



JEWISH  
COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS  
COUNCIL  
OF NEW YORK INC.

# A Guide to Jewish New York

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For additional information please see the JCRC-NY's  
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# A Guide to Jewish New York

## Synagogue/Jewish Life

The New York Jewish community offers a variety of options when it comes to religious life and affiliation. Jews in the United States are generally broken up into movements. There are quite a few movements in the U.S, however, the four largest being, Conservative Judaism, Orthodox Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism and Reform Judaism.

We hope this description of the denominations, along with links to a list of synagogues in the New York area, will aid you not only by providing a better understanding of religious life in New York, but also help you decide which if any synagogue to attend.

### Conservative Judaism

Conservative Judaism developed as a reaction to various reformist movements. Conservative Judaism wanted to maintain links to traditional Jewish beliefs and practices while also participating and adjusting to modern, secular society. Guided by a commitment to both modernity and tradition, Conservative Judaism is guided by Jewish tradition and to the observance of mitzvot. Conservative Jews study texts critically and bring knowledge from other disciplines to help better understand Jewish heritage and preserve sacred traditions. Conservative Judaism is unique in its approach to halakhah and mitzvot. For the Conservative Jew, halakhah is both evolving and binding, so one must continue to grow in his commitment and observance. The unity of the Jewish people is a central value of the Conservative Movement. The centrality of modern Israel, Hebrew as the language of Judaism, devotion to the idea of Klal Yisrael (Jewish Unity), the defining role of the Torah and Torah study, that Halakah governs Jewish life, and the belief in God, are the central values in Conservative Judaism.

For more information about this movement and a list of congregations please visit: <http://metny.uscj.org/>

### Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Judaism is a collective of many different movements adhering to common principles and therefore does not have a single governing body. All of the Orthodox movements are very similar in their observance and beliefs, differing only in the details that are emphasized. Orthodox sees itself as the continuation of the beliefs and practices of normative Judaism, as accepted by the Jewish nation at Mt. Sinai and codified in successive generations in an ongoing process that continues to this day. Orthodox Judaism believes that both the Written and Oral Torah are of divine origin, and represent the word of G-d. As practical questions arise, Orthodox authorities apply the Halachic process (the system of legal reasoning and interpretation described in the Oral Torah) using the Torah (both Oral and Written) to determine how best to live in accordance with G-d's will. In this way, Orthodoxy evolves to meet the demands of the times. Within the category of Orthodox Judaism, there are the following sub-sets: Modern Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodoxy, also known as Haredi Judaism.

For more information about this movement please visit: <http://www.youngisrael.org/> and <http://www.ou.org/>

For a list of congregations in Manhattan, please visit: <http://citidex/894.htm>

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## Reconstructionist Judaism

Reconstructionist Judaism is a progressive, contemporary approach to Jewish life which integrates a deep respect for traditional Judaism with the insights and ideas of contemporary social, intellectual and spiritual life. Judaism is more than religion, it is the entire cultural legacy of the Jewish people. Reconstructionists have a profound sense of belonging in contemporary communities while maintaining connected to the historical experience of the Jewish people. Reconstructionist communities are characterized by their respect for such core values as democratic process, pluralism, and accessibility. In Jewish tradition, talmud Torah, (the study of Torah), is a life-long obligation and opportunity. Reconstructionists are committed to a serious engagement with the texts and teachings, as well as the art, literature and music of tradition. Reconstructionist Judaism is respectful of traditional Jewish observances but also open to new interpretations and forms of religious expression.

For more information about this movement and a list of congregations please visit: <http://jrf.org/>

## Reform Judaism

Reform Judaism attempts to treat Judaism as a rational religion which can be adapted to modern needs and modern problems. Reform Jews accept the Torah as the foundation of Jewish life containing God's ongoing revelation and the record of the Jewish people's ongoing relationship with God. The great contribution of Reform Judaism is that it has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition, and to bring faith to sacred texts without sacrificing critical scholarship. Tikkun olam (repairing the world) is a hallmark of Reform Judaism, which promotes bringing peace, freedom and justice to all people. Reform Judaism has been reaching out to Jews-by-choice and inter-faith families, encouraging them to embrace Judaism.

For more information about this movement and a list of congregations please visit: <http://urj.org/>

## Kosher Food and Restaurants

The Hebrew word kosher means "fit." The kosher laws define the foods that are fit for consumption for a Jew. Throughout our 4000-year history, the observance of kosher has been a hallmark of Jewish identity. Some of the basics of keeping Kosher are:

- The meat, milk and eggs of certain species of animal are permitted for consumption, while others are forbidden. In addition, a series of laws govern how the animal should be killed and which parts of the animal can be eaten.
- Meat and milk are never combined. Separate utensils are used for each, and a waiting period is observed between eating them.
- Fruits, vegetables and grains are basically always kosher, but must be insect free. Wine or grape juice, however, must be certified kosher.

