

WTHigh Holidays?!

A quick guide for the upcoming holidays

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It's about the journey

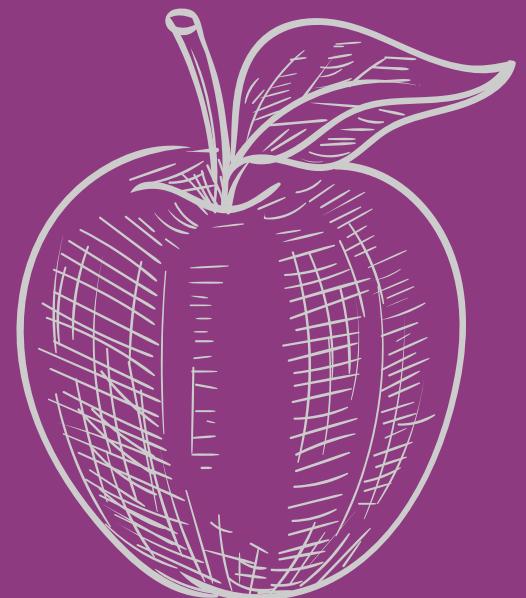
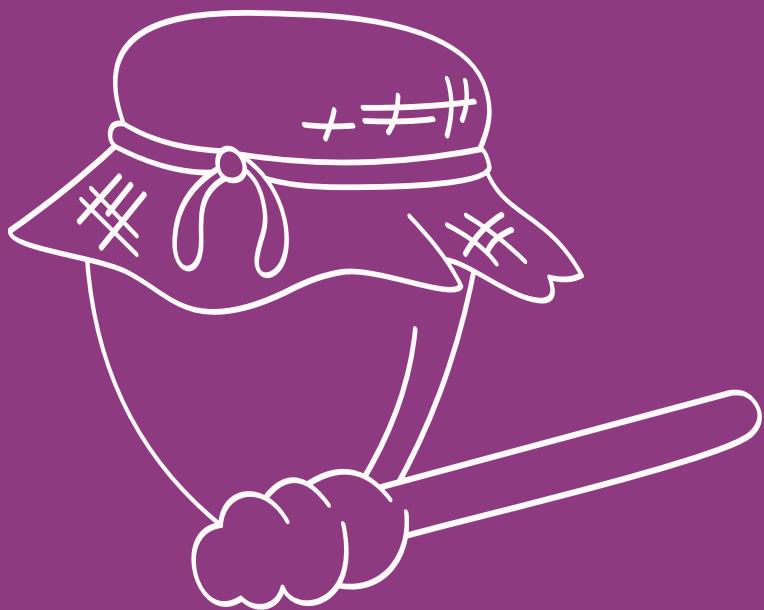
WHAT'S GOIN' DOWN?!

In this guide, you'll learn a bit about:

- Some major holidays that are coming up in the next month (or so)
- Themes & important terms
- Ways to celebrate while social distancing

Big holidays to be aware of:

- **Rosh Hashanah**
- **The 10 Days of "Returning"**
- **Yom Kippur**
- **Sukkot**



ROSH HASHANAH

רָאשׁ הַשְׁנָה

Who doesn't love a New Year party?! Rosh Hashanah, is the start of the year on the Jewish calendar celebrating the birthday of the word. We celebrate with traditions that:

