



2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study.

A large, semi-transparent circular overlay covers the lower half of the page. Inside this circle, a person's hands are shown adjusting the zipper of a light blue, ribbed button-down shirt. The person is also wearing a white beaded bracelet on their left wrist and a white yarmulke. A small, rectangular pin featuring the colors and symbols of the Israeli flag is attached to the zipper. The background of the entire page is a light cream color, and the overall composition is clean and professional.

Jewish identity
and behaviors.

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Conducted by: Rosov Consulting with SSRS

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cjp.org/CommunityStudy2025

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Introduction.

2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study

This study is an independent research initiative sponsored by Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP). The mission of CJP is to inspire and mobilize the diverse Greater Boston Jewish community to engage in building communities of learning and action that strengthen Jewish life and improve the world.

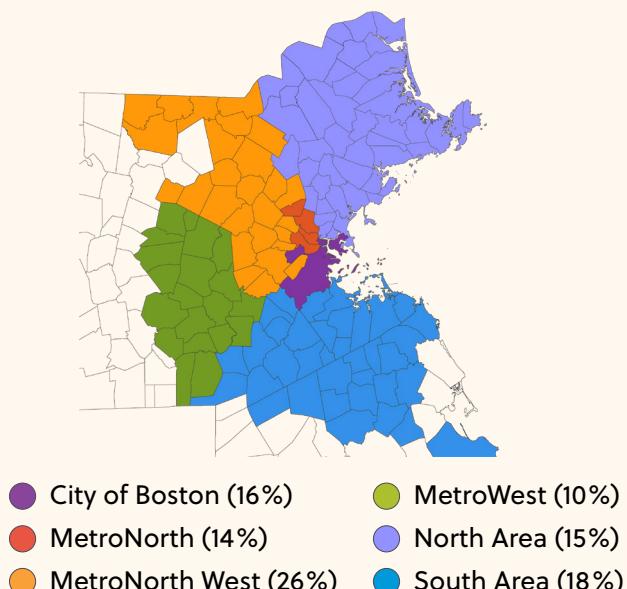
The goal of this study is to provide a transparent, fact-based picture of the community today. Conducted once every decade, this study gives the community the chance to step back and ask: Who are we today? Where are we thriving? And what does our community need to build a strong and safe future?

The research is based on 4,776 responses from a probability survey of a randomly selected sample of Jewish households across Greater Boston and is supported by follow-up interviews and focus groups. These reports remind us that every

data point represents a real person—a life, a story, and a lived experience in our community. Readers are encouraged to approach the findings with curiosity and openness to the diverse experiences they represent. The reports present two types of data: estimates of the number of Jewish households and the people in them, and percentages describing their characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. As with all probability-based surveys, these estimates are not exact and include a margin of error of about ± 2.6 percentage points for the full sample. For smaller groups, the margin of error is wider. Throughout the reports, estimates are rounded to whole numbers and populations to the nearest hundred, so categories may not equal the total.

To read all the reports and access a detailed explanation of the survey methodology, visit cjp.org/CommunityStudy2025.

Map of Jewish households



For a detailed map, visit: cjp.org/regionalmap

Population estimates of Greater Boston

Jewish households	138,200
Individuals in Jewish households	333,100
Adults	277,900
Jewish	184,500
Not Jewish	93,400
Children	55,200
Jewish	44,000
Not Jewish	10,800
Unknown	400

Glossary

Terms used in the reports

Jewish household: A home in which one or more Jewish adults reside. All Jewish households have at least one Jewish adult living in them. About half of them are also home to one or more adults or children, or sometimes both, who are not Jewish.

Adults

- **Jewish adults:** A person who identifies as Jewish by religion, ethnicity, culture, parentage, or how they were raised, so long as they do not also identify with another religion.
- **Adults who are not Jewish:** Adults living in Jewish households who do not identify as or consider themselves Jewish by religion, ethnicity, culture, parentage, or how they were raised.

Children

- **Jewish children:** A person ages 0-17 who is being raised Jewish by religion, or Jewish and another religion, or is considered Jewish aside from religion, including ethnically or culturally Jewish.
- **Children who are not Jewish:** Children ages 0-17 who are living in Jewish households who are not being raised Jewish by religion, or Jewish and another religion, or considered Jewish aside from religion.

Index of Jewish Connection

A system to measure how Jewish adults connect with Jewish life in Greater Boston

Contemporary Jewish life is multidimensional. There is a wide range of different and diverse ways to connect to it. To measure and categorize this diversity among Jewish adults in Greater Boston, an Index of Jewish Connection was developed and is used throughout the series of reports about the study.

The index—which is based on a statistical procedure called latent class analysis—captures the primary ways that five segments of Jewish adults connect to Jewish life in Greater Boston. It is not designed to place the groups in a hierarchy of engagement, with some doing “more” and some doing “less.”

Instead, it highlights what makes each group distinctive in how they connect in ways that are personally meaningful to Jewish life, distinctions which are reflected in the names given to the groups.



Seeking the Social - 29%

The *Seeking the Social* group is similar to *Family Focused* and, additionally, is more active in communal and organizational events, activities, and programs.



Tenuously Tethered - 27%

The *Tenuously Tethered* group is minimally involved in Jewish life, with infrequent participation in personal, home, and family-based Jewish activities or organizational events and programs.



Family Focused - 17%

The *Family Focused* group is focused on personal, home, and family-based Jewish activities and holiday observances.



