

Hilkhot Sukkot 5776

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	Sun Sept 28	Mon Sept 29	Tues Oct 30
Shacharit		9:00am	9:00am
Mincha	6:15m	6:00pm	6:00pm
Candle Lighting	6:15pm*	after 6:32pm	---
Earliest Kiddush**	7:15pm	7:13pm	---
Havdalah	---	---	7:11pm

*All davening will take place in the International Lounge
Zmanim are for Waltham, MA only*

* In other words, light at or around (or before) 6:15, and 6:33 is shkia. Explanation below

** Kiddush on Sukkot must be made after tzeit ha-kokhavim, like on Pesach.

Sukkah

The Torah commands that we dwell in our *Sukkot* for the seven days of *Sukkot*. In the Diaspora, unless one has a family custom to the contrary, we also eat in the *Sukkah* on *Shimini Atzeret*. The Sages teach that we should strive to dwell in our *Sukkah* as we dwell in our homes. Whenever one eats substantial food in the *sukkah*¹ (bread or “mezonos” i.e., food derived from the five grains) we say the following brakha:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו מצותיו וצונו לישב בסוכה

Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam Asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzinvanu leishev ba-sukkah.

Blessed are You Hashem our God, sovereign of the world, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to dwell in the *sukkah*.

Sefaradim should only make this brakha when eating bread, i.e. ha-motzi². As for the timing of the brakha, some stand, then make the brakha, then sit and make hamotzi/mezonos (and then eat), while some sit, make the hamotzi/mezonos and then the brakha on the sukka (and then eat). Both customs are valid.

¹ Shulchan Aruch OC 639:8, Rama ad loc

² Hazon Ovadia seif 31

Candles

We say 2 blessings each of the first two nights of chag. When possible candles should be lit in the sukkah.

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 indicated³ 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

On *Sukkot*, at all times, all meals should be eaten in the *Sukkah*. Aside from the first nights, however, as long as it is raining strong enough to ruin our food we may eat indoors. If it rains on the first night, there are two schools of thought. Ashkenazim must wait to see if the rain will subside. If the rain does not subside, the meal may be taken in the house, but Kidush and an olive's size piece of bread must be consumed in the *Sukkah* without the special “*Leisheiv*” brakha (and then everyone should shuffle indoors for the rest of the meal). Sefaradim need not enter the *sukkah* at all, and the halakha is like any other night.

For most people, discomfort due to cold weather does not create an exemption since it can be remedied by bundling up. However, anyone who suffers distress or a malady which, for whatever legitimate reason, makes eating in a *Sukkah* uncomfortable is under no obligation to be in the *Sukkah*.

³ based on the Rambam, Shabbat ch. 5

Ushpizin

There is a beautiful custom on *Sukkot* to invite both real and spiritual guests to our *Sukkah*. Just as the four walls of Abraham and Sarah's tent were open to guests, so too we affirm the value of *hachnasat orchim* - hospitality as a fundamental to building the good society. This hospitality extends to all humanity, as we pray for the God to spread the shelter of the great *Sukkah* of peace over the entire world and all humanity. The traditional rite found in *siddurim* and benches is to invite a different Patriarch and great Biblical leader each night of *Sukkot*.

Arba Minim (Lulav and Etrog)

One of the mitzvot of *Sukkot* is take the 4 species (lulav and etrog). When holding the *Lulav* (palm branch) in front of us with the spine of the branch facing us, the three *Hadassim* (myrtle) are to the right, and the two *Aravot* (river willow) are to the left, slightly lower than the *Hadassim*. Every man, woman, and child (upon reaching an age of understanding) should take hold of a set of *Arba Minim* on each day of *Sukkot* and make the appropriate blessing(s) and wavings. For men this is *Hiyyuv* (obligation), for women this is *Kiyyum* (religious opportunity) and for children this is *chinuch* (education in a life of *mitzvot*).

The blessing for *arba minim* is usually said before *Hallel*, however, some have the custom to take the *lulav* before *davening* in the *Sukkah*. *Shehechyanu* is said the first time someone performs the mitzvah each year.

We wave the *arba minim* on every day of *Sukkot* except for *Shabbat*.

Proper procedure: it is important to not pick up all four species the appropriate way before reciting the berakha, or you will risk accidentally fulfilling the mitzvah and then lose out on the opportunity to make a berakha (or worse: you'll make the berakha and it will be inappropriate to do so). Therefore, there are a number of recommended workarounds. My preferred: position the etrog right in front of you on a table or equivalent, take up the lulav + 2, make the berakha, then take up the etrog, join it to the other three species, and begin waving.

One important note about borrowing and about children: There is an additional requirement that on the first day of *Sukkot* the *arba minim* belong to the person waving them because the Torah instructs us *ulekachtem LACHEM ba-yom ha-rishon...* (You should take for YOURSELVES on the first day...). If one does not have their own lulav and etrog and are using that of a friend it should be given to the person as a gift so that they own it. After completing the mitzvah they may give it back to the original owner as a gift. Regarding children, however, halakha holds that a child knows how to acquire, but not give, so if you let your child shake your lulav on the first day of *Sukkot*, make sure it is only after you have fulfilled your own obligation.

We wave the lulav and etrog as part of *Hallel*, and we also parade around shul with them as part of *hoshanot*.

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 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.**⁴ 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*

⁴ [Here](#)'s a bumper story about a guy who didn't know that.

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

Havdallah

Havdallah should be said in the Sukkah, but no *brakha* of *leishev ba-sukkah* is said. 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.

Chol ha-Moed

No unnecessary work should be done on chol ha-moed that does not directly contribute to our enjoyment of the holiday or our preparations for Shabbat and Yom Tov.

Going to class and taking notes is considered a matter of great loss if one doesn't go. Students therefore can go to class and participate fully.