



A STUDENT'S GUIDE

TO SHAVUOT

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UJS
UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE FIVE FACES OF SHAVUOT

1. Chag HaShavuot (the Celebration of the Weeks) - חג השבועות
2. Chag HaKatsir (the Harvest Festival) - חג הקציר
3. Yom HaBikurim (the Day of the First Fruits) - יום הביכורים
4. Zman Matan Torateinu (time of the giving of our Torah) - זמן מתן תורתנו
5. Atzeret (the Conclusion) - עצרת

Shavuot is the festival of Weeks, celebrated 50 days (or 7 weeks) after Pessach - it is unique in that it is the only Jewish holiday without a specific date in the Torah but rather is counted up to from the second day of Pessach.

We celebrate the time of the year, when we harvest the first crop of the year (Chag HaKatsir) and when our first fruits would be brought as an offering to G-d in Temple times (Chag HaBikurim).

It is of course also the time when the Torah was given to Moses and the Jewish people at Mount Sinai (Zman Matan Torateinu).

Azeret is probably one of the lesser known names and as well as meaning 'conclusion' to the end of the 7 week period since Pesach, it also refers to an aspect unique to Shavuot - Shavuot is the only Jewish holiday that doesn't have any specific Mitzvot (commandments) attached to it. Instead the only thing we are told, is to 'refrain' from work during those days - so it's really up to us how to make it special for ourselves.



OUR BASKETS ON OUR SHOULDERS

Lyrics by Levin Kipnis Melody by Yedidya Admon

Our baskets on our shoulders,
our heads adorned with blooms,
from every corner we come,
bringing the first fruits.

From Yehuda and the Shomron,
From the valley and the Galilee.
Move aside and make way,
we're bringing first fruits,
bang, bang, bang the drum
play the flute!

Our fields and our gardens
have ripened harvests,,
our vineyards, our vegetable beds
have produced wonderful first fruits
Figs, apples,
grapes and almonds

Move aside and make way,
we're bringing first fruits,
bang, bang, bang the drum
play the flute!
How lovely our dancing circles,
how beautiful our procession!

The harvest of the land is ours,
bringing the first fruits,
from the Golan, from the Bashan
from the Negev and the Yarden!
Move aside and give us way,
we're bringing the first fruits
bang, bang, bang the drum
play the flute!

סלינו על כתפֵינו,
ראשינו עטורים;
מקצות הארץ באנו,
הבאנו בכורים.

מיהודה, מיהודה, משומרון,
- מו העמק, מו העמק והגליל
פנו דרך לנו,
בכורים אתנו,
הה, הה, הה בתר, חלל בקליל

שדינו וגנינו
הבשילו יבולים,
כרמינו, מקשותינו
בכרו פרי הלולים.

תאנים, תאנים, תפוחים,
- ענבים, ענבים ושקדים
פנו דרך לנו,
בכורים אתנו,
הה, הה, הה בתר, חלל בקליל

מה טובו מעגלינו,
מה יפיו הטורים!
זמרת הארץ לנו,
הבאנו בכורים.

מגולו, מגולו מבשו,
!מו הנגב, מו הנגב והירדן
פנו דרך לנו,
בכורים אתנו,
הה, הה, הה בתר, חלל בקליל



MUST TRY RECIPES

THE STAPLE CHEESECAKE

4 eggs
1 cup of Sugar
2 tablespoon of Vanilla Sugar
200g sour cream
500 g Quark
1 tablespoon of oil
4 tablespoon of Cornflour

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For topping:

2 tablespoon of Icing Sugar
250ml Double Cream

1. Take a 26cm round cake tin
2. Preheat oven to 180 degrees and put in a large pan with a little water until the cake is prepared. This helps keeping the moisture in the oven.
3. Separate the eggs: Whisk the egg whites with half a cup of sugar in the mixer until whipped and even until when you flip the bowl it stays the same.
4. In another bowl, whisk the egg yolks with half a cup of sugar, and gradually add all the other ingredients.
5. Put the whipped eggs whites into the bowl with the yolks, and stir gently in folding movements and not let the air out.
6. Put everything in a well-oiled cake tin and put in the oven for half an hour. It is done when the edges are firm, but the middle still jiggles a bit.
7. Then turn off the oven and open the door a bit, without taking the cake out until it cools.
8. After the cake has completely cooled, whisk in the icing sugar with the double cream for 3 minutes and cover the cake.