Deeply Devoted - 15%

The *Deeply Devoted* group is similar to *Enthusiastically Engrossed* and, additionally, is more focused on synagogue involvement and religious observance.



Enthusiastically Engrossed - 12%

The *Enthusiastically Engrossed* group has a wide range of family, personal, home, organizational, and cultural connections to Jewish life.

Being Jewish in Greater Boston.

This report explores how community members understand and live out their Jewish identity, which often plays an important role in shaping and directing their behavior. Identity refers to the ways in which people understand who they are, the groups they consider themselves a part of, and the values that are important to them, whereas behavior refers to their actions.

To explore identity and behavior among Jews living in Greater Boston, they were asked about their Jewish experiences in childhood and their Jewish identity in adulthood.



Jewish experiences in childhood

Participation in formal Jewish education, such as Hebrew school or yeshiva

Participation in informal Jewish education, such as youth group or summer camp



Jewish identity and behaviors in adulthood

Importance of being Jewish

Importance of being part of Jewish communities

Essential aspects of what being Jewish means

Denominational identities

Personal Jewish activities

Connections to informal and grassroots groups

Friendships

By examining identities and behaviors across age groups, types of Jewish connections, and geographic regions, this report offers a nuanced view of how Jewish identities and their manifestations vary across different segments of the community, providing a window into the diverse and multifaceted lives of Jews living in Greater Boston.

Key takeaways



Most value Jewish identity, and connection to Jewish community varies widely

While many Jews feel that being Jewish is important, fewer feel connected to the Jewish community. Older adults and those with deep Jewish levels of engagement are more likely to feel connected to both the Greater Boston Jewish community and the local Jewish communities where they live.



Jewish childhood experiences shape Jewish identity in adulthood

Participation in Jewish childhood experiences, such as Hebrew school, youth groups, and trips to Israel, play a significant role in shaping adult Jewish identity. Those who are more connected today often had more formative Jewish experiences growing up, while those less engaged had fewer of these experiences.



Jewish identity is anchored in shared traditions, history, and ethics

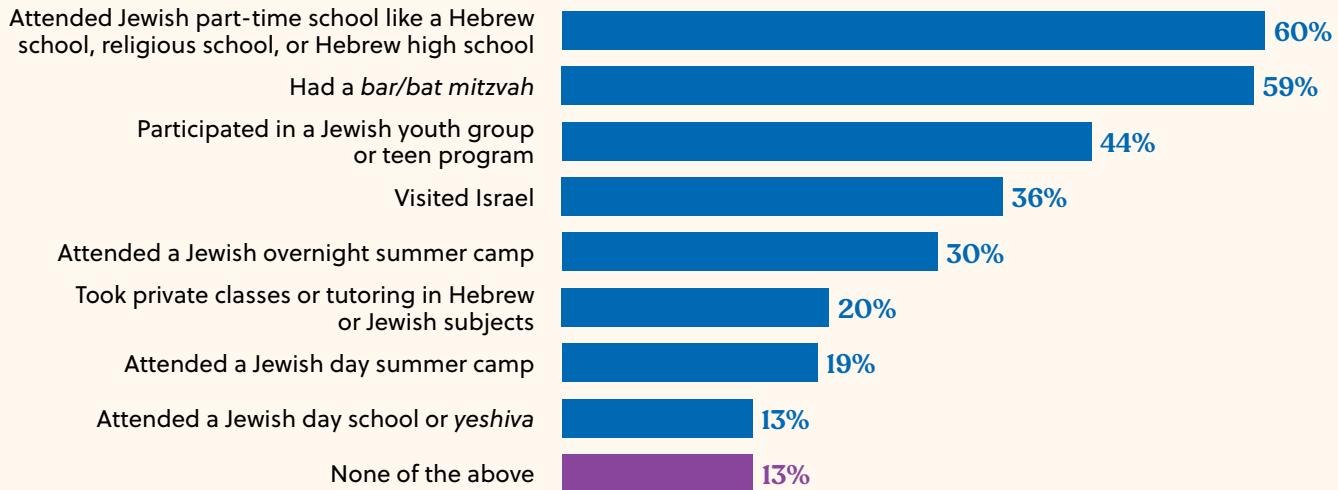
Holocaust remembrance, family traditions, and ethical living are consistently viewed as essential aspects of being Jewish. These elements form a common core of Jewish identity, even among those who differ in their religious practices or connections to Jewish life. However, Jewish adults differ on other aspects of Jewish identity, including the importance of religious or spiritual practices, engaging in Jewish culture, having a connection to Israel, and celebrating and observing holidays.

To explore more formal and public ways that Jews in Greater Boston are involved in Jewish life, read the [*Jewish Communal and Organizational Connections*](#) report.

Jewish experiences during childhood.

Most Jews in Greater Boston participated in formative Jewish experiences as children. They differ in their exposure to formal and informal Jewish education and their family backgrounds.

