

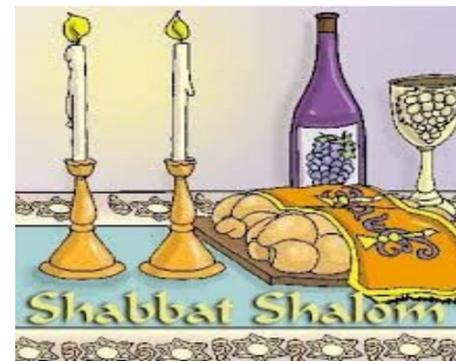
## The Jewish Calendar 2019–2020/5780

The purpose of this newsletter is to help you plan helping your Jewish residents celebrate their holidays during the coming year. Since the dates of Jewish holidays on the secular calendar change every year, we think you'll find it useful to have them all in one place.

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, meaning that every time there is a new moon, there is a new month. However, since that adds up to only 354 days, a leap month must be added periodically to keep the holidays in line with the proper season of the year. Centuries ago, the Rabbis calculated the year in which they believed Creation took place. By that calculation, this September, Jews will enter the 5781st year since Creation.

### Shabbat

The Sabbath is celebrated weekly from Friday at sundown until dark on Saturday. Shabbat is welcomed with the lighting of candles, the blessings over the wine (*Kiddush*) and *hallah* (braided egg bread). It is a day of physical rest, spiritual refreshment, good food, and friends. Wish your residents "Good Shabbos" or "Shabbat Shalom"—a peaceful Sabbath—on Friday afternoon and Saturday. This is a major holiday.



Shabbat Table with candles, *hallah* bread, and wine for Kiddush

L' Shanah Tovah  
Have a sweet year!



Greeting card with apples and honey

### Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins Sunday evening, September 29, 2019. It ends at sundown on Tuesday, October 1. It begins the High Holy Days, a period of introspection that ends with Yom Kippur. Traditional foods are honey cake and apples dipped in honey, symbolizing the wish for a sweet year. It is also customary to have a round *hallah* (egg bread) and grape juice or sweet wine. Rosh Hashanah is a major holiday.

### Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, begins at sundown on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, and ends at dark on October 9. It is a solemn day marked by fasting and prayer. Memorial prayers are said and memorial candles are lit for deceased loved ones. There are special meals before and after the fast. Yom Kippur is a major holiday.



We pray to be written in the Book of Life on the High Holy Days

## Upcoming Jewish Holidays 2019–2020

HOLIDAY	DATE
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Sun. night Sept. 29 – Tues. Oct. 1
Yom Kippur	Tues. night Oct. 8 – Wed. Oct. 9
Sukkot (7 days)	Sun. night Oct. 13 – Sun. Oct. 20
Shemini Atzeret	Sun. night Oct. 20 – Mon. Oct. 21
Simhat Torah	Mon. night Oct. 21 – Tues. Oct. 22
Hanukkah (8 days)	Sun. night Dec. 22 – Mon. Dec. 30
Tu B'Shevat	Sun. night Feb. 9 – Mon. Feb. 10
Purim	Mon. night Mar. 9 – Tues. Mar. 10
Passover (8 days)	Wed. night Apr. 8 – Thurs. Apr. 16
Shavuot (2 days)	Thursday night May 28 – Sat. May 30

Jewish Life Newsletter

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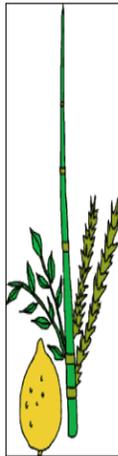
## Sukkot

**Sukkot (Tabernacles)** is the autumn harvest holiday. **It begins on Sunday evening, October 13, 2019.** The first two days of Sukkot are major holidays on which many Jews do not work. (Reform Jews observe the first day only.) Sukkot lasts for seven days. During that time, religious Jews eat in an outdoor booth with a branch-topped roof (*sukkah*) and wave a palm branch (*lulav*) and citron (*etrog or esrog*) in appreciation of the harvest.



