

Hilkhhot Shmini Atzeret 5776

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	Sun Oct 4	Mon Oct 5	Tues Oct 6
Called	Hoshana Rabba	Shmini Atzeret	Simchat Torah
Shacharit	8:15	9:00am	8:30am
Mincha	6:05m	6:00pm	6:00pm
Candle Lighting	6:03pm*	after 7:02pm	---
Earliest Kiddush	---	7:02pm	---
Havdalah	---	---	7:00pm

*All davening will take place in Levin Ballroom (except for Sunday Shacharit)
Zmanim are for Waltham, MA only*

** In other words, light at or around (or before) 6:03, and 6:21 is shkia. Explanation below*

Sukkah on Shmini Atzeret

Shmini Atzeret is in some respects a new holiday. It is entirely unconnected to the mitzvah of sukkah, and when in Israel, Sukkot are abandoned on Shmini Atzeret across the board (even by 'hutznikim' keeping a second day). Since Shmini Atzeret in galut (the Diaspora) is, at once, its own holiday and a repetition of the seventh day of Sukkot, we straddle a fine line between our observance of the seventh day of Sukkot and not extending those practices into Shmini Atzeret.

This tension was noticed by the Amoraim, the authors of the Talmud, who concluded this sugya: 'Yoshev, yashvinan. Barekhin, lo mvarekhinan.' We certainly sit, and we certainly do not bless.

In other words, the prevailing custom (as this gemara indicates) is to have your meals in the Sukkah, but to not make a berakha of '*leishev basukkah*.' Furthermore, time in the sukkah is to be limited to eating: one should not sleep or hang out in the sukkah.

Some students come from families with different customs regarding the resolution of this tension, and should honor the customs of their ancestors. Those without a custom may conduct themselves as articulated above.

On Simchat Torah (ie the second day of Shmini Atzeret), the sukkah must be avoided altogether.

Candles

We say 2 blessings each of the first two nights of chag. On Sunday and Monday nights we say:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב

Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov.

You are the Source of Blessing, Hashem our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Who has sanctified us through his commandments and commanded us to kindle the candles Yom Tov.

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam she-hechyanu ve-kiymanu ve-higi'anu la-zman ha-zeh.

You are the Source of Blessing, Hashem our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us and brought us to this season.

Candles lit on first night -- unlike Shabbat, where there is a hard and fast end time to when you can light candles (called shkia) and the “candle lighting time” listed in your local Orthodox calendar is 18 minutes before shkia, on Yom Tov, even after shkia, you have the option to transfer fire in order to light your candles (as per the normal rules of Yom Tov, and as is absolutely necessary on the second night, below). That said, Rabbi Soloveitchik indicated ¹ that one who does not light on the first night before shkia fulfils the obligation to light candles but misses the element of kavod Yom Tov.

Candles on the second night of Yom Tov are lit after, rather than before, nightfall, because one may not prepare from one day of Yom Tov to the next. There is no particular need to light before maariv, so students davening with us may light after tfillah is over.

Rain and other Party Poopers

We use the same litmus test to excuse people from eating in the sukkah on Shmini Atzeret as we do for the rest of Sukkot.

Cooking on Yom Tov

On Yom Tov we are permitted to perform certain activities that we can't do on Shabbat if they fall under the category of *ochel nefesh* (things that are beneficial to the soul). This broad category includes cooking and preparing food for the Chag, carrying, and other activities. One may cook on Yom Tov with the following restrictions:

- One cannot create a new flame, but must use a fire that was lit before Yom Tov. Similarly, one cannot extinguish a flame on Yom Tov.
- One CAN adjust the temperature on an oven or stove as long as there is not digital temperature display or other lights that will be turned on or be adjusted when changing the temperature. Electric stoves in which the heating element turns red when active are also problematic - please consult with a rabbi before using such stoves. Provided one's oven and/or stovetop meet these criteria, it is recommended to

¹ based on the Rambam, Shabbat ch. 5

leave it on at a low temperature before the start of Yom Tov, and to increase the temperature when cooking. Once you finish cooking you should return the oven/stove to the low temperature. **Extreme care should be taken to prevent fires and accidental burns.**

- One can only prepare food for that day of Yom Tov. It is not permitted to cook on the afternoon of the first day for the next day's meals. If there happen to be leftovers, they can be eaten on the following day.