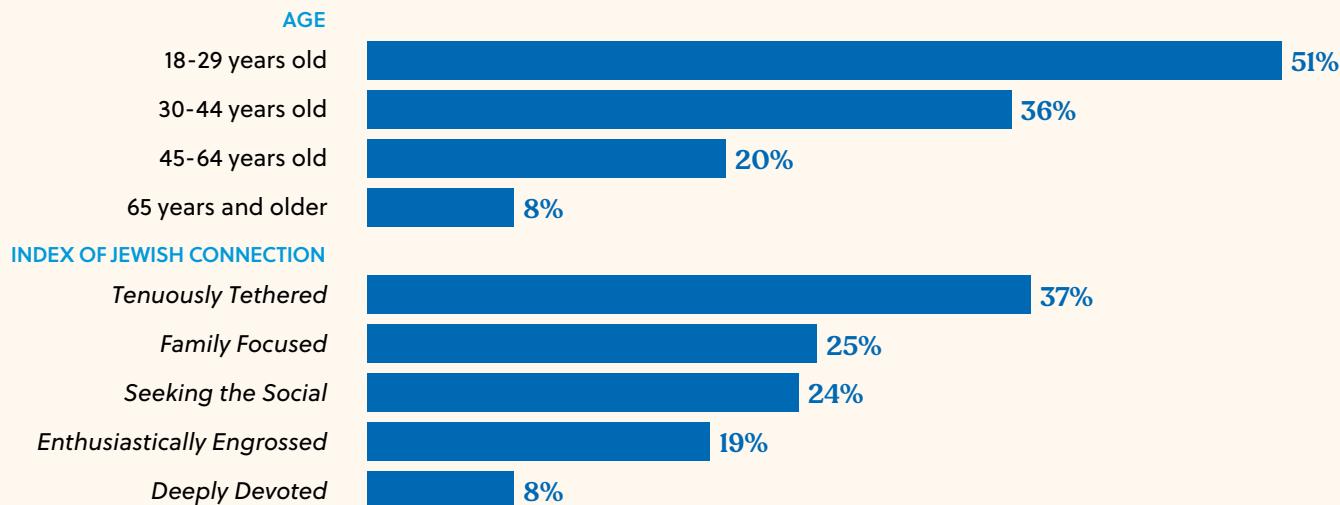
Jewish experiences during childhood



Compared to Jews who are 45 and older, a greater proportion of 18- to 44-year-olds attended a Jewish day school or *yeshiva* (a traditional Jewish educational institution), participated in private classes or tutoring in Hebrew or Jewish subjects, had a *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, attended a Jewish overnight camp, or visited Israel. Compared to other Jews, those who are *Enthusiastically Engrossed* or *Deeply Devoted* tend to have had greater exposure to Jewish and educational activities in their childhood. Jews who are *Tenuously Tethered* had the least exposure. *Family Focused* and *Seeking the Social* fall in the middle.

In addition to differences in Jewish educational experiences, Jews have varied family backgrounds. A quarter (24%) grew up in interfaith families, defined as families having at least one parent, step-parent, or guardian, who identified as Jewish and at least one who did not. Three quarters (76%) grew up in families where all parents, step-parents, or guardians identified as Jewish. Younger Jews are more likely to have been raised in interfaith families. Approximately 51% of 18- to 29-year-olds and 36% of 30- to 44-year-olds were raised in interfaith families. Similarly, Jewish adults who are *Tenuously Tethered* are more likely to have been raised in interfaith families (37%).

Percent raised in an interfaith family



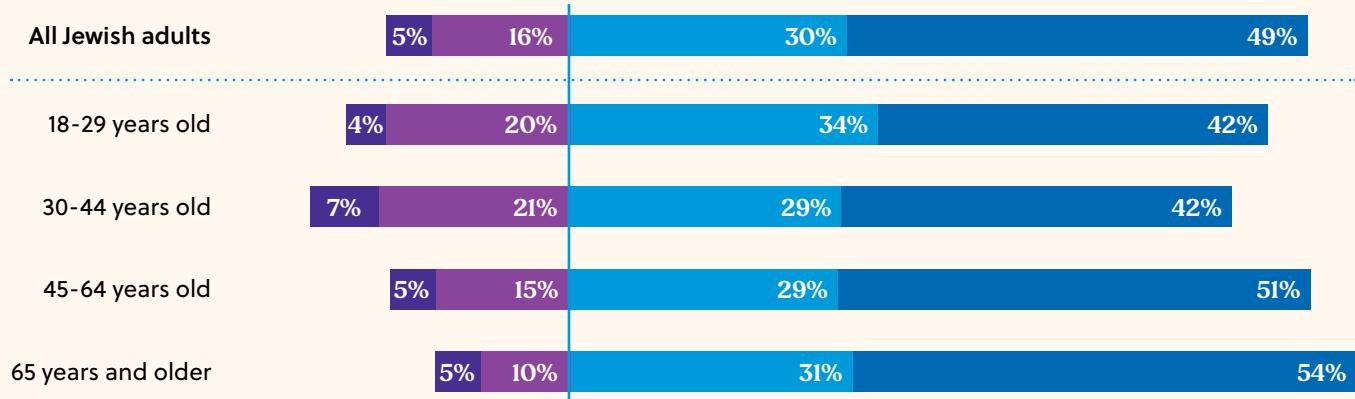
Jewish identities.

The importance of being Jewish

Nearly 80% of Jewish adults feel that being Jewish is very or somewhat important to them. This tends to be more common among older Jews, compared to their younger peers.