MUST TRY RECIPES

VEGAN AND GLUTEN FREE TIRAMISU

BOTTOM LAYER:

1 cup walnuts
¾ cup dates, pitted (soft medjool work best for this layer)
¼ tsp instant espresso powder
2 tbsp coconut oil, liquefied
2 tbsp warm water
1 tsp pure vanilla extract (or 1/8 tsp raw ground vanilla bean)
dash salt

CREAM LAYER:

½ cup raw cashews, pre-soaked and strained
¼ cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
2 tbsp coconut oil, liquefied
2 tbsp maple syrup (or raw agave for raw version)
1 tsp pure vanilla extract (or 1/8 tsp raw ground vanilla bean)
dash salt

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE LAYER:

¾ cup walnuts, pre-soaked and strained
¾ cup raw cashews, pre-soaked and strained
¾ cup dates, pitted
6 tbsp maple syrup (use raw agave for raw version)
6 tbsp unsweetened vanilla almond milk
4 tbsp coconut oil, liquefied (sub in 1 tbsp melted cacao butter instead of 1 of the tbsp coconut for an intense and deep chocolate liqueur flavor)
3 tbsp cacao powder
½ tsp unsulphured blackstrap molasses
1 tsp pure vanilla extract (or ¼ tsp raw ground vanilla bean)
1½ tsp instant espresso powder (or more to taste)
½ tsp salt

Process all base layer ingredients to combine into a fine sticky mixture in a food processor. Scoop out into a 6" springform pan and press down into an even crust, going up the edges a little all around. Place in the freezer while working on next step.

Blend all chocolate mousse layer ingredients in a power blender until smooth. Pour into the pan over the crust, tap the pan lightly on the counter and even out the top. Place the pan in the freezer while working on the next step.

Clean out your blender and blend all cream layer ingredients together into a smooth mixture. Spoon this mixture over the previous layer in the cake pan, being careful not to pour it in all at once so the layers don't mix. Smooth out the top. Cover the pan and freeze for 6 hours or overnight.

Top-tip: Leave the nuts to soak in water the night before to allow for smoother blending (discard water before blending).



TIKKUN LEIL



Tikkun leil, which literally translates to ‘night of repair’, is a tradition that has been followed over the past centuries, whereby we get together and stay up all night and learn. The idea is said to stem from a midrash, which says the Jewish people overslept the morning they were to receive the Torah - so to make up for it we stay up all night. The learning can be anything, from delving deeper into the Book of Ruth (the scroll read for Shavuot), from choosing your own Jewish texts, to listening to speakers. However, as we physically can’t get together in our communities this year, here are some ideas on how to run your own tikkun leil and have a meaningful time that works for YOU:

Use these ideas for yourself, with some friends over zoom or your family - and get creative!

Below are two interesting and easy source texts, accompanied by some discussion questions. Maybe weave in the “5 faces of Shavuot”, which are also in this booklet? Or find a topic that you always wanted to delve deeper into and use this time to explore that - anything goes.

Ruth is a Moabite woman who marries a Judean immigrant named Mahlon (1:1–4; 4:10). Upon his death she becomes a childless widow who chooses to accompany her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Judah. Naomi protests the decision (1:11–13), but Ruth perseveres. She pledges total loyalty, even unto death, to Naomi, her people, and her G-d(1:16–17).

Ruth emerges in tension with her culture. She marries outside her own people, disavows the solidarity of her family, abandons her national identity, and renounces her religious affiliation. In the entire biblical epic of Israel, only Abraham approaches this radicalness, but then he had a call from God (Gen, 12:1–3). Ruth stands alone, without support human or divine. Moreover, she reverses sexual allegiance. A young woman commits herself to an old woman in a world where life depends upon men.

