



SUKKOT GUIDE AND SCHEDULE

5787 ☆ 2026

Sukkot is the festival, where we remember and celebrate the Jewish people having dwelled in booths (or the presence of the clouds of glory), after having left Egypt. This year, Sukkot begins on the evening of **Friday, September 25th**, and ends at nightfall on **Sunday, October 4th**.

Requirements of the Sukkah

The Sages tell us that on Sukkot, one is supposed to dwell in the Sukkah as one would in their home (Sukkah 28b). The following activities are meant to be performed in the Sukkah:

Eating a Meal – Any consumption of food which is considered to be a “fixed consumption” (Achilat Keva) should be eaten in the Sukkah.

- This is defined as eating more than the size of an egg of bread, or foods made of the five grains – wheat, barley, rye, oats, and spelt. When eating bread, in addition to the blessing of “*HaMotzi*”, one also recites the blessing of “*Leishev BaSukkah*” before eating (Shulchan Aruch OC 639:2; Mishnah Berurah 639:15).
- When eating other foods made of the five grains that have the blessing of “*Mezonot*”, one only recites “*Leishev BaSukkah*” if they are eating it as a meal (Mishnah Berurah Ibid.).
- One who eats less than this amount of bread or foods made of the five grains, or any amount of any other food or any drink, does not have to eat or drink it in the Sukkah (Shulchan Aruch OC 639:2).
- Kiddush on Yom Tov and Shabbat Chol HaMoed is always recited in the Sukkah, and the blessing of “*Leishev BaSukkah*” is recited before drinking the wine (Rema OC 643:3).
- Havdalah is also recited in the Sukkah (Mishnah Berurah 639:30). The standard practice is to do it without the blessing of “*Leishev BaSukkah*” (Shevet HaLevi 6:42:2).

Exceptions – The following exceptions apply to dwelling in the Sukkah.

- Women are exempt from dwelling in the Sukkah, though they are certainly allowed to if they wish (Shulchan Aruch OC 640:1).
- One who is even slightly unwell, as well as those helping take care of them, are exempt from the Sukkah (Ibid. 640:3).
- One who is bothered by a phenomenon that makes it uncomfortable to dwell in the Sukkah, including: rain, intense weather, foul odours, wasps, etc., is exempt from dwelling in the Sukkah. This is known as “*Mitztaer*” (Ibid. 640:4).
- This is because the Mitzvah is to dwell in the Sukkah as one would in one’s home, and were this to occur in one’s home, they would certainly move to a different room.
- One who is travelling and will not find an available Sukkah at their place of travel, is exempt from the Sukkah (Ibid. 640:8). That said, it is only proper to plan such a trip, if one is doing so for a good reason (i.e. business or work related).

Sleeping in the Sukkah – Although the basic requirement of dwelling in the Sukkah includes sleeping there, many communities have historically been lenient, either because they are bothered by the cold weather (in some places), or because of the inability of a husband to sleep comfortably there with his wife (Rema OC 639:2).

- That said, a man who is able to comfortably sleep in the Sukkah with his wife (or one who is single), is technically supposed to sleep in the Sukkah (Ibid.).
- The blessing of “*Leishev BaSukkah*” is not recited when sleeping in the Sukkah; only when eating there.
- For one who is sleeping in the Sukkah, even if a small amount of rain is sufficient to render one “bothered” and thereby exempt from the Sukkah (Ibid. 639:7).

Other Activities – One is encouraged to perform most other activities that one usually performs in their home.

- These include reading, learning, conversing, relaxing, etc. (Mishnah Berurah 639:2).
- Degrading activities, however, such as washing dishes, using the restroom, changing diapers, etc., should not be performed in the Sukkah (Rema OC 639:1).

Friday, September 25th: Erev Sukkot

Candle Lighting and Maariv

Candle Lighting on the first night of Sukkot is at **6:35pm**. A 24-hour candle should also be lit so that an existing flame will be present for candle lighting and Havdalah, the following night. When lighting candles, the blessing of *Shehechiyahu* is added.

Mincha will be at **6:35pm**, and will consist of an abbreviated Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Maariv.

The First Night of Sukkot

On the first night, the blessings of Kiddush are recited in the following order:

1. “*Borei Pri HaGafen*”
2. “*Mekadesh... V’HaZmanim*”
3. “*Leishev BaSukkah*”
4. “*Shehechiyahu*”

If one unintentionally said “*Shehechyanu*” before “*Leishev BaSukkah*”, they need not repeat either of the blessings (Mishnah Berurah 643:3).