Importance of being Jewish

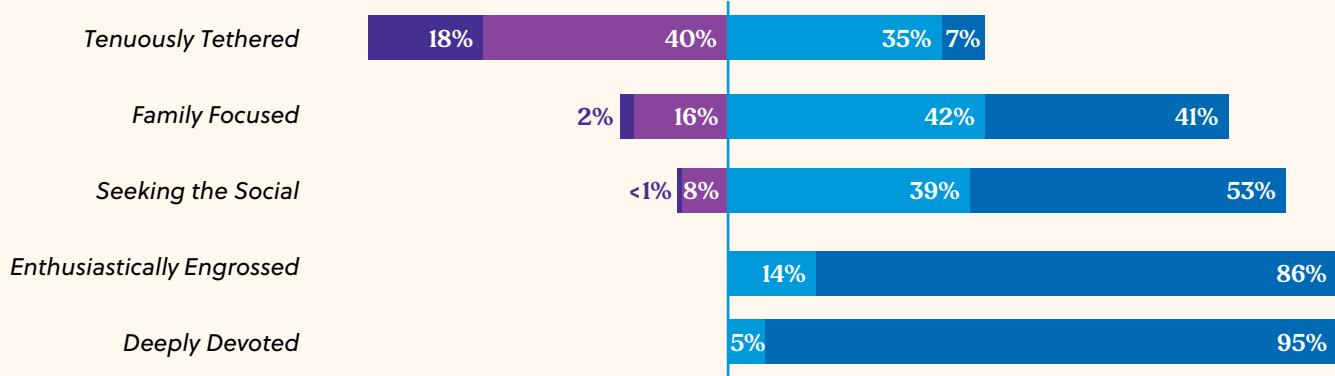
■ Not at all important ■ A little important ■ Somewhat important ■ Very important



Jews who are *Deeply Devoted* or *Enthusiastically Engrossed* consider being Jewish the most important, while those who are *Tenuously Tethered* are least likely to feel that being Jewish is important. Those who are *Seeking the Social* or *Family Focused* fall in the middle.

Importance of being Jewish by Index of Jewish Connection

■ Not at all important ■ A little important ■ Somewhat important ■ Very important



Essential aspects of being Jewish

Community members were shown 11 aspects of Jewish life and asked to indicate the importance of each one to their Jewish identity. Jewish adults placed the strongest emphasis on Holocaust remembrance, followed by continuing family traditions and leading an ethical life.¹ Responses were largely consistent across age groups, with the exception of Israel connectivity, as Jews who are 45 and older are markedly more likely to say Israel is an important or essential part of their Jewish identity than younger Jews.²

In a follow-up interview, one participant noted the importance of family traditions:

“

I grew up in a Jewish family, so for me, being Jewish is a lot about family and traditions that are passed down.

”

Another participant spoke about values:

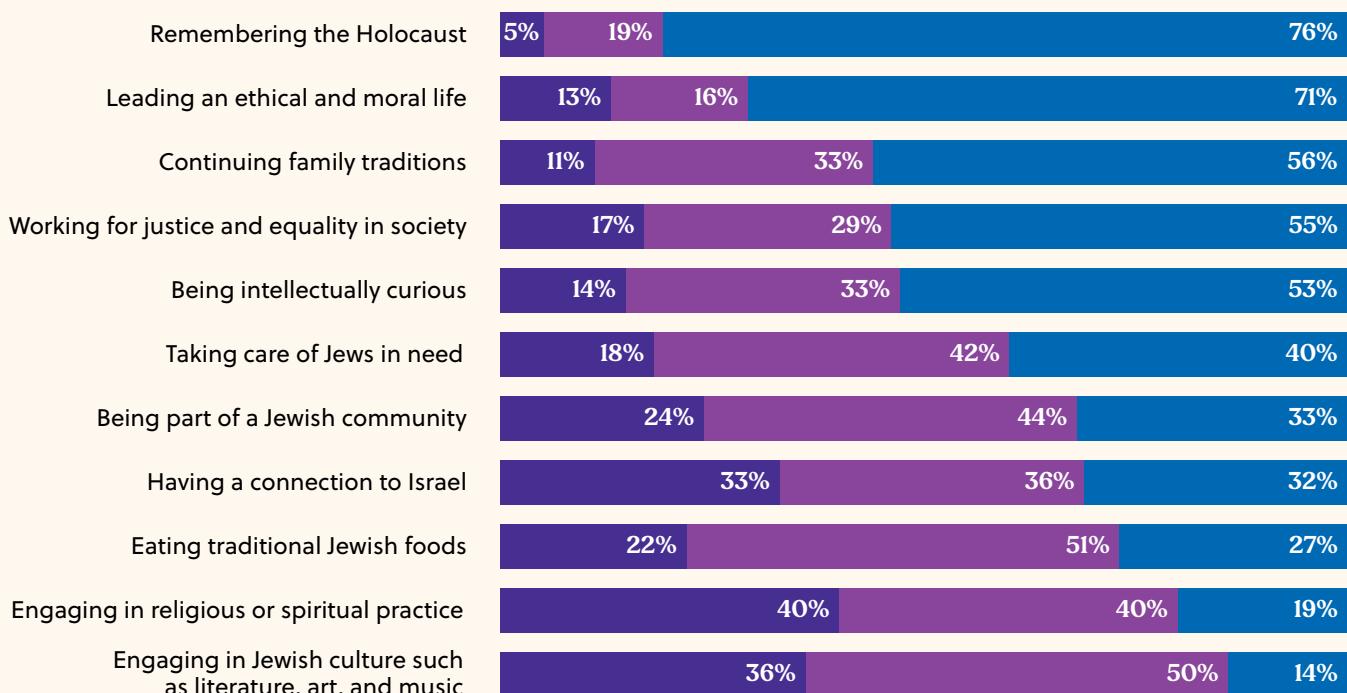
I think it [Jewish community] is a sense of peoplehood, being part of a people that respect and value education and making the world a better place.

