

Hazon Tu Bishvat Seder Manual

How to create your own Tu Bishvat Seder



Tu Bishvat seder manual - table of contents

About Hazon

- Mission
- History
- Contact info

Celebrating Tu Bishvat

- How does a Tu Bishvat seder bring more joy to your life?
- Creating inclusive community

About Tu Bishvat

- What is Tu Bishvat?
- What is a Tu Bishvat seder?
- Tu Bishvat dictionary

Planning & hosting a seder

- An overview
- Finding a location and determining size
- Next steps

Seder volunteers

- Creating a core base of volunteers
- Planning schedule for a seder

Seder marketing

- Paper free marketing Ideas
- Marketing template

Seder supplies & materials

- Wine, fruits, and nuts: oh my!
- Decorating your space
- Supplies & minimizing our impact

Seder cost estimates

Educational content

- The Haggadah as your guide
- Suggestions for making it your own seder
- Resources – [Food for Thought](#)
- Suggestions on selecting leaders

Appendix

- Haggadah

About Hazon

Hazon's Mission



Hazon works to create a **healthier** and **more sustainable** Jewish community – and a healthier and more sustainable world for all.

Hazon's History

Known initially for our series of Jewish Environmental Bike Rides in New York, Washington, DC, and Israel, Hazon is now at the forefront of an emerging national movement at the intersection of food and Jewish life.

Hazon's food programs include:

- **Hazon CSA:** Hazon's Jewish Community-Supported Agriculture Project.
- **Food Conference:** An annual event which brings together chefs, farmers, nutritionists, rabbis, educators, and food enthusiasts. Over 630 people attended in 2009!
- **Jewish Food Education Network:** Hazon's Family Education Initiative for day school children, synagogue school children, campers & their families.
- **Food for Thought:** A 130-page sourcebook-style curriculum that includes traditional Jewish texts as well as modern texts and resources.
- **The Jew & The Carrot:** Hazon's award-winning blog on Jews, food, and contemporary life. www.jcarrot.org
- **Challah for Hunger:** Chapters bake and sell challah to raise awareness of and money for poverty and disaster relief.

Contact Hazon

Hazon 45 W. 36th Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10018
info@hazon.org
212-644-2332
www.hazon.org

Celebrating Tu Bishvat

How does the celebration of Tu Bishvat bring more joy to your life?

Honoring Tu Bishvat by creating a seder is the modern way to renew ancient traditions and celebrate Tu Bishvat. It is our hope that creating a Tu Bishvat seder will bring more joy to your life. We have found Tu Bishvat seders to be a vehicle for:

- Creating community through a fun, educational, and delicious celebration;
- Bringing meaningful, lively, participatory discussion to the table;
- Making new friends;
- Tasting new fruit;
- Picking up new insight;
- Being inspired to take environmental action;
- Being inspired toward spiritual growth and transformation;
- Continually evolving and working with Jewish tradition to make sense of it in your life;
- Engaging in the Jewish tradition with integrity;
- Engaging in difficult environmental issues;
- Deepening our connection to Jewish history, Israel, the earth, the food we eat and each other.

Creating community and including all people in the experience.

It is our hope that your Tu Bishvat seder will live up to the Hazon vision to create a renewed Jewish community: one that is rooted in Jewish tradition and is radically inclusive, passionate and creative.

It is our hope that as many people as possible will be involved in this delicious and fun experience. This means that people from across the Jewish spectrum of knowledge and observance, people of other faiths and people of no religious affiliation, will be at the table.

It is our hope that Hazon inspires communities that are passionate, joyful, spiritual and socially progressive; and that emphasize tolerance, respect, and diversity.

Design and craft your seder with awareness around who the participants will be. Make it compelling, substantive, and challenging for those with lots of Jewish knowledge while at the same time accessible, engaging, warm, and welcoming to all. Yes, this is a challenge, and you are up for it!

About Tu Bishvat

What is Tu Bishvat?

Tu Bishvat is a Jewish holiday in the Hebrew month of Shevat, usually in late January or early February, that marks the "**New Year of the Trees**". Tu Bishvat is one of four *New Years* mentioned in the Mishnah¹. Customs include planting trees and eating dried fruits and nuts, especially figs, pomegranates, dates, almonds, and carob.

