

SHAVUOT



Shavuot is a late spring holiday 50 days after Passover that celebrates the Israelites receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai. It commemorates the 50 days it took the Israelites to travel through the desert to Mt. Sinai following their exodus from Egypt. When the Jewish people were given the Torah, they went from a familial clan to a formal religion, committing themselves to God and accepting the commandments and values of Judaism.

Historically, Shavuot also celebrated the grain harvest in the land of Israel. In the times of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, Jews would bring their first fruits as a thanksgiving offering to the Temple on Shavuot.

CUSTOMS

TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

Some people stay awake all night engaged in Torah study (*tikkun leil Shavuot*) in anticipation of receiving the Torah on Shavuot morning. This demonstrates their excitement in hearing the 10 commandments read aloud in synagogue and shows their commitment to the Torah.

EATING DAIRY

In contrast to the large meat meals that are customarily eaten on Jewish holidays, it is common to eat dairy foods such as blintzes, borekas, noodle kugel and cheesecake. There are several reasons given to explain this custom, including that eating dairy is a nod to the verse describing Israel as a “land flowing with milk and honey,” because following Mt. Sinai the Israelites began their journey to Israel. Some explain that cheese was a traditional food eaten during the harvest season. Or that following the acceptance of the Torah the Israelites were hesitant to consume any meat until they studied their new laws.



BOOK OF RUTH

In many synagogues, the biblical Book of Ruth is read on Shavuot, which describes the story of a Jewish family who left Israel and whose two sons married women of other faiths. Both sons and their father died, leaving only an old widow and her two daughters-in-law. One daughter-in-law, Ruth, vowed to stay with her mother-in-law to provide for her and return with her to the land of Israel. Ruth later remarried and became the great-grandmother of King David. Ruth is considered to be the first convert to Judaism. Shavuot is a special holiday to many who have converted to Judaism.

ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

Taste a New Fruit The produce aisle of your local grocery store is filled with new and interesting fruits. Take one home and let everyone try something new.

Make Your Own Ice Cream Put cream, sugar and vanilla in a zippered freezer bag, place into a larger bag filled with ice and kosher salt. Shake vigorously until frozen!

DIY Flowers Make flowers from recycled bottles and egg cartons to decorate your holiday table.

Pajama Tikkun Leil Shavuot Let your kids stay up a bit later than usual to read some of their favorite Jewish books in their PJs as your own mini *tikkun leil Shavuot*.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, ACTIVITIES
AND RECIPES, VISIT

mandeljcc.org/holidays



Jewish Holiday Calendar *The dates of Jewish holidays shift slightly on the secular calendar from year to year since the Jewish calendar is based on the lunar cycle. Holidays begin the evening before at sundown.*