

Calendar of Jewish Holidays

Field Resource

This guide is designed to inform you about the Jewish calendar and cycle of holidays. Jews observe these holidays according to their family traditions and personal preferences, with some observing each of them according to traditional practice while others only rarely. The holidays are each based on biblical festivals or commemorations.

The Jewish calendar follows the lunar cycle, which runs shorter than the solar cycle used for the standard calendar. Thus, most Jewish holidays do not fall on the same date each year. Jewish holidays begin and end at sundown. Therefore, all holidays begin at sundown on the first day and end at nightfall on the last day shown in the calendar below.

At the end of the document, please find a five-year calendar of the Jewish holidays that fall during the academic year for planning purposes.

Shabbat

Description: Shabbat is the weekly day of rest for the Jewish faith, when Jewish people refrain from typical weekday behaviors and participate in restful activities to honor the day. Shabbat is considered by many to be the most important day in the Jewish faith. Shabbat meals are typically celebrated with a cup of wine and challah, a special braided bread.

Practice: Shabbat is marked by attending synagogue Friday night, Saturday morning, and Saturday afternoon, in addition to three festive meals and eating challah. Students who observe Shabbat traditionally will also refrain from working, traveling, spending money, and using electronics, and will engage in restful activities.

What to expect: While Shabbat falls over the weekend so students will not have to miss school, they may miss any extracurriculars that occur over the weekend and will be unable to complete homework Friday night to Saturday night.

How to support your Jewish students: Be mindful of the amount of homework assigned over the weekend, as some Jewish students will not be able to complete any work beyond reading from Friday night to Saturday night.

Rosh Hashanah

Description: Rosh Hashanah means “head of the year” and is the beginning of the Jewish New Year. Orthodox and Conservative Jews observe the traditional two-day holiday, while Reform Jews observe only the first day. Rosh Hashanah is one of three most observed holidays by all Jewish families. The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is listening to the blowing of the shofar (ram’s horn) during prayer services. Rosh Hashanah meals traditionally include round challah bread and apples dipped in honey that symbolize our wishes for a sweet year.

Practice: Jewish students will likely attend prayer services and convene with their families. Rosh Hashanah is considered a day of rest; therefore, some students will not do work, write, spend money, or travel.

What to expect: Jewish students might miss school and extracurricular activities.

How to support your Jewish students: Please try to avoid scheduling tests during or the day after the holiday.

Yom Kippur

Description: Yom Kippur translates to “Day of Atonement” and is one of the holiest days of the year in the Jewish calendar. It is focused on atonement and repentance through prayer, fasting and acts of charity. Yom Kippur is a fast day, where Jewish people over the age of 13 do not drink or eat anything for 25 hours. The holiday is spent in synagogue and is concluded by the blowing of the shofar.

Practice: Jewish students will likely attend prayer services and convene with families. For those over the age of 13, students will traditionally fast for 25 hours and refrain from all food and drink. Yom Kippur is considered a day of rest, and some students will therefore not do work, write, spend money, travel, or use electronics.

What to expect: Jewish students will likely miss school and extracurricular activities.



How to support your Jewish students: Please try to avoid scheduling tests during or the day after the holiday.

Sukkot

Description: Sukkot, which means “festival of booths,” is a week-long holiday commemorated by dwelling in huts called ‘sukkot,’ which the Israelites lived in after the Exodus from Egypt. The festival of Sukkot also references the types of dwellings that farmers would live in during harvesting, making Sukkot important both as a holiday recognizing the Exodus from Egypt and a harvest festival. Another important feature of Sukkot is making a blessing over the four species, four different types of leaves, and the etrog, a type of citrus.

Practice: The first two days are considered days of rest, where work (including writing, use of electricity, spending money and travel) cannot be done. While many Jewish students may not observe the holiday restrictions, many Jewish students will attend prayer services and convene with family. As a festive holiday, it is common for people to gather in sukkot for meals and celebrations. During the intermediate days of the festival, the use of electricity, writing, and other things are permitted, but many Jewish people still use these days as a time to rest and enjoy the holiday. Nonetheless, students can participate fully in academic activity during the intermediate days. Please note that the intermediate days often include a Shabbat (see above) when work is prohibited.

What to expect: For the first two of Sukkot, Jewish students may miss school and extracurricular activities. (Reform Jews generally observe only one day at the beginning of the holiday.)

How to support your Jewish students: Please try to avoid scheduling tests during or the day after the holiday.

Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah

Description: Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are two holidays that occur at the end of the weeklong holiday of Sukkot. Shemini Atzeret is a sort of celebration of the end of the high holiday season in the Jewish calendar, and is celebrated on the last day of Sukkot. Simchat Torah is the celebration of when the Jewish people finish their annual Torah (Hebrew bible) reading cycle, and the holiday is often joyous, with much singing and dancing.



Practice: Jewish students will likely attend prayer services and participate in festive events and parades with the Torah.

What to expect: Jewish students may miss school and extracurricular activities, and may also refrain from working, traveling, spending money, and using electronics.

How to support your Jewish students: Please try to avoid scheduling tests during or the day after the holiday.

Hanukkah

Description: Hanukkah is an eight-day long holiday commemorating the victory of the Jewish Maccabees over the Greeks, the procurement and rededication of the Beit HaMikdash (Second Holy Temple) in Jerusalem, and the miracle of oil burning for eight days. Hanukkah is a festive and joyous holiday.

Practice: Hanukkah is typically celebrated by lighting a *Chanukiyah* (a nine candle menorah lamp) every night for eight nights, making a blessing over the lighting of the candles. Other important practices of the holiday include playing a game dreidel, a spinning top game, eating oil-based foods such as *latkes* (fried potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts) and singing Hanukkah songs. Work is permitted during Chanukah.

What to expect: Jewish students will attend all extracurriculars and school during this holiday.

How to support your Jewish students: Incorporate educational material about Hanukkah into your holiday curriculum! Jewish students may often feel left out if there is curriculum about other winter holidays without including Hanukkah, so incorporating information about Hanukkah into lesson plans is a great way to support and include Jewish students.

Purim

Description: Purim is an annual holiday commemorating the Jewish people being saved from destruction in Persia by a man named Haman, the court vizier. The heroes of the story are Queen Esther, a young woman who becomes Queen of the Persian Empire and saves the Jewish people, and her cousin Mordechai. There are many customs celebrated on Purim, including giving gifts of food and drinks, known as *Mishloach Manot*, dressing up in costumes, and listening to the Scroll of Esther in synagogue.



Practice: The day before Purim is a fast day, commemorating the fast of Queen Esther as she prayed for the redemption of the Jewish people from the genocidal designs of the Persian vizier. On Purim, Jewish students will likely attend prayer services at night, and may dress up in costumes. They may also participate in Purim parades, and eat festive cookies known as Hamentashen. Many will participate in a festive meal on the afternoon of Purim. Work is permitted on Purim.

What to expect: Jewish students will attend all extracurriculars and school during this holiday, but will likely be busy after the school day ends.

How to support your Jewish students: Be mindful of the amount of homework given, as Jewish students may be at synagogue during the night.

Passover

Description: Passover is one of the most widely observed holidays in the Jewish calendar. It commemorates the Israelites' exodus out of Egypt, where the Jewish people were held as slaves for 400 years. The most important and main tradition of the holiday are large meals called *Seders*, where the story of the Exodus from Egypt is recounted, and *Matzah*, an unleavened bread, is eaten.

Practice: Passover *Seders*, large family meals, occur on the first two days of the holiday. Both the first two days and last two days are considered rest days, where some students will not partake in any sort of work or writing. As this is one of the most central family holidays of the year, many Jewish students will make every effort to go home prior to Passover to join in their family seder. Campus organizations also host seders for students who cannot get home for the holiday. Many Jewish students will not eat any bread or other food items made with wheat, oats, spelt, barley or rye, along with other prohibited food items.

What to expect: Jewish students will likely miss school and extracurricular activities for the first two days and last two days of Passover. Some students will also refrain from working, traveling, spending money, and using electronics. Students will also be unable to eat bread or any product made with risen flour for eight days.

How to support your Jewish students: Please try to avoid scheduling tests during the rest days of the holiday. Work to provide matzah and fresh fruits and vegetables for students observing the holiday to eat.



Shavuot

Description: Shavuot is one of the three traditional pilgrimage holidays, celebrating the wheat harvest and the gifting of the Torah and Ten Commandments to the Jewish people from God. Shavuot is traditionally observed by studying Torah all night and eating only dairy foods such as cheesecake.

Practice: Jewish students will likely attend prayer services and convene with their families. Depending on their age, they may also partake in overnight studying. Shavuot is considered a day of rest; therefore, some students will not do work, write, spend money, or travel.

What to expect: Jewish students will likely miss school and extracurricular activities.

How to support your Jewish students: Please try to avoid scheduling tests during or the day after the holiday.



