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# Guide to Shavuot 5786

Shavuot is the festival where we commemorate and in some ways, re-experience, *Matan Torah* - the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This year, it begins before sundown on Thursday, May 21st, and ends at nightfall on Shabbat, May 23rd. Although Shavuot is a Biblical holiday, there are no particular Mitzvot that we fulfil on the day. That said, there are still some unique customs, and details regarding Yom Tov that I felt appropriate to discuss:

## Thursday, May 21st - Erev Shavuot

### Eruv Tavshillin

Since the second day of Yom Tov will fall on Shabbat, we set aside an **Eruv Tavshillin** before Yom Tov to allow for cooking and preparing on the first day of Yom Tov for Shabbat. This can be done by setting aside a piece of bread or Matzah, with either a piece of meat, fish, or a hard boiled egg, and reciting the blessing and statement in the Siddur (under “Eruv Tavshillin”).

### Greenery

Some communities have a custom to decorate their Shul with trees and greenery for Shavuot to remember how Har Sinai was filled with greenery at the time of the giving of the Torah (Rema OC 494:2). Other communities refrain from doing so (Aruch HaShulchan 494:6; Igrot Moshe YD 4:11:5).

### Eating Dairy

It is a widespread custom to eat dairy on Shavuot (Rema OC 494:3). There are many reasons for the practice, the most known one being that when the Jewish people received the Torah, there were many new laws given about the preparation of meat. Being too difficult to now prepare meat, they ate dairy foods when they returned home that day (Mishnah Berurah 494:12).

There are differing practices as to how to fulfil this while also having meat for the Mitzvah of Simchat Yom Tov (rejoicing on the festival). Some eat dairy and then switch to meat at every meal (Rema Ibid.), some eat dairy for some of the meals and meat for others. Some rely on the view (Beit Yosef OC 529) that meat is not required nowadays on Yom Tov, and eat only dairy for all meals.

### Shavuot Night and Tikkun Leil

Candle lighting is at **7:53pm**. It is common practice on the first night of Shavuot to wait until nightfall, at **8:58pm**, before making Kiddush. This is to ensure that the days of Sefirat HaOmer which end at this point, are “complete” (Magen Avraham 494:1). Some even wait until nightfall to daven Maariv (Mishnah Berurah 494:1); however, we will daven Maariv before nightfall, in accordance with those who understand that this rule only applies to Kiddush (Aruch HaShulchan OC 494:3).

There is a widespread practice to stay up at night on the first night of Shavuot and study Torah (Mishnah Berurah 494:1). Our Tikkun Leil program begins at **11:30pm**. Those who stay up all night

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should wash hands without a blessing, and should not recite Birkot HaTorah (blessings for Torah study), nor the blessings of “*Elokai Neshama...*” and “*HaMaavir Sheinah...*” in the morning. Preferably, they should hear these blessings from one who slept that night (Mishnah Berurah 494:1).

## Friday, May 22nd - Shavuot I

### Tefillah

Shacharit begins at **9am**, and consists of the standard Shacharit and Shemoneh Esrei for Yom Tov. Full Hallel is recited with a blessing. The Torah reading for the first day contains the Aseret HaDibrot (ten commandments).

### Preparations for Shabbat

Since the second day of Yom Tov falls on Shabbat, one may cook and prepare on the first day for the second day, provided that they set aside an Eruv Tavshillin before Yom Tov. One who forgot to set aside an Eruv Tavshillin should speak to Rabbi Rubin.

### Candle Lighting

Candle lighting for Shabbat/Second day is at **7:54pm**, from an existing flame. Mincha/Maariv, and an abbreviated Kabbalat Shabbat, will begin at **7:55pm**. Kiddush at night (and during the day) is the combined Kiddush for **Shabbat and Yom Tov**.

## Shabbat, May 23rd - Shavuot II

### Tefillah and Yizkor

The Tefillah is the same as that of the first day of Yom Tov, but with the appropriate insertions added for Shabbat. Many communities read the book of Ruth on the second day; however our Shul does not do so. **Yizkor** also is recited for departed relatives and community members.

### Tikkun Yom and Conclusion

One should consume their Eruv Tavshilin on Shabbat. While not a traditional custom of Shavuot, we will have a daytime learning program, beginning at **5:20pm**. All are invited to attend and listen to a range of classes and speakers. Mincha followed by Seudah Shlishit will be at **7:40pm**.

Yom Tov/Shabbat concludes at **9:00pm**. Havdalah is the regular Havdalah for **Shabbat**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: [rabbirubin@nhbz.org](mailto:rabbirubin@nhbz.org)

Leia and I wish you all an enjoyable and inspiring Shavuot,

Rabbi Rubin