

# The Jewish Calendar

The western calendar in use today was adopted by Julius Caesar, which is a modified calendar from the times of the Roman Republic (pre-Christ). It is based on the cycle of the Earth around the sun, which is very close to 365 ¼ days.

Over the centuries since its adoption it was discovered that the “leap year” addition every four years didn’t quite make the proper adjustments for the real length of earth orbit around the sun (which is what makes up a year). In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century the western world made a major calendar adjustment and re-adopted a slightly modified version of the calendar which is still in use today.

By way of contrast, the Hebrew calendar is based on the cycle of the moon around the Earth, rather than the cycle of the Earth around the Sun. The length of this Jewish calendar cycle, the lunar month, is about 29 1/2 days. Twelve lunar months make therefore about 354 days, which is 11 1/4 days shorter than the solar year.

Every month, there is one instance in which the moon is exactly between the Earth and the sun and the Earth faces the dark side of the moon. This instance is called *Molad* ("birth" of a new moon) and it marks the beginning of a new month. The *Molad* of the first month of the year, *Tishrei*, marks the Jewish New Year or *Rosh HaShana*.

Because of the inaccuracies of the lunar calendar versus the solar calendar, there are dozens of rules that the Jews use to calculate their holidays. A search on the internet will find several web sites devoted to calculating the modern Jewish calendar, due to the complexities of bringing in all the rule sets.

Want to learn more about western and Jewish calendars? Do some basic searches using [www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com) or visit the suggested link below, which was active as of this writing.

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Religious Year	Civil Year	Hebrew Month	Western Correlation	Farm Season	Climate	Special Days	
1	7	Nisan	March-April	Barley Harvest	Latter rains (Maiqosh)	14 Passover 21 First fruits	
2	8	Iyyar	April-May	General Harvest	D R Y  S E A S O N	6 Pentecost	
3	9	Sivan	May-June	Wheat Harvest Vine Tending		9 Destruction of temple	
4	10	Tammuz	June-July	First Grapes		1 New year 10 Day of Atonement 15-21 Feast of Tabernacles	
5	11	Ab	July-Aug	Grapes, figs & olives		Early rains (Yoreh)  Rain season	25 Dedication
6	12	Elul	Aug-Sept	Vintage			13-14 Purim
7	1	Tishri	Sept-Oct	Ploughing			
8	2	Marchesvan	Oct-Nov	Grain Planting			
9	3	Kislev	Nov-Dec				
10	4	Tebet	Dec-Jan	Spring growth			
11	5	Shebat	Jan-Feb	Winter figs			
12	6	Adar	Feb-March	Pulling flax, almonds bloom			
		Adar Sheni	Intercalary Month				

Best source for information on calendars:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/khagen/CalHist.html>

<http://www.justchristians.net>