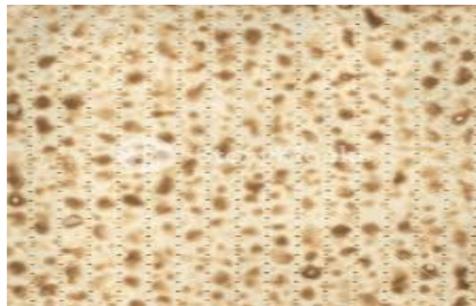
Above: Sukkah (branch-topped booth with table inside)

Right: Lulav and etrog set (palm, citron,



## Hanukkah

**Hanukkah**, a minor holiday, marks the victory of the Maccabees over oppressing Syrian-Greeks, followed by the rededication of the Temple. **It begins at sundown on Sunday, December 22, 2019, and lasts for eight days—ending at dark on Monday, December 30.** A minor festival, Hanukkah is celebrated by lighting candles in the Hanukkah menorah each night. Traditional foods are potato pancakes and jelly donuts. Fried in oil, they commemorate the tradition that there was only enough oil to light the Temple menorah for a single night, yet the oil burned for eight days until new oil had been prepared.



It wouldn't be Passover without Matzah! But don't serve it for Hanukkah!

## Tu B'Shevat

**Tu B'Shevat**, a very minor holiday, is the Jewish Arbor Day; the New Year for the Trees. On Tu B'Shevat, we celebrate trees by eating their fruit and planting for the future. **Tu B'Shevat begins the evening of Sunday, February 9, 2020, and ends at dark on February 10.**

## Purim

Purim, a minor holiday that celebrates the defeat of wicked Haman's plot to destroy the Jews of Persia, falls on **Monday night, March 9, 2020, and Tuesday, March 10.**

Purim is celebrated by reading the biblical Book of Esther from a scroll, costumes, merrymaking, eating hamantaschen, and sending food gifts to friends and family.

## Passover

**Passover**, marking the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, is an eight-day festival. The first two and last two days are major holidays on which no work is done. The first two evenings are each celebrated with a Seder: a festive meal that includes a service where the story of the exodus is retold, eating ritual foods, and singing songs. **Passover begins Wednesday evening, April 8, 2020, and ends at dark on Thursday, April 16.** (Reform Jews observe the first seven days with only one Seder.)

## Shavuot

**Shavuot** marks the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. A major festival, **it is celebrated for two days beginning Thursday evening, May 28, 2020, and ending on Saturday, May 30, when it is dark.** (Reform Jews observe the first day only.) Dairy products are the traditional food eaten on Shavuot.

## Two More Occasions to Celebrate

**Israel Independence Day:** You may celebrate Cinco de Mayo, Columbus Day, and St. Patrick's Day as cultural celebrations. Similarly, **you may celebrate Israel Independence Day** on the Jewish date, the 5th of Iyar, which is **Wednesday, April 29, 2020, or on the English date, May 14.**

Since most older Jews are not connoisseurs of Israeli music, get lively Jewish music instead. Amazon.com has **L'Chaim (To Life): Ultimate Jewish Music Collection and Mazel Tov! – Klezmer Music for a Jewish Wedding and other Joyous Occasions.** Serve hummus with pita or fill a pita with a chopped tomato and cucumber salad and fried falafel balls (frozen falafel balls are available at Price Chopper, 1892 Central Avenue, west of Rte. 155, Colonie). Drink orange juice.



**Lag B'Omer:** On the 33rd day between Passover and Shavuot, we celebrate Lag B'Omer (literally "the 33rd Day of the Omer"). **It will be Monday night, May 11 and all day May 12, 2020.** Lag B'Omer is traditionally celebrated with bonfires, picnics, and relay races ("color wars"). Called the "Scholars' Holiday," it commemorates the cessation of a plague among the students of Rabbi Akiva around the year 120 of the Christian Era.

## We want to reach your residents!

During the summer, we will send you an email requesting the number of Jewish residents at your facility to let us know where to send volunteers during the High Holy Day season.

Our mission is to reach all Jewish residents in Capital District long-term-care facilities to keep them connected to their religious and cultural roots. It is only with YOUR help that we can reach out to the Jewish residents of your facility.

**Please remember:** If your residents or their family members need chaplaincy assistance or have religious concerns, we want to help. **You can reach Chaplaincy Services at 518-783-7800, ext. 228.** We can also provide in-service training on Jewish life, holidays and customs, as well as prayer books and some ritual items for your residents.

## Important Reminders!

**All Jewish holy days and festivals begin and end at sundown.** That is because the Book of Genesis, in Chapter 1, says "there was evening and there was morning."

**There are different degrees of holiday observance among Jews.** The days given above follow the most traditional practices. **Talk to your residents and their families to find out how they celebrate. They can also tell you which foods their families traditionally prepared for each holiday.**

Throughout the year, Federation's Jewish Life Newsletter will provide more detailed material on holiday observances, traditions, and special foods associated with the holidays and resources you can turn to for further information.

**Have a great summer!!!**