”

Aspects of being Jewish that were deemed least important include: engaging in religious or spiritual practices, engaging in Jewish culture, and having a connection to Israel.

Essential and important aspects of being Jewish

■ Not important ■ Important but not essential ■ Essential



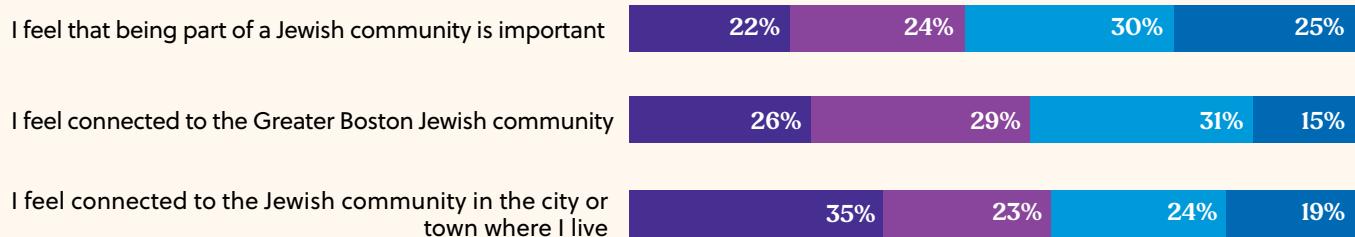
The overall trends are also consistent across differing segments on the Index of Jewish Connection, though there are some distinctions. The proportion of individuals who view each of the 11 aspects of Jewish life as essential or important tends to be higher among Jews who are *Deeply Devoted* or *Enthusiastically Engrossed*, and lower among Jews who are *Tenuously Tethered*. For some items, such as engaging in religious or spiritual practices, engaging in Jewish culture, as well as having a connection to Israel, Jews who are *Seeking the Social* and *Family Focused* fall somewhere in the middle. For other aspects, such as taking care of Jews in need or being intellectually curious, these individuals more closely resemble those who are *Deeply Devoted* or *Enthusiastically Engrossed*.

The importance of Jewish community

The vast majority say their Jewish identity is important to them, while not all feel connected to a Jewish community. Just over half of Jewish adults (55%) say it is very or somewhat important to be part of a Jewish community. Close to half (46%) feel very or somewhat connected to the Greater Boston Jewish community, while 43% feel very or somewhat connected to a Jewish community in the city or town in which they live.³

Connection to a Jewish community

■ Not at all ■ A little ■ Somewhat ■ Very



One community member said:

“For me, the Jewish community is kind of like a family. And we all can kind of relate to each other with our struggles, especially nowadays, what we’re going through. And having that sense of people around that you can relate to, and you feel comfortable and safe.”

While individuals across all age groups feel similarly about the importance of being part of a Jewish community, Jews who are 45 and older tend to feel more connected to the Greater Boston Jewish community and their local communities compared to their younger peers.

Jews who are *Deeply Devoted* place the greatest emphasis on being part of a Jewish community and feeling connected to both the Greater Boston and local Jewish communities, followed by *Enthusiastically Engrossed*, *Seeking the Social*, *Family Focused*, and lastly, *Tenuously Tethered*.

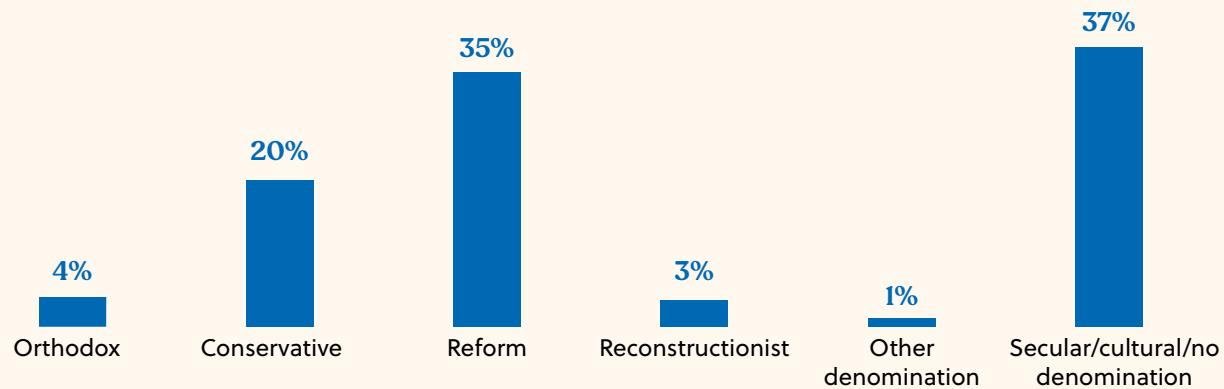
Connection to Jewish community by Index of Jewish Connection	Feel that being part of Jewish community is very important	Feel very connected to the Greater Boston Jewish community	Feel very connected to the Jewish community in the city or town where one lives
Seeking the Social	18%	8%	14%
Tenuously Tethered	<1%	<1%	<1%
Family Focused	6%	4%	5%
Deeply Devoted	84%	53%	70%
Enthusiastically Engrossed	46%	29%	29%

Jews across most geographic areas in Greater Boston feel similarly about the importance of being part of a Jewish community, though those in MetroNorth West place a slightly greater emphasis on this value compared to their peers. Likewise, these individuals feel most connected to the Greater Boston Jewish community and their local Jewish communities relative to Jews living in other areas.

