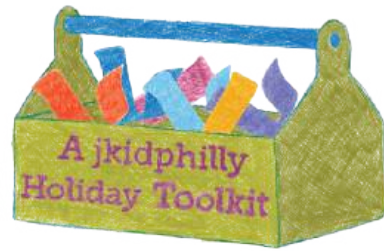


Venture into Rosh Hashanah

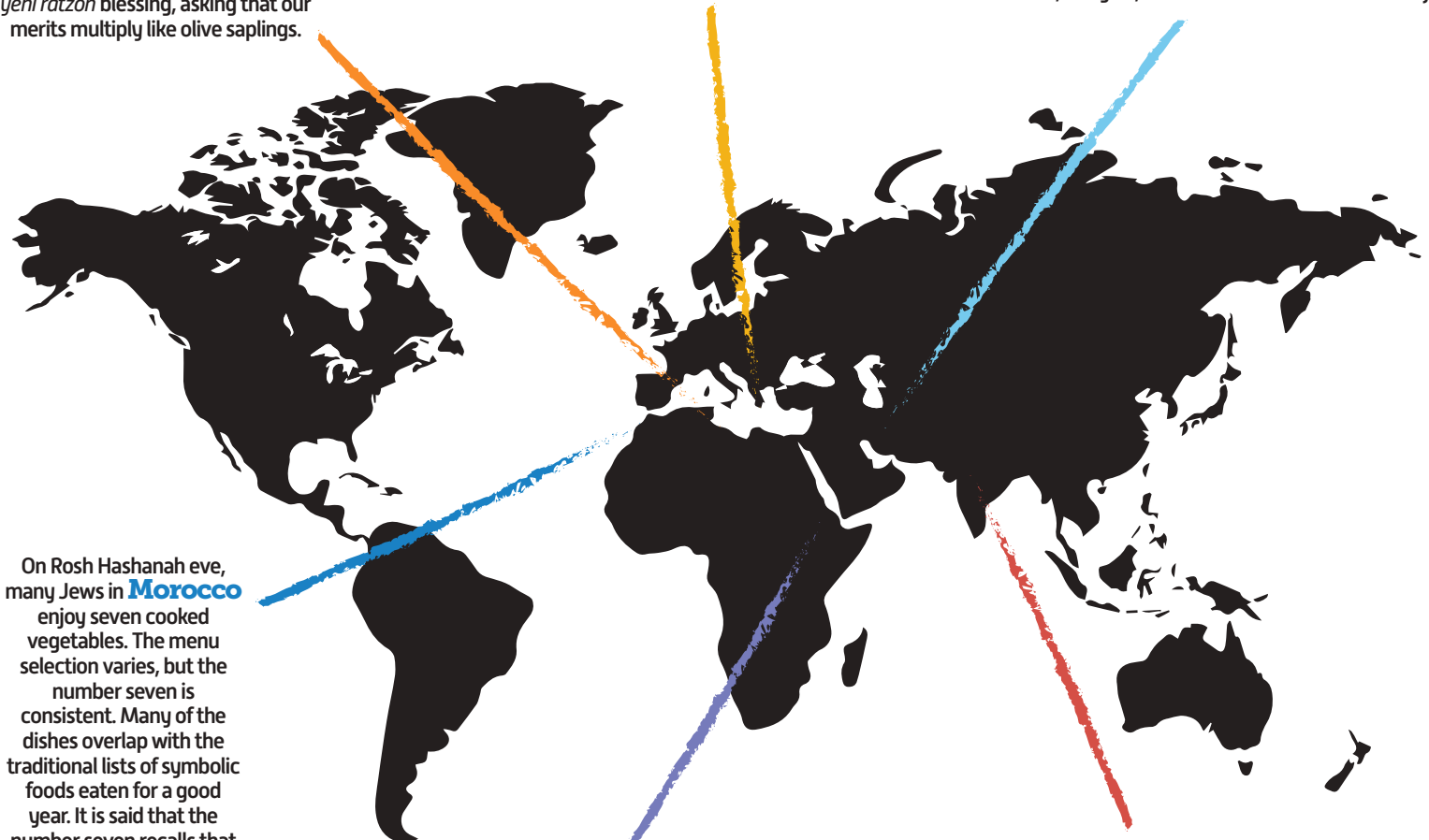


Rosh Hashanah Around the World

In Djerba, an island off the coast of **Tunisia**, children collect fallen olives in the olive orchards. On the morning before Rosh Hashanah, they carry them through the streets announcing that they have olives with which people can recite the traditional *yehi ratzon* blessing, asking that our merits multiply like olive saplings.

In **Greece**, Romaniote Jews eat a whole fish for Rosh Hashanah, which literally means “the head of the year.” It is customary to recite a blessing based on a verse in Deuteronomy: “May we be heads, not tails” — in other words, leaders rather than followers. In many families, the father is honored with the head at the traditional meal.

For **Persian** Jews, it is customary to say as many psalms as possible on Rosh Hashanah. Among Iranian Jews it is customary to recite the entire book twice in the home of someone who has passed away during the past year (300 chapters in total, since the word **רַפָּא**, “forgive,” has the numerical value of 300.)



On Rosh Hashanah eve, many Jews in **Morocco** enjoy seven cooked vegetables. The menu selection varies, but the number seven is consistent. Many of the dishes overlap with the traditional lists of symbolic foods eaten for a good year. It is said that the number seven recalls that Rosh Hashanah ushers in the seventh month on the Jewish calendar.

On Rosh Hashanah morning in **Ethiopia**, each village's *kessim* — Jewish spiritual leaders — wake before dawn, dress in white, recite the first of four prayer services of the day, and retell the history of Biblical figures. Villagers then gather for family feasts of lamb stew and *injera*, a traditional Ethiopian bread.

A major highlight of Bene Israel Jews' High Holiday observance in **India** is *Tzom Gedaliah*, the Fast of Gedaliah, which falls the day after Rosh Hashanah. Bene Israel Jews call the day *Naviacha Roja*, or the “Fast of the New Year.” The fast is traditionally broken with a rice pudding dish called *kheer*, made with coconut milk, rice, cardamom, and nuts.