

What is Shavuot?

Shavuot is a holiday that celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. It's also called Hag HaBikkurim, which is Hebrew for Holiday of the First Fruits, because it marks the beginning of the fruit harvest when offerings were historically brought to the Temple in thanksgiving.

The traditional understanding of Shavuot is a celebration of the bond between God and the Jewish people. It is also a chance to embrace the ethics of the Torah, the Five Books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

When is it?

Shavuot falls in late spring, 50 days after the second day of Passover. Shavuot is the Hebrew word for "weeks" and refers to the seven full weeks between Passover and this holiday. The days in between are known as the Counting of the Omer, a unit of measure representing the grain offerings of biblical times.

Shavuot Activities

Studying as a Family – Celebrate the Torah with family by allowing children to stay up late to read and discuss stories or watch movies with the appropriate lessons. And don't forget the ice cream.

Decorating with Flowers – It's a Shavuot tradition to decorate the table with fresh flowers. Take the children to a market, pick your own flowers or make them out of craft materials.

Blintzes – A traditional Shavuot treat and can be part of the dairy meal.



How do I celebrate Shavuot?

Holiday Meal The holiday begins at sundown with a meal that includes blessings for candles, the kiddush (blessing over the wine) and shehekhiyanu (prayer of gratitude). Two loaves of challah bread are part of the meal because it's mentioned in the Torah. Sometimes they're baked side by side to resemble the twin tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Dairy Meal – It's customary to eat a dairy meal at least once during Shavuot, and there are several possible reasons for this, including serving as a reminder of the promise that Israel would be a land of "milk and honey." Another explanation is that the Israelites abstained from eating meat to purify themselves before receiving the Torah. A third theory is that it was around this time of year that the ancient Israelites harvested goat cheese and other dairy products. Whatever the reason, it's a good excuse to eat ice cream and other dairy treats.

Studying – Since Shavuot is about the Torah, it's customary to study the text. Some people stay up the first night of Shavuot, reading the Torah and other Jewish texts.

Reading the Book of Ruth – Ruth was a Moabite woman who married an Israelite named Mahlon, who fled to Moab with his family to escape famine. However, Mahlon, his brother and father died in Moab. The widow, Ruth, went with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to live in Israel. The story highlights themes of charity, friendship, loyalty, kindness and compassion.

Still have questions?

For more information about Shavuot, interfaith events and programs around Atlanta, and the JFGA's Interfaith Connector, contact Doug Konkel at dkonkel@jewishatlanta.org



Shavuot Blessings

Blessing Over the Candles

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֶר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has made us holy through God's commandments, and commands us to light the holiday candles.

Blessing for Our Children

יְבָרֶכְךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ. יֵאָר יִפְנֵינוּ אֵלֶיךָ וְיִחַנֶּנָּךְ. יִשָּׂא יי פְּנֵי אֶלֶיךָ וְיִשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yish'm'rekha. Ya'eir Adonai panav eilekha viy'khuneka.

Yisa Adonai panav eilekha, v'yaseim l'kha shalom.

May God bless you and protect you. May God shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God always be with you and grant you peace.



Kiddush — Blessing Over the Wine

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Shehehiyanu — Blessing for special occasions

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ הַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam, shehehiyanu v'kiymanu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us and for enabling us to reach this season.

Blessing Over the Challah

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam, hamotzi lekhem min ha'arets.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who causes bread to come forth from the earth.

Blintz Recipe

Crepe

- 1 cup flour
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk

Filling

- 1 lb. small curd cottage cheese
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup sugar

Crepe Directions

1. Mix the flour, eggs and milk together. Pour a small amount of oil in a frying pan and heat.
2. Drop a spoonful of batter into the pan, tilting it to coat the pan.
3. When the blintz is lightly browned, remove it from the pan.

Filling Directions

1. Mix the cottage cheese, egg and sugar.
2. Place a spoonful of the mixture in the center of each blintz.
3. Roll up the blintz, tucking in the sides.
4. Place in a buttered baking dish and bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes.

