

SHAVUOT: the Giving of the Torah

Seven weeks after Passover, we celebrate the festival of *Shavuot*, sometimes pronounced as *Shavuos*. On Shavuot we celebrate the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. Historically, Shavuot also marked the spring harvest, so it is a time of both joy and abundance in the Jewish calendar. **Shavuot will begin at sundown on Thursday, May 25 and end at sundown Saturday, May 27.**

Counting the Omer

Beginning on the second night of Passover, the 49 days that elapse are counted each night until Shavuot arrives. This is called the *Omer*. Historically, the counting of the *Omer* marked the period between the barley and wheat harvests. Today, it serves as a spiritual preparation for “receiving” the Torah on Shavuot.

How We Celebrate

While Shavuot is a very meaningful holiday, it is not as widely celebrated as some other Jewish holidays. Given the themes of spring and harvest, decorating shared spaces with florals and bright colors is a great way to get in the spirit of the holiday. Typical celebration involves staying up late and studying biblical texts, especially the [Book of Ruth](#), [summarized here](#). We also read about the Ten Commandments and celebrate Moses receiving the tablets from God at Mount Sinai.



Why Dairy?

Dairy is a feature of Shavuot because of the Torah’s role as the metaphorical “mother’s milk” that sustains and nourishes us. Kugel, blintzes, and cheesecake are all delicious meals that remind us of the joy and comfort provided by the Torah.



Making a Shavuot Space

To prepare for Shavuot celebrations, try some easy, fun crafts that will bring spring into any space! DIY projects like [these popsicle stick flowers](#) or [these cupcake liner bouquets](#) can be made with common household objects and are sure to brighten rooms and moods alike.



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Bubbe's Corner

You can always count on Bubbe (Yiddish for "grandmother") for her wisdom, stories and traditions. Be sure to ask your residents about how they celebrated Shavuot. Did they make blintzes, eat cheesecake, make paper flowers? Be sure to ask your residents about any Shavuot memories they have!

Shavuot has **five** recognized names! *Shavuot*, Day of First Fruits, the Harvest Festival, *Atzeret*, and the Time of the Giving of the Torah.



During the *Omer*, Jewish weddings are prohibited. Therefore, Shavuot is often a very popular time to get married.

In some sects of Judaism, teenagers in religious schools have confirmation ceremonies around Shavuot because it's near the end of the school year.

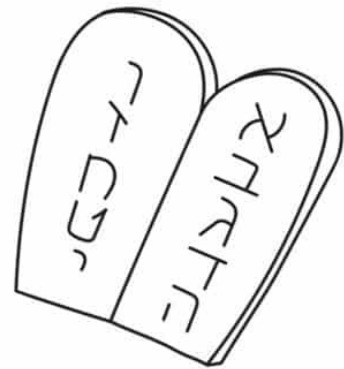
In Israel, many *kibbutz* (commune) communities throw colorful harvest festival celebrations called *Bikkurim*.

Shavuot literally translates to "weeks" since it marks the seven weeks that have elapsed during the *Omer*.

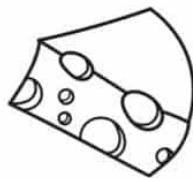
Important Terms for Shavuot

Hebrew...	It is pronounced...	It means...
Shavuot	Shah-voo-oat / shah-voo-us	Weeks/the Harvest Festival
Chag Sameach	Hahg sah-may-ach	Happy holiday!
Aseret Hadibrot	Ah-sare-et Ha dee-brote	The Ten Commandments
Har Sinai	Har Sea-nye	Mount Sinai
Megillat Rut	Meh-gi-lat Ruth	The Book of Ruth
Sefirat HaOmer	Se-Fear-aht Ha Oh-mare	Counting of the Omer





Happy Shavuot



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HOLIDAY	DATE
Shavuot (2 days)	Thursday, May 25* – Saturday, May 27, 2023
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Friday, Sept. 15* – Sunday Sept. 17, 2023
Yom Kippur (1 day)	Sunday, Sept. 24* – Monday, Sept. 25, 2023
Sukkot (7 days)	Friday, Sept. 29* – Friday, Oct. 6, 2023
Shemini Atzeret (1 day) & Simchat Torah (1 day)	Saturday, Oct. 6* – Sunday, Oct. 8, 2023
Hanukkah (8 days)	Thursday, Dec. 7* – Friday, Dec. 15, 2023
Purim	Saturday, March 23 – Sunday, March 34, 2024
Passover	Monday, April 22 – Tuesday, April 30, 2024

*** All holidays begin at sundown**

About JFS

JFS has continuously provided a range of support, services and resources for individuals and families of all ages and backgrounds since 1854.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and the community by providing compassionate, collaborative human services, guided by Jewish values.

Our staff have expertise in:

- Helping older adults maintain their safety and independence
- Providing resources and guidance to older adults and their families
- Spiritual support and guidance
- Counseling and case management

Support Our Chaplaincy Program

JFS created the Dr. Rela Mintz Geffen Jewish Community Chaplaincy Fund to enable us to provide free spiritual connection and support for Jewish residents in long-term settings as well as those older adults who are living alone.

This publication and the visits and program offered by our Community Chaplain, Rabbi Ami Monson, are made possible through philanthropy.

Please consider supporting this program so that we can continue to offer this complimentary service:

Online: jfsnyny.org/donations

Call: 518-516-1102

Email: donate@jfsnyny.org



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Chaplaincy Services are a service of Jewish Family Services and are funded in part by grants from the Jewish Federation of NENY in cooperation with the B'nai B'rith Gideon Foundation, The Theodore Strauss Endowment Fund, Daughters of Sarah Community for Seniors and Temple Israel.