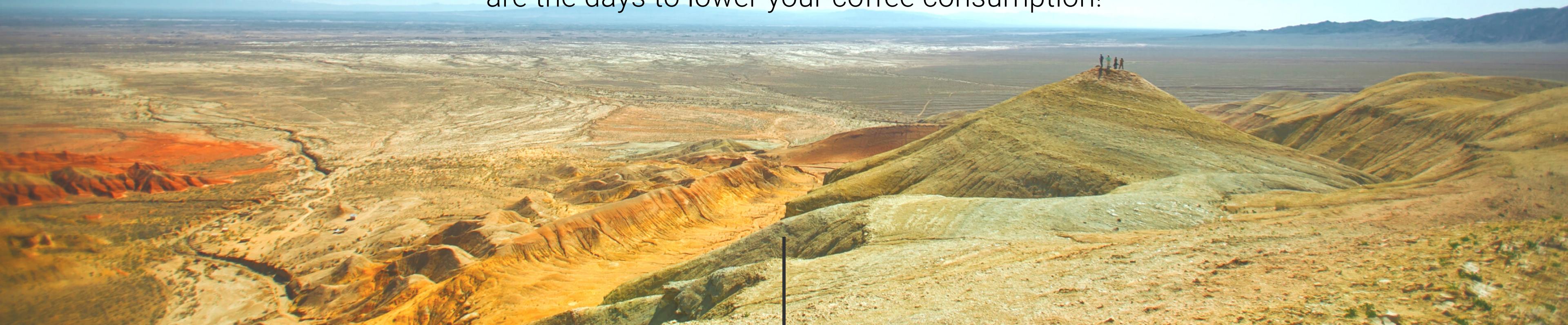
- invite a sweet year (think apples dipped in honey)
- start us off on a clean slate (think lots of introspection, and strengthening/repairing relationships that matter most to us)
- awaken us to the moment (think blowing the shofar, the ram's horn)

People often go to synagogue, join with family and friends for a festive meal and set intentions for a year of growth.

Ten Days of "Returning"

עשרת ימי תשובה

From the beginning of Rosh Hashanah to the break fast at the very end of Yom Kippur is 10 whole days. While some folks spend the month before Rosh Hashanah getting their act together and their lives in order, many of us need the energetic nudge from the holidays to think about what we truly want out of this life. We are encouraged to give an honest look at our lives and without beating ourselves up, begin to reorient ourselves to the productive, good-natured person we know we are. This is the time to pick up the phone and apologize for ghosting your friend or forgiving your sister for spilling the beans to your parents about that embarrassing situation at work. This is the time when we begin to act on the intentions we have set. And if you plan to fast for Yom Kippur, these are the days to lower your coffee consumption!



YOM KIPPUR

יום הכיפורים



Things tend to get a bit more serious, but that's because Judaism wants you to be living your best life.

Yom Kippur is a day when we try to rid ourselves of distractions, so we fast from food, television, electronics, gossip, and sexual relationships. We bring our focus to the quality of life we want to lead. We own up to the mistakes we made and ask for forgiveness. Many of the rituals and prayers remind us life is short and fragile so we might be motivated to do better because we know we can be better.

Prayers in the synagogue are all in the plural so we know we are not alone; we are all human. And after 25 hours of this focused attention, we gather to break the fast with a festive meal.

סוכות Sukkot

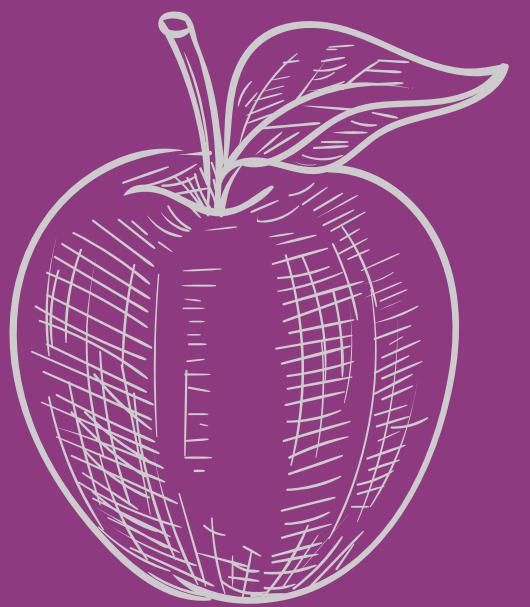
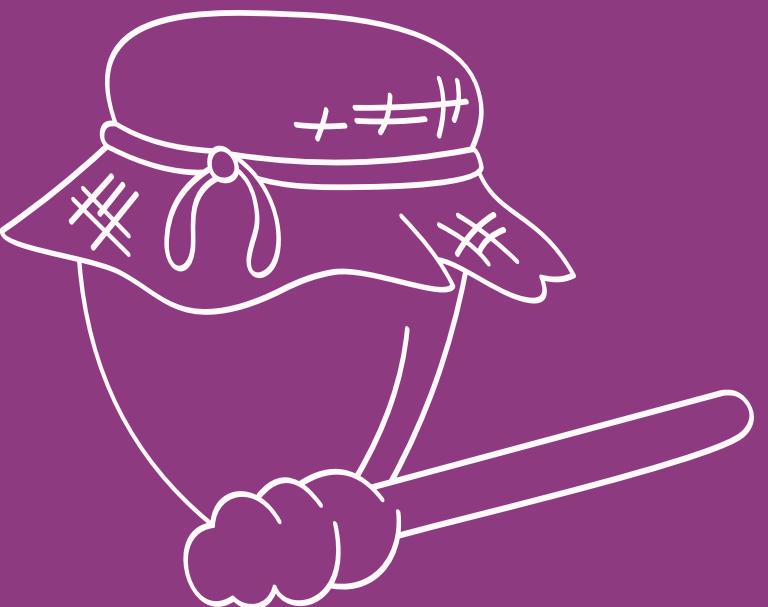
This holiday is named for the cool fort you get to build outside your home, the sukkah. With at least three walls and a natural roof where you should be able to see the sky, eating (and for adventurous souls sleeping) in the sukkah is one of the main rituals. Sukkot is the last of the Jewish harvest festival (think Thanksgiving because it was based on Sukkot).

