

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – *Written by Linda S Trapasso*

Keep Shabbat and Shabbat Keeps Us

Ah...the joy of Shabbat! Come the end of the work week and Friday night, *Shabbat* is a welcome respite from all the demands on us. For 25 hours, *Shabbat* is a time to unplug from our everyday activities and technology; and time to de-stress and enjoy being with family and friends, and communing with G-d. *Shabbat* is a gift I give to myself so that I can relax and recover from what I've been doing for six days, just as G-d rested after creating the world.



The key to *Shabbat* is that it should be different from the other days of the week. One rests, prays, studies, eats, drinks, and has a lovely time celebrating *Shabbat* with family and friends. I once had the pleasure of celebrating *Shabbat* with a Modern Orthodox acquaintance and their family. We went to services, we joined in the *Kiddush* at shul, we enjoyed a lovely luncheon at the family home, we went for a neighborhood walk and visited a sick community member. I remember thinking how lovely it was, how relaxing, how the rest of the world slipped away, and how refreshed I was at the end of *Shabbat*.

There is a rhythm to *Shabbat*. In many communities, you can feel it in the air on Friday afternoon as everyone prepares for *Shabbat* (everything must be done by sundown, including preparing food, for the next 25 hours). It takes time to get into the *Shabbat* rhythm and the practices it entails.

If you have an interest in observing *Shabbat*, start out small. These three ingredients are the most essential:

1. Lighting candles to chase away the darkness in our world and to bring light and hope.
2. Drinking wine or grape juice to celebrate the joy of the moment.
3. Eating *challah* and breaking bread with others.

Try doing one thing and do it regularly. Light the candles on Friday night. Say the blessings over the wine, the washing of hands, and the *challah*. Have a lovely dinner. Go to *Shabbat* services on Saturday. Stay for *Kiddush* and *kibbutz* with others. Go home, relax, and unplug for the rest of the day. Watch for three visible stars in the sky as it gets dark to signal the end of *Shabbat*.

As you get into the rhythm, add other practices. Remember, you can observe *Shabbat* in many ways, such as avoiding technology use, giving back, and special meals. With family and friends, create a *Shabbat* experience that is the way you enjoy it!

The interesting thing about *Shabbat* is that it ties us to all Jews, past and present. These *Shabbat* practices help us celebrate our gratitude for all we have. They separate us from work and the daily stress of life. They celebrate family, friendship, and community. We connect with our families and friends, but also to Jews around the world, who are also sitting at their tables, saying the same prayers, and fostering peace for ourselves internally and for the world at large.

To learn more about *Shabbat* and its practices, check out the following Web sites:

- Shabbat 101 at [MyJewishLearning](#)
- The Shabbat page at [Aish](#) has many articles
- What is Shabbat? from [Haaretz](#)
- A short video on Shabbat at [TheHolocaustExplained](#)
- *Shabbat*: What is Shabbat? at the [Jewish Virtual Library](#)
- What is Shabbat? at [Judaism.about.com](#)



So let Shabbat keep you rested and joyful and ready for what's next!