Five-Year Academic Calendar of Jewish Holidays

2026-2027

Holiday	Start Date	End Date
Shabbat	Weekly, Friday sunset	Saturday night
Rosh Hashanah	Friday sunset, September 11, 2026	Sunday night, September 13, 2026
Yom Kippur	Sunday sunset, September 20, 2026	Monday night, September 21, 2026
Sukkot	Friday sunset, September 25, 2026	Friday night, October 2, 2026
Shemini Atzeret	Friday sunset, October 2, 2026	Saturday sunset, October 3, 2026
Simchat Torah	Saturday sunset, October 3, 2026	Sunday night, October 4, 2026
Hanukkah	Friday night, December 4, 2026	Saturday night, December 12, 2026
Purim	Monday sunset, March 22, 2027	Tuesday night, March 23, 2027
Passover	Wednesday sunset, April 21, 2027	Thursday night, April 29, 2027
Shavuot	Thursday sunset, June 10, 2027	Saturday night, June 12, 2027

2027-2028

Holiday	Start Date	End Date
Shabbat	Weekly, Friday sunset	Saturday night
Rosh Hashanah	Friday sunset, October 1, 2027	Sunday night, October 3, 2027
Yom Kippur	Sunday sunset, October 10, 2027	Monday night, October 11, 2027
Sukkot	Friday sunset, October 15, 2027	Friday night, October 22, 2027
Shemini Atzeret	Friday sunset, October 22, 2027	Saturday sunset, October 23, 2027
Simchat Torah	Saturday sunset, October 23, 2027	Sunday night, October 24, 2027
Hanukkah	Friday night, December 24, 2027	Saturday night, January 1, 2028
Purim	Saturday sunset, March 11, 2028	Sunday night, March 12, 2028
Passover	Monday sunset, April 10, 2028	Tuesday night, April 18, 2028
Shavuot	Tuesday sunset, May 30, 2028	Thursday night, June 1, 2028



2028-2029

Holiday	Start Date	End Date
Shabbat	Weekly, Friday sunset	Saturday night
Rosh Hashanah	Wednesday sunset, September 28, 2028	Friday night, September 22, 2028
Yom Kippur	Friday sunset, September 29, 2028	Saturday night, September 30, 2028
Sukkot	Wednesday sunset, October 4, 2028	Wednesday night, October 11, 2028
Shemini Atzeret	Wednesday sunset, October 11, 2028	Thursday sunset, October 12, 2028
Simchat Torah	Thursday sunset, October 12, 2028	Friday night, October 13, 2028
Hanukkah	Tuesday night, December 12, 2028	Wednesday night, December 20, 2028
Purim	Wednesday sunset, February 28, 2029	Thursday night, March 1, 2029
Passover	Friday sunset, March 30, 2029	Saturday night, April 7, 2029
Shavuot	Saturday sunset, May 19, 2029	Monday night, May 21, 2029

2029-2030

Holiday	Start Date	End Date
Shabbat	Weekly, Friday sunset	Saturday night
Rosh Hashanah	Sunday sunset, September 9, 2029	Tuesday night, September 11, 2029
Yom Kippur	Tuesday sunset, September 18, 2029	Wednesday night, September 19, 2029
Sukkot	Sunday sunset, September 23, 2029	Sunday night, September 30, 2029
Shemini Atzeret	Sunday sunset, September 30, 2029	Monday night, October 1, 2029
Simchat Torah	Monday sunset, October 1, 2029	Tuesday night, October 2, 2029
Hanukkah	Saturday night, December 1, 2029	Sunday night, December 9, 2029
Purim	Monday sunset, March 18, 2030	Tuesday night, March 19, 2030
Passover	Wednesday sunset, April 17, 2030	Thursday night, April 25, 2030



Shavuot	Thursday sunset, June 6, 2030	Saturday night, June 8, 2030
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2030-2031

Holiday	Start Date	End Date
Shabbat	Weekly, Friday sunset	Saturday night
Rosh Hashanah	Friday sunset, September 27, 2030	Sunday night, September 29, 2030
Yom Kippur	Sunday sunset, October 6, 2030	Monday night, October 7, 2030
Sukkot	Friday sunset, October 11, 2030	Friday night, October 18, 2030
Shemini Atzeret	Friday sunset, October 18, 2030	Saturday sunset, October 19, 2030
Simchat Torah	Saturday sunset, October 19, 2030	Sunday night, October 20, 2030
Hanukkah	Friday night, December 20, 2030	Saturday night, December 28, 2030
Purim	Saturday sunset, March 8, 2031	Sunday night, March 9, 2031
Passover	Monday sunset, April 7, 2031	Tuesday night, April 15, 2031
Shavuot	Tuesday sunset, May 27, 2031	Thursday night, May 29, 2031