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- Since even a small trace of a non-kosher substance can render a food not kosher, all processed foods and eating establishments require certification by a reliable rabbi or kashrut supervision agency.
- A domesticated animal is kosher if it has spilt hooves and chews its cud. It must have both kosher signs. Examples: cows, sheep, goats and deer are kosher, while pigs, rabbits, squirrels, bears, dogs, cats, camels and horses are not.
- Fowl: The Torah lists 24 non-kosher bird species -- basically all predatory and scavenger birds. Examples of kosher birds are the domestic species of chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and pigeons.
- Fish & Seafood: A water creature is kosher only if it has fins and scales. Examples: salmon, tuna, pike, flounder, carp and herring are kosher, while catfish, sturgeon, swordfish, lobster, shellfish, crabs and all water mammals are not.
- All reptiles, amphibians, worms and insects -- with the exception of four types of locust -- are not kosher.

**For lists of Kosher restaurants in New York City, please visit the following websites:**

<http://www.koshertopia.com/>

<https://ozny.org/docs/kosherlist.pdf>

<http://www.jewishtraveladvisor.com/kosher-restaurant-list.php?ac=New%20York%20city>

## Education

When it comes to education in New York, Jewish parents have the choice to send their children to public or private Jewish schools. Parents who do send their children to public schools often also send their children to Hebrew school, which is an after school program aimed at supplementing secular education with a Jewish curriculum and Hebrew language. However, many Jewish families in New York send their children to Jewish day schools. These yeshivas are private schools, and are thus not free. All yeshiva/Jewish day schools have dual curricula. While all of these schools offer good Jewish and Secular educations, some are considered to be more prestigious than others. While it is not our job to endorse a specific school, we strongly urge you to research different institutions to find out which school would be best for your child.

For a list of educational resources, schools, and further information please visit the Board of Jewish Education's website: <http://www.bjeny.org/bjeny.asp>

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## Visas and Immigration

Newcomers to America face many obstacles in settling in their new home. Some of these obstacles include learning a new language or establishing a new home. Some immigrants face the additional challenges of poverty, immigration red tape among other challenges. Fortunately for Jewish immigrants to New York, there are organizations that are willing to help, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG).

### HIAS

The HIAS Immigration Services Department provides information, training and expert advice on immigration law and procedures to community-based organizations working with refugees and immigrants and to individuals seeking basic immigration-related information.

HIAS Immigration Services also develop resource materials to help guide émigrés through these complex processes. For more information about the services HIAS provides, please call their national immigration information hotline (1-800-HIAS-714), or visit their website at: <http://immigration.hias.org/en/pages/help-for-individuals>

### NYLAG

NYLAG's Immigrant Protection Unit (IPU) understands and empathizes with immigrants trying to achieve their dream of citizenship. Immigrants often confront legal obstacles due to disability, age, or recent changes in law. NYLAG's IPU assists immigrants in these situations in applying for citizenship or legal residency status and in applying for and retaining appropriate government benefits.

For more information please call 212-613-5000, or visit their website at: [http://www.nylag.org/immigrant\\_protection.htm](http://www.nylag.org/immigrant_protection.htm)

For forms and information on immigrating to the US, including visas and green cards, please visit: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/immigrants\\_1340.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/immigrants_1340.html)

## Highlighted Organizations

### UJA - Federation of New York

With us, you can join a group — in your own town or neighborhood — that reflects your personal, professional, and charitable interests. We offer something for everyone.

You can participate in major events, volunteer projects, Jewish studies classes, and social activities with people who share your interests and concerns.

Whether you're a high-profile executive or just getting started, our professional divisions offer great opportunities to meet like-minded people in every field: law, entertainment, finance, medicine, marketing, fashion, technology, real estate, and more.

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And there are so many other groups to join. If you're single or married, young or old . . . looking for companionship or intellectual stimulation . . . living in the center of Manhattan or on Long Island . . . giving at the highest levels of philanthropy or investigating your first charity . . . UJA-Federation of New York has the right group for you.

## We share your concerns.

The minute you join one of our philanthropic groups, you become part of a caring community, a community that cares about:

You and your family

The welfare of Jews at home and around the world

The vulnerable people you want to help

The choices you make for yourself, your family, and your community

So join with colleagues, neighbors, and friends who care about our efforts — the leaders of industry who control Fortune 500 companies, the concerned young adults who are exploring their philanthropic choices, and the men and women of all ages and interests who share one common goal: to make a profound difference.

## Among our groups are:

### **Emerging Leaders & Philanthropists**

Join people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s to foster social change, connect to community, travel, participate in think tanks, and celebrate with like-minded adults.

### **Entertainment, Media & Communications**

Join leaders in entertainment, music, communications, publishing, sports, and fashion for high-profile events, mentoring, Jewish learning, and briefings on hot topics.

