

## FESTIVAL INFO

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### FAST OF ESTHER (TA'ANIT ESTHER)

**Ash Wednesday** is a [Christian](#) holy day of [prayer](#) and [fasting](#). It is preceded by [Shrove Tuesday](#) and falls on the first day of [Lent](#),<sup>[2]</sup> the six weeks of [penitence](#) before [Easter](#). Ash Wednesday is traditionally observed by [Western Christians](#). It is observed by [Catholics](#) in the [Roman Rite](#), [Anglicans](#), [Lutherans](#), [Methodists](#), [Moravians](#), [Nazarenes](#), and [Independent Catholics](#), as well as by many from the [Reformed](#) faith (inclusive of the [Congregationalist](#), [Continental Reformed](#), and [Presbyterian](#) traditions) and [United Protestants](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

As it is the first day of Lent, many Christians begin Ash Wednesday by marking a [Lenten calendar](#), praying a [Lenten daily devotional](#), and making a [Lenten sacrifice](#) that they will not partake of until the arrival of [Eastertide](#).<sup>[4][5]</sup>

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the placing of repentance [ashes](#) on the foreheads of participants to either the words "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or the dictum "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."<sup>[6]</sup> The ashes are prepared by burning [palm leaves](#) from the previous year's [Palm Sunday](#) celebrations.

#### CONTENT

- [About This Event](#)

### LAWS

The fast is observed on the 13th day of the [Hebrew month](#) of [Adar](#). (When the year has two Adar months, it is observed only in the second Adar). If the date of the Fast of Esther falls on [Shabbat](#) (Saturday), the fast is instead observed on the preceding Thursday, as this was the case in 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2017. This will occur again in 2024. ([Shulchan Aruch](#) S.686 s.2)

As the fast of Esther is not one of the four public fasts ordained by the [Prophets](#), the laws concerning its observance are more lenient; pregnant women, nursing mothers, and those who are weak are not required to observe it.<sup>[5]</sup>

The [Gregorian](#) dates, from dawn until nightfall, for 2021–2023 are:<sup>[6]</sup>

- 2021: February 25
- 2022: March 16
- 2023: March 6