The name Tu Bishvat is derived from the Hebrew date of the holiday, which occurs on the 15th day of Shvat, the Hebrew month. "Tu" stands for the Hebrew numerals "tet vav" which is 15.

Tu Bishvat has become the Jewish Earth Day and a time to reflect on environmental issues, our earth, our food sources and the human connection to our surroundings. Environmental organizations in the United States (like Hazon!) and Israel have adopted it to further ecological awareness.

There are many customs associated with Tu Bishvat. A well known custom is to eat lots of fruit. Because Tu Bishvat falls on the 15th day of the Hebrew month, Shvat, some people try to eat 15 kinds of fruit.

What is a Tu Bishvat Seder?

In the Middle Ages, Tu Bishvat was celebrated with a feast of fruits, in keeping with the Mishnaic description of the holiday as a "New Year." In the 1600s, the mystic kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria, of Sfat, and his disciples instituted a Tu Bishvat seder in which the fruits and trees of Israel were given symbolic meaning. The main idea was that eating ten specific fruits and drinking four cups of wine in a specific order while reciting the appropriate blessings would bring human beings, and the world, closer to spiritual perfection.

The mystical kabbalistic Tu Bishvat seder has been revived, and is now celebrated by many Jews, religious and secular. Special haggadot have been written for this purpose. Hazon has put together a haggadah which is in the appendix of this manual (you can also download it from www.hazon.org).

The structure of a Tu B'Shevat Seder often corresponds to the four "worlds"--levels, realms, or spheres through which, the Kabbalists teach, the life-giving flow of the Divine is channeled and filtered. Very simply, kabbalah uses a metric which explains life through 4 worlds – the world of the physical emotional, mental and spiritual. The Tu Bishvat seder is often viewed through this lens of four worlds. All fruits are divided into categories representing the first three worlds (Asiyah-physical, Yetzirah-emotional, Briya-mental). The fourth world, Atzilut-spiritual, has no representative fruits because it is pure spirit and cannot be represented physically. Much of the seder is divided up to its corresponding kabbalistic world, often including the four cups of wine, types of wine, and blessings.

¹ According to the Mishnah (the book of Rabbinic Jewish oral law recording debates from about 70-200 CE) there are four new years in the Jewish calendar: The first of Nissan is the new year for kings and for festivals; the first of Elul is the new year for the tithe of animals. Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Shimon say that the first of Tishrei is the new year for years, for the sabbatical year, for the jubilee year, for planting and for vegetables...**Rabbi Hillel says that the fifteenth of Shevat shall be the new year for the tree.** - Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 1:1

Tu Bishvat Dictionary

Four Worlds²:

Atzilut (אֲצִילוֹת), World 4, or "World of Emanations." The world of pure and clear truth, timeless Spirit, and the Infinite Perfection.

Briya (בְּרִיאָה), World 3, or "World of Creation." The world of the mind, science, wisdom.

Yetzirah (יְצִירָה), World 2, or "World of Formation." The world of the emotions, sensations, feelings, and the heart.

Asiyah (אֲשִׁיָּה), World 1, or "World of Actions." The world of form, action, the physical, and dualism.

Haggadah: The Hebrew word means "telling" and it is a religious text that sets out the order of the Seder.

Seder: Hebrew word that means order, and is the name for the traditional meal with blessings and a liturgical structure.

Shmita: Every seventh year is known as the year of "shmita," during which the land is left idle and no work is done in the fields.

Shvat: Name of the Hebrew Month in which Tu Bishvat falls.

Tu: stands for the Hebrew Numerals "tet vav" which is 15



² Like everything else in this manual, these are abbreviated definitions and there is so much more information, truth, and knowledge out there. However, the four worlds in particular, have taken on so much symbolic meaning (corresponding with the Indian chakras, the Chinese meridians, colors, stones, astrological planets, emotional centers, and Jewish liturgy to name but a few!) Explore further wherever your curiosity leads you.

