

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish (Internet) Connection!

Got Sukkah?

Brought to you by the TBA Lifelong Learning Committee - Written by Linda S Trapasso

Have I mentioned how much I love the fall season? The explosion of colors, fruit and vegetable harvests, lots of agricultural fairs, apple picking, and fresh cider – what could be more grand? Actually, the holiday of Sukkot!

We celebrate the harvest during Sukkot, which is followed by Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. In ancient times, the Jews built temporary huts near the edges of the fields where they were harvesting. A single hut is a sukkah, and the plural is sukkot. The three major traditions associated with Sukkot are building a sukkah, eating in the sukkah, and waving the lulav and etrog.

You can find guidelines for building a sukkah on My Jewish Learning (http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Sukkot/At_Home/The_Sukkah/Laws/Building_a_Sukkah.shtml).



If you're up to the challenge, it's fun (and some work) and decorating it is the best part. Use all kinds of fruits and vegetables, paper garlands, pictures, and strings of lights. Search on sukkah images and you'll get lots of ideas! If you would rather use a sukkah kit, search on sukkah kit. You'll find many to choose from. Or come to the synagogue and

help erect the community sukkah.

Eating in the sukkah is best done with family and friends. There are specific blessings to say that you can find at Judaism 101 (<http://www.jewfaq.org/prayer/sukkot.htm>).



Waving the lulav and etrog is an interesting tradition that ties in with our agricultural heritage. The lulav and etrog represent the Four Species: a citron or etrog, a palm branch, three myrtle twigs and two willow branches. Do you know why the etrog is considered the most important of these? Find the answer at <http://judaism.about.com>. I'll give you a hint – look under Jewish Holidays and Sukkot for an article about holding an etrog in the left hand.

If you'd like to learn more about the etrog, go over to this site: <http://kosherfood.about.com/od/glossaryofjewishfoods/g/etrog.htm>. Find out how etrogs are grown here in the US at the Tablet (<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/80571/etrog-man>). It isn't easy growing etrogs that are used for religious purposes, yet this is exactly what a non-Jew does.

So what do you do with an etrog after Sukkot? You can make marmalade (<http://www.food.com/recipe/Etrog-Esrog-Jam-Marmalade-192588>). Learn from the Velveteen Rabbi how she made her etrogcello (go to <http://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/> and on the right, under Categories, click on Sukkot). Great photos and descriptions. Plus a lot of other interesting stuff – check out her Torah Commentary and Poetry, too.



The eighth and last day of Sukkot is known as Shemini Atzeret. This is the day when we add the prayer for rain to our prayers. Is this really part of Sukkot, or is it its own holiday?

You'll have to read this article (http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Shemini_Atzeret-Simchat_Torah/History/Shemini_Atzeret_Development.shtml) to find out!

The last day is Simchat Torah, a big celebration where we rejoice in the torah. Read about how we dance with the torah scrolls and what is done especially for children at Netplaces Judaism (<http://www.netplaces.com/judaism/sukkot-shemini-atzeret-and-simchat-torah/synagogue-services-on-simchat-torah.htm>).

It's a thrill to carry a Torah scroll during a hakafot. Plus there are many days during this holiday to celebrate and spend time with family and friends and community. Now isn't that grand?

