

2020 Pew Research Center Study

The American Jewish Demographic:
Ten Key Findings

The US Jewish demographic is stable.



In absolute numbers, the 2020 Jewish population estimate is approximately 7.5 million, including 5.8 million adults and 1.8 million children (rounded to the closest 100,000). The 2013 estimate was 6.7 million, including 5.3 million adults and 1.3 million children.

Like the overall U.S. population, Jews appear to be growing more racially and ethnically diverse.

- ▶
- ▶ 8% identify with non-white categories. Among Jews ages 18 to 29, however, who identify as a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White, the number rises to 15%. 17% of Jews surveyed – including 29% of Jewish adults under the age of 30 – live in households in which at least one child or adult is Black, Hispanic, Asian, or some other non-White race or ethnicity, or multiracial.

U.S. Jews are less religious than American adults overall.

- ▶
- ▶ There are even bigger gaps when it comes to belief in God: Around a quarter of Jews (26%) say they believe in God “as described in the Bible,” while 56% of all U.S. adults say they do not believe in the God of the Bible. Key findings here do not include the complexity and range of beliefs in a Divine Presence apart from the God of the Bible.

Jewish Americans are staunchly liberal and favor the Democratic Party, but Orthodox Jews are a notable exception.

- ▶ The survey, which was conducted in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election, finds that 71% of Jewish adults (including 80% of Reform Jews) are Democrats or independents who lean toward the Democratic Party. But among Orthodox Jews, three-quarters say they are Republican or lean that way. And that percentage has been trending up: In 2013, 57% of Orthodox Jews were Republicans or Republican leaners.

Three-quarters of American Jews think there is more anti-Semitism in the U.S. today than there was five years ago.

Varieties of Antisemitism in the US today include:

- *Extremism of white nationalists: the Great Replacement Theory
- *"Philosemitism" of Christian Evangelicals
- *Anti-capitalist ideologies of left-wing antisemitism
- *Anti-Israel antisemitism

A large majority of U.S. Jews (82%) say caring about Israel is either “essential” or “important” to what being Jewish means to them.

- ▶ About six-in-ten (58%) say they are at least somewhat attached to Israel, and those who have been to Israel are especially likely to feel this way (79%). But there are sharp partisan differences in attitudes toward Israel.

Majorities of U.S. Jews engage in cultural activities like cooking Jewish food (72%), sharing holidays with non-Jewish friends (62%) and visiting historical Jewish sites (57%).

- ▶ Many also say they engage with Judaism through Jewish media by “often” or “sometimes” reading Jewish literature, history or biographies (44%), watching television with Jewish or Israeli themes (43%), or reading Jewish news in print or online (42%). Those who are religiously observant in traditional ways – such as going to synagogue and keeping kosher dietary laws – also report the highest levels of engagement in the broad array of cultural Jewish activities listed in the survey.

Younger Jews are more likely than older Jews to identify as Orthodox and more likely to say they do not belong to any particular branch of Judaism.

- ▶ Some 17% of U.S. Jews ages 18 to 29 say they are Orthodox, compared with 3% of Jews ages 65 and older. At the same time, 41% of young Jewish adults do not identify with any particular branch of American Judaism. Most of the people in this category are “Jews of no religion” – they describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or nothing in particular, though they all have a Jewish parent or were raised Jewish and still identify as Jewish culturally, ethnically or because of their family background.

Members of different branches of American Judaism generally do not feel they have “a lot” in common with one another

- ▶ Just 9% of Orthodox Jews feel they have “a lot” in common with Reform Jews and vice versa. In fact, both groups are more likely to express feelings of commonality toward Jews in Israel than toward each other.

About four-in-ten married Jews (42%) have a non-Jewish spouse, but intermarriage rates differ within subgroups.

- ▶ For example, intermarriage is almost nonexistent among married Orthodox Jews (2%), while nearly half of all non-Orthodox Jews who are married say their spouse is not Jewish (47%). Intermarriage also is more common among Jews who are themselves the offspring of intermarried parents: Among married Jews who say they have one Jewish parent, 82% have a non-Jewish spouse, compared with 34% of those who report that both of their parents were Jewish.