

BASIC BLESSINGS TO ACCOMPANY The Tu B'Shevat Seder

Blessing For The Grape Juice

You can say this before each cup of grape juice you drink.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.
Blessed be You, the One who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessing After Eating Various Fruit

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, בורא נפשות רבות וחסרון,
על כל מה שבראת, להחיות בהם נפש כל חי, ברוך חי העולמים.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei n'fashot
rabot v'chesronan, al kol ma she-barata, l'hachayot bahem nefesh
kol chai, barukh chei ha-olamim.

Blessed be You, the One who created so many different living
things, all needing each other, to make one Life interwoven
through them all, as one soul. Blessed be the Life of all worlds.



Blessing For The First Time You Experience Something (Shehechyanu)

You might want to say this before any fruit you are
tasting for the first time this season.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם,
שהחינו וקימנו והגענו לזמן הזה.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-hechyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed be You, the One who has kept us alive and
sustained us so that we could reach this moment.

A Tu B'Shevat Seder

The Tu B'Shevat seder is a celebration of our
relationship with nature and with fruit trees in
particular, and a time for reflection. Today, as we
celebrate together, let us envision ourselves as
partners in shaping, cultivating, and healing the
natural world. The Tu B'Shevat Seder is split into four
sections, each reflecting the seasons and symbolizing
different aspects of the trees and our own lives.

WINTER



Pour a glass of white grape juice, say the blessing, and drink half or more.

The Tu B'Shevat seder is split into four sections, each reflecting the seasons and symbolizing different aspects of the trees and our own lives. We start with winter when many species in nature lay dormant. Just like animals hibernate through the winter, the seeds that will sprout new trees in the spring, "sleep" deep in the ground. To start our seder, we'll taste foods, like nuts, that have a hard exterior. These foods are good reminders not to judge others by their appearance. A coconut, for example, is hairy and hard on the outside, but contains sweet water and delicious fruit inside. This part of the seder helps us remember that *every person is unique and special*.

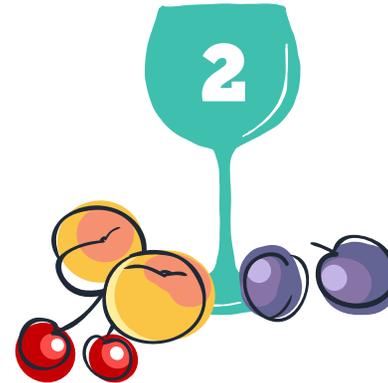
Discuss:

When have you "judged a book by its cover" only to realize that you were mistaken?

Eat:

Walnuts
Almonds
Pomegranates
Coconuts
Pistachios

SPRING



Add a few drops of red grape juice and fill the rest with white. Drink half or more.

This portion of the seder starts with a really fun sensory activity. You'll add a few drops of regular grape juice to your cup of white juice to look at the way a little bit of color can cause a lot of transformation. This helps us think about the fact that every stream begins with a small trickle and every flower or tree starts with just a single bud. Although we don't eat the pits of fruits, they are the building blocks of new plants.

Discuss:

What is something you have done or created that started out very small and became bigger or more important over time?

Eat:

Cherries
Olives
Plums
Apricots
Avocado



SUMMER



Refill the glass so that there is now half red and half white grape juice.

Drink half or more.

At this part we'll drink a third cup of juice that's made of equal parts red and white juice. We'll also get to *nosh* on (that means eat, in Yiddish), some foods that can be eaten whole – no peeling, deseeding, or prep needed. These fruits can remind us of the wholeness of the world, where nothing is wasted and everything nourishes everything else.

Discuss:

When do you feel truly whole and happy?



Eat:
Grapes
Raisins
Apples
Pears
Blueberries
Raspberries

FALL



Pour a nearly full glass of red juice again and add just a few drops of white.
Drink all.

And now we're at our final step—where we'll drink a full cup of juice and focus on the sense of smell rather than taste. During this end portion, we're thinking about was invisible to the eye or things that are part of us and part of the world that we can't see or hear, like trees growing, leaves blowing in the wind, or the sun coming up to bring us new days and help the cycle of life.

Discuss:

What helps you remember and appreciate what you cannot see?

Smell:
Cinnamon
Rosemary
Bay Leaf
Cedar



May the New Year of The Trees begin a year of growth; may it be a year of renewal for the trees and for us; and may our blessings give strength to the trees and may our eyes be opened to the wonders of creation, and may we nurture the world that nurtures us.

