

# High Holidays AT HOME





# SYMBOLIC NEW YEAR FOODS

Welcome to Rosh Hashanah *simanim*

– eating foods with special symbolic value for the new year.  
Each of these appetizers is chosen because the food itself, or the Hebrew name of the food, connects to a wish for the new year. **Here goes!**

"You're one in a melon!"



"Have a grape New Year!"

## APPLES & HONEY – A SWEET NEW YEAR

In ancient Israel, the apple was often eaten as the first dish in a meal, to help spark people's appetite, while honey was a popular dessert. By dipping an apple in honey, we connect symbols for the beginning and the end of a meal – symbolizing how one year is ending and another is beginning.

Take an apple slice, dip it in honey, and say:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתַּחֲדֵשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוֹקָה.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai  
Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu,  
shetechadesh aleinu shanah tovah  
umetukah.

Dear God, renew us for  
a good and sweet year.



Now eat a dripping slice of apple!



## DATES (Tamar)

### HOPING FOR AN END TO HATE

The word-play here is that the Hebrew word **tam** means “end.” The wish for the new year is that hatred in our world will end. Say the blessing, then eat a date.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
שִׁיתָמוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשִׁי רַעְתָּנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei  
avoteinu v'imoteinu, sheyitamu oyveinu veson'einu vechol  
mevakshei ra'ateinu.

Dear God, in this new year, please end all hatred.



## CARROT (Gezer)

### WISHING FOR A GOOD JUDGMENT

The pun here is that **gezer** also means a firm decision or judgment. The wish is that we will be judged favorably in this High Holiday season. Say the blessing, then crunch a carrot (or eat them quietly if they're cooked).

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
שֶׁתִּגְזֹר עָלֵינוּ גְּזֵרוֹת טוֹבוֹת.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu  
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shetigzor aleinu  
**gezerot** tovot.

Dear God, in this new year, please give us  
a good judgment.



## POMEGRANATE (Rimon)

### FILLING UP WITH GOOD DEEDS

The hundreds of seeds inside a pomegranate represent the many good deeds – *mitzvot* – we can do to make the world better. Say the blessing, then eat some seeds. (Watch out for stains...)

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
שְׁנֵהֲיָה מְלָאִים מִצְּוֹת כְּרִמּוֹן.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu  
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shenih'yeh  
melei'im mitzvot kerimon.

Dear God, in this new year, may our  
good deeds be as many  
as the seeds of a pomegranate.



### “HEAD OF THE YEAR”

Finally, we hope that on Rosh Hashanah (“head of the year”) we will hold our heads up high and be leaders for others. Traditionally, this blessing was said with a fish head (!), but it can be said instead with another symbolic “head.”

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
שְׁנֵהֲיָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu  
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shenih'yeh lerosh  
velo lezanav.

Dear God, in this new year, may we be like  
the head and not the tail.



If your family is inspired by the Jewish tradition of *simanim* (symbols) to create your own food symbolism, go for it! Think what foods could represent values you want to highlight in the new year. (If you're brave, create some English-language puns to go along with them.)

**And now, enjoy your holiday meal.**



Your family may prefer to use a “suggestion”  
of a fish head (fish-shaped crackers or a  
gummy fish) or a different  
kind of “head”  
entirely – a head  
of lettuce or  
cabbage, a  
broccoli or  
cauliflower, or  
an artichoke.

