

Happy Chanukah from jpr /

UK 2025 edition





According to the latest UK Census, an estimated 313,000 people in the UK identify as Jewish, accounting for close to 0.5% of the total population of the country. Nearly half of all Jewish households (47%) are not affiliated to a synagogue of any kind, while the remainder are divided across the denominational spectrum: Central Orthodox (27%), Progressive (16%) and Strictly Orthodox (10%).



In our most recent survey, 89% of British Jews said they had participated in at least one Chanukah candle-lighting ceremony in 2024. This level of engagement makes Chanukah the most marked festival in the annual calendar of the UK Jewish community. And even though Jews are slightly less likely to observe this Chanukah tradition as they get older, it attracts British Jews across all age groups, denominations and levels of religiosity.



In the UK, nearly four in five married Jews are married to another Jew – compared to just over half of American Jews, about a third of Jews in Russia and under a quarter of Jews living in Poland. Overall, about a quarter of all married Jews around the world are married to non-Jews, but there's a clear distinction between the situation in Israel (just 5%) and the Diaspora (42%).



Whilst 28% of all British Jews have a Christmas tree at home at least sometimes, there are major distinctions by family circumstances. Just 4% of in-married couples have one at home every year, compared to 45% of out-married couples. Yet nearly a quarter of Jews in the UK have both a Christmas tree at home and light Chanukah candles, at least some years.



Only about a third of British Jews say they believe in God as described in the Bible – about the same rate as among European Jews in general. Still, two out of three (65%) British Jews who don't believe in God say they attend synagogue at least on the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and 'non-believers' make up more than half of paid-up synagogue members.



Jewish identity is multi-faceted, and different types of Jews typically understand it in different ways. Yet most – approaching nine in ten – believe that feeling part of the wider collective of the Jewish People is either 'very important' (62%) or 'fairly important' (26%) to them when they think of what makes up their Jewishness.



The Chanukah story is very much linked to this history of the Jewish People in the land of Israel. Three in four British Jews say they feel either 'very attached' (49%) or 'somewhat attached' (26%) to Israel today, and about a third (64%) say it is an important part of their Jewish identity. Four in five see Israel as the ancestral homeland of the Jewish People, and support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State.



Over 300,000 Israel-born people live outside Israel today, and about 7.5% of them live in the UK, making it the fourth-largest ex-pat Israeli community in the world (after the US, Canada, and Germany). The ex-pat Israeli population in the UK has nearly doubled over the past twenty years, and today ex-pat Israeli families make up 8% of the entire British Jewish population.

