

# Healthy and Sustainable Rosh Hashanah Resources

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The holiday of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is the perfect time to open up to new possibilities and be grateful for everything you have. It's a time to let the blasts of the shofar shake you awake to the world around you. And more than anything, Rosh Hashanah offers the opportunity for *tshuva* (returning/repentance) – to return to our best, most full versions of ourselves. As we turn inward, we have the chance to ask, “what impact do our actions have on our friends and family, our communities, and on the earth?”

In celebration of this time of turning and returning, we've created for our Hazon Seal of Sustainability Sites a list of healthy, sustainable resources that will help you welcome Rosh Hashanah with mindfulness, sustainability, and joy!



## Go apple picking

What could be better than dipping apples that you picked yourself, straight from the tree? Many family farms welcome visitors to pick apples, make fresh cider, and tour their grounds. Needless to say, this is a great activity for the whole family. Look for local farms in your area that offer family-oriented activities and practice organic methods. If you can't get to an orchard, purchase organic apples at a farmers market (support local farmers) or at a grocery store.

## Avoid the honey bear

Apples and honey are two of the most recognizable Jewish holiday foods. Meanwhile, the emergence “colony collapse disorder” (aka the mass disappearance of bees from hives) indicates that something is awry in the bee community. There are many great articles about the potential causes of CCD online. To note, the ubiquitous honey bear that sits in most of our cabinets tends to be filled with industrially-produced (and not particularly flavorful) honey. This year, dip your apples in delicious, raw honey produced by a small-scale local apiary. Local honey has the added benefit of providing some relief from seasonal allergies.

## Highlight local flavors

This year, Rosh Hashanah falls at the end of summer and beginning of early fall. It is one of the most amazing times to find fresh local vegetables through your CSA or farmers market. Serve a root veggie medley that highlights the vegetables of fall. Consider having more plant-based options at your holiday table and less industrial meat and dairy dishes.

## Seasonal centerpieces

Instead of fresh-cut flowers that will wilt after a few days, create a sustainable centerpiece that will impress your guests. Place heirloom apples or pomegranates in a glass bowl, or place potted fall flowers (chrysanthemums, marigolds etc.) around the table to add seasonal color.

## Eat and Learn

Rabbi Shimon said: If three have eaten at one table and have not discussed words of Torah over it, it is

as though they had eaten of the sacrifices of the dead, as it is written (Is. 28:8). Ask each of your Rosh Hashanah guests to bring a reading (e.g. traditional Jewish texts, Hasidic tales, a favorite poem or scene from a play, children’s book etc.) to share on a particular Rosh Hashanah-related theme. Need an example? Try “returning” “scarcity and abundance” or “mindfulness.” At dinner, ask your guests to share what they brought.



### **Kosher organic wine**

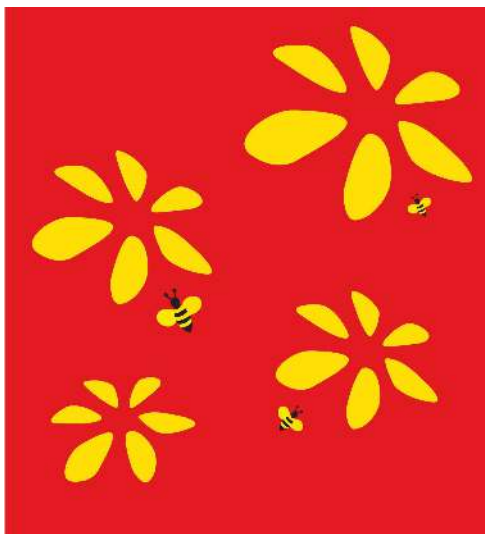
Serve your friends and family wines from [Hazon’s kosher, organic wine list](#). The list got a whole lot longer since Baron Herzog decided to go “sustainable” (three cheers!) The wines on this list are tasty, hechshered and good for the earth – you’ll be able to impress your friends as the world’s best sustainable sommelier.

### **Get outside!**

Rosh Hashanah celebrations have the tendency to fall into the rhythm of pray, eat, sleep, pray, eat, sleep...eat. This year, change up that rhythm by finding some time to get outside into the crisp fall sunlight. Go for an early morning walk before synagogue, meditate outside in the afternoon, or bring your kids to the park after lunch to sing holiday songs.

### **Cast away cleanup**

Tashlich is one of the most beautiful moments of Rosh Hashanah where we head towards a flowing body of water and toss in bread to symbolically cast away our sins. As part of your Rosh Hashanah preparation, take a day in the week leading up to the holiday (and bring your friends and kids) to “clean up” the river or watershed where you will perform the tashlich ritual. Collect any garbage or bottles lying about and walk around to get a lay of the land, sometimes called a [“reverse tashlich.”](#) When you come back the next week, note if you feel a different connection to the space.



**With best wishes for a happy,  
peaceful, healthy and sustainable  
new year from everyone at  
Hazon.**

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