### **Healthcare Division**

Join physicians, dentists, psychiatrists, and other healthcare professionals for prestigious events, community programs, and social-action projects.

### **The Lawyers Division**

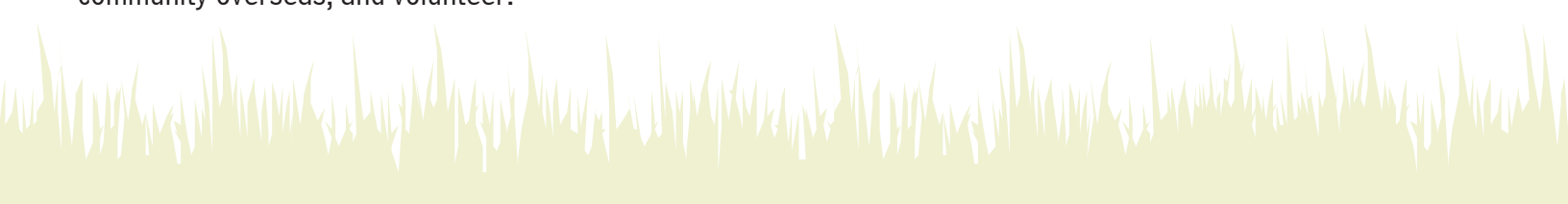
Join bankruptcy lawyers, corporate attorneys, criminal lawyers, and estate attorneys for educational, cultural, and philanthropic programs.

### **Long Island**

Join a connected, caring community right in your own neighborhood. Enjoy philanthropic events, social-action projects, Jewish study groups, and holiday celebrations.

### **New York City Campaign**

Join individuals and families in every borough to attend a major event, join a fundraising committee, visit a Jewish community overseas, and volunteer.



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## **Philanthropic Leadership Group**

Join other top donors for high-level briefings, cultural events, and overseas travel. PLG includes the King David Society, the Prime Minister's Council, and the Philanthropic Leadership Circle.

## **Real Estate & Allied Trades Division**

Join pros in real estate, construction, hotel and hospitality, and related fields for annual events, tours of citywide development projects, and hands-on volunteering.

## **Russian Division**

Join Russian-speaking Jewish community leaders dedicated to ensuring a strong Jewish future. Attend an annual gala, volunteer, and participate in leadership opportunities.

## **Wall Street & Financial Services Division**

Join financial leaders, investment professionals, bankers, and other Wall Streeters for prominent philanthropic events, community volunteer projects, and briefings with industry icons.

## **Women's Philanthropy**

Join many women throughout the New York metropolitan area who are using their talents, energy, and clout to inspire, educate, and transform lives. Participate in events, volunteer projects, cultural activities, and overseas trips.

## **JIC - NY**

JICNY is a multi-faceted, New York based Jewish community experience, for thousands of international and American young members, looking to meet other Jews, find out what is going on in the City and to connect on the one thing that unites Jewish people from all over the world – our heritage.

As a unique, grassroots led community; we provide unifying and compelling Jewish learning, Shabbat and social experiences, hosting programs in different languages and cultural styles. Members from over 60 countries and cities across the US attend and support programs featuring dynamic teachers, VIP guests and speakers from all over the globe.

JICNY has demonstrated significant growth in just a few years. Young Jews who move to the City are attracted to our distinctive and relevant programs, helping them explore their Jewish identity within an 'at home' and familiar context. It might be a big event but it will also be a personal experience. We imbed in our programs a unified 'home away from home' family atmosphere, connecting and helping a community of individuals and young couples with no local infrastructure to:

- Help build trusted social and career networks

- Meet marriage partners

- Experience and learn about their Jewish heritage

- Learn how to live a Jewish life

- Advocacy for Israel

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As a non-profit organization, JICNY utilizes its powerful global communications database and network to creatively grow its outreach, by leveraging low cost digital initiatives. We maximize significant output on minimum financial resources through successful utilization of a committed leadership base of teachers and volunteers, to expand the depth of 4 core areas of activity:

- Jewish Identity & Experience
- Professional & Social networking
- Couples & Parenting Programs
- Israel & Activism

## The 92nd Street Y

92Y serves international communities. Our services and facilities include:

- May Center for Health, Sport and Fitness—classes, work-out facilities, swimming pool, and a kosher café!
- School of the Arts—classes in jewelry-design, painting, ceramics, drawing, etc. with an international faculty
- English-as-a-Second-Language classes and classes in other languages
- Behind-the-Scenes tours of New York City institutions
- Parenting Classes for expecting parents and parents of children of all ages
- Connect After-School program for Jewish education—starting at Kindergarten, once per week on Monday afternoons
- Israeliness Programs—family-oriented activities conducted in Hebrew for the Israeli community in New York
- Judíos Latinos—a group of Latin American Jews living in New York who plan different activities
- Shababa Shabbat programs with Karina—family-oriented Shabbat programming with Argentine musician/performer/chazzan Karina Zilberman
- International concerts—classical and alternative, at our Upper East Side and Tribeca facilities
- Interviews with world leaders in various fields on our public stage
- Community-building and creative activities for “seniors” age Sixty Plus
- Noar After-School Program—a warm, wonderful environment for study and enrichment after school
- Summer Camps—at our facility in Pearl River and also specialty camps (theater, music, fashion, etc.) based at the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan
- Dance classes and parties—Israeli folk dance, Argentine tango, Ballroom....

