

# Purim

## Watch overview videos:

1. Crash Course in Purim (5:42)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQUyri9S9Xg>
2. Vashti & Esther – The Women of Purim (3:48)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=al6e9OauXWO>
3. Purim Song (4:16)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgJlnVvJSZg>

## Basics:

**Pronunciation:** POO-reem (♫ <http://bit.ly/15mV2xS>)

**Meaning:** lots (i.e. casting of, lottery)

- Purim is from Persian word for “Lottery”

**Jewish Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> Adar

**Secular Date:** Generally falls late-February to early-March

**Length:** 1

**Themes:** topsy-turvy, food & drink

## Overview & History:

Read: <http://bit.ly/1bMnIUX> & <http://bit.ly/16kQvle>

- Purim is the holiday that commemorates the victory of the Jewish people over certain destruction from “Haman,” the advisor to King Ahasuerus. The Megillat Esther, one of the books of the Tanakh, contains the story of the events the holiday commemorates.
- It is believed that the events of the Megillat Esther took place in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE and that King Ahasuerus is actually the Persian ruler Xerxes I.
- Shushan Purim, 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar, is when people who live in walled cities celebrate Purim

## Customs

Read: <http://bit.ly/1gvSfwl>

**Mishloach Manot:** (♫ <http://bit.ly/19y9PXC>)

- Meaning: “gifts of hands”
- Gift boxes containing at least two ready-to-eat foods, given as gifts to friends, loved ones or those in need. As they are “gifts of hands” it is considered preferable to deliver them by hand, instead of mail when ever possible.
- Giving of Charity:

Please note: this text may not be shared or reproduced without the written permission of the Darshan Yeshiva.

- Traditional to give to charity or those in need on 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar
- Hamantashen or Oznei Haman:
  - Traditional cookies. 3-cornered cookie with savory or sweet filling.
  - Hamantashen is the Ashkenazic name from Yiddish for “Haman’s Pockets.
  - Oznei Haman is the Hebrew name and it means “Haman’s Ears”
- Purim Schpiel:
  - Meaning: skit (Yiddish)
  - a satirical or humorous rendition of the Purim story that is intended to gain power over enemies by mocking them.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages
  - Jews are not known for getting drunk, but on this holiday of reversals the Talmud tells us: “It is one's duty, to make oneself fragrant [with wine] on Purim until one cannot tell the difference between cursed Haman and blessed Mordecai" (Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 7b).”
  - More recent commentary suggests that if getting drunk will interfere with one’s ability to perform a mitzvah on Purim, then one should abstain. (Be'ur Halakhah 694, s.v. "Ad")
- Esther & Vashti Flags
  - Traditionally Vashti has been seen as a “bad example” of womanhood, but in many progressive communities, Purim is a holiday that celebrates feminist ideals and reclaims Vashti and Esther as different sides of the same coin.
  - To recognize this, instead of just shouting and stamping out Haman’s name, some communities wave flags in celebration whenever Esther or Vashti’s names are mentioned.
  - Learn more: <http://bit.ly/19uL4g3>

## Liturgy & Halakhah

Read: <http://bit.ly/1eCiCwk>

- Fast of Esther: dawn to dusk of “Erev Purim.”
  - Some debate if this is Halakhah or “minchag”
  - Fast is from dawn to dusk on Adar 13
  - Commemorates fast Esther undertakes in the Scroll of Esther
- The four mitzvot of Purim are:
  1. Read or hear (live) the Scroll of Esther (Megillah).
    - i. Note that in the Book of Esther the Holy One is not ever mentioned.
  2. Send at least two ready-to-eat foods to at least one person or give charity to at least two people in need.
  3. Sit down for a royal feast.
  4. Break out of habits and inhibitions.
- During the reading of the Megillah, we “blot out” Haman’s name each time it is said by shouting, stomping or shaking noisemakers (graggers).

Please note: this text may not be shared or reproduced without the written permission of the Darshan Yeshiva.

- The prayer/song Al Hanissim is also traditionally included in the liturgy at Purim (and Chanukah). Download PDF copy of Hebrew & English text: <http://bit.ly/1aiZEZ7>
- During a leap year, Purim always falls in second month of, Adar so it remains one month from Passover.

## Sources and Bibliography

### Books:

- The Jewish Holidays: A Guide & Commentary, Michael Strassfield
- Seasons of our Joy, Arthur Ocean Waskow
- The Jewish Book of Days, Jill Hammer
- Celebrating the Jewish Year: The Winter Holidays, Paul Steinberg
- The Rosh Chodesh Table: Foods at the New Moon, Judith Solomon
- Seasons for Celebration, Karen L. Fox and Phyllis Zimmler Miller
- Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Patkin Teutsch

### Websites:

- [http://www.aish.com/h/pur/b/Understand\\_Purim\\_in\\_5\\_Minutes\\_or\\_Less.html](http://www.aish.com/h/pur/b/Understand_Purim_in_5_Minutes_or_Less.html)
- [http://jhom.com/calendar/adar/about\\_adar.html](http://jhom.com/calendar/adar/about_adar.html)
- <http://jhom.com/calendar/adar/curiosities.htm>
- [http://www.ou.org/torah/article/fast\\_of\\_esther](http://www.ou.org/torah/article/fast_of_esther)
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holiday9.html>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purim>
- <http://www.hazon.org/resource/purim/>
- [http://www.chabad.org/holidays/purim/article\\_cdo/aid/648895/jewish/Purim-FAQs.htm](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/purim/article_cdo/aid/648895/jewish/Purim-FAQs.htm)
- [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Purim/History.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Purim/History.shtml)
- <http://www.ou.org/holidays/purim/#.UkDFGBZbVtc>
- [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Purim/In\\_the\\_Community/Plays\\_and\\_Carnivals.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Purim/In_the_Community/Plays_and_Carnivals.shtml)
- [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Purim/At\\_Home/Meal/Drinking\\_on\\_Purim.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Purim/At_Home/Meal/Drinking_on_Purim.shtml)
- <http://vbm-torah.org/archive/moadim69/18-69moed.htm>
- <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/story/purim-laws-customs?tp=339>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamantasch>
- [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Purim/At\\_Home/Foods/Hamantaschen.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Purim/At_Home/Foods/Hamantaschen.shtml)

Please note: this text may not be shared or reproduced without the written permission of the Darshan Yeshiva.

- [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Purim/In\\_the\\_Community/Purim\\_Story/Vashti\\_and\\_Esther.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Purim/In_the_Community/Purim_Story/Vashti_and_Esther.shtml)
- [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Purim/In\\_the\\_Community/Megillah\\_Reading/A\\_New\\_Ritual.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Purim/In_the_Community/Megillah_Reading/A_New_Ritual.shtml)