



# HOST GUIDE

🍋 for Rosh HaShanah Gathering 🍋



This downloadable Rosh HaShanah kit has been specially created and produced by **Kol HaOt - Illuminating Jewish Life through Art** for the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

Thank you to members of the Kol HaOt team – Elyssa Moss Rabinowitz, David Moss, Yair Medina, Matt Berkowitz and Fern Allen – for their originality and vision, which facilitated the creation and development of this kit.

**Illustration & Design:** Elad Lifshitz, Dov Abramson Studio

**Origami Artist:** Yonatan Fialkoff

**Poem by:** Chaya Lester

**Translations and Hebrew editing:** Lucy Shvamental, Marcelo Kisilevski, Naama Shaked.

Thank you to the dedicated staff at the ROI Community office and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation for their support in guiding this kit from concept to reality. Special thanks to Elissa Krycer, Erica Mandell, Ariel Hirsch, Arielle Cizma and Renana Levine.



Dear Host,

We are thrilled that you have decided to host a Rosh HaShanah gathering! This kit is meant to help you fill your event with inspiring and innovative Rosh HaShanah-themed content.

Read on for some background information on the meaning of the holiday, as well as key points about the traditional Rosh HaShanah *Seder* and its special menu. We'll share with you some traditional blessings, together with a few contemporary compositions that our community members have made up themselves. We encourage you to be creative and original, too! Make your *Seder* a unique experience for yourself and your guests by inventing your own food and pun combinations to add to the mix.





The following downloadable pieces are meant to enhance the content of your event:



**Host Guide** Read this first! It will give you directions for everything you need to get your *Seder* started.

A5 booklet,  
printed on 90  
gr. paper, full  
color print, staple  
binding



### Rosh HaShanah Haggadah

We recommend printing one for each participant, to be used at the gathering as well as a nice giveaway for them to take home. This file appears in four versions, with the introductory pages in Russian, Spanish, Hebrew and English. Choose the one that's most appropriate for your guests!

A5 booklet,  
printed on 170  
gr. paper, full  
color print, staple  
binding



**Centerpiece** Print this file to beautify your *Seder* table.

A3X2 double sided  
print, printed on  
300 gr. paper, full  
color print



**Activity file** "Let us entertain you"—or rather, let us help you entertain your guests! The "Four Children of Rosh HaShanah" activity is sure to encourage interesting conversation and table talk.

A4 single sided  
print, printed on  
90 gr. paper, full  
color print



### "Make Your Own Origami Pomegranate"

Print this file as placemats and let your guests create their own pomegranates, or follow the instructions yourself to create beautiful invitations, New Year's cards or name cards for your participants. Step-by-step instructions included!

A3 single sided  
print, printed on  
90 gr. paper, full  
color print





The files listed to the left are in standard print sizes; all you need to do is send them to your local print station (FedEx, Kinkos, Office Depot, etc.), give them the paper size and weight instructions for each file, and make sure they are in full color. Did you receive a #MakeItHappen: Rosh HaShanah micro grant? Keep your printing receipts to get reimbursed for the cost of printing!



Wishing you a wonderful holiday and joyful New Year,  
The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.



## Introduction

There is no doubt that the Jewish New Year—Rosh HaShanah—differs from the New Year that much of the world celebrates on January 1. There is no Rosh HaShanah midnight countdown, and no party hats...but our Jewish New Year is far from a bore! Our sages established Rosh HaShanah traditions that are thought-provoking, creative and, believe it or not, fun—even 1,000+ years after they were written. (How's that for #ForwardThinking?)

Discover the fascinating history of the Rosh HaShanah *Seder*: a lesser-known Rosh HaShanah tradition consisting of delicious foods, puns, word games and meaningful reflections on the year that has passed, and expectations for the year to come. We hope that you'll experience a new—actually, an old!—way to celebrate the Jewish New Year with your family and friends; and if you're still pining for those party hats, find a creative way to include them in your *Seder*! The Jewish New Year is at your fingertips.

May the coming year be a peaceful one, filled with blessings.  
*Shanah Tova U'Metukah!*





What's in a Name?