“Sabbath Mode” Ovens

A number of different on-campus oven models are equipped with a feature called “Sabbath mode.” To be clear, this is an example of the worst marketing failure in history: **they may not be used on the Sabbath.**² There is no oven that allows you to cook on Shabbat. Sorry, GE. They were designed for Yom Tov.

- **What they do:** they disable a number of safety features, such as the 12-hour shut off, and temperature modulation that happens when you open the door. They also disable all digital displays and lights. They also kill the feedback of the temperature buttons to the operator. You can find more information in the manual to your oven.
- **Can I use it:** Sabbath mode should be engaged regardless of whether you plan on pressing buttons on Yom Tov, because ovens these days are so fancy, everytime you open them you could be breaking Yom Tov, and because they will otherwise shutdown after 5 or 12 hours. However, the more salient and controversial feature - adjusting temperature on Yom Tov - is the point of a debate between current authorities. Please consult your LOR.
- **How do I turn it on:** get your oven's model and make number, and Google it with the words “Sabbath mode.” You'll have to press a bunch of buttons in sequence, reminiscent of the Konami code.
- **Where can I learn more:** [here](#), [here](#), or talk to me

Showering on Yom Tov

Many poskim feel that showering on Yom Tov is permitted by the principle of *ochel nefesh* (things that are beneficial to the soul) if a person **feels particularly dirty** from not having showered. If one decides that he/she needs to shower on Yom Tov, the following guidelines must be followed:

- One should shower in order to clean themselves and not take an overly long or luxurious shower.
- One may not use bar soap as this presents a separate problem of *memareach* (smoothing out the soap)
- One should not use a washcloth in order to avoid problems of *sechitah* (squeezing out the water from the washcloth)
- One must also be very careful not to squeeze out their hair for the same concern.
- Ideally, one should drip dry after the shower in order to avoid squeezing out the

² [Here](#)'s a bumper story about a guy who didn't know that.

towel. If one exercises extreme caution they can pat themselves dry with a towel.

Havdallah

Havdallah is made only on wine - candle and spices are excluded.

Class on Yom Tov

Many students have asked me about the permissibility of attending class on Yom Tov. My advice is to not attend class and to make arrangements in advance for a non-Jewish classmate to take notes for you. While there is no technical prohibition with attending class, it is certainly not within the spirit of the holiday. It is also important to keep some perspective. While Brandeis' calendar with no classes on the first day of Yom Tov but regular classes on the second day may seem strange to us, we are quite fortunate to have a large number of yamim tovim off. Most schools have class on all days of Yom Tov - including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The official university policy is that students must be excused from classes that meet on Yom Tov. They must provide advance notice to their professors and complete all assignments in a timely manner. Professors are not required to allow an extension to students who missed class because of Yom Tov. It also goes without saying that the university does not provide for excused absences to allow students to travel for the holidays.

If anyone experiences trouble with a professor not excusing them for Yom Tov they should bring it to the attention of me and/or Rabbi Winick as well as the department chair.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR ETROG

Please note, if you bought your etrog from Hillel, and likely even if you bought it from somewhere else, your etrog has the status of kedushat shevi'it, i.e. it was farmed in Israel on a shmitta year. This is a wonderful thing: poskim like R Joseph B Soloveitchik, R Moshe Feinstein, and R Ovadiah Yosef reiterated in strong language that it was a mitzvah to buy etrogim from Israel on such years.

HOWEVER, these etrogim **must** be treated with kedushat shevi'it. As such, disposing of them casually is a sin.

There are a number of ways to deal with this problem, each has its own pros and cons. For our community, I am recommending the following solution: **keep your etrog in your room, either out in the open or in a bag. Over time, it will either rot or dry out. When either of those happen, the etrog may be discarded (or kept, if you so desire).**³⁴⁵

³ Psachim 52 forbids being mafsid shmitta produce, Maharit 1:83 excludes gram hefsed. Chazon Ish 14:10, Minchas Yitzchok 10:119 (in theory), Shu"t Hat Tzvi Zera'im 2:54, and Yalkut Yosef Shviit 15:57 concur.

⁴ Regarding the mitzvah of bi'ur, it is still incumbent on us in hutz l'aretz -- see Rambam Shmittah v'Yovel 7:12 -- but does not apply to you if you only have 1 or 2 etrogim -- see Rambam Shmittah v'Yovel 7:4.

⁵ Regarding the option of eating it: that comes with it's own complications. You may need to consume the peel, you may need to finish it really soon (etrog liquor is pretty much out of the question), you may get stuck with bi'ur, and it may be assur to eat shvi'it in hu"l. I recommend avoiding these options.