Planning & hosting a seder

An Overview

Planning a seder is easy! It just takes a little bit of planning. Here are the steps in brief. Decide you want to do it. Get a group of people who are willing to volunteer and willing to help plan for about two months before the event. This requires a weekly phone call, a few emails to be sent out, some set up time on the day of, having the seder, and, of course, clean up time.

Finding a Location & Determining Size

First of all, decide how many people you would like to attend. Do you want to have a large seder? Do you want to invite the whole Jewish community in your area? If so contact the JCC and local synagogues and see if someone will donate their space or rent it out for a small fee.

If you end up “partnering” with an organization, they can help you market the event by sending out the invitation to their list serves.

You might want a small gathering and it could be at someone’s home. Or perhaps you are looking to go to a restaurant. Once you decide on location, keep in mind that if you do host it at a JCC, synagogue, or event space, setting up with candles, cushions, and decorations helps make the space more festive. The volunteer team can have a person doing just this!

Next Steps

Create a committee of three to seven core planners (dependant on size of seder planned) and organize a conference call each week (or every other week for the first four weeks of planning and then every week one month before the seder).

The planners can be a mix of professionals, volunteers, lay leaders, and educators. (For more on how to create this team and key next steps see the following sections).

The team will do all of the planning work and set up schedules for

1. Getting supplies – who and what?
2. Reviewing the haggadah.
 - a. assign lead parts to people
 - b. create new parts for people!
 - c. be creative and incorporate meditation, environmental speakers and movement.
3. Sending out marketing materials .
4. Setting up on the day of the seder.
6. Clean up



Seder Volunteers

Creating a core base of volunteers

A core base of volunteers is the group of committed volunteers who are responsible for organizing all aspects of the Tu Bishvat seder. A strong and empowered core ensures the success of your seder. The core team not only organizes the event, but also can act as a jumping off point to create other community events.

Recruiting fabulous volunteers

- **Personal Invitations:** Don't be shy about reaching out to people who you think would be good team members. Flatter them! Give them a call and let them know why they would be great for the job.
- **Know what you need:** Don't pick someone who is in grad school, has two jobs, twins, and a mother in law in town on the day of Tu Bishvat. At the same time recognize that we are all busy....try to find someone who can strike that balance and has enough time to really help!
- **Hold a meeting:** The beginning of your planning (eight weeks before the event) is a great time to get together as is 1 week before the event. In between those times, conference calls work well too. You can also plan a casual get together for after the event.

Planning a schedule

Two months is enough time to plan a fabulous, organized, and fun seder. However you might need to book a room earlier. Some people book rooms a year in advance. It will all depend on what location you host your seder in.



Seder Marketing

Paper free Marketing Ideas


Facebook

Create a facebook group. Invite people to join and make it an open invitation so everyone can invite anyone.

Emails

Send out group emails inviting people to come and to freely forward the email on.

Marketing Template



Come celebrate!

Tu B'Shevat



*with Hazon &
the JCC in Manhattan*

Tuesday, January 22nd, 7:00pm

Join us for our 6th annual Tu B'Shevat seder. Learn, be inspired, eat a delicious dinner and organic fruits and nuts, and drink four cups of wine as we celebrate the holiday of the trees. Examine how food connects us to Jewish tradition, to the Earth, to other people, and to ourselves.

The seder sells out every year - don't miss it!

Cost is \$30. Registration required: www.jccmanhattan.org or 646.505.5708
Questions? contact Leah Koenig: 212.644.2332 or leah@hazon.org

JCC in Manhattan | 334 Amsterdam Ave. @ 76th St. | New York, NY 10023

Seder supplies & materials

Wine, fruits, and nuts; oh my!

- **Seder fruits/nuts** – There are hundreds of customs about which fruits to eat during the seder. Pick a fruit you haven't tried, your favorite fruit, dried fruit, a wide range of fruits and nuts, nuts from one part of the world, local nuts, or a mix of nuts – go nuts. You can also just pick fruits and nuts that taste good to you. Check with your Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA³ farm (or other local farms) about donations
The rest will likely have to be purchased from your local co-op, farmers market or super market.
- **Dinner and other snacks** – Make sure you have humus, freshly baked local breads, cheese, and other things to fill participant's bellies in a healthy and wholesome way.
- **Wine/grape juice** – Try and find a local wine.
- **Seder materials** – This will vary widely depending on your needs. Kippot? Wine openers? Name tags? Much of this can be handmade or donated.

