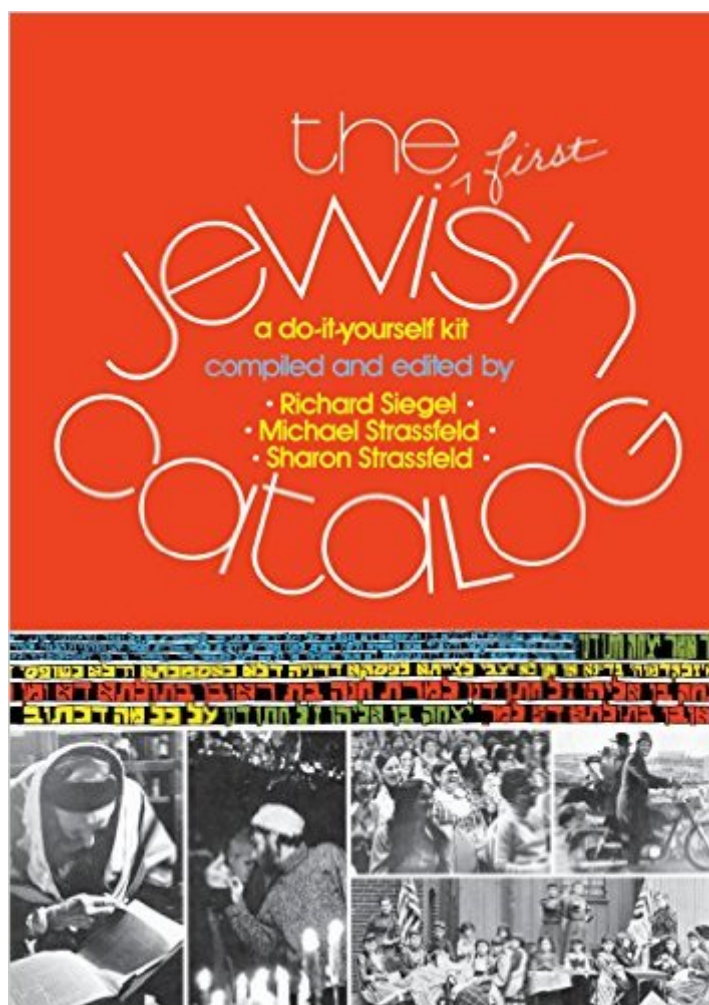


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The First Jewish Catalog: A Do-It-Yourself Kit



Synopsis

A true classic! When no one else can answer your questions on celebrations, ceremonies, customs, and rituals, The First Jewish Catalog can.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: The Jewish Publication Society; 1st edition (October 15, 1965)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0827600429

ISBN-13: 978-0827600423

Product Dimensions: 8.3 x 0.7 x 11.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (22 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I'm not even Jewish, and this is one of my all time favorites (I discovered it at the library). It belongs in the hall of fame for its genre: the large-format black-and-white early 1970s counterculture workbook/"catalog." Make your own prayer shawl, make your own yarmulke, make your own wallhanging to indicate the direction of Jerusalem, make your own challah....make your own is definitely the name of the game. I'm not personally likely to do most of those things (though I do like challah), but I just can't get enough of the b&w photos of young people sitting cross-legged on the floor with their long wavy hair, bell bottoms, beards and beads; and the eclectic, semi-disorganized format really holds your interest and keeps you coming back for more. I'm not qualified to measure the vision of Judaism presented in this book against traditional standards; but hippie optimism and "make your own" seem to marry well with the concept of tikkun olam. The connection to a traditional faith is definitely what makes this catalog a cut above the rest, such as the secular "Whole Earth" - makes it easier to take the nostalgia seriously at this late date, I suppose.

The "First Jewish Catalog" is a book I consult again and again--to answer friends' questions and my own. I have lent it out and bought copies to give. There is information on how-to for every regular

holiday in the Jewish calendar. A treat for the knowledgeable as well as those new to Jewish celebration.

This has been called the "Whole Earth Catalog" of Judaism, and it certainly is that. A little skimpy on halacha (Jewish law) and day-to-day practicalities, this book is all about having a good time, making a difference, saving the world. Illustrated throughout with scary 1970's black-and-white photos, cartoons, and clips of Yiddish proverbs, this book actually manages to overcome its "feel-good" message, providing a joyful introduction to important Jewish themes. It might be nice to see an updated edition of this book, but in the meantime, it and its siblings certainly fill a gap. If nothing else, the "Jewish Catalog" books capture an era in Jewish thought, informed by the youth movement, when havdalah was hip because you could use incense, and Jewish music was anything Jews felt like singing together. We may mock it now, but maybe we could use a little of that enthusiasm today.

I use this constantly as a Jew. Get the original, not the newer printings. The original was done in the '70's and it just has this very open, dowhatchalike feel. Everything is covered from living Kosher to Shabbat to the Shoah. It's a 'how-to' manual for the Reformers. Good things abound. Take what you like and leave the rest.

I have had this book for over 30 years. It was like a how-to bible for me on Jewish practice. I loved it and wanted to give one to my daughter now. Book came in pretty good condition. While many addresses and phone numbers no longer be current, I still believe this is a critical addition to any Jewish household. There is so much valuable knowledge, insight and pictures. And frankly, the whole 70s theme of it is kind of fun to read. You get an earthchild sense, but I love it and highly recommend. Also, the Second and Third Catalogues are also good, but the First one is the best!

The Jewish Catalogue is certainly indicative of the Jewish renewal movement fueled by the sixties counter culture. It was written to reinvest "spirit" or intention "kavanah" into Jewish practices by young people who were dismayed by the increasingly ossified nature of institutional, organized Judaism. So the Jewish Catalogue contains such gems as how to make your own eternal light, ner tamid, out of a can; how to macramé a Torah scroll cover; the proper method of tying your own tallit; how to make a mezuzah; creating your own yahrzeit candles. Along with these do-it-yourself versions of Jewish worship and practice, there are the rudiments of halakhah: The basics of keeping

kosher; the order of prayers for holidays and daily worship; the Passover Seder. This book is not a Shulchan Aruch or a Mishneh Torah in terms of detail, and some of its information is outdated (like contact information). Even more of its details can now be gleaned from the internet (how to build a sukkah, for example). Yet the Jewish Catalogue gains the ground it has lost over time by possessing a great deal of charm. The form of Yiddishkeit presented here is one that few people could have major objections to; do-it-yourself Judaism, after all, was probably the pre-modern form of the faith.

This is the Original Jewish Catalog; my challah recipe is from this book and so are other women's in Knoxville, Tennessee. We all had a copy in the late 70's. Glad to see I was still able to get a copy. Better than all Catalogs since this one. Can't go wrong with a Bride's gift.

It's a lot of fun and good info, now getting dated.

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