

**Welcome To Our Family Seder:
A Tu B'Shevat Celebration**

“The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the human whom He had formed.

And from the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden.”

Bereshit/Genesis 2: 8-9

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Preparing for your Tu B'Shevat Seder:

1. Traditionally, Tu B'Shevat is celebrated by eating of the seven species grown in Israel: wheat, barely, dates, olives, grapes, figs, and pomegranates.
2. For this Seder, you will simply need 3 different species of fruits:
 - a) **fruits with shells or peels** (citrus fruits, nuts, pomegranate, coconut)
 - b) **fruits with hard pits or seeds** (dates , olives, cherries, avocados, plums)
 - c) **fruits you can eat whole** (figs, berries, apples, pears, grapes)
3. You will need **white and red grape juice** (enough for 4 small cups for each Seder participant)
4. Set the table for a celebration, or spread a blanket out for a picnic on your living room floor
5. This guide takes the form of question and response. Choose a narrator or take turns reading through the Tu B'Shevat Family Seder guide with your family, pausing to ask questions and enjoying the tasty fruits of the trees! The questions, which are in bold, are a guide to elicit participation.

“When I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my ancestors. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren”

- Talmud Bavli, Ta'anit 23a

Welcome to our Family Seder: A Tu B'Shevat Celebration

Does anyone know what we are celebrating today?

Tu' B'Shevat is the new year of the trees.

Tu B'Shevat actually means the 15th day (Tu) of the month of Shevat, which marked the end of the fruit crops in ancient Israel.

Today, Jews all over the world celebrate by planting trees, eating new fruits, and learning about the seven species that grow in Israel.

Why do we celebrate Tu B'Shevat during winter?

In Israel, winter is usually a time of heavy rains.

This is the time when the buds on the trees begin to show, and the almond tree blooms, reminding us there is new life waiting to sprout after a long winter.

On Tu B'Shevat we eat new fruits, often the seven species that grow in Israel. **Can anyone guess what these seven types of foods are?**

Wheat

Barley

Grapes

Figs

Pomegranates

Olives

Dates

Has anyone ever been to a Seder? What did you do?

Ask questions, drink grape juice or wine, eat special foods and say thanks to God for all we have. Usually, if we do or eat something for the first time, we say the Shehecheyanu:

Blessed are you God, Master of the universe, who grants us life, sustains us, and has brought us to this season.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵן הַזֶּה.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Shehecheyanu,
v'Kiyemanu, v'higiyanu lazman ha'zeh*

What makes this a Tu B'Shevat Seder?

We are celebrating trees, the fruits of the trees, and the importance of caring for our earth. Our sages teach us that the earth belongs to our creator and that we are co-partners, working together to protect and keep our planet.

“And God took Adam and put Adam in the Garden of Eden, to work and to protect it” -Bereshit/Genesis 2:15

Do you know there is a Midrash (a kind of Jewish story) that says when God finished creating the world, God led the first human beings around the Garden of Eden, and told us that our job as humans is to take care of the earth?

“Upon creating the first human beings, God guided them around the Garden of Eden, saying, ‘Look at My creations! See how beautiful and perfect they are! I created everything for you. Make sure you do not ruin or destroy My World. If you do, there will be no one after you to fix it.’”

- Midrash Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) Rabbah 7: 13

Let's get started!

On Tu B'Shevat we eat different fruits to honor what the Rabbis understood as the four worlds in which we live. We could think of these worlds as different parts of ourselves: our bodies; our feelings; our thoughts; our breath. Let's sound out these word together.

1. *Assiyah* – the world of action (our body)
2. *Yetzirah* – the world of formation (our feelings)
3. *B'riyah* – the world of the mind (our thoughts)
4. *Atzilut* – the world of spirit (our breath)

Like at a Passover Seder, we are also going to drink 4 cups of grape juice of different colors. The colors change like the seasons change.

Can anyone tell me what season are we in now?

Winter

What's the color of winter?

White

That's right! In winter it's white, in spring we have light pink flower buds, summer is rosy with flowers and fruits, and then in autumn we have fully red leaves.

1st cup (white grape juice)

Our first cup is white, like the winter, as we drink it we remember that nature has been sleeping for many months. New life is waiting there under the snow.

