



What is Purim?

Purim is one of the most joyous holidays celebrated by the Jewish people. It commemorates the day Esther, Queen of Persia, saved the Jewish people from execution by Haman, the advisor to the Persian king. Esther bravely exposed her previously hidden Jewish identity to her husband the king and asked him to save her people, which he did.

When is Purim?

Purim is held on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar. In 2026, Purim starts the evening of March 2nd and ends the end of the day March 3rd. In some cities such as Jerusalem, Purim is celebrated the following day instead. (this is called Shushan Purim)

How is Purim Celebrated?

Purim carries a theme of celebration with a carnival like flair, replete with costumes, noisemakers (called groggers) and libations. It's a festival for people of all ages to dress up and simply enjoy! Below these are some of the traditions that make the holiday so fun.

Fast: There is a fast the day before Purim, which commemorates three days Esther fasted before approaching the king to save the Jews.

Feast: The holiday itself is known for a party atmosphere, with lots of food and drinks. The centrepiece of Purim's home celebration is the seudah, a festive meal accompanied by alcoholic beverages.

One of the iconic foods associated with Purim are hamantaschen: triangle-shaped cookie pastries with fruit or savory filling. The treat is said to look like Haman's tri-cornered hat or his ears ("Oznei Haman" / "המנן אוזני" in Hebrew). Sweet hamantaschen are most popular. Poppy seed, chocolate or apricot are the most common fillings, although people often like to get creative!



Be merry: The centrepiece of the communal celebration is the reading of the Scroll of Esther, the Megillah, in the synagogue. It's a rowdy affair, with loud boos made every time that Haman's name is mentioned, so no one can hear the name of this horrible evildoer.

Another tradition is the Purim shpiel, the Purim play, during which fun is poked at community leaders and members. Purim has often been called the Jewish carnival, dressing in costume, drinking, music, dancing and games are all encouraged to heighten the levity of the day.

Share the joy: A Purim tradition is to send out baskets of food and drink ("shalach manot"/"mishloach manot") to family, friends and to the poor. They are often filled with food that is ready to eat — pastries, wine, candy, chips, and other snack foods certainly count.

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Will my Jewish colleagues be available over the festival?

While observant Jews are able to work on this festival, many choose to take time off to spend it with their families taking part in festivities!

What greeting can I give my Jewish colleagues?

You can wish your colleagues “Happy Purim” or in Hebrew, “Chag Purim Sameach” (the “Ch” in Chag is guttural like in “ch” in “Bach” or “Loch”.)

Where can I learn more?

- [The Story of Purim - Mayim Bialik](#)
- [Adloyada](#) - The Shushan Purim Parade in Jerusalem
- [Shushan Funk](#) - Music Video
- [Purim](#) - Jewish Virtual Library
- [Purim in Israel](#)

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