



DEI Initiative on Jewish Life and Antisemitism at U-M Presents... Passover on campus at U-M 2024

During the winter semester, Jewish students, faculty, and staff will observe Passover, a holiday observed by most Jews world-wide. Here's how you can support them and promote a more inclusive campus community.



1. When is Passover?

In 2024, Passover falls from the evening of April 22 to sunset on April 30. It is an eight-day holiday, beginning on the 15th of the Jewish month of Nisan. Because the Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, Passover falls on different days of the Gregorian calendar each year, always in March or April.

2. How are these holidays observed?

On the first two evenings (Monday 4/22-Tuesday 4/23) many Jews hold a Passover Seder—a special meal with symbolic foods, and people use both ancient and contemporary texts to discuss the themes of liberation and justice, rooted in the biblical story of the Exodus from Egypt and enslavement, and connected to contemporary struggles for freedom.

Many Jews observe Passover by not eating leavened products or grains for the entire holiday, and instead eat matzah, an unleavened bread, and products prepared according to the holiday's dietary restrictions. Many Jews who do not follow kosher dietary laws during the year are stricter about their observance of these traditions on Passover.

The first two days (Tuesday 4/23-Wednesday 4/24) and the last two days (Monday 4/29 and Tuesday 4/30) are considered holy days, during which traditionally observant Jews refrain from all kinds of work, similar to their observance of the sabbath each week (including using anything electronic, riding in cars, writing or typing).

3. How does this affect the University of Michigan?

This year, Passover Seders fall on the last two nights of classes in winter semester, and the holiday continues through exam period. Because Seders are usually conducted at home, many students, faculty, and staff will want to be home or travel to be with their families to celebrate. Students might need to miss the last day of class, or move an exam time to accommodate their observance. The scheduling of faculty meetings and retreats, commonly held at the end of the semester, should avoid the first two days of the holiday and offer Passover-friendly food options.

4. How Can I Be Supportive?

Be Aware:

Mark these dates on your calendar. Let students know that you are aware that some may be observing these holidays and invite them to approach you about accommodations. Encourage Jewish faculty and staff to be proactive about making alternate schedule arrangements for this week.

Be Inclusive:

Offer holiday greetings (Happy Holiday! or Happy Passover!). Recognize that requests from differently observant students may vary. Consider your final exam, presentation, or assignment schedule so that Jewish students can both complete their course requirements and celebrate their holiday.

Be Accommodating:

Understand that students may need to make alternative arrangements to turn in assignments or to fulfill class responsibilities. Faculty and staff should work with students to find accommodations if conflicts arise. Avoid scheduling mandatory meetings and meals during this time.

Resources:

Hillel and Chabad both provide strictly kosher food for Passover Seders and meals throughout the holiday, and have other resources for those seeking information or ways to celebrate.