Because it's a celebration of the autumn bounty, Sukkot is called "the festival of joy". The huts remind us of the times we wandered in the desert for 40 years. Being exposed to natural elements, we remember the fragility of life and turn our prayers for rain to renew the next harvest.



High Holy Days Vocab:

- Cheshbon HaNefesh
- Tashlich
- Sin (it's not what you think)
- Teshuvah



Cheshbon HaNefesh

חישוב הנפש

Jewish tradition can be understood as a practical path to self-actualization, the development of our character, and the capacity to act more consistently in accordance with our highest selves. Metaphysically-speaking, the High Holy Day season is considered an auspicious moment for the practice of Cheshbon HaNefesh (literally, an accounting of the soul). Basically, it's a balance sheet of your spiritual highs and lows from 5780 that will position you to embody an even better 5781. Sounds intimidating? It's actually pretty straightforward: Get a blank journal, find some quiet space, and write. For specific instructions and prompts, visit our Honeymoon Israel High Holy Days website!



תשליך "to cast off"

Symbolically
casting away your
"sins" in a moving
body of water.

Visit the HMI
website for a
guided tashlich
mediation.



Sin in Judaism

There are many words in Hebrew for sin, one of the most common is chet. Chet means to miss the mark or to go astray, like when an archer misses a target. This assumes that our human path is to be on target. In other words, we are born with "original goodness," as opposed to "original sin."



TESHUVAH תְּשׁוּבָה

(RETURNING)

The process of acknowledging a wrong and apologizing, the work of repairing one's relationship with themself, others, and a higher power.

See the HMI website for more specifics!

**Literally - all of
the apologies**

Covid-19 has changed the form of High Holy Days but not the purpose.

Here are some ways to embrace the difference this year:

Surf's up!
For these holidays you can surf the web. You have a whole host of Zoom, FB Live, Youtube and direct stream on congregational websites for the services or activities that meet your need.

Pro tip: Connect your TV to your laptop for better visual experience.

Be a transformer.
Rituals will likely need to be transformed like how we listen to the shofar or the ritual of tashlich, releasing “sins” at a body tashlich.

Pro tip: If you can't get to a stream or a body water outside, take a moment to think about what you want to release and transform the ritual by using a sink, a bathtub or even use bubbles that you can release in the wind.

Your home is your sanctuary. Literally. Get into the holiday spirit and declare a spot in your home your High Holy Day space. Clear away the clutter and decorate.

Pro tip: Keep it simple if you need. Just an apple and honey or your favorite picture of your family can be enough to bring focus to your space.

You can be the rabbi! (but only if you want.) Let this pandemic spark your creative juices. There are more DIY services and opportunities than ever before. You can lead and convene your whole family or group of friends in a ritual or a socially distant meal.

Pro tip: Search websites ahead of time like Honeymoon Israel, 18 Doors, JewBelong, OneTable or your local synagogue for ideas and DIY guides.