



# SIMCHAT TORAH

**The tail end of Sukkot has a “buddy holiday” called Simchat Torah.** Simchat Torah takes place on the eighth or ninth day of Sukkot (depending on if you’re in Israel or the diaspora, and your denomination). Though connected to Sukkot, this holiday independently celebrates the completion of the Torah reading cycle done in synagogues every year.

## CUSTOMS

Simchat Torah literally translates to “rejoicing in the Torah.” On Simchat Torah, we read the last *parsha* (portion) of the Torah detailing Moses’ death and immediately begin reading the first Torah portion, which is the story of creation. By finishing the Torah and eagerly beginning it again, we demonstrate the centrality of the Torah to our identity as Jews.

### SONG AND DANCE

There is a celebratory practice of singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls on Simchat Torah. In synagogues, many members of the congregation are called up to say a blessing (*aliyah*) on the Torah.

### PRAYER FOR RAIN

The end of Sukkot also marks the beginning of the rainy season in Israel. On Simchat Torah synagogues around the world begin praying for rain in Israel for the year’s harvest. In the Torah, the bounty of the land of Israel is tied to the behavior and actions of the Jewish people – it is a spiritual reward or punishment. The Torah teaches that rain in Israel is more than an economic factor but also an indicator of the spiritual and moral standing of the Jewish people.



## STUFFED CABBAGE

In some communities there is a custom to eat stuffed cabbage on Simchat Torah. The rolled up cabbage leaves are said to resemble the rolled up Torah scrolls that we dance with on Simchat Torah.

## ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

- **Make Your Own Edible Torah** Using creative ingredients in your kitchen! Try pretzels and fruit roll-ups, baby cucumbers and cheese, smarties candies and ribbon, or deli-filled puff pastry dough.
- **Family Torah** Buy a poster board and outline the shape of a Torah. As a family, make a list of your family's "Torah" – what foundational stories, morals or values do you hold dear and talk about year after year?
- **Dance Party** Even if you're not celebrating Simchat Torah in a synagogue, you can have your own dance party at home. You can find many Jewish or Israeli songs on Spotify, Amazon Music or YouTube.
- **Make Caramel Apples** In Israel, a common Simchat Torah snack is caramel apples. Make some as a family topped with M&Ms, sprinkles, crushed Oreos or melted chocolate.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, ACTIVITIES  
AND RECIPES, VISIT

[mandeljcc.org/holidays](http://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.*