Jewish denominational identities

Denominational identity has long played an important role for U.S. Jews. In Greater Boston, six in 10 Jewish adults (62%) identify with a particular denomination. Reform is the most common denomination (35%), followed by Conservative (20%) and smaller Orthodox (4%) and Reconstructionist (3%) segments.

Jewish denominational identity



Jews who are *Tenuously Tethered* lean more secular or cultural, while older adults and those who are *Enthusiastically Engrossed* or *Deeply Devoted* are more likely to identify with a denomination. Jews who are *Family Focused* or *Seeking the Social* largely fall in the middle. Regional patterns show that Jews in the City of Boston and MetroNorth, areas that have larger concentrations of younger Jewish adults, as well as those in the North Area, are least likely to identify with a denomination compared to Jews living elsewhere.



Jewish behaviors.

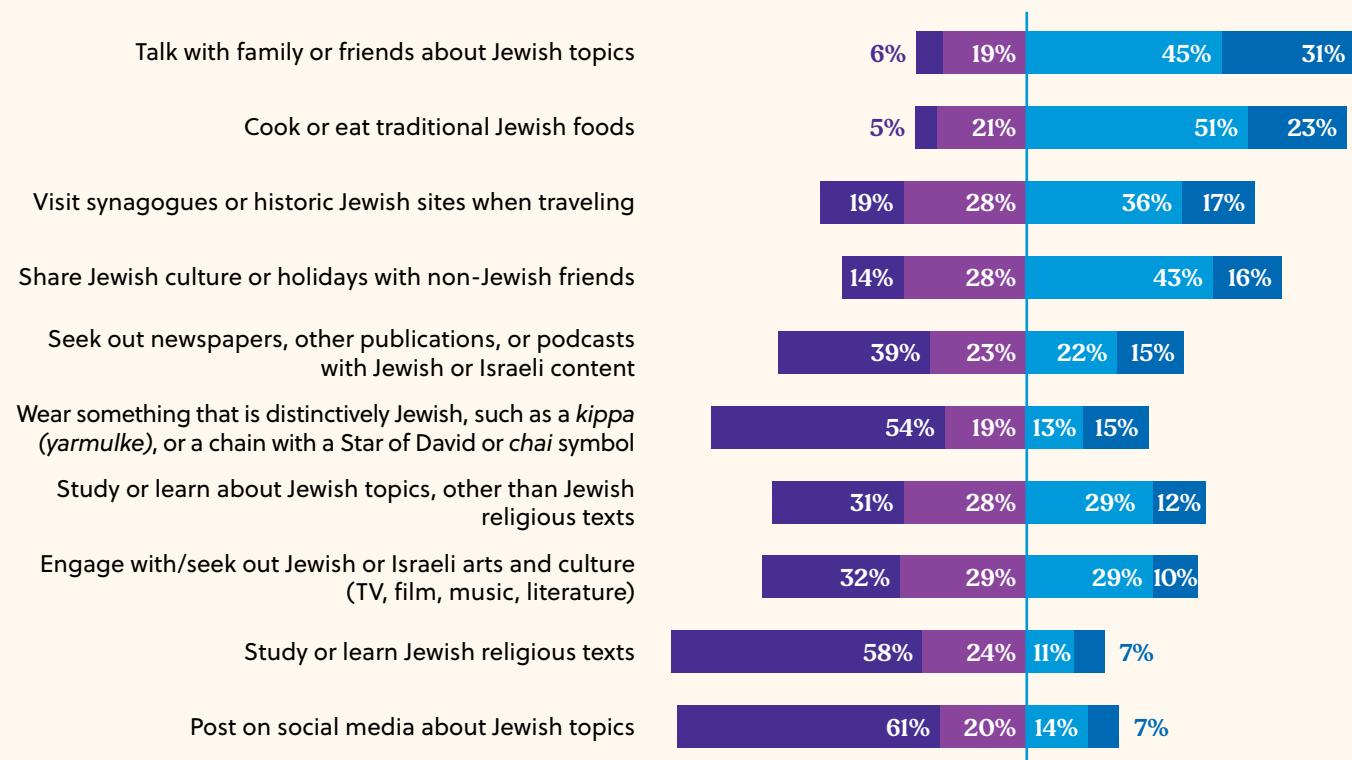
Personal Jewish activities

Jewish identity can be manifested or expressed in various ways. For most Jews in Greater Boston, personal Jewish behaviors and activities tend to be more cultural than religious or spiritual. The most common personal Jewish activities include: talking with family or friends about Jewish topics (76%) or cooking and eating traditional Jewish foods (74%). In addition, 59% indicate that they often or sometimes share Jewish culture or holidays with friends who are not Jewish.

Jewish adults are far less likely to wear something that is distinctively Jewish, study or learn Jewish religious texts, or post on social media about Jewish topics. Slightly more than half of Jews in Greater Boston say they never do these activities.

