to honor Mordecai.



**Haman**

an officer in the king’s command, was promoted. All were commanded to bow to Haman, but Mordecai feared God and refused to bow to any man. Outraged, Haman devised a plan to kill Mordecai, and all Jews throughout the kingdom.

## THE PURIM STORY

Haman persuaded the king to irrevocably decree that everyone who killed Jewish people on a certain date would receive a reward. Mordecai begged Esther to plead with the king on behalf of their people. But approaching the king without being summoned could result in execution. So Esther fasted and prayed for three days, and called on all Jews to do so as well. Then, she bravely went to the king unbidden. Ahasuerus granted her favor, learned of Haman’s plot, and decreed the Jews could defend themselves on the day of the massacre. When it came, God saved His people from destruction. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had intended for Mordecai, and Mordecai was finally honored for earlier saving the king’s life. The Jews were commanded to celebrate God’s salvation at Purim throughout their generations.

## WAYS TO CELEBRATE PURIM TODAY



### FAST OF ESTHER

A fast from sunrise to sunset the day before Purim honors the fasting and praying of Esther and the Jews. Participants fast and pray for the Jewish people or as God leads.

### PLAYS, CARNIVALS AND COSTUMES

Many children and adults wear costumes to the Megillah reading. Traditionally people dress as characters from the Purim story, although today some dress as any kind of character.



### FEASTING, SINGING AND DANCING

Hamantaschen are triangular, fruit-filled cookies representing Haman’s three-cornered hat – in Israel often called “Haman’s ears” – are traditional Purim treats.



### VISITING FRIENDS

Delivering food gifts to friends and relatives and celebrating at each visit is a Purim tradition.



### FOOD GIFTS — MISHLOACH MANOT

Traditionally, the food gifts of Purim include at least two kinds of ready-to-eat foods such as nuts, fruit, bread or candy. Many Mishloach Manot are given in decorative baskets containing a variety of items.



### READING THE BOOK OF ESTHER

At synagogue on the night of Purim, the book of Esther, called The Megillah (scroll), is read aloud. When the name Haman is read, participants stomp, “boo”, and use noisemakers called groggers to blot it out. The book is read again after morning prayers on the day of Purim.



### GIVING TO CHARITY

Charitable giving is another Purim tradition. Jewish Voice brings clean water, humanitarian aid and the Good News of Yeshua (Jesus) to some of the neediest Jewish people around the world. Celebrate the holiday with a Purim offering to help meet the practical and spiritual needs of God’s chosen people.



The full story of Purim is found in the book of Esther. For more info visit: [jemi.org/purim](http://jemi.org/purim)