

ALL ABOUT SUKKOT



What is Sukkot?

Sukkot is the fall harvest festival, a time to give thanks, as well as to commemorate the 40 years the children of Israel wandered in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. In Hebrew, *sukkot* means “booths” or “huts,” and a replica of the shelters Jews lived in while harvesting and during their exile in the desert is at the heart of this joyous celebration.

The *sukkah* is a temporary shelter built for the holiday. Building and decorating the *sukkah* can be a fun family project. The commandment to “live in” the *sukkah* during the holiday can be satisfied by eating meals in it though, if weather and circumstances allow, families can sleep in it as well.

Though the *sukkah* can be framed with modern materials, such as PVC pipe, the roof must be covered in natural materials, such as cornstalks, bamboo or branches.

When is it?

Sukkot begins five days after *Yom Kippur*, on the eve of the 15th day of *Tishrei*, the seventh month in the Jewish calendar, and lasts for seven days. It falls in September-October. It is customary to begin building the *sukkah* on the day after *Yom Kippur*.

What do I need to celebrate Sukkot?

Sukkot typically is celebrated with several rituals:

Lulav is a bundle of branches made from three species of tree (myrtle, palm and willow). *Etrog* is a citrus fruit, similar to a lemon. Together, the *lulav* and *etrog* are known as the Four Species. The two are held together and shaken in six directions to symbolize that God is everywhere.

Ushpizin is the Aramaic word for “guests” and refers to the custom of inviting biblical guests into the *sukkah* to teach spiritual lessons. It’s also customary to invite friends and family to celebrate and share a meal in the *sukkah*.

Building the *sukkah* is a *mitzvah*, or commandment, and any *mitzvah* can be enhanced by beautifying the objects used to fulfill it. The *sukkah* is a place of celebration and can be decorated using paper chains, gourds, strings of uncooked pasta and colored pictures. And the crafts can be reused every year. Visit jHUB’s [Pinterest board](#) for ideas.

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Additional resources

Books for children:

The Big Sukkah by Peninnah Schram
Sammy Spider's First Sukkot by Sylvia A. Rouss

Books for adults:

Jewish Living by Mark Washofsky
The Jewish Festivals by Hayyim Schauss

Still have questions?

For more information about *Sukkot*, jHUB and interfaith programs or Jewish culture, contact us at jHUB@jecc.org, 216-371-0446.

SUKKOT BLESSINGS



Blessings for Dwelling in the Sukkah

TO BE SAID WHEN EATING OR DRINKING IN THE SUKKAH

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בְּסֻכָּה.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu leishev basukkah.*

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has made us holy through God's commandments, and commands us to dwell in the sukkah.

Blessing for the Lulav and Etrog

TO BE SAID BEFORE SHAKING THE LULAV IN 6 DIRECTIONS AND SMELLING THE ETROG

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לוּלָב.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.*

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has made us holy through God's commandments, and commands us to take up the lulav.

Shehehiyanu — Blessing for Reaching This Special Occasion

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam,
shehehiyanu v'kiymanu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us and for enabling us to reach this season.