

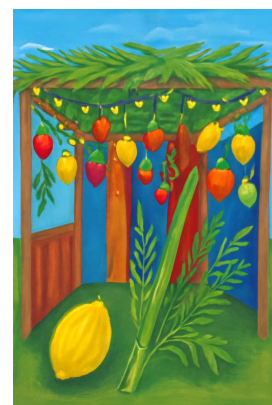


What is Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah?

Following Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – holidays focused on a “fresh start” to a new year, the Jewish people conclude the holiday season with a stretch of three distinct celebrations lasting over a week long.

The first holiday, Sukkot lasts for 7 days, celebrating God’s protection over the Jewish people during the Exodus from Egypt on their desert journey to Israel. Sukkot represents a time of humility, joy and community. For thousands of years, Jewish people have traditionally built “huts” called a Sukkah.

The Sukkah is intended to be reminiscent of the shelters built the while in the desert. Meagre and exposed to the elements, Jews often spend much of their time in the Sukkah during the holiday hosting meals, relaxing and even sleeping!



Immediately following Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, which means “the eighth day of assembly”, is meant to be a “last hurrah” for the holiday season purely as a time to rejoice