



TEMPLE
BETH EL

Home FOR
Tu B' Shevat
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Tu B'Shevat

Tu B'Shevat appears in the Talmud as one of the four “new years” in the Jewish calendar, “Beit Hillel says that the ‘new year for the trees’ is the 15th of Shevat”.

Traditionally, we eat fruits from the seven species for which the Land of Israel is praised: “...a land of wheat, barley, [grape] vines, fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and [date] honey” (Deut. 8:8).

In the Kabbalistic tradition Tu B'Shevat includes a Seder, conceptually similar to the Passover seder, where the inner dimensions of fruits are explained, along with blessings, songs and deep discussion. The 16th century kabbalist Arizal taught that eating 10 specific fruits and drinking four cups of wine in a specific order can bring one closer to spiritual perfection. Some Jews preserve their etrog from Sukkot and eat it on Tu B'Shevat.

In Israel, Tu B'Shevat is a sort of Jewish Arbor Day – a day of environmental awareness where trees are planted in celebration.

To mark Tu B'Shevat with special emphasis this year we would like to connect it to Shabbat, specifically Havdalah, the moment we end Shabbat and begin a new week. That ability to differentiate between the holy and the profane, should be present at the moment we acknowledge God's creation symbolized in nature. Tu B'Shevat is counted as having grown fruits in the previous agricultural year, while fruit which developed after belongs to the next year. It marks an ending and a new beginning, very similar to the end of Shabbat and the beginning of a new week with new challenges.

Let us celebrate Tu B'Shevat with the spirit of blessing over the new fruits of our world. Say a blessing (bracha) over fruits. Find one or more of the seven species, wheat / barley / olives / dates / grapes / figs / pomegranates and say the blessing.

Happy Tu B'Shevat!!



Prayers for Seder

Blessing For The Grape Juice

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed be You, the One who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessing For Fruit Of The Tree

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Baruch atah A-donay, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam borei pri ha-aitz.

Blessed be You, the One who creates the fruit of the tree.

Blessing For The First Time You Experience Something (Shehechiyanu)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-hechiyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed be You, the One who has kept us alive and sustained us so that we could reach this moment.

Blessing After Eating Various Fruit

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא נִפְשוֹת רַבּוֹת
וְחֶסְרוֹנָן עַל כָּל מָה שֶׁבְּרָאתָ לְהַחַיּוֹת בָּהֶם נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי
בְּרוּךְ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei n'fashot rabot v'chesronan, al kol ma she-barata, l'hachayot bahem nefesh kol chai, barukh chei ha-olamim.

Blessed be You, the One who created so many different living things, all needing each other, to make one Life interwoven through them all, as one soul. Blessed be the Life of all worlds.

Tu B'Shevat Seder Begins With...

Winter

We start with winter when many species in nature lay dormant. Just like animals hibernating through winter, seeds that will sprout new trees “sleep” underground. To start our seder we taste foods, like seeds, that have a hard exterior. Many foods that are hard or fuzzy on the outside contain sweetness and deliciousness on the inside. Because of their hard exterior, these foods can represent the human tendency to judge others by their outer appearance. They can also represent the ways that we separate ourselves from other people. This part of the seder reminds us that every person is unique and special.

- 1. The First Cup:** Pour a glass of white grape juice, say the appropriate blessing (grape juice) and drink half or more.
- 2.** Say blessing on the Fruit of the Tree and Shehechyanu.
- 3. Eat:** Walnuts, almonds, pomegranates, coconuts, or pistachios.

As part of the seder we leave you with discussion

Discuss: When have you “judged a book by it’s cover” only to realize that you were mistaken?

Spring

Add a few drops of red grape juice to your cup of white juice to look at the way a little bit of color can cause a lot of transformation. This helps us think about the fact that every stream begins with a small trickle, and every flower or tree starts with just a single bud. Although we don't eat the pits of fruits, they are the building blocks of new plants. Our growth can sometimes come from the innermost overlooked places. They can symbolize the potential within us that we have not yet tapped.

- 1. The Second Cup:** pour a few drops of red grape juice and fill the rest with white. Say the appropriate blessing, and drink half or more.
- 2. Eat:** Cherries, olives, plums, apricots, or avocados.

Discuss: What is something you have done or created that started out very small and became bigger or more important over time?

Summer

At this part we drink a third cup of juice that's made of equal parts red and white juice. We'll also get to nosh on some foods that can be eaten whole, no peeling or deseeding needed. These fruits remind us of the wholeness of the world, where nothing is wasted and everything nourishes everything else. Even though the trees will be full and green, and their flowers will blossom, their growth is not complete. So much more will be created and so much more is to come. We take this time to look at the fruit of our own creations and actions and consider how to deepen our relationships in the world and with the earth.

- 1. The Third Cup:** Refill the cup so that there is half red and half white grape juice. Say the appropriate blessing, and drink half or more.
- 2. Eat:** grapes, raisins, apples, pears, blueberries, or raspberries.

Discuss: When do you feel truly whole and happy?

The Meal: Take time with your family and enjoy your meal!

Time to Eat!

Fall

Now we're at our final step - where we'll drink a full cup of juice and focus on the sense of smell rather than taste. The drops of white in the red remind us of the first cup of this seder and of the cyclical nature of the seasons. Beyond the cycle of eating is the cycle of breathing, when something lives both within and without us at the same time. At this level all things are already part of each other. Like smells, the ways we remember this connection are subtle: the feel of the soil or the smell of dew. During this portion we think about what was invisible to the eye, or things that are part of us and part of the world that we can't see or hear, like trees growing, leaves blowing in the wind, or the sun coming up to bring us new days and help the cycle of life.