## The Many Names and Meanings of Rosh HaShanah

Usually translated as the Jewish New Year, Rosh HaShanah literally means, the “Head of the Year.” It was not called by this name until Talmudic times, however, and in biblical days it was referred to as *Yom Teruah*—the “Day of the Sounding of the Shofar”—or *Yom HaZikaron*—the “Day of Remembering.” According to rabbinic tradition, Rosh HaShanah has three major significances:

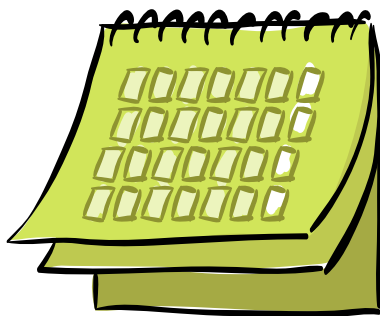
- ❶ It is an anniversary of the world's creation  
(and specifically the Sixth Day, when humanity was born)
- ❷ It is the Day of Judgment
- ❸ It is a day of renewing the bond between God and the People of Israel





Rosh HaShanah opens the ten-day period of the Days of Awe (*Yamim Nora'im*), which culminate with Yom Kippur. It represents a celebration of the beginning of the New Year, as well as a striving for atonement for our misdeeds in the year that has just ended. The Days of Awe surrounding Rosh HaShanah are days of reflection and judgment, in which we carefully examine who we are so we can become aware of the ways we have failed others, ourselves and God. This introspection is meant to lead us to feelings of regret for the harm we have done, to attempt restitution when possible, and to turn away from our past negative behaviors in order to act differently in the coming year. The blasts of the *Shofar* (the ram's horn) awaken our slumbering souls to time's passage, to our actions and—more importantly—to how we can shape our lives in the future. We are not meant to be our same old selves year after year, but rather we strive to be renewed.

Although Rosh HaShanah consists of very serious and reflective elements, it is also an extremely joyous, festive, forward-looking celebration—and what better way to combine these two moods of the holiday than with food!







## The Rosh HaShanah Seder

Think *Seders* are only for Passover? Think again. In fact, there are a few Jewish holidays with *Seder* traditions, and Rosh HaShanah is one of them. The gist of the Rosh HaShanah iteration: There is an ancient custom to eat symbolic foods at the Rosh HaShanah meal, accompanied by blessings and wishes for the upcoming year. These foods are consumed in a particular order—a *Seder*.

The tradition of the Rosh HaShanah *Seder* is based on the following early Talmudic source. It appears twice, with a slight variation (in bold):



*Abaye said: 'Now that you have said that an omen is a significant thing, [a person] should always be accustomed **to seeing / to eating** at the beginning of the year (on Rosh HaShanah) a gourd, green beans, leek, beets and dates.'*



Based on the two different versions of the text ("to see" and "to eat"), two traditions evolved: one in which those present at the Rosh HaShanah meal ate the symbolic foods; the other in which they merely pointed to the foods and recited the corresponding wishes (they did not eat them).

Classical commentators explain that the foods mentioned in the Talmud should be accompanied by wishes/blessings, thereby having the effect of inspiring a person to repent and perform good deeds. They add that one may use any food whose name carries with it the implication of a blessing, even if this is not related to the Hebrew name of the food.



## The Simanim

As Jewish history developed and the Jews were spread throughout diverse communities around the world, various customs emerged and additional symbolic foods were added, complete with blessings, wishes and hopes.

These have become known as the Rosh HaShanah *Simanim* (the Hebrew word for “symbols” or “signs”).



Some of these wishes are based on the symbolic nature or shape of the food (e.g. honey is sweet, pomegranates have many seeds, etc.); others are word-plays reflecting the food's name. Originally, these puns were based on the Hebrew or Aramaic names of the foods, but local communities eventually invented new puns based on their local languages and dialects.

The Rosh HaShanah *Seder* with the foods mentioned in the Talmud (page 9) was preserved mainly among the Jews of Sephardi and Middle Eastern descent; however, Jews from other lands, too, retained the basic concept of serving symbolic foods at the evening meal of Rosh HaShanah.

This year, we gathered some of the best of the Rosh HaShanah *Seder* traditions from around the world, as well as added our own modern twists to this ancient custom. In our Haggadah file, we explain some of the traditional *Simanim* (symbolic foods + corresponding blessings), together with newer formulations for wishes and hopes that are relevant to our day.

Thought of your own clever, witty, relevant or generally meaningful food/ blessing combo? Tweet it to us (#applesandpunny)!



As the host, there are many ways you can go about preparing the foods for your *Seder*. You can decide which foods you'd like to incorporate into your *Seder* and prepare them all in advance, or assign each guest to bring one of the *Seder* foods, potluck style. Alternatively, you may choose to prepare a number of the dishes in advance and invite each guest to bring a new food of their own choice, together with a blessing they have created to share with the rest of the group. See alternative wording options for the invitations below.

## Suggested Menu



First of all, don't forget both wine and Challah bread—both are crucial at any Jewish festive meal!

The wine should be good wine, that you (and your guests) will enjoy drinking.