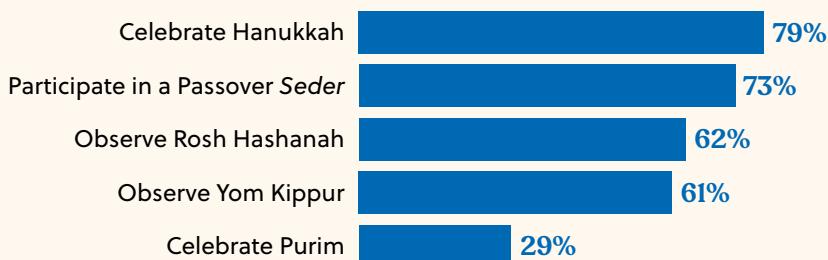
Frequency of engaging in personal Jewish activities and behaviors

Never Rarely Sometimes Often



When it comes to Jewish holidays, 86% of Jewish adults celebrate or observe at least one Jewish holiday during the year. Celebrating Hanukkah and participating in a Passover Seder are relatively more common than observing Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. These findings are fairly consistent across age groups.

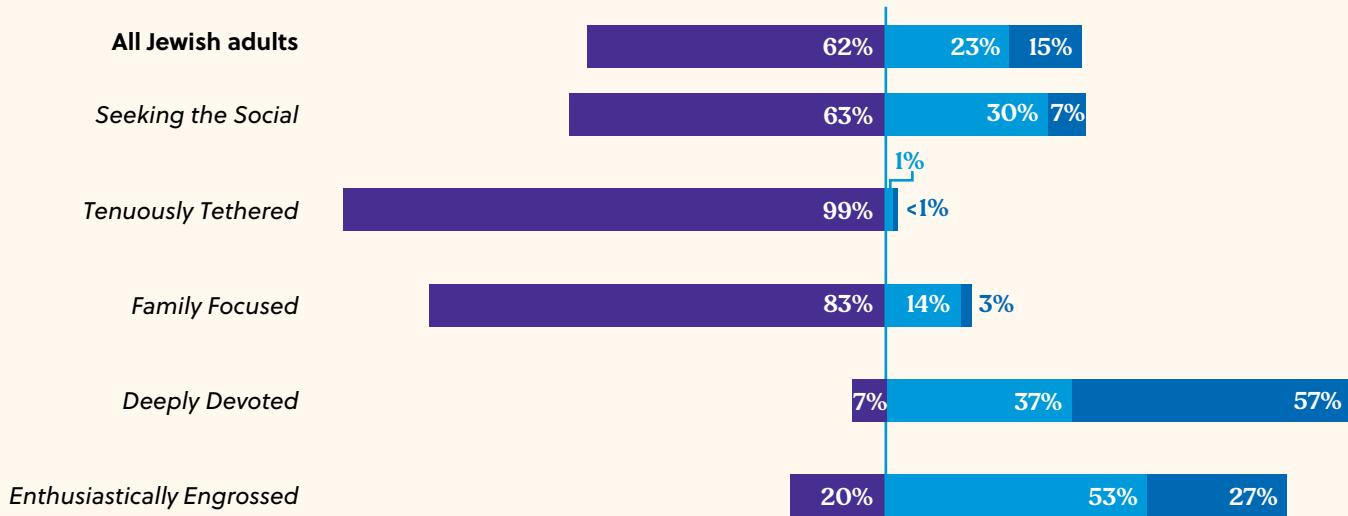
Celebrating or observing Jewish holidays



Compared to the widespread celebration and observance of holidays, a smaller group of Jews is more observant: 19% attend religious services once a month or more, 38% mark Shabbat in a different way from the rest of the week, sometimes or every week, and 27% follow kosher rules in some way.

Mark Shabbat in some way

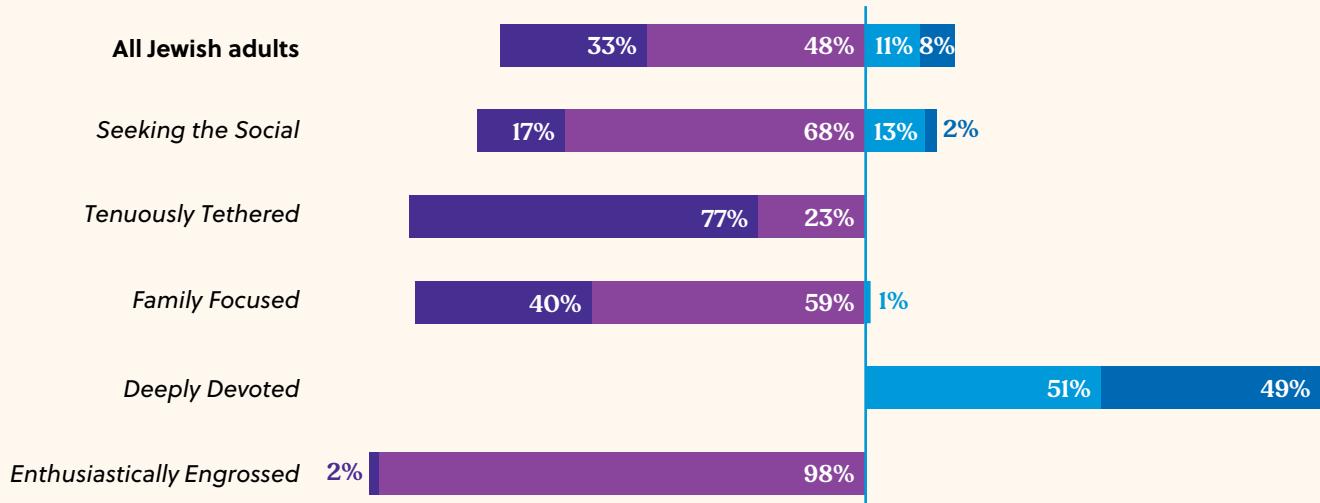
■ No ■ Yes, sometimes ■ Yes, every week



Jewish activities, especially those with a more religious or spiritual orientation, are most common among Jews who are *Enthusiastically Engrossed* and *Deeply Devoted*. They are least common among *Tenuously Tethered*, with *Family Focused* and *Seeking the Social* falling in the middle.

