

# Tu B'Shevat

## Watch overview videos:

1. What is Tu B'Shevat (5:06)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjT0squ8aG0>

## Basics:

**Pronunciation:** TOO bish-VAHT (♫ <http://bit.ly/19xZjzA>)

**Meaning:** 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat (literal)

**Jewish Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> Shevat

**Secular Date:** Generally falls late-January to late-February

**Length:** 1

**Themes:** Trees, Fruit, 7 Species

## Overview & History:

Read: <http://bit.ly/17aaVy0> & <http://bit.ly/HbDcYy>

- Tu B'Shevat is considered one of the four Jewish new years, according to the Talmud. It is considered to be the New Year for the Trees.  
“There are four new years... the first of Shevat is the new year for trees according to the ruling of Beit Shammai; Beit Hillel, however, places it on the fifteenth of that month.” (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1)
- Originally, this was an agricultural marker when calculations for the tithing of trees were determined. It also falls exactly six months after Tu B'Av.
- The tribe of Asher, whose standard is an olive tree, is also associated with the month of Shevat.
- **17<sup>th</sup> Century CE:** Kabbalist Issac Luria and his contemporaries create the practice of a Tu B'Shevat Seder that explores the Torah, as Tree of Life, through sacred texts, four cups of wine, and eating fruits and nuts from trees.
- **19<sup>th</sup> Century CE:** leaders of the Zionist movement brought new attention to the holiday, by beginning the practice of planting trees in Israel on this holiday.

## Customs

Read: <http://bit.ly/1b3SRSR>

- The practice of the Tu B'Shevat seder has seen resurgence in the past 30 years.
- The practice of planting trees or donating to tree funds in Israel and other countries is also a common practice.

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

- Eating foods connected to Israel – seven species: wheat, barley, grape (wine), pomegranates, olives (oil), figs and honey (dates). Deut 8:8
- Eating carob is also a custom for some, in remembrance of Choni the Circlemaker: <http://bit.ly/1bM7TxD>
- Some progressive congregations use this time of year to bring eco-issues to mind and undertake sustainability or “greening” initiatives.
- Telling stories of trees! There are many stories and midrash in Jewish tradition about trees. Find them at: <http://bit.ly/19kEXwm>

## Liturgy & Halakhah

- There are no form liturgical or halakhic requirements for Tu B’Shevat, so a wide variety of approaches to liturgy have been developed.
- Tu B’Shevat Seder Resources:
  - Ritual Well: <http://bit.ly/1i6y6IX>
  - Hazon: <http://bit.ly/1bM89ge>
  - Punk Torah: <http://bit.ly/15UQkL7>
- Tree Planting Prayers: <http://bit.ly/19kEXwm>
- Psalms of Ascent: It is traditional to read the “Psalms of Ascent” (Psalms 120-134) on the days leading up to Tu B’Shevat

## 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.jewfaq.org/holiday8.htm>
- [http://www.kolel.org/pages/holidays/TuBishevat\\_intro.html](http://www.kolel.org/pages/holidays/TuBishevat_intro.html)
- <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/24629/tu-b'shevat—a-guide-for-the-perplexed>
- [http://ohr.edu/holidays/tu\\_bshvat/1447](http://ohr.edu/holidays/tu_bshvat/1447)

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

- <http://www.ritualwell.org/categories/661>
- <http://www.peelapom.com/spirituality/wheel-of-the-year/tu-bshevat/tu-bshevat-seder-resources/>
- <http://jhom.com/topics/trees/prayer.htm>
- <http://punktorah.org/planting-seders-and-psalms-practices-for-shevat/>
- <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/kosher/living020199.asp>
- <http://www.hazon.org/resource/tu-bshvat/>
- [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/3264/jewish/Tu-BShevat.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3264/jewish/Tu-BShevat.htm)

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