



Rosh HaShana

Sept 22-24, 2025

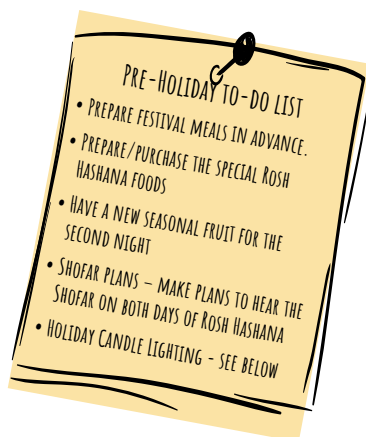


Rosh Hashana begins at 6:56pm on Monday, Sept 22.
Rosh Hashana concludes at 7:53pm on Wednesday, Sept 24.

All times displayed in this guide are for the Greater Toronto Area.

WHAT IS ROSH HASHANA?

Hashana, as the name implies, is the “head” of the year, from which all the energy that flows through the rest of the year emanates – including our connection to the Divine and all the blessings we need for the year. Just as a body needs a healthy head in order to function properly, so too the year needs a healthy Rosh Hashana in order to channel its energy in the best way.



ROSH HASHANA IN JEWISH HISTORY

3760 BCE: Birthday of humanity with the creation of Adam and Eve, and the first sin (of the Tree of Knowledge) and repentance on the same day.
2105 BCE: The Great Flood in the days of Noach ends.
1677 BCE: The Binding of Isaac, and the passing of his mother Sarah
1746: The Baal Shem Tov's vision of Moshiach, during which he asked him when he would finally come. His reply? “When your teachings are disseminated and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings spread to the outside,” a reference to Chassidic teachings.



SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING

Shabbat and Holiday candles are lit by women and girls.

The blessings for lighting, with instructions and times, can be found in the JRCC Calendar.

📖 Learn more at jrcc.org/ShabbatCandles

THE FIRST ROSH HASHANA

Rosh Hashana is the anniversary of the birth of humankind. Why do we celebrate Rosh Hashana, and the beginning of the year, on this day?

The creation of humanity is what enables the true purpose of Creation to be fulfilled. G-d created a world that conceals His presence, and He wants us to reveal it. Only humans – who are endowed with intelligence and freedom of choice; the ability to accept G-d or reject Him – can accomplish this.



We're here to help

The JRCC is here to assist with all your Rosh Hashana needs. See the back page of Exodus for a list of High Holiday Services locations. For assistance in making your Rosh Hashana plans, including attending services, having someone blow the Shofar for you in your home, or any other assistance, visit jrcc.org/HighHolidays or contact the JRCC.



WHY SHOFAR? TEN REASONS

Although the Torah does not specify why we are to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana, Rabbi Saadia Gaon compiled a list of ten reasons for this special mitzvah:

1. On Rosh Hashana we coronate G-d as King of the world. The shofar's trumpeting call heralds this exciting event.
2. Its piercing wail serves to awaken slumbering souls that have grown complacent.
3. It evokes the shofar blasts that were heard when G-d descended on Mount Sinai and gave us the Torah.
4. It echoes the cries of the prophets who urged Israel to mend their ways and return to G-d and His commandments.
5. It reminds us of the war cries of our enemies as they broke into the Temple in Jerusalem and destroyed it.
6. Made of a ram's horn, the shofar recalls the near-sacrifice of Isaac, who was saved when G-d showed Abraham a ram to bring as an offering in his stead.
7. Its loud piercing sound humbles us and fills us with awe before G-d.
8. It foreshadows the day of judgment at the end of days, which the prophet describes as "a day of shofar and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers."
9. It gives us hope, mirroring the sound of the "great shofar" that will call together the Jewish people who are scattered to the corners of the earth at the time of the coming of Moshiach.
10. It reminds us of the Revival of the Dead, about which we read, "dwellers of the earth ... a shofar is sounded you shall hear."

📖 Learn more at jrcc.org/Shofar



THE MOSHIACH CONNECTION

The shofar blasts on Rosh Hashana are associated with the coming of Moshiach, especially the long, extended blast at the end of each set. The prophet Isaiah writes, "On that day a great shofar will be sounded, and those who are lost in the land of Ashur (Assyria) and those who are cast away in the land of Mitzrayim (Egypt) shall come and bow down to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem."

There are different ways we can get lost in the journey of life. Ashur means "bliss," a reference to the luxuries and pleasures of prosperity we can get lost in. Mitzrayim means "constraints," a reference to the various limitations, stresses and pressures that swallow us alive.

Both of these phenomena are burdens that hold us back from realizing our true spiritual potential, and both will be lifted with the sounding of the great shofar that will awaken us with the coming of Moshiach.

📖 Learn more at jrcc.org/Moshiach



SPECIAL ROSH HASHANA FOODS

A central part of Judaism is about expressing the spiritual within our physical lives in a meaningful way. That's why there are so many mitzvahs and details governing daily life. Even the foods we eat have significance – especially on an auspicious day like Rosh Hashana. Here are a few examples:



We dip a piece of sweet (red) apple into honey, praying that it be G-d's will to renew for us a good and sweet year.



A head of a fish, ram, or other kosher animal, is served. This symbolizes our desire to be at the "head of the class" this year.



A pomegranate is eaten, symbolizing our wish to have a year full of mitzvah and good deeds, as a pomegranate is filled with luscious seeds.



On Rosh Hashana it is customary not to eat foods which are sour or tart. Instead, the focus is on sweet foods, symbolizing our desire to have a sweet year, blessings and abundance.



It is also customary not to eat nuts on Rosh Hashana, as the numerical value of the Hebrew word for nuts ("egoz") is the same as the Hebrew word for sin ("chet").



SWEETNESS

One of the unique qualities of honey as it's described in Jewish literature is that it doesn't overpower with brute force, like fire which violently consumes whatever it touches. Honey overpowers with sweetness. The sweetness of honey is so intense that everything it touches is overwhelmed and succumbs to its sweet embrace. This power of honey represents a deeper approach to the High Holidays. Yes, these are somber times, and there is a real need to return to G-d. But the introspection and good resolutions that these days inspire need not come from a place of guilt. Rather, when we experience the sweetness of Divine love, when we feel how close G-d is to us and what a blessing it is to be a Jew, our joy can melt away whatever is evil and purify us from our less than kosher ways. This is why we start the High Holidays by dipping challah and apple in honey. Only a Judaism that is infused with sweetness and joy has the power to dissolve negativity, cynicism and indifference. Sadness and heaviness will not cleanse our soul. But the experience of sweetness will.

📖 Learn more at jrcc.org/NewYear