On the first night of Sukkot, there is a special requirement to eat at least a *Kezayit* (the size of an olive) of bread in the Sukkah. For this reason, one should also wait until nightfall, at **7:33pm** before eating (Shulchan Aruch and Rema OC 639:3).

According to Ashkenazi practice, the requirement on the first night exists **even** if it is raining. Ideally, one should first wait a little for it to stop raining. If the rain persists, one makes Kiddush in the Sukkah, washes, eats a small amount of bread, and then moves into the house to eat the rest of the meal (Rema OC 639:5).

Shabbat, September 26th: Sukkot Day I

Tefillah

Shacharit begins at **9am**. Prayers consist of the standard Shacharit and Musaf for Yom Tov, with the insertions for Shabbat. Full Hallel is recited with a blessing. We will also recite a special “Hoshanot” for Shabbat, but without circling the Bimah.

Since the first day of Sukkot is on Shabbat, we **do not** use the Four Species; nor do we handle them in any way (Shulchan Aruch and Rema 658:2).

Mincha, Seudah Shlishit, and Second Night

Mincha will be at **6:15pm**, followed by Seudah Shlishit, which will be eaten in the Sukkah. At Maariv, we add the paragraph of “VaTodieinu” in the Amidah, due to the conclusion of Shabbat.

Candle Lighting will be after **7:32pm** from an existing flame. Since it is also the conclusion of Shabbat, the special ‘Yaknehaz - יקנהז’ Kiddush is recited, followed by “*Leishev BaSukkah*”. Hence, the order is as follows:

1. יין – Blessing on wine (*Borei pri hagafen*),
2. קידוש – Kiddush (*Mekadesh Yisrael...*),
3. נֵר – Candle (*Boreh me'orei Ha'Esh*),
4. המבדיל – *HaMavdil*,
5. זמן – *Shehechyanu*.
6. *Leishev BaSukkah* (It is said after “*Shehechyanu*” on the second night)

On the second night (outside of Israel) just as on the first night, one should make a special effort to eat at least a *Kezayit* (size of an olive) of bread in the Sukkah, and if it is raining, one should ideally wait until it stops before making persists. If the rain persists on the second night, one can make Kiddush (without “*Leishev BaSukkah*”) and eat their meal inside their home, and briefly step into the Sukkah to eat a small amount of bread (Mishnah Berurah 639:36).

Sunday, September 27th: Sukkot Day II

Tefillah

Shacharit begins at **9am**. Prayers consist of the standard Shacharit and Musaf for Yom Tov, and the full Hallel is recited with a blessing.

The Four Species

The taking of the four species is one of the main Mitzvot of the day. The four species consist of the *Etrog* (citron), the *Lulav*, the Hadassim (myrtles), and *Aravot* (willows).

- The four species are taken every day of Sukkot, except for Shabbat. This year, we will begin shaking the four species on the second day of Sukkot.

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- On the first day (and second day outside of Israel), the four species that one takes are supposed to belong to oneself. One who hands their four species to someone else to use, should give them as a ‘gift’, before receiving them in return. This is not necessary on the remaining days of Sukkot (Shulchan Aruch OC 649:2,5).

The Procedure

- One picks up the Lulav with the Hadassim and Aravot in their right hand, and the Etrog in their left hand. The Etrog should be facing downwards with the stem upwards before the blessing is recited (Shulchan Aruch OC 651:5).
- The spine of the Lulav should be facing oneself, with the Hadassim (myrtles) on the right, and the Aravot (willows) on the left. The Hadassim should also be slightly higher than the Aravot (Rema OC 651:1; Mishnah Berurah 651:12).
- One then recites the blessing of “*Asher Kideshanu...Al Netillat Lulav*”. The first time one fulfils the Mitzvah, the blessing of “*Shehechyanu*” is also recited.
- After reciting the blessings, one turns the Etrog the right way up with the stem pointing downwards. The four species are then held together and waved three times in all six directions.
 - The order according to standard Ashkenazic practice, is: forward, right, back, left, up, down.
 - The order according to the AR”I, and **what we do at NHBZ**, is: right, left, forward, up, down, back.
- One who is left-handed (according to Ashkenazic practice) should hold the Lulav, Hadassim, and Aravot in their **left** hand, and the Etrog in their **right** hand. The Hadassim should still be to the right of the Lulav, and the Aravot should still be to the left of the Lulav (Rema OC 651:3; Mishnah Berurah 651:12).
- One who did not wave the four species at Shul, may fulfil the Mitzvah any time during the day, but not at night.

