

Shabbat & Festivals		✓
Shabbat	<p>Shabbat means 'to cease' or 'to rest'. Following the commandment in Exodus and Deuteronomy, Jews set this day apart. They remember that G-d rested from creation and delivered them from slavery.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>And so the whole universe was completed. By the seventh day G-d finished what he had been doing and stopped working. He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he has completed his creation and stopped working.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Genesis 2: 1-3</p>	
Rules about working on Shabbat	<p>On this day no creative work is done. Shabbat is the last day of the week, beginning at sunset on Friday and ending at nightfall on Saturday when the first three stars can be seen in the sky. On Shabbat, Jews think about G-d as the creator of everything and of people as G-d's partners in the world. Shabbat is considered to be a festival, which takes place every week, both at home and in the synagogue.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>You have six days in which to do your work, but on the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work – neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Exodus 20: 8-10</p>	
Shabbat at home	<p>Preparations for Shabbat begin early on a Friday, as all of the cleaning, shopping, food preparation and cooking must be completed before the sun sets. During the winter this can be as early as 3.30pm, so Jewish people finish school and work early on a Friday. At dusk, just as the sun sets, Shabbat is welcomed in by a Jewish woman lighting two candles – symbols of joy, blessing, serenity and peace. She also recites the blessing of G-d, and blesses the children of the family.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>King of the universe, who has hallowed us by the commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.</i></p> <p>When the men and boys return from the synagogue, Friday night dinner begins with the ceremony of Kiddush – 'sanctifying' or 'hallowing' – making Shabbat holy. A Jewish man blesses the wine and the challot. After the blessing, the bread is sprinkled or dipped in salt and given to everyone present at the meal. After the meal a special grace is recited. Some families sing 'table songs' which stress the idea of joy and togetherness. Saturday afternoon is usually spent in rest and relaxation. This might include going for a walk in the park, visiting family or friends who live nearby, or reading a book. There is also an afternoon service in the synagogue.</p>	
Shabbat in the synagogue	<p>Men and boys attend a synagogue service on the Friday evening. They sing hymns from the Psalms and recite prayers and blessings. At the end of the service they sing a hymn called the Yigdal. On the Saturday morning the whole family walks to the synagogue for the main service of the week. As the Aron Hakodesh is opened and the Sefer Torah is taken out, the congregation sings the first line of the Shema. The scroll is carried around the synagogue with great rejoicing. Some men touch the corner of their tallit to the scroll as it passes by.</p>	
Yigdal & Maimonides Thirteen Principles of Faith	<p>The words of the Yigdal are based on Maimonides Thirteen Principles of Faith which are summed up as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G-d is the creator – one, spiritual and eternal. • The teachings of the prophets are true. • Moses is the greatest of the prophets. • The Torah was revealed to Moses and is unchangeable. • G-d knows what human beings do and think. • He rewards the good and punishes the wicked. <p>The Messiah will come and the dead will be resurrected.</p>	
Havdalah	<p>The Havdalah ceremony marks the end of Shabbat at nightfall on the Saturday evening. The same symbols of wine and light, together with spices, are used to bid it farewell. The box of sweet-smelling spices is passed around in the hope of sweetening the deeds of the coming week, or some say to revive the body as the extra soul departs!</p>	

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The ancient Israelites worked out their calendar on the movements of the moon. The new moon marks the beginning of a new month in the Jewish calendar. To make sure that the festivals always fall at the right time of year and during the correct season, every few years an extra month is added! (Seven times in a cycle of nineteen years).

Days of Awe	<p>Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the most important days in the Jewish calendar. They are called the Days of Awe because they stress the need for awe and reverence towards G-d. Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement - when one admits all they have done wrong, atones/repents of their sins, and turns back to G-d. At Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Jews reflect on their responsibilities. The Book of Life is opened on Rosh Hashanah, and is closed ten days later on Yom Kippur.</p>	
Rosh Hashanah	<p>Rosh Hashanah literally translates as 'Head of the Year'. The Rabbis of the Talmud believed that the world was created on this day. Rosh Hashanah is celebrated as the birthday of the world and the whole human race. Relationships between people and G-d, and people with each other, come under scrutiny. <u>Rituals and Customs at Rosh Hashanah</u></p>	
Yom Kippur	<p>Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is ten days after Rosh Hashanah. It is the holiest day of the Jewish year. Much of the day is spent fasting and in the synagogue, where they confess their sins. The ceremonies and readings describe the Temple ritual of atonement and G-d's willingness to forgive those who are truly sorry. <u>Rituals and Customs for Yom Kippur</u></p>	
Pilgrimage Festivals	<p>There are three <u>pilgrimage festivals</u> when Jewish people would travel to the Temple in Jerusalem.</p>	
Sukkot	<p>Sukkot is also known as the Feast of the Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths - the temporary shelters used by the Israelites during their 40 year journey from Egypt, through the wilderness. Sukkot celebrates G-d's protection of the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land of Canaan. It takes place at the conclusion of the fruit harvest in Israel, around October time, and lasts for seven days (eight days for Orthodox Jews living outside of Israel). <u>Rituals and Customs at Sukkot</u></p>	
Pesach	<p><u>Pesach</u> means 'to pass over' and the seven night festival, also known as Passover, celebrates the freedom of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, under the guidance and leadership of Moses. It is called Passover because the tenth plague, the Angel of Death, passed over the homes of the Hebrew slaves taking only the lives of the Egyptians' first born. Also, when they escaped - made their Exodus - they passed over the Sea of Reeds. <u>Pesach Rituals and Traditions</u></p>	
Shavuot	<p><u>Shavuot</u> is the 'Feast of Weeks' and falls seven weeks after Pesach. The name comes from the idea of counting the days to a special event! Shavuot is a one day festival which completes Pesach by celebrating G-d's gift of freedom. (2 days outside Israel). At Pesach they gain <u>PHYSICAL</u> freedom. At Shavuot they gain <u>SPIRITUAL</u> freedom. Shavuot celebrates the 'revelation' or giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. <u>Shavuot Rituals and Traditions</u></p>	
Hanukkah	<p>Whilst it is very well known, Hanukkah is one of the minor festivals. <u>Hanukkah</u> is the Hebrew word for 'dedication' and the festival commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, after it had been desecrated (made impure) by Greek opponents of the Jewish faith in the second century BCE. The story is told in the Tenakh in books of the Maccabees. Judah Maccabee and his small army, against all odds, defeated the Greeks. They tore down the desecrated altar, built a new one and relit the great menorah. <u>Hanukkah</u> is also known as the 'Feast of Lights'. The Talmud tells the story of the miracle of the oil. When Judah Maccabee entered the Temple, there was only one jar oil which hadn't been defiled to light the menorah. It should only have lasted for one day, but miraculously lasted eight days until fresh, pure oil could be prepared. This is why Hanukkah lasts for eight nights, and foods fried in oil like doughnuts and potato latkes (a bit like a rostie or pancake) are eaten.</p>	