The Challah is traditionally round on Rosh HaShanah (see explanation in your Haggadah). If you live near Jewish bakeries, it is likely that they will be selling round Challah this time of year. You may also buy any other bread with a round shape and use it as Challah bread.

Alternatively, you can bake your own Rosh HaShanah Challah.  
(see recipe on the next page)





## Sweet Challah Recipe

Makes 2-3 Challahs

### Ingredients:

- 1 kg. flour
- 1 package fresh (or dry) yeast
- $\frac{3}{4}$  c. sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. canola oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 flat Tbs. salt
- About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  c. warm water
- 1 beaten egg, for spreading on the loaves
- Optional toppings: Sesame seeds/poppy seeds/cinnamon or any other favorites!



### Directions:

Put the flour, yeast, sugar, oil, eggs and salt into a large bowl.

Gradually add the water, while constantly kneading until you've got a soft, flexible dough that doesn't stick to the sides of the bowl.

Cover the bowl and let it rise until the dough doubles in size.

Divide the dough into two or three balls and shape a Challah out of each one. Remember, it's customary to serve round Challah on Rosh HaShanah!

Line a baking sheet with baking paper, put the Challahs on the paper and let them rise again, until they've doubled in size.

Spread some of the beaten egg on each Challah with a pastry brush, add optional toppings.

Bake for about half an hour in an oven that was preheated to 350°F or 180°C. You will know the Challahs are ready if they are golden on the outside and sound hollow when tapped!





The Rosh HaShanah *Seder* usually takes place as a tapas course, with little tastings of the various foods (though for many, these tapas could actually constitute an entire meal!).

We suggest first course plates and small forks or spoons, with the different foods set in small serving bowls in the center of the table. You can choose whether to serve the foods cut, raw and fresh (for example: carrot sticks) or incorporated into salads or other small finger food dishes. You are also welcome to incorporate some of the foods later on in the meal, during the other courses.

Some ideas and suggestions for how to serve the various foods:



#### Dates:

Dried dates can be served just as they are, but beware of the pits. In some fresh produce markets one can buy fresh dates. These, though they are not ripe enough to eat, serve as beautiful table decorations.



#### Rubia (green string beans or sesame seeds):

Serve the green beans fresh with the edges cut off and slightly boiled; straight from the can; or in a green bean salad with sesame seeds and soy sauce dressing.



#### Pomegranates:

Feel free to prepare a bowl of fresh pomegranate seeds, pomegranate jam/chutney, and/or green salad with pomegranate seeds.



#### Karti (leeks or scallions):

We suggest freshly cut leeks, leek and fennel salad, or leek quiche.





### Beets or beetroot leaves:

If you are using beets: cook the fresh beets in boiling water and prepare a beet and walnut salad or a spicy beet salad. If you are using beetroot leaves (these look like spinach), wilt the leaves and sauté them with salt. You can also serve a fresh beetroot leaf salad with cooked beets inside.



### Kara (a pumpkin or gourd):

Roast the pumpkin or squash in the oven, then add a maple drizzle. Alternatively, feel free to prepare pumpkin or squash muffins, or an orange soup with pumpkins, squash, sweet potatoes (and other orange vegetables).



### Gezer (carrots):

Serve fresh carrot sticks, baby carrots, sweet carrot raisin salad, spicy Moroccan carrot salad, or carrot and dill cold soup.



### Fish:

Serve any kind of fish as you would for a first course. For a vegetarian alternative, serve fish crackers or fish-shaped gummy candies.



### Head:

If you are adventurous, ask your local butcher or fish monger for a head of a fish or lamb, and cook it. You can also simply print a symbolic visual representation of a head. If even that is too much for you, you are welcome to use a head of lettuce, fish crackers—or even pour some good heads of beer!



### Apples and Honey:

Slice fresh apples (we suggest using various colored apples to enhance the look on the plate) and serve them on a plate with a bowl of honey in the center. Beware that honey is sticky! There are various neat honey utensils on the market, but a simple spoon will always do...

Be sure to add in the various contemporary foods you've chosen to incorporate.





Pomegranates are very messy and tend to stain! If you buy a whole pomegranate, slice it in half and immerse each half in a bowl of water. While your hands (and the pomegranate) are immersed in the water, push out the pomegranate seeds from the skin. The white parts of the fruit will float to the top; from there, they can be discarded easily. The sweet red seeds will not squirt and stain your clothes while under water!

After you've released all the seeds from the hard skin, pour the contents of the bowl through a strainer—you will be left with delicious red pomegranate seeds!

