

Tu Be'Shvat Seder (Short)

Preparations

To enjoy this experience in your own home, try to prepare the basic items mentioned below. Don't worry if you can't find all these items; do the best you can. Since the order and the contents of the seder do not follow a specific Halacha (law), there is much room for flexibility.

You will need lots of fruit, including:

1. The seven species by which the Land of Israel is praised:
 - **Figs**
 - **Dates**
 - **Pomegranates**
 - **Olives**
 - **Grapes** (or raisins)
 - **Wheat** and **barley** (in the form of bread, cake or cereal)
2. Various nuts *with* the shells (walnuts, almonds, pistachios, coconut), and fruits with peels (oranges, pomegranates, avocado)
3. Other fruits with *edible* seeds (e.g. blueberries)
4. Other fruits with *inedible pits* (e.g. peaches, plums)
5. Wine or grape juice, both white and red
6. charity box

Important note: Since insects are not kosher, check your fruits to make sure they are bug-free. Bugs are especially common in figs, dates, and dried apricots. To check, split the fruit in half and look carefully before eating.

Next..

Set up your table as for Passover: white or other nice tablecloth, good dishes, flowers, wine, and juice. There is no requirement to light candles, but scented candles add a nice touch and a festive glow. Either one person can lead the seder, reciting each reading and making the blessings, or everyone can take turns. The directions concerning which fruit to locate and the mix of the wines should be read aloud. As each piece of fruit and each cup of wine is being considered and blessed, that object is held by the reader. After each blessing, the participants taste the fruit or sip the wine.

Hand Washing

When eating **bread**, begin with the washing of the hands, twice on both hands and say:

Hebrew: ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וציונו על נטילת ידים

Transliterate: *Baruch Atah Ado-nai, Elohai-nu Melech HaOlam, asher kideshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu al netilat yadayim*

English: *Blessed are you God, King of the Universe, who made us holy with his commandments and commanded us in the washing of the hands.*

As we raise our hands, we remind ourselves that the food we are about to eat – even though it was made by a human being – ultimately comes from G-od. As the verse says: He would feed him with the finest wheat (Psalms 81:17).

Without speaking from the time of the washing, we then recite the blessing on the bread:

Hebrew: ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ

Transliterate: *Baruch Atah Ado-nai, Elohai-nu Melech HaOlam, ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz*

English: *Blessed are you God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth*

Reader: And God said: Let the earth put forth grass, herb-yielding seed, and fruit-tree-bearing fruit after its own kind, wherein is the seed thereof, on the earth. (Bereshit 1:11)

Reader: In the 16th century in northern Israel, in the spiritual town of Tzfat (Safed), the Jewish mystics created the Tu'Beshvat seder. They recognized the many and varied dimensions of God's creation and used the fruits of Israel to symbolize their existence.

The First Cup of Wine

This cup of white wine or grape juice symbolizes winter and the mystical dimension of *Atzilut*, or emanation, at which God's energy infused the creation process with initial life.

Hebrew: ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Transliterate: *Baruch Ata Adon-ai Elohai-nu Melech HaOlam boray pri ha-gafen*

English: *Blessed are you God, King of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine*

Reader: For Adonai your G-od is bringing you into a good land. A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths springing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land wherein you shall eat without scarceness, you shall not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you may dig brass. And you shall eat and be satisfied, and bless G-od for the good land, which is being given unto you (Devarim 8:7-10)

The First Fruit

Fruit that is hard on the outside and soft on the inside, such as walnuts, coconuts or almonds. The hard shell symbolizes the protection that the earth gives us and reminds us to nourish the strength and healing power of our own bodies.

Hebrew: ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ

Transliterate: *Baruch Ata Adod-nai Elohai-nu Melech HaOlam boray pri ha-Eitz.*

English: *Blessed are you God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree.*

The Second Cup of Wine

This cup of wine or grape juice is mostly white, with a little red mixed in, to symbolize the passing of the seasons and the mystical concept of formation and birth, often associated with water.

Reader: Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall you be in the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, and the fruit of your cattle, and the young of your flock. Blessed shall you be in your basket and your kneading trough. Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out (Devarim 28:36)

The Second Fruit

This fruit is soft with a pit in the center — olives or dates [or peaches, apricots, etc.] — and symbolizes the life-sustaining power that emanates from the earth. It reminds us of the spiritual and emotional strength that is within each of us.

The Third Cup of Wine

This cup of wine is mostly red with a little white mixed in and symbolizes once again the change of seasons and the mystical concept of *Beriah*, or creation.

Reader: Then God formed the human from the dust of the ground, and breathed into the nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living soul (Bereishit 2:7)

The Third Fruit

This fruit is soft throughout and is completely edible, such as figs, grapes, and raisins. This type symbolizes God's omnipresence and our own inextricable ties with the earth.

The Fourth Cup of Wine

This cup is all red, symbolizing the mystical concept of fire and the idea that within all living things dwells a spark of G-od.

Reader: And the angel of G-od appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and Moses looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed (Shemot 3:2)

The Fourth Fruit

This has a tough skin on the outside but sweet fruit within—mangos, bananas, avocados, or sabra, a desert pear—and symbolizes the mystery of the world and our study of Torah. We are constantly seeking to uncover her secrets and are continually nourished by her fruits.

After we're done eating, we say the full Grace After Meals (Birkat Ha'Mazon)