Attend religious services

■ Never ■ A few times a year/seldom ■ Once or twice a month ■ Once a week or more

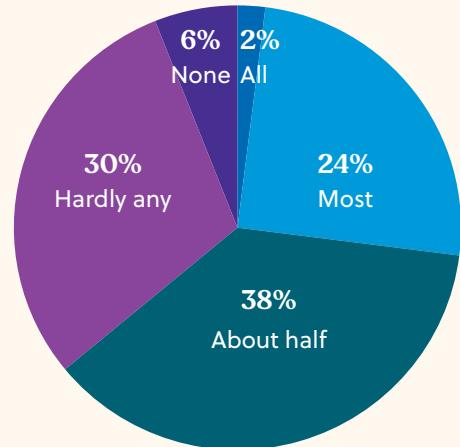


Jewish friendship networks

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Jews in Greater Boston say that half or more of their closest friends are Jewish. Only 6% say they have no close Jewish friends.

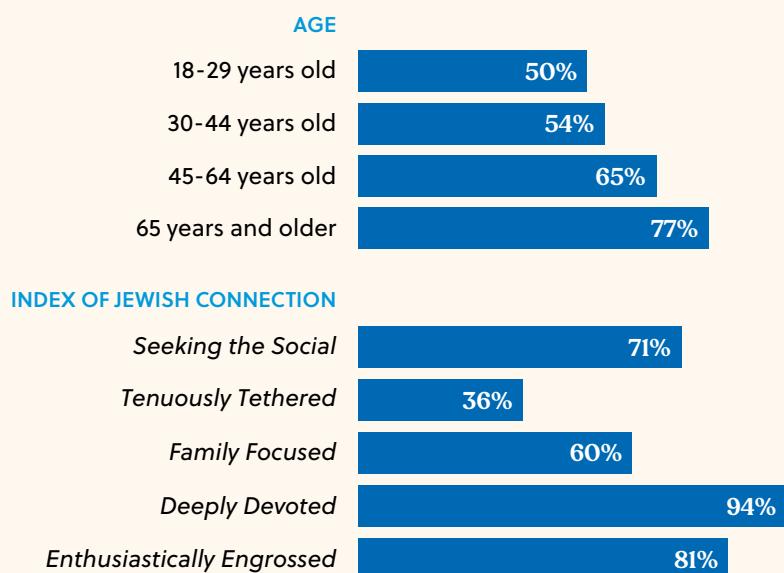
Those with more close Jewish friends tend to be older. Jews who are 65 years and older (77%) as well as Jews who are *Deeply Devoted* (94%) have more close friends who are Jewish, whereas Jews who are 18-29 years old (50%) as well as Jews who are *Tenuously Tethered* (36%) have fewer close friends who are Jewish.

Jewish social circles



How many of your closest friends today are Jewish?

Jews who say half or more of their closest friends are Jewish, by age group and Index of Jewish Connection



In follow-up interviews and focus groups, people emphasized the value of having Jewish friends. One shared:

“

The people that I find I gravitate to in life are just often Jewish people, I think, because we have a bit of shared culture and values. Or parts of our personality that sort of click. I often find that I'm drawn to someone and then I find out that they're Jewish. So, a lot of people in my social circle are Jewish. And I value that. That feels sort of important to me.

”

I would say my Jewish community in Boston is very bottom-up and ad hoc. I work in academia. A lot of my colleagues and friends are Jewish and we talk very openly about Jewish identity. ... I feel like I get this kind of nourishment just from the people who are in my networks around me.

Conclusion.

The findings in this report demonstrate that Jewish identity is a meaningful and important aspect of life for the majority of Jewish adults across Greater Boston.

The ways in which they express their Jewish identity vary widely, with most opting for cultural and familial practices, while some are drawn to deep religious or spiritual commitment.

There are differences across age cohorts and by segments of the Index of Jewish Connection in how adults express their Jewish identity, particularly regarding denominational affiliation and connection to Israel. At the same time, Holocaust remembrance, preservation of family traditions, commitment to ethical living, and the celebration or observance of holidays consistently remain core values across all groups. These findings underscore the importance of creating multiple pathways into Jewish life that honor tradition and resonate with the diverse ways people live their Jewish identities.

Did you know?

This report is part of a series of 13 reports across a range of topics that are important to the Greater Boston Jewish community. To explore insights, access additional resources, and read the other reports, visit cjp.org/CommunityStudy2025.

Notes.

1. These findings are similar to national data from *Jewish Americans in 2020*, a study conducted by Pew Research Center.
2. For an in-depth explanation on how age impacts Israel connectivity, see the [Israel](#) report.
3. For additional findings on how people connect to and are involved in the Greater Boston Jewish community, see the [Jewish Communal and Organizational Connections](#) report.