Hallel and Hoshanot

- The four species are also waved in Hallel each time we recite the verse הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב..., and the two times we say אֲנֵהּ ה' הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא.
- There are different practices as to whether to first shake the four species before coming to Shul, or just before Hallel. The practice that makes the most sense is to first shake them just before Hallel, so that the blessing one says on the species also covers the wavings that are done during Hallel (Nefesh Harav p.217-218).
- Each day of Sukkot, a Torah scroll is placed on the Bimah, and the congregation circles the Bimah counterclockwise, while holding their four species and reciting certain prayers. This is known as “Hoshanot”. The practice at NHBZ is to perform Hoshanot each day, **after Hallel**.

Mincha and Conclusion of Yom Tov

Mincha will be at **6:35pm**. Maariv and the conclusion of Yom Tov will be at **7:30pm**. Havdalah is recited over wine or grape juice, and consists only of “*Boreh Pri HaGafen*” and “*HaMavdil*”. No spices or candle. It is recited in the Sukkah, but without the blessing of “*Leishev BaSukkah*”.

Mon, Sept 28th – Thurs, Oct 1st: Chol HaMoed Sukkot

Tefillah

We will begin Shacharit each day at **6:45am**. Full Hallel is said with a blessing, followed by Hoshanot. Mussaf is also recited, which consists of the same Mussaf Shemoneh Esrei as that of Yom Tov. Mincha each day will be at **6:30pm**.

Friday, October 2nd: Hoshanah Rabbah

Tefillah

Shacharit will be **6:30am**. Full Hallel is said with a blessing, followed by Hoshanot. On this day, instead of circling the Bimah, once, the congregation circles it seven times. Hence the reason the day is called “Hoshanah Rabbah”, which means ‘The Great Hoshanah’.

Beating the Willows

After the conclusion of Hoshanot, it is an ancient practice to take a bundle of willows (often referred to as a “Hoshanah bundle”). Some people also wave the bundle in all six directions, as one does with the four species. The reason for taking the bundle of willows is to remember the Mitzvah of ‘Aravah’ (willows) that was performed in the Temple, where willow branches were placed next to the Altar, and the people circled it with their four species (Mishnah Sukkah 45a; Mishnah Berurah 664:1).

The willows are then beaten on the ground three or five times, depending on one’s practice (Ibid. 664:19). There is **no** special Mitzvah to remove the leaves while beating.

One of the reasons for beating the willows is that it is a physical expression of a prayer for rain for the coming year, the verdict of which is decided at the end of Sukkot (Sefer HaRokeach).

Candle Lighting and Maariv

Candle Lighting on Shemini Atzeret is at **6:24pm**. A 24-hour candle should also be lit so that an existing flame will be present for candle lighting and Havdalah, the following night. When lighting candles, the blessing of *Shehechiyahu* is added, as Shemini Atzeret is considered a separate Yom Tov.

Mincha will be at **6:25pm**, and will consist of an abbreviated Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Maariv. At NHBZ, we have a practice of doing “earlier Hakafot” on the night of Shemini Atzeret as well (they will be quicker and brief), to remember the Hakafot being done

Sukkah on Shemini Atzeret

Throughout much of history, there was a doubt outside of Israel, as to whether the day that Shemini Atzeret is observed is really the seventh day of Sukkot.

- For this reason, the standard practice based on the Talmud, is for one to eat all the meals of Shemini Atzeret in the Sukkah, but **without** reciting the blessing of “*Leishev BaSukkah*” (Shulchan Aruch OC 668:1).

- Nevertheless, even a slight amount of rain or bad weather renders one exempt from the Sukkah (Korban Netanel Sukkah 4:7).
- Among those who sleep in the Sukkah on Sukkot, many do not do so on Shemini Atzeret (Mishnah Berurah 668:6).

Kiddush is recited in the Sukkah, and the blessing of “*Shehechyanu*” is added (No “*Leishev*”).

Shabbat, October 3rd: Shemini Atzeret

Tefillah and Yizkor

Shacharit begins at **9am**, and includes the standard Amidah for Yom Tov, with the insertions for Shabbat. Full Hallel is recited with a blessing. **After Torah reading, Yizkor** is also recited for departed relatives and community members.

At Musaf, we will begin saying “*Mashiv HaRuach U'Morid HaGeshem*” in our silent Amidah. **Tefillat HaGeshem** (The special prayer for Rain) is recited in the Chazzan’s repetition of Musaf.