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Music and enrichment classes for children ages 4 months to 17 years

Volunteering opportunities for teenagers

Explore [www.92Y.org](http://www.92Y.org) <<http://www.92y.org/>> and [www.92YTribeca.org](http://www.92YTribeca.org) <<http://www.92ytribeca.org/>> for more information and inspiration!

## American Jewish Committee

AJC, established in 1906 by a small group of American Jews deeply concerned about pogroms aimed at Russian Jews, determined that the best way to protect Jewish populations in danger would be to work towards a world in which all peoples were accorded respect and dignity.

Over 100 years later, AJC continues its efforts to promote pluralistic and democratic societies where all minorities are protected. AJC is an international think tank and advocacy organization that attempts to identify trends and problems early - and take action. Our key areas of focus are:

- Combating anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry

- Promoting pluralism and shared democratic values

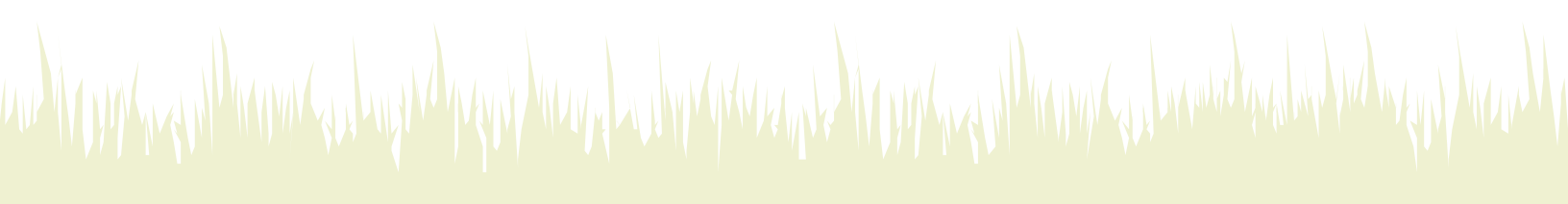
- Supporting Israel's quest for peace and security

- Advocating for energy independence

- Strengthening Jewish life

In addition to its New York headquarters and Office of Government & International Affairs in Washington, AJC has 26 chapters and 3 independent affiliates in the U.S. and 8 overseas offices. In addition, AJC has 28 global partnerships. AJC is also home to a very active, high-level young professionals program, ACCESS ([ajc.org/accessny](http://ajc.org/accessny)) that aims to inspire and empower young leaders to engage the critical issues of the day.

AJC's approach, tackling a breadth of interests in a deliberate and diplomatic manner, contributes to a success that gains trust, earns access, and, most importantly, produces results.





## JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL OF NEW YORK

**Building relationships. Connecting communities. Meeting challenges.**

New York is home to the largest concentration of Jews outside Israel. Just like the New York area, the Jewish community is a rich and diverse mix of cultures. Creating a unified voice from this eclectic mix is a vital and formidable task. By building bridges within the Jewish community and beyond, JCRC-NY helps to unite and strengthen the greater community.

JCRC-NY is the central coordinating and resource organization for New York's Jewish community.

It acts as the:

- **Creative advocate** for the Jewish community, locally, in Israel and elsewhere
- **Strategic builder** of broad-based, multi-ethnic, issue-solving coalitions
- **Progressive convener** for training the next generation of civic and nonprofit leaders

### JCRC-NY'S CORE VALUES

**Protect:** JCRC-NY protects, strengthens and ensures the continuity and vitality of the diverse metropolitan area Jewish community.

**Build Relationships:** JCRC-NY builds sustainable relationships with the leadership of Jewish organizations, diverse communities, faith-based organizations and governmental agencies through preparedness, communication, assistance and action.

**Take Action:** JCRC-NY is an action-oriented organization committed to bridging inter-group and intra-group divisions.

**Solve Problems:** JCRC-NY's dedicated professionals and board members apply their education, collective experience, ingenuity and relationships to think and work beyond what is expected and solve problems effectively.

**Appreciate Diversity:** JCRC-NY is inclusive and values all facets of Jewish life as well as other traditions, cultures and religions. We strive for cultural competency and fairness, and use diversity as a constructive and practical force for enhancing New York life.