

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year festival. It lasts two days.

It commemorates the creation of the world.

Rosh Hashanah is also a judgement day, when Jews believe that God balances a person's good deeds over the last year against their bad deeds, and decides what the next year will be like for them.

It's a time for people to think about their priorities in life and to reflect on what has been achieved in the past year.

It's a time of asking for forgiveness for wrongdoings (sins)

It's a chance for Jews to ask questions about their actions throughout the year. Questions considered during Rosh Hashanah include:

- What's the most meaningful thing in my life?
- Who in my life means the most to me? How often do I let them know this?
- What are the most significant things I've achieved in the past year?
- What do I hope to achieve next year and in my life generally?



In the synagogue

A lot of time is spent in the synagogue during Rosh Hashanah.

One of the synagogue rituals for Rosh Hashanah is the blowing of the **Shofar**, a ram's horn trumpet. A hundred notes are sounded in a special rhythm.

The sound of the shofar starts a ten-day period known as the 'Days of Awe', which ends with the solemn festival of **Yom Kippur**.

🔊 [Listen](#) to a demonstration of the shofar

After the service a **special meal** is eaten at home, including:

- apples dipped in honey, a symbol of the sweet New Year that each Jew hopes lies ahead
- a sweet carrot stew called a tzimmes is often served
- Hallah (or Challah) bread in a round loaf, rather than the plaited loaf served on the Sabbath, so as to symbolise a circle of life and of the year
- often a pomegranate on the table because of a tradition that pomegranates have 613 seeds, one for each of the commandments that a Jew is obliged to keep.