

# Purim

The Jewish holiday of Purim (Poo-rim or Puh-rim) also known as the “Festival of Lots”, is a fun commemorative holiday celebrating the rescue of the Jewish people from the Ancient Persian Emperor Haman’s plot to kill all the Jews in his kingdom as told in the Book of Ester. Like other Jewish holidays, the date of Purim on the Gregorian Calendar can vary from year to year, but it generally falls between the end of February and the middle of March. In 2022, Purim begins on **Wednesday night, March 16<sup>th</sup>** and continues through **Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>**. In Jerusalem and other communities, celebration of Purim occurs on or into **Friday March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020**.

## History of Purim

Purim is told through the biblical Book of Esther, taking place in Ancient Persia during the reign of King Ahasuerus. In the Persian capital of Shushan (also spelled Susa), the King’s Prime Minister Haman plotted to kill the entire Jewish population of the city after a Jewish man named Mordecai refused to bow in front of him. Haman convinced the Persian king to issue a degree ordering the extermination of the Jewish population on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month of Adar. A young woman named Ester, who was raised by Mordecai, manage to become the Queen of Persian, albeit hiding her Jewish identity. Mordechai convinces Esther to reveal her Jewish identity to the king and Haman at a feast, at the risk of her life. In the end after revealing her identity to the king, Esther convinces him to let the Jews live and have Haman and other enemies of the Jews punished. Mordecai then becomes the new Prime Minister and the Jewish community of Persia celebrate their victory on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar or Purim.

## Observance of Purim

Celebration of Purim varies from Jewish community, families and individuals; yet it is universally noted for its spirit of liveliness and fun. At home, many will celebrate Purim with a festive meal called a *Seudah*, which is held during the daylight hours of the holiday and accompanied by lots of wine and *Hamantaschen*, or triangular pastries. Some also many chose to fast the day before Purim also known as *Ta’anit Esther*. Purim is also an important holiday where the community comes together at a synagogue to read or dramatize the Book of Esther, known as the *Megillah* or *Purim speil*. Many people wear costumes, sing songs, perform skits, and use rattles or noisemakers every time someone mentions Haman’s name during the reading of the story.

## Scheduling

During Purim, Jewish employees may request time off work to attend a Megillah or Seudah, observe the holiday, or even to prepare for the holiday. Some may choose to fast the day before or celebrate the holiday on different ways than others. Invite your employees to share how they personally observe Purim and what practices they have that should be respected during the days of Purim.

### **Greetings for Purim**

Typical greetings if you'd like to recognize Purim with your colleagues and friends, included the Hebrew *Chag Purim Sameach*, or the Yiddish *ah freilichen Purim*, both of which mean "Happy Purim".

**For more useful information on world religions, subscribe to Tanenbaum's online resource, [Religion at Work: A \(Human\) Resource](#). Visit [the Tanenbaum Workplace Resources page](#) for additional Tanenbaum fact sheets and contact Tanenbaum at [membership@tanenbaum.org](mailto:membership@tanenbaum.org).**