



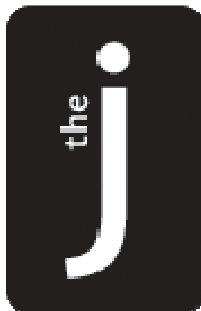
Chag Purim Sameach! Happy Purim Holiday!

From all of us at
The Jewish Community Center

INSPIRING JEWISH JOURNEYS

For more information about Purim or other Jewish holidays and resources contact

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Purim

The holiday of Purim is a celebration and commemoration of events that transpired approximately 2300 years ago in the land of Persia. Through a fascinating turn of events in the capital town of Shushan, a new Jewish Queen came to the throne. Her name was Queen Esther. With the help of her Jewish cousin Mordechai, Queen Esther managed to save her people from the destructive intentions of King Achashverosh's top advisor Haman. In the end, Haman and his supporters are destroyed and the Jews prevail.

The name Purim literally means "lots." Haman used lots to determine which day the Jews were all to be destroyed. In the end, Haman and his ten sons were hung on the gallows that day instead.



One of the main themes of Purim is related to secrecy and things being hidden. There is a secret plot to assassinate the King which is foiled by Mordechai, giving him status and power. Also, the fact that Esther is Jewish is a secret to everyone until she reveals it to the King only after she was made Queen and in order to save her people. Furthermore, even though God's name is never mentioned in the story of Purim, there are hints that the hidden hand of God was involved in the maze of events that led to the victory of the Jews. Purim is a holiday often associated with masks, costumes, carnivals, and merrymaking.

The holiday takes place on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar, although for those living in an ancient walled city, the celebration takes place on the 15th day of Adar.

The Scroll of Esther—Megillat Esther

The Purim story is traditionally read in temple or synagogue from a scroll called the Scroll of Esther, which is part of the Bible. Whenever the name of the wicked character Haman is read, everyone shakes their noisemakers called graggers and boos to blot out Haman's name and wipe out his memory.



Mishloach Manot - Purim Giftbaskets



One of the customs of Purim is to send baskets of food and good tidings to our friends and neighbors. This symbolizes the spirit of unity and brotherhood which helped the Jewish people defeat Haman. The custom is to include at least two types of ready-to-eat food.

Matanot L'evyonim—Gifts to the Poor

It is a tradition on the day of Purim to give tzedakah (charity) to at least two needy persons. As we celebrate and our joyful on the day of Purim, we are always cognizant of the poor and needy for which this is more difficult. Therefore, we help others to share in that joy and have good fortune of their own.

Seudat Purim

Another mitzvah associated with Purim is to have a special festive meal to celebrate the Purim story and the continuing survival of the Jewish people.

Family Activities

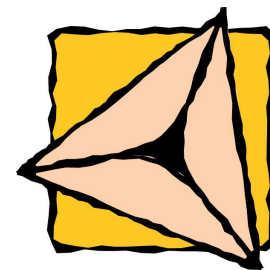


Gragger Making

There are many ways to make a gragger that children can use at Purim festivities. One way is to take a paper plate and fold it in half. Place beans or buttons in it and then staple it closed. Next, decorate the plate using markers, glitter, colored tissue paper or other materials.

Hamentaschen Baking

On Purim, we eat triangle shaped cookies to recall Haman and the myth of his three cornered hat. Traditional hamentaschen are filled with poppy seeds, but you can fill them with many tasty fillings, such as jam or even chocolate. A great activity for the family is to bake together. Here is a yummy recipe:



In a bowl mix 4 cups flour, 1 Tsp. baking power, 1/2 tsp. baking soda, 1/2 tsp. salt. Set aside. In another bowl mix 1 cup butter/marg. Softened, 1 & 1/2 cup sugar, 1 egg, and 1/2 cup sour cream. Blend butter and sugar together. Add egg and sour cream. Slowly add in the flour mixture and mix until smooth. Refrigerate (overnight is recommended). Roll out the dough about 1/4" thick. Cut circles out with a can or cup. Put filling in the middle of the circle and lift edges of the circle to create three corners. Pinch the corners together and place on cookie sheet. Potential fillings: any flavor of jam, poppy seeds, chocolate chips. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes. (edges should just begin to turn brown).