

How to Celebrate Rosh Hashanah - 5778

Erev Rosh Hashanah:

1. It is customary [but not mandatory] to fast until Halachik mid-day. [1:10 PM]
2. Additional Selichos are said in the morning.
3. No Tachanun is said during the morning service.
4. We do not blow the Shofar after the morning service.
5. One should nullify his / her vows before 3 people in a language that you understand. See Artscroll Siddur pg. 762. This procedure only helps for vows and good deeds that one may have been committed to do, **that one does not remember having made.**
6. Women can appoint their husbands as their agents to nullify their vows for them. Other women rely on the Kol Nidrei ceremony to nullify their vows.
7. It is customary to visit the cemetery.
8. One should spend time doing Teshuvah, giving charity, learning, and asking forgiveness from other people. Before Rosh Hashanah actually begins, one should resolve to strive to focus on improving a specific area on conduct during the New Year.
9. One should be well groomed in honor of the Yom Tov.
10. One should preferably take a shave and haircut before Halachik Mid- day. [1:10 PM]
11. Men should immerse in the Mikveh no earlier than one hour before Halachik Mid-day. [12:10 PM]
12. One should familiarize oneself with the Machzor.
13. One should wear festive clothing, but in moderation. Save new clothing for the Shehechyanu blessing on the second night of Yom Tov.
14. It is customary to bake or purchase Challah in the form of a circle, ladder, or bird.
15. One should be careful not to display anger or even become angry during these special days.
16. Remember that on Rosh Hashanah one is permitted to cook or bake from a pre-existing fire. **You need not have all your food cooked before Yom Tov.** [Which is generally required to be done for Shabbos.] Consult with your Rabbi to learn more of the Halachik details involved.
17. It is preferable and practical to light a 24 hour Yartzeit candle before Yom Tov, so that you will have a pre-existing flame to use throughout the first day of Yom Tov. This flame will be the one that you can light candles from on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. Since the second day of Yom Tov is followed by Shabbos, which also requires candle lighting, it is advisable to light a 48 hour Yahrzeit candle tonight. Alternatively, you can light a new 24 hour Yahrzeit candle on Thursday night from a pre-existing flame.
18. *Remember to make an Eruv Tavshilin before Yom Tov in order to be able to cook on Yom Tov for the Shabbos which immediately follows Yom Tov this year. See Artscroll Siddur pg. 654. (you must use foods (one baked & one cooked) that one usually eats as part of bread meal, such as fish, meat, and eggs. A dessert may not be used.) Most people use a challah or matzah and an egg.*
19. *If you do not plan on cooking any meals for Shabbos (i.e. you are eating out for all your Shabbos meals), you still are required to make an Eruv Tavshilin in order to light candles in your home. In such a situation, the Eruv Tavshilin should be made without reciting a blessing.*

First Evening of Rosh Hashanah:

1. Women light candles either at the regular time of candle lighting [7:00 PM] or from a pre-existing flame when the men come home from Shul and are ready to eat. They make 2 blessings: One for the Mitzvah of lighting the Yom Tov candles and the other “Shehechyanu” blessing. [If a woman forgets to light candles at these two times, she may light them from a pre-existing flame the entire evening.]

