

Shabbat & Yom Tov Hospitality Guidelines

(Adapted from ASBI)

These guidelines help us perform the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim, or welcoming guests into our home and making them feel comfortable.

1. Please de-activate the light in your refrigerator so the door can be opened and closed on Shabbat without the light going on and off. Even if your guests will not be using the refrigerator, keeping the light off will reassure them that their host is sensitive to Shabbat. Some refrigerator lights can be easily unscrewed or taped before Shabbat, while many modern refrigerators have “Shabbat modes” that can be activated before Shabbat and which prevent the light from going on and off.
2. Many Shabbat observant Jews refrain from tearing toilet paper on Shabbat. While there are alternative lenient positions - and certainly one can rely on those lenient positions if one finds oneself without any other option - it is recommended to stock a bathroom with tissues or pre-torn toilet paper.
3. Place liquid soap in the bathroom that your guests will use. Using bar-soap is considered a violation of Shabbat by many influential halakhic scholars (because the rubbing changes the shape of a solid object).
4. Tape the light switch in the bathroom that your guests will use in the on position so that each and every guest will be able to use the bathroom without the need to switch on the light. It is very easy to accidentally switch off a light when we are accustomed to automatically turning off lights as we exit a room.
5. Enable your guests to access and leave your high-rise apartment through the stairs. You may need to explain to your building staff that guests will be arriving who will not use the intercom to announce themselves and who will need to access the staircase. It is permissible to directly ask a doorman to push an elevator button if one is traveling above the 5th floor or if walking to the desired floor will present special hardship.
6. Remember that your guests may not be familiar with Shabbat home rituals (like kiddush, motzi, and birkat ha-mazon). Distribute benchers with English translations or instructions and announce the pages of any songs you may sing to include more of your guests in the singing.