Mincha, Seudah Shlishit, and Simchat Torah Night

Mincha is at **6pm**, followed by Seudah Shlishit, which will be eaten in the Sukkah.

Candle Lighting is after **7:21pm** from an existing flame. Maariv is at the same time, and we add the paragraph of “*VaTodieinu*” in the Amidah, due to the conclusion of Shabbat.

Hakafot will follow Maariv. The Torah scrolls are removed from the ark, and we perform seven counterclockwise circuits dancing around the Bimah while holding the Torah scrolls.

Kiddush on the second night follows the special ‘Yaknahaz - יקנהז’ formula: יין – Blessing on wine (*Borei pri hagafen*), קידוש – Kiddush (*Mekadesh Yisrael...*), נר – Candle (*Boreh me'orei Ha'Esh*), המבדיל – *HaMavdil*, זמן – *Shehechyanu*.

We will make Kiddush at NHBZ, followed by our standard annual Simchat Torah dinner.

On Simchat Torah, we specifically **avoid** eating in the Sukkah, out of a concern *Bal Tosif* – the prohibition against adding to any of the Mitzvot (Rema OC 666:1).

Sunday, October 4th: Simchat Torah

Tefillah and Hakafot

Shacharit begins at **9am**, and includes the standard Amidah for Yom Tov. Birkat Kohanim (the priestly blessing) is recited at Shacharit on Simchat Torah, lest the Kohanim drink afterwards and become unable to recite the blessing. Full Hallel is recited with a blessing.

After Shacharit, we will take out the Torah scrolls and perform Hakafot again. We will also have a Kiddush in the middle of Hakafot, to allow for people to eat and drink.

After Hakafot, we will read from “V’Zot HaBerachah” several times, and it is a practice for all men over Barmitzvah to receive an Aliyah. While this takes place, a class will be available for the women, beginning at **11am**.

Kol HaNe’arim and Completion of the Torah

Before completing the Torah, all children under Bar and Batmitzvah are called up to the Torah and recite the blessings on the Torah, along with an adult who receives the Aliyah. This is known as “Kol HaNe’arim”. Afterwards, it is customary to sing “HaMalach HaGoel...” and give candy to the children.

The Chatan Torah is then called up, and the reading of the Torah is completed. Then the Chatan Bereshit is called up, who reads the beginning of Parshat Bereshit. The completion and restarting of the Torah is accompanied by great celebration.

Mincha and Conclusion of Yom Tov

Mincha will be at **6:25pm**. Maariv and the conclusion of Yom Tov will be at **7:19pm**. Havdalah is recited over wine or grape juice, and consists only of “*Boreh Pri HaGafen*” and “*HaMavdil*”. No spices or candle.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: rabbirubin@nhbz.org

Leia and I would like to wish you all a *Chag Sameach* – a pleasant and joyous festival!

Rabbi Rubin

SUKKOT SCHEDULE 5787 AT NHBZ

EREV SUKKOT – Friday, Sept 25

Mincha/Maariv	6:35 pm
Candle Lighting	6:35 pm
Nightfall	7:33 pm

SUKKOT I – Shabbat, Sept 26

Shacharit	9:00 am
Childcare	10:00 – 11:30 am
Soul Building	10:00 am
Mincha/Seudah Shlishit	6:15 pm
Candle Lighting	After 7:32 pm

SUKKOT II – Sunday, Sept 27

Shacharit	9:00 am
Childcare	10:00 – 11:30 am
Mincha/Maariv	6:35 pm
Yom Tov Concludes	7:30 pm

CHOL HAMOED SUKKOT

Monday, Sept 28 – Thursday, Oct 1

Shacharit	6:45 am
Mincha/Maariv	6:30 pm

HOSHANAH RABBAH, Friday, Oct 2

Shacharit	6:30 am
Mincha/Maariv	6:25 pm
Candle Lighting	6:24 pm

SHEMINI ATZERET – Shabbat, Oct 3

Shacharit	9:00 am
Childcare	10:00 – 11:30 am
Yizkor	Approx. 10:30 am
Mincha/Seudah Shlishit	6:00 pm
Maariv	7:21 pm
Hakafot & Parade of Torahs	7:35 pm
Candle Lighting	After 7:21 pm

SIMCHAT TORAH – Sunday, Oct 4

Shacharit	9:00 am
Childcare	10:00 – 11:30 am
Women's Class	11:00 am
Kol HaNe'arim (Call all kids to Torah)	11:30 am
Mincha/Maariv	6:25 pm
Yom Tov Concludes	7:19 pm