2. Men should daven Mincha with a Minyan and everyone should say Mincha with extra concentration, as it is the final prayer of the year **5777**.
3. The earliest time to either light candles or make Kiddush is after **6:01 PM**.
4. 4 insertions are made in the Maariv Amida [and for all Amidahs through Yom Kippur], which are found in the Artscroll Machzor on pages 62, 64, 66, and 72. One need not repeat the Amida if one forgot to say any or all of the insertions.
5. We change the ending of the third blessing from “Ha-el Hakadosh” to “Hamelech Hakadosh” One must repeat the Amida if one forgot to say “Hamelech Hakadosh.”
6. Special greetings are given to friends and family members after Maariv and before Kiddush. “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year [immediately, for a good life and for peace].” See Artscroll Machzor pg. 90 for the Hebrew text. **This greeting should only be said on the first night.** Greetings for the remainder of Rosh Hashanah should be limited to “Shana Tova”, “Happy New Year”, “Chag Samayach”, or “Good Yom Tov.”
7. After making the special Yom Tov Kiddush and washing our hands, we make a Brocha over two Challahs, and cut the top Challah.
8. Challah is dipped in honey [some have the custom to dip the Challah into salt as well].
9. Symbolic foods are eaten at the evening meal. See Artscroll Machzor pg. 96-98. The first symbolic fruit to be eaten should be the date. You should make the blessing “Borei Pri Ha’etz” on that fruit, keeping in mind the other fruits you will be eating on this night. Eat a little of it, followed by the special “Yehi Ratzon” prayer, and then finish the date. If dates are not eaten, then the pomegranate should be eaten before the apples. There are no other blessings made on the symbolic foods. One does say the special “Yehi Ratzon” prayer before eating each of the symbolic foods.
10. It is optimal to eat symbolic foods, that normally would require the blessing of “Borei pro Ho’adama, during the course of your meal, to avoid the doubtful necessity of making that blessing during the meal.
11. If one is not able to eat any of the symbolic foods, one may look at them and say the special “Yehi Ratzon” prayer.
12. Some have a custom to avoid eating sour or bitter foods and nuts.
13. One should not say the blessing of Borei Pei Ha’etz on fruits that one eats for dessert if one had dessert in mind when one made the blessing on the symbolic fruits at the beginning of the meal.
14. Remember to make the proper insertion of Ya’aleh Veyavo” during the Birchas Hamazon.
15. It is a custom to learn one Chapter of Mishnayos from Tractate Rosh Hashanah after each of the Yom Tov meals.

First Day of Rosh Hashanah:

1. Men should come on time to Shul and say the Amidah with a Minyan.
2. The Shema should be recited before **10:07 AM**.
3. Although there is no obligation to stand when the Aron Hakodesh is opened during the prayers, there is a Mitzvah to stand if one has the strength to do so.
4. One should optimally listen to each sound of 100 blasts of the Shofar on both days of Rosh Hashanah. 30 are blown before Mussaf. 30 are blown during the repetition. 40 are blown at the end of the service.
5. Men are obligated to hear the Shofar. Women are technically exempt from hearing the Shofar; however, it has become customary for women to hear at least 30 blasts of the Shofar. If possible, they should hear both the 30 blasts before Musaf and the 30 blasts during the repetition of the Amida.
6. If you are not able to go to Shul, you should hear a minimum of 30 blasts blown privately for you. The listener should preferably make the blessings on the Shofar.
7. Children, who are old enough to silently listen to the Shofar, should be encouraged to do so. ***Little children, who will disturb the service, may not be brought to Shofar blowing.***

8. It is forbidden to talk while the Shofar is being blown. ***One should not speak from the time that the blessings on the Shofar are made until after hearing the 100th and final note.*** Only under extenuating circumstances may one talk after hearing the first 30 blasts. Women may be more lenient in this matter after hearing 30 blasts.
9. During the Musaf Amida, one should bow when they say “Modim” in the “Aleinu” prayer.
10. If one chooses to kneel on the floor during Aleinu of the reposition of the Musaf Amida, one should put some material between their face and the floor.

Afternoon:

1. One should leave Shul feeling relaxed and confident that Hashem has accepted his prayers with mercy.
2. One is obligated to eat Challah and have a festive meal on both days of Rosh Hashanah.
3. One should not sleep in the afternoon. [One may be lenient on the second day.] A person who is very tired should sleep a little rather than sit around widely and waste time.
4. It is not the custom to visit friends in the afternoon.
5. Any free time in the afternoon should be spent learning Torah, saying Tehillim, doing Teshuva or doing acts of kindness. It is not a time for idle chatter.
6. After Mincha, it is customary to go to Tashlich.
7. If you don’t think you will have enough time to say Tashlich after Mincha, you can say it before Mincha.
8. The custom is to recite Tashlich preferably at a body of running water [i.e. a river or stream] where fish are found. If that is not possible, one can say it by any body of water – even a well.
9. When reciting the word “Vesashlich”, it is customary to shake out the corners or pockets of your outer garments, which are empty.
10. ***It is forbidden to throw any crumbs of food into the water.*** [or to feed the ducks]
11. ***Tashlich was not designed to be a venue for socializing.*** [One is permitted to invite guests for meals and should make an effort to keep the discussions focused on the theme and spirit of Rosh Hashanah.]