Decorations

- **Flowers** – Small bouquets of flowers that you can get donated from a local farmer make beautiful centerpieces
- **Herbs** – Bundles of herbs tied with twine or yarn can be place settings, centerpieces, and yummy seasoning for the food.
- **Pillows** – Depending on your set up, soft pillows for people to sit on always make a space cozier and warmer.
- **Candles** – Candles smell good, bring light and warmth, and are easy to use for decoration. Just place them around the table or around the space you are using.
- **Children's Art** – Do you have or know children? Have them draw pictures of trees and create a forest on the wall with all their trees.

Minimizing our impact

- All food and drinks can be purchased from local and organic sources wherever possible. You can even purchase things like apples from the farmers directly!
- To reduce waste, use cloth bags when shopping.
- Rent, borrow, or purchase for reuse table cloths, napkins, platters, and even dishware. People can be encouraged to bring their own dishware and utensils and there can be a volunteer team to wash up.
- Paper free advertising on facebook and evite!
- Print the haggadot on post consumer recycled paper
- Choose a location that is accessible to public transport.

³ For more about Hazon's CSA program visit www.hazon.org

Seder Cost Estimates

The seder will cover its own costs if you charge somewhere between \$5-\$15 at the door, depending on the size of the seder. This is a small fee and you can let people know that it is only being used to cover costs.

See how much you can get donated from local grocers, local florists, local farmers and local copy stores. Do you have friends with a garden? Cut flowers! Do you have friends in graphic design? See if they would work on the email. People love to help – so empower your friends and start finding donations.

This is a template budget that you can fill in for your own seder needs

Expected Costs

Room Rental (or use your own living room)	\$
Fruits/Nuts –	\$
Other snacks –	\$
Wine –	\$
Materials (like name tags, bottle openers, pens, kippot etc)	\$
Copying Costs –	\$
Paper goods (if necessary) –	\$
Decorations (like flowers, candles, and pillows)	\$



Educational content

The Haggadah as your guide

Use the haggadah as your guide for the seder. The haggadah delineates the order of the seder. Look through the haggadah and see where you will need leaders. For example, if you are having a large seder, pick four people to lead the blessings over the cups of wine, one person to lead in hand washing, four people to each give a short kavanah/intention for each *world* and one person to lead in the Grace After Meals/gratitude at the end.

Of if you are having a smaller seder, pick two people to lead the blessing over the cups of wine, one person to introduce the whole seder with a discussion, one person for an action oriented environmental suggestion and one person to offer gratitude.

Suggestions for making it your own seder

As mentioned above, music makes any seder more magical. Meditation also brings a unique component. Or, get everyone moving and teach a small circle dance. Try and think about how you can engage the four worlds of a person. Their head, perhaps through environmental Torah, their heart through singing, bodies through a guided stretch, and souls by creating community, prayer, and contemplative silence. What works for you? What are the needs of your community?

Resources

Food for Thought, the Hazon Sourcebook on Jews and Food, has tons of great resources for a seder. You can pick a text and ask a friend to lead a discussion. Or you can match everyone up with a chevruta, learning partner, and facilitate a discussion question. You can pass the book and read sections aloud followed by comments and questions. The book is an endless resource of texts and idea that are perfect for discussion at a Tu Bishvat seder. You can purchase it from the Hazon website (www.hazon.org).

Suggestions on selecting leaders

What great leaders, teachers and musicians are in your area? Some sections of the seder are nice when they have musical accompaniment. You can add a song or sing a song that is already included. Pick someone who plays guitar or who can lead group singing.

Some sections need a juicy environmental teaching to introduce the theme – do you know someone who is knowledgeable?

Some sections would be great with a guided meditation in the beginning. Can you lead a meditation? If not, find a friend.