

SUKKOT

Feast of Tabernacles



Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, is a week-long feast during which Jewish communities build temporary shelters (“booths” in Hebrew) to remind each generation that our forefathers lived as nomads, wandering in the desert for forty years (Leviticus 23:42-43).



Biblical Origins of Sukkot

"...You are to take choice fruit of trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and rejoice before Adonai your God for seven days. You are to live in sukkot for seven days...so that your generations may know that I had Bnei-Yisrael to dwell in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Adonai your God." (Leviticus 23:42-43)

'Sukkah' is the Hebrew word for 'booth' or 'tabernacle'. 'Sukkot', the plural form, and it is the name of the festival of booths. Sukkot were the huts in which the Israelites lived during their years in the desert after they left slavery in Egypt and before they arrived in the Promised Land. Sukkot begins two weeks after Rosh Hashanah, on the eve of the 15th day of Tishrei and lasts for seven days. Sukkot comes at the end of the High Holydays (Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur), which are the most serious days of the Jewish year. Sukkot is a joyful festival and one of the Three Pilgrim Festivals when all the Jewish men were to go up to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast.

Building a Sukkah

It is traditional to start building a sukkah to use during the holiday of Sukkot straight after Yom Kippur so that it will be ready in time.

A sukkah must have at least three walls. The walls of the sukkah can be made out of anything: canvas, wood, bricks, even metal or stone, as long as the walls don't flap in the wind. One of the three walls may even be part of permanent structure, such as the side wall of a house.

There are also strict rules about the roof of a sukkah:

it must be made out of something which grew from the ground (e.g. branches are allowed, plastic or metal is not).

It must be possible to see at least 3 stars in the night sky through the sukkah roof but it must also provide more shade than sun. The roofing is meant to be temporary so it does not protect us totally from the environment – instead, we need to still have some trust that God will continue to protect us while dwelling in a sukkah.

Living in a Sukkah

We are commanded to 'dwell' in a sukkah for the whole week of Sukkot. This means that we should try to eat all our meals in the sukkah and say the blessings for bread, wine, and a prayer that thanks God for Sukkot.

Some people, especially men, also sleep in the sukkah at night time. During Sukkot, it is a great (and very enjoyable) mitzvah to invite guests over to eat with you in your sukkah. We also imagine that seven special guests, known as the Ushpizin, join us in the sukkah. These biblical guests are: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.

The Four Species

On Sukkot we use four kinds of plants known in Hebrew as the Arbah Minim (literally, the 'four species'). They represent the oneness of Israel and the harvest. We read a prayer before saying a blessing for the lulav. We then hold the etrog in the left hand (stem pointed downwards, then after the prayer, upwards)

We then shake the lulav, holding it next to the etrog, while facing east towards Jerusalem. We shake it three times- once to the south (right), once to the west (over the shoulder) and once to the north (over the other shoulder). We wave the lulav as a sign of joy and thanks that God has given us a final harvest. Waving the lulav also shows that we wish for rain in Israel.

We also wave the lulav during Hallel (psalms of praise).

We do not shake the lulav on Shabbat because we are not allowed to carry anything on Shabbat, and shaking the species involves carrying them.

Each person should have their own lulav – it cannot be borrowed, but it can be given as a gift.

Aravot – willows that have no fruit and no fragrance

Lulav – palm branch that has no fragrance, but has fruit which can be eaten

Etrog – citron, a fruit like a lemon, that has a sweet fragrance and can be eaten

Hadassim – myrtles, that have a nice smell but cannot be eaten



Sukkot Blessings

Lulav Blessing

The following blessing is said while holding the lulav bundle in your right hand:

Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm ah-sheer ki-deh-shah-noo beh-mitz-voh-tahv veh-tzee-vah-noo ahl neh-tee-laht loo-lahv

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us regarding taking the lulav.

Bendito eres Tú, Hashem nuestro Di-s, Rey del universo, que nos santificó con Sus preceptos y nos ordenó respecto de tomar el Lulav.

Sukkah Blessing

The following blessing is said before partaking of a meal in the sukkah:

Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm ah-sheer ki-deh-shah-noo beh-mitz-voh-tahv veh-tzee-vah-noo lay-shayv bah-soo-kah

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the sukkah

Bendito Seas, Señor nuestro Di-s, Rey del universo, quien nos santifico con Sus mandamientos, y nos ha ordenado sentarnos en la Sucá.

Shehecheyanu Blessing

:When eating in the sukkah for the first time this year, say the following blessing

-Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm sheh-heh kheh-yah-noo veh-kee-mah-noo ve-hig-ee-yah-noo liz-mahn hah-zeh

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has granted us life sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion

Bendito eres ,Tu Señor nuestro Di-s, Rey del universo
quien nos ha concedido la vida, nos ha sostenido, y nos ha permitido llegar a esta ocasión

A Quinoa Tabouleh Salad your kids will Love

Ingredients

2 cups fresh flat leaf parsley, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
½ red onion, minced
4 large tomatoes, diced
1 cup dry quinoa
2 cups vegetable broth (or water)
Juice of 1 lemon
Zest of 1 lemon
¼ cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste



Preparation:

Rinse quinoa well with cold water in a mesh strainer.

Combine quinoa with the vegetable broth or water in a small pot, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cook, covered, for 20 minutes.

Once finished, drain excess liquid.

Combine cooked quinoa with the chopped parsley, mint, onion and tomatoes. Mix well.

In a separate bowl, combine the lemon juice, lemon zest, olive oil, salt and pepper and whisk together.

Top the quinoa mixture with the dressing and combine.

Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.

This dish is vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free. It pairs well with meat, fish and chicken for a wonderful and filling side to enjoy in your sukkah.

Sukkah Decorations



Supplies:

Roll of tinfoil

Lots of masking tape, any size

Non-toxic Craft Paint

Sponges / paint brushes

Newspaper/ something to protect the table surface

Twisty ties

“Mod Podge”



To make the apple, make a ball of tinfoil. Wrap it in the tape and shape it. Attach a twist tie

with tape so that it makes a loop. You can use it to hang inside the sukkah. You can get more complicated, making pears or other fruit shapes simply by smushing the tinfoil together to somewhat resemble the fruit or vegetable you want to create. For my project, I made two apples, two pears, and two squash.

Have the kids paint the shapes. I recommend being actively involved in the painting process. I only used sponges, and I painted an undercoat of a recognizable color (green for pears, red for apples, green and orange for squash) and had the kids paint over it however they wanted.

Set aside to dry . Once everything is dry, coat it in the Mod Podge (it is a paint-like substance that can seal and protect it from water, you can find it at any craft or art supply store)

Set aside to dry overnight, then hang it up in your sukkah and enjoy!



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