Second Evening of Rosh Hashanah:

1. One should pray the evening service after Tashlich. It is preferable to say Maariv after the stars come out, or at least after sunset.
2. One may not make any Yom Tov preparations for the second night, light candles, or make Kiddush until after **7:59 PM.** (with the exception of taking food out of the freezer.)
3. There are lenient opinions who permit asking a non-Jew to make preparations for the second night, that do not involve actual work (e.g. setting the table) that can be relied on, especially when necessary.
4. If the first day of Rosh Hashanah is not a Shabbos, there is no need for women to say “Baruch Hamavdil Been Kodesh Lekodesh” before making preparations for the second night.
5. Candle lighting and Kiddush are done in the same way as on the first night.
6. One should wear a new garment for candle lighting / kiddush at the second evening meal. Have this in mind when making the “Shehechyanu” blessing.
7. It is questionable as to whether one can make a “Shehechyanu” blessing on any fruits. The only fruit that one, who lives in Toronto, can definitely say the “Shehechyanu” blessing is on pumpkins and Ontario concord grapes.
8. If you do have such fruit, it should optimally be eaten immediately after Kiddush.
9. No one else besides the one who lights candles and / or makes kiddush says the “Shehechyanu” blessing.
10. Some people have the custom to eat the symbolic foods and recite the special prayers at this meal as well.

Second day of Rosh Hashanah:

1. The procedures for this day are the same as the first day. The exception being that we do not go to Tashlich again. If it rained on the first day or you were not able to go to Tashlich [or the first day was Shabbos], you should do so on the second day. [If one does not have the opportunity to go to Tashlich on both days of Yom Tov, you are permitted to do it until the seventh day of Succos – Hoshana Rabbah.]
2. If you have made an Eruv Tavshilin on Wednesday, you may make Shabbos preparations on Friday.
3. Since Rosh Hashanah ends on Friday afternoon, we do not make Havdalah. We welcome the Shabbos no earlier than **5:58 P.M.** Candle lighting and Kiddush for Shabbos can begin after this time. The latest time for candle lighting is **6:56 P.M.**
4. During the Prayer of “Magen Avos” we substitute with the words “Hamelech Hakadosh.”

Rosh Hashanah: Yehi Ratzon – Symbolic Foods Text and Instructions

All of the Yehi Ratzons start out the same way:

"Yehi Ratzon Mil'fa'necha, Ad-noi El-heinu Vei'l-hai Avosainu..."

(The "-" represents the letter "o," which was purposely left out so as not to write out the name of G-d.)

"May it be your will, Hashem our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers..."

Listed below are the various foods and the endings, which are appropriate to them:

For dates: "...She'yitamu son'ainu." "...that our enemies be consumed."

For pomegranate: "...she'nirbeh ze'chu'yos k'rimon"

"...that our merits increase like (the seeds of) a pomegranate."

For the apple in the honey: "...she'tichadesh aleinu shana tova u'm'tuka."

"...that you renew us for a good and sweet year."

For fenugreek (or carrots - as the Yiddish word for carrots - Mehren - can also mean "to increase," this Yehi Ratzon is appropriate as well):

"...She'yir'bu ze'chuyo'sainu." "...that our merits increase."

For leek or cabbage: "...She'yikar'su son'ainu." "...that our enemies be decimated."

For beets: "...She'yistalku oy'vainu." "...that our adversaries be removed."

For gourd: "...She'yikora g'zar de'nainu v'yikaru l'fanecha zechu'yosainu."

"...that the decree of our sentence be torn up and may our merits be proclaimed before you."

For fish: "...She'nif'reh v'nir'beh ki'dagim." "...that we be fruitful and multiply like fish."

For the head of a fish or sheep: "...She'ni'hiyeh l'rosh v'lo l'zanav."

"...that we be as the head and not as the tail."

All of these Yehi Ratzons are said on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, after Kiddush has been made, after the blessing over the Challos (breads) has been made and the bread has been eaten. (There are those who have the custom to eat these foods and recite the Yehi Ratzon on the second night as well.) After the bread has been eaten, one should take the date, make the blessing that one would normally make on fruit [“Borei Pri Ha’etz’], and then take a bite of the date. Before one has eaten the whole date, one should recite the Yehi Ratzon. After the date, one can then have all, none, or some of the other foods.