

Sukkot

סוכות



Sukkot, literally, "huts" is named for the booths we dwell in during this week-long holy day. It is also referred to as *Chag HaAsif*, or "The Harvest Festival." This reflects its character as both a biblical holiday and an agricultural one. It is a time of rejoicing and giving gratitude for the harvest, and of remembering our time traveling in the wilderness under God's close protection, making camp in temporary huts. Sukkot is one of the *Shalosh Regalim* (literally "the three legs"), or pilgrimage festivals, in the Jewish year. In ancient times, people would travel to the Temple in Jerusalem during Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot.

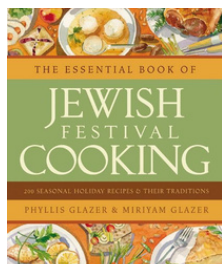


Featured Cookbook

The Essential Book of Jewish Festival Cooking

By Phyllis Glazer and Miriyam Glazer

Perfect for celebrating a harvest holiday, this cookbook is organized by seasons! Learn more about why we eat what we eat on each holiday and about the origins, traditions, and seasonal and biblical significance of each holiday and its foods. **Check out this cookbook and others from our Mount Zion library!**



Fun Fact!

You might notice that the Mount Zion offices are closed for part of Sukkot but not the whole festival. Why?!

In the case of Sukkot and Passover, the first and last days are considered *chag* (holy days) while the middle days are referred to as *chol hamoed*, literally "the mundane days of the holy day." *Chol hamoed*, the intermediate days, are observed a little differently. While we still observe the mitzvot of sukkot on *chol hamoed*, we carry on with "business as usual," unlike on *chag* days.

Order of Operations

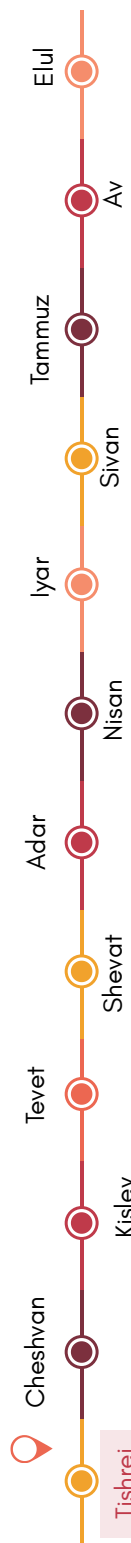
A sukkah is not just for eating in or for shaking the lulav! Gather with friends, study Torah, work, play music, or sleep in the sukkah! If you don't have a sukkah at home, you can also try out this mitzvah at Mount Zion. Our sukkah is open to all.

Simply sitting in a sukkah is itself a mitzvah. We even have a blessing that we recite before we sit down in these temporary huts. Confused about what to do first?

1. Recite the blessing and shake the lulav and etrog
2. Recite the blessing for sitting in the sukkah
3. Recite the *Shehechyanu* if it's your first time in a sukkah for the season
4. Recite any other blessings, such as those over food (e.g. *hamotzi*)

Download a printable version of the Sukkot blessings by scanning the QR code.

How will you spend time in a sukkah this year?



Jewish Calendar

Can You Build it on a Camel? Can You Build it with a Mammal?

A sukkah is a temporary structure with at least three sides, whose roof is made out of natural material that provides some shade and protection from the sun, but also allows the stars to be seen at night. The sages in the Talmud debated over what constituted a kosher sukkah and where you could build one. Some say you can build a sukkah on top of a tree, on the deck of a ship, or even on the back of a camel (*Mishnah Sukkah 2:3, Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 23a*). Even more creatively, some sages thought that an elephant could be used as one of the walls of your sukkah!

Want to learn more about the requirements to build a sukkah? Check out **The Sukkah Project** at sukkot.com, which creates "klutz proof" sukkah building kits.



Torah Teaching

In our liturgy, Sukkot is referred to as *Z'man Simchateinu*, the Season of our Rejoicing. This name comes directly from the Torah! Deuteronomy 16:14 instructs us, "And you shall rejoice in your Festival," referring to Sukkot, and Leviticus 23:40 similarly tells us, "And you shall rejoice before Adonai your God seven days." But what does rejoice really mean? The *Mishnah Torah*, one of the central codes of Jewish law, teaches that although this used to refer to making lots of sacrifices, it now means that each person should celebrate in the particular way that brings them joy.

How can you cultivate joy during sukkot?



The Four Species

The lulav and etrog are comprised of four species. We hold these four species together and wave them on Sukkot both as a way of offering gratitude and joy, and in the hope that we will be surrounded by protection and blessing in the coming year. There are many different interpretations of the symbolism of these species. One interpretation is that they symbolize parts of the human body.

1. Myrtle-eyes / (Hadas) **הדס**
2. Willow-mouth / (Arava) **ערבה**
3. Date Palm Frond-spine / (Lulav) **לולב**
4. Citron-heart / (Etrog) **אתרוג**

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Sukkot is my favorite holiday, the most joyous! It is my refuge. We build our sukkah with our community and everyone helps put up decorations. After that, I spend 7 days going into the sukkah and feeling surrounded by the love and support of my community and the comfort and warmth of God.

—Sue Lund, Mount Zion member

Kavanah (intention) Corner

Here are some prompts to get you thinking about the meaning behind Sukkot. Journal about them, discuss them with a friend, or hang them in your sukkah for reflection!



- Jewish tradition encourages us to welcome seven spiritual guests called *ushpizin* into our sukkot (plural of "sukkah"). Who do you want to invite into your sukkah this year—literally or figuratively? Why?
- The holiday of Sukkot celebrates nature and harvest. Share a memory you have of being in nature.
- The sukkah is both intentionally temporary and a source of shelter, reminding us to reflect on what keeps us protected, cozy, and comfortable. What makes a home a home for you? What helps you feel safe?
- As we think about the fragility of our material homes, in what ways can we offer tzedakah most effectively to those who struggle right now to have stable housing?