- 1. The Fourth Cup:** pour a nearly full glass of red grape juice and add just a few drops of white. Say the blessing. Drink all.
- 2. Smell:** cinnamon, rosemary, bay leaf, cedar
- 3. Say blessing** aftering eating various fruit!

Discuss: What helps you remember and appreciate what you cannot see?

May the New Year of The Trees begin a year of growth; may it be a year of renewal for the trees and for us; and may our blessings give strength to the trees and may our eyes be opened to the wonders of creation, and may we nurture the world that nurtures us.

VEGAN TU B'SHEVAT "7 SPECIES" SALAD

By The Red Fern

INGREDIENTS

POMEGRANATE-DATE DRESSING:

POMEGRANATE JUICE ½ CUPS
DRIED FIGS, 6 CUT IN QUARTERS
DRIED PITTED DATES 2 HALVED
BALSAMIC VINEGAR ¼ CUP
CLOVE GARLIC 1 SMALL
DIJON OR BROWN MUSTARD 1 TSP
OLIVE OIL ¼ C. + 2 TBSP
SEA SALT ½ TSP
BLACK PEPPER TO TASTE



GRAIN SALAD:

DRY PEARL BARLEY ¾ CUP
DRY FARRO ¾ CUP
POMEGRANATE SEEDS ¾ CUP
SLIVERED CURED GREEN OLIVES ¾ CUP
SLICED SEEDLESS RED GRAPES (SLICED THE LONG WAY) ½ CUP
SOAKED, QUARTERED FIGS
PARSLEY, MINCED, 1 BUNCH
GARLIC, FINELY MINCED 1 CLOVE
SHALLOT FINELY MINCED 1
(CAN SUBSTITUTE ¾ CUP RED ONION, FINELY MINCED)
OLIVE OIL ¼ CUP
RED WINE VINEGAR 2 TBSP
LEMON JUICE 2 TBSP
SEA SALT ¼ - ½ TSP
BLACK PEPPER ⅛ TSP

POMEGRANATE-DATE DRESSING:

- 1.** Soak the dried figs and dates in pomegranate juice overnight. Remove the *figs only* and put them in a bowl off to the side for later!
- 2.** Pour the pomegranate juice and softened dates in a high-speed blender with balsamic vinegar, garlic clove and mustard. Buzz on high speed until dates are pureed. Turn blender speed to medium-low and SLOWLY pour olive oil thru the hole in the blender's lid. Dressing will begin to thicken and emulsify. Add salt and pepper and buzz for 5-10 more seconds to combine.

GRAIN SALAD

- 1.** Because they cook at different times, cook each grain (barley and farro) in*separate* pots, according to the cooking instructions on their bags. For an added flavor bonus - cook in low-sodium vegetable broth!
- 2.** While the grains are cooking, prepare the rest of the salad. In a large bowl, add pomegranate seeds, slivered black olives, sliced red grapes, soaked figs, minced parsley, garlic, shallot/onion, olive oil, red wine vinegar and lemon juice.
- 3.** By now, each grain should be cooked! Carefully taste them - each grain should be chewy, but not hard or mushy. Drain any excess water/broth from them, and add them both to your bowl of other ingredients. Stir well to combine. Salt & pepper to taste.

ASSEMBLY

In a medium mixing bowl, toss your salad greens of choice (arugula for a peppery bite, spinach for a hardy option, frisee for fancy, spring mix for a universal crowd pleaser, etc!) with pomegranate-date dressing (about 2 lightly-packed cups per person). Spread dressed greens on a dinner plate. In the center, scoop a one-cup portion of grain salad in the center. Sprinkle with extra pomegranate seeds and/or salad dressing as desired. For extra protein, add a grilled, plant-based chick'n breast, veggie burger or portobello mushroom. Enjoy!

Seed Kit

Directions

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PEAT PELLET 1



BIODEGRADABLE PLANT POT 1

MYSTERY SEED PACK 1 (PARSLEY, CHIVES, BASIL)

1. Place peat on a small plate or bowl and add enough water to cover half the height of the pellet.
2. Wait 5-10 minutes for the pellet to fully expand. If more water is needed at this time, add more.
3. When pellets have fully expanded, dump any excess water into the sink. Move pellet to the plant pot.
4. Slightly tear the top of the netting and use a toothpick or a pencil to make a small well where the seeds will go. Plant your seeds and lightly cover them with some of the soil that moved to the side while making the well.
5. Place your pot in a warm place, out of direct sunlight, and wait a few days for the seeds to sprout. Be sure to check every day to see if they have sprouted. Only water if they're looking very dry. If the soil is a little damp to the touch that is good!
6. Once the seeds have sprouted place the tray in a sunny spot or under grow lights. Water as needed.


Plant ID Apps



Tu B'shevat is all about celebrating our ecosystem so we have gathered some apps you can use in your free time to learn more about our world!



PlantSnap (free  \$3.99 ) can be used to take photos of just a few leaves or a flower and can help identify your plant. Has over 500,000 species in the searchable database.

Garden Compass (free  ) can be used to identify garden pests, diseases, or plants. Submit a photo to experts that can name it and provide advice on care.

iNaturalist (free  ) AI is used to immediately ID all kinds of plants and wildlife. Can also be used as a social network for naturalists, and is a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society.

Leafsnap (free on ) uses visual recognition software to correctly recognize plants and will catalog your photos so you can build your own reference library.

Plantifier (free  ) is a crowdsourced plant recognition app where you upload your photos and users of the MyGarden.org community will identify it.

iPflanzen (free  ) pinpoints the identities of over 1500 local flora using traits of flower structure and leaf shape.