

# FESTIVAL INFO

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## TU BISHVAT

Tu B'Shevat is the Jewish 'New Year for Trees'. It is one of the four Jewish new years (Rosh Hashanahs).

On Tu B'Shevat Jews often eat fruits associated with

the Holy Land, especially the ones mentioned in the Torah.

## HISTORY

Tu B'Shevat is a transliteration of 'the fifteenth of Shevat', the Hebrew date specified as the new year for trees.

The Torah forbids Jews to eat the fruit of new trees for three years after they are planted. The fourth year's fruit was to

be tithed to the Temple. Tu B'Shevat was counted as the birthday for all trees for tithing purposes: like the beginning of a fiscal year. It gradually gained religious significance, with a Kabbalistic fruit-eating ceremony (like the Passover seder) being introduced during the 1600s.

## CUSTOMS

Jews eat plenty of fruit on Tu B'Shevat, particularly the kinds associated with Israel. The Torah praises seven 'fruits' in particular: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.

A short blessing is recited after eating any fruit. A special, longer blessing is recited for the fruits mentioned in the Torah.

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Jews also try to eat a new fruit, which can be any seasonal fruit that they have not tasted this year, followed by another blessing. Hassidic Jews may also pray for a perfect etrog, a type of citrus fruit, to use for Sukkot.

Some Jews plant trees on this day, or collect money towards planting trees in Israel.