Now we raise our glasses, say the blessing, then drink

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the vine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri Hagafen

1st fruits (coconuts, pomegranates, oranges, nuts)

Let's start with *Assiyah* – the world of action, our body

We eat fruits or nuts with a tough outer skin. These fruits have a skin that we can't eat and an inside that is delicious. The outside protects the inside – like when we go outside in the winter, we need protection from the cold, or we could get frost bite. The hard outside keeps the inside safe.

(Pass around these fruits, say the blessing, then eat)

Remember to say *Sheyhecheyanu* (found on page 4) if you are eating any of these fruit for the first time this year.

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the tree

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ:

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri
Haetz*

2nd cup (white grape juice with a few drops of red)

Our second cup is white with a few drops of red, like the beginning of spring, when the trees are waking up, and little bits of colour are starting to show, in tree buds and almond tree blossoms. Before we drink this second cup let's each think of a wish we have for this spring. If you want, share your wish.

Now we raise our glasses, say the blessing, and drink!

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the vine

ברוך אתה אֱדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri Hagafen

2nd fruits (dates, olives, cherries, avocados, plums)

Our next fruits represent the world of *Yetzirah*– the world of emotions or feelings. These fruits that have an outside that you can eat, with a tough inner core. This could remind us of our inner strength, or our heart, that keeps us strong on the inside. Sometimes we have reach down really deep inside ourselves to find the strength to do things that are hard. Can you think of something you did that was really hard but you did it anyway?

(Pass around these fruits, say the blessing, then eat)

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the tree

ברוך אתה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ:

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri
Haetz*

3rd cup (red grape juice with a few drops of white)

Our third cup is red with a few drops of white, like the summer, when fruits and vegetables are still growing and beautiful colors are all around us.

Now we raise our glasses, say the blessing, and drink!

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the vine

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri
Hagafen*

3rd fruits (figs, grapes, berries, apples, pears)

These next fruits represent the world of *B'riyah*– the world of our thoughts. Here we eat fruits that are soft on the inside and outside, we can eat the whole thing. This reminds us that through our thoughts and imagination we can be or do anything! We can be free to be however we want in our thoughts. If we choose good thoughts we can be our best selves. From the inside good comes all the way to the outside! What new thoughts do you choose for yourself this year?

(Pass around these fruits, say the blessing, then eat)

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the tree

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ:

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri
Haetz*

4th cup (red grape juice)

Our fourth cup is red, like the fall, when the harvest is ready, and we eat all sorts of foods that were planted in the spring and summer. It's red like the leaves that are turning bright colors.

Now we raise our glasses, say the blessing, and drink!

Blessed are you God, Master of the Universe who creates
the fruit of the vine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'Olam Borey P'ri Hagafen

4th fruits

In the last world, the world of *Atzilut* of breath, we don't eat any fruits. This world of breath actually brings us back to the importance of trees. Trees give us oxygen, they clean our air from all the carbon and pollution. We need clean air to live, stay healthy and have energy to grow. That's why we need to take care to protect and take care of our trees.

Now let's all stand up tall and pose like a tree:

1. Stand up and plant your feet on the ground
2. Spread your toes and imagine your roots in the ground
3. Put your palms together in front of your chest
4. Tuck one foot inside the opposite leg (above or below the knee)
5. Balance and breathe
6. Stretch your arms out like branches, sway in the wind
7. **Can you feel yourself growing?**
8. **What kind of tree are you?**

Do you remember at the beginning of our Seder we talked about a Midrash (a Jewish story) where God told the first humans they needed to take care of the trees of the garden, because if they didn't there was no one else to fix it? Well, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, says:

“If you believe that you have the ability to destroy, then believe that you have the ability to fix.”

As we celebrate the new year of the trees, let's commit our family to protecting our trees and caring for the earth around us. **Wondering how?** Below are some suggestions.

Check off what you are doing, or commit to do this year:

- Plant a tree in your yard or neighborhood
- Compost your food waste
- Upcycle your recycling into arts and crafts
- Start a Green Earth Keepers club at school
- Use reusable shopping bags
- When you buy things, buy things that will last
- Say “no thanks!” to plastic bags
- Use both sides of your drawings or school paper
- Buy recycled paper products
- Grow a vegetable garden in your yard or neighborhood
- Turn off the lights when you're not using them
- Buy less plastic, and recycle what you buy
- Ask your school or office to put compost bins in the lunch room

Draw a picture of your family Seder below