More ideas for Rosh HaShanah-themed foods for your meal:

Gefilte Fish / Apples and Honey Chicken / Honey Cake / Date and Nut Bread.  
For some Rosh HaShanah-themed menus see Jamie Geller's site:  
[www.joyofkosher.com](http://www.joyofkosher.com)



## Sample Invitations:

See a sample wording for your invitation below. Obviously, it should be adapted based on your unique event.

### Rosh HaShanah—the beginning of the Jewish year—

is around the corner, and we'd like to celebrate!

Come join me/us for a special Rosh HaShanah gathering.

We will break bread, drink wine and share our hopes  
and wishes for the New Year!

We are going to be celebrating with a Rosh HaShanah *Seder*,  
where symbolic foods are eaten together with creative blessings  
and wishes for the New Year!

- ✿ **WHO:** *[Add names of who's invited]*
- ✿ **WHAT:** *[Add a short description of event—Rosh HaShanah Dinner/ Happy Hour/ Brunch etc.]*
- ✿ **WHERE:** *[Add location]*
- ✿ **WHEN:** *[Add date and time]*
- ✿ **WHY:** *[In honor of Rosh HaShanah, the Jewish New Year]*
- ✿ **WHAT-YOU-NEED-TO-DO:** *[Your assignment for your guests]*

*For example:*

- Please bring a bowl of fresh pomegranate seeds.
- Please bring a dish made with green beans.
- Please bring a food of your choice that connects to your blessing and wishes for the new year. For example: A salad of peas and thyme, wishing for “peace in our time.”



*and don't give it away!*





### Origami Pomegranates:

Included in our downloadable file links are instructions for folding origami pomegranates.

We've prepared them in a placemat format that you can print out and use as placemats for all your guests. If you choose to dedicate some time at your meal to preparing the pomegranates, make sure you prepare the correct number of square red sheets of paper! We also recommend having some extra paper on hand. Some people may need more than one chance to fold their piece of art.

Alternatively, you may decide to prepare the pomegranates yourself, in advance. Feel free to use them as decorations for physical paper invitations to your event, or as decorations for New Year's cards. You can also prepare one for each guest and attach them to place cards with your guests' names on them.



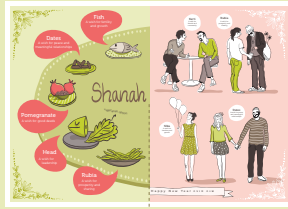
### Table Talk:

While we anticipate the *Seder* foods playing a major role in the evening's discussions, we are also providing you with a structured activity to prompt further thoughtful and meaningful conversation around the table.

Based on the model of the Four Children of Passover—each child with his or her own attitude and viewpoint on life—we've created an alternative Four Children for Rosh HaShanah. Recalling the holiday themes of self-reflection, forgiveness and improvement, the four children approach the holiday from a variety of perspectives. The poem is meant to be read in four voices; you can assign each role to one of your guests in advance or on the spot. Choose one person to facilitate the discussion at the end, using the prompt questions provided.



# Centerpiece Assembly Instructions



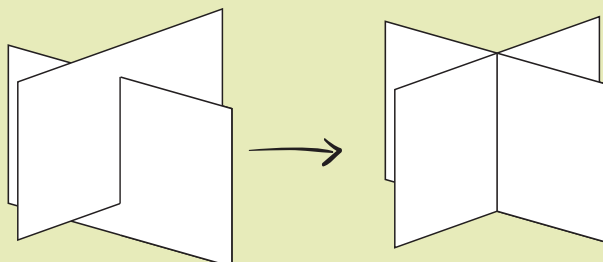
- 1 Print both A3 size pages, full color, double sided, on 300 gram paper.



- 2 Using an x-acto utility knife or scissors, gently cut along the dotted lines. On Page 1: cut from the bottom to the end of the dotted line. On page 2: cut from the top to the end of the dotted line.



- 3 Stand both pages up vertically, with images facing up. Insert Page 1 into the cut on Page 2, to create a standing "X" with four flaps.



## Final Check List:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have all your guests received their invitations and do they know what their assignments are?             | <input type="checkbox"/> Is the table set?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did you print a Haggadah for each of your guests?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Are the origami placemats printed?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have wine and Challah?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have enough sheets of square red paper for everyone to make an origami pomegranate? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are all the special foods for the <i>Seder</i> prepared or assigned?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Have you printed and assembled your <i>Seder</i> plate centerpiece?                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did you print the "Four Children" activity file and assign each of the characters to one of your guests? | <input type="checkbox"/> Did you save your receipts for your #MakeltHappen Rosh HaShanah micro grant?               |
| Will you or one of your guests be facilitating the discussion around the table?   |   |