Arriving in Judah, Ruth takes the initiative to find food. She comes to the field of a prosperous man named Boaz, a relative of Naomi (2:1–3). He asks, “To whom does this young woman belong?”—truly a patriarchal question. Though the question fits his culture, it does not fit Ruth, who remains in tension with the culture. The servant’s answer fails to give her name but identifies her as “the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab” (2:6). It derives her identity from her “otherness”, and from another woman.

Boaz allows Ruth to glean in his field and arranges for her safety. She responds with deference, noting his favour and her foreignness (2:8–9). Yet ironic subtlety marks her speech. The favour Boaz gives her is the favour that she has sought. Therefore, she not he, is shaping her destiny. Boaz recognizes her distinctiveness. He describes her as one who has left her mother and father and her native land to live among a people she did not know (2:11).

At the insistence of Naomi, Ruth agrees without question to pursue marriage with Boaz. The plan calls for her to visit him on the threshing floor after he has celebrated the harvest and gone to sleep. She is to uncover his “feet,” often described as a euphemism in commentary, and then he will tell her what to do.

As the story draws to a close, Boaz takes Ruth as his wife, and she bears a son (4:13). Her story ends, however, not with male elders but with the women of Bethlehem (see 1:19). In transferring Ruth’s child to Naomi, they remind her that “your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him” (4:14–15).

1. What is the moral of this story?
2. Why is this the book of Ruth, not the book of Naomi (or indeed the book of Boaz)?
3. What makes this story so special that it is one of only two biblical books named after women?
 - a. Is Ruth really as significant in this story as Esther is in hers?
4. Would you have acted like Ruth? Left your family, your home, your safety for someone who may be in need?
5. This story is littered with fear and apprehension around outsiders. How could the outcome of this story, impact our actions and beliefs in today’s world?
6. In this story there are multiple themes – Female empowerment, Charity, Loyalty, how to treat a stranger and more – What of these is the most important?

EXTRACTS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ON THE THEMES OF SHAVUOT

... Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, defiant returnees, and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

... On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State. Accordingly we, members of the People's Council, representatives of the Jewish Community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist Movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel.

...The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

...Placing our trust in the Almighty, we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the provisional Council of State, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel-Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (14th May, 1948).

1. What does it feel like to live in a place where you are a minority?
2. What does it feel like to live in a place where you are the majority?
3. What responsibilities and opportunities do both offer?
4. How has the receipt of the Ten Commandments on Shavuot, at Mount Sinai, shaped our morals and values today?
5. Would you follow Naomi to a land where you were a minority, or would you stay in a land where you were a majority?
6. What other lessons can we learn from the book of Ruth in comparison with Eretz Yisrael and the State of Israel today?

LINKS AND RESOURCES FOR TIKKUN LEIL

Here is some more inspiration for learning on Shavuot!

<https://reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/shavuot/tikkun-leil-shavuot-videos-and-study-guides>

<https://education-en.nli.org.il/jewish-calendar/shavuot>

SUMMER/SHAVUOT HACKS

TIKTOK WHIPPED COFFEE



If you have TikTok, you've probably come across the Whipped coffee trend - Is that an eyeroll I see? Well don't knock it before you try it.. Because it is delish, super easy and can even be made on Shavuot.

How to: Whisk equal parts (eg. 2 tablespoons) instant coffee, hot water and sugar in a small bowl together. Add it to a glass of milk of your choice - and voila! Enjoy this summer treat.

HOW TO ASSEMBLE YOUR CHEESE PLATTER

Try between 3-5 cheeses of different textures and flavours.

Dot those around your board with a few small bowls in between.

Add your fruit and veg - pick what you like best and add some colour and flavour.

Don't forget some crackers and/or bread.

Fill up the bowls and some empty spaces on the board with nuts, olives and/or dips.

For the final touch, fill the empty spaces with some greenery.

ANATOMY OF A CHEESE PLATE



Top-Tip:

Adapt your cheese platter to your budget - don't worry about ticking all the boxes, just have fun and tasty times.

Use vegan cheeses, a variety of spreads and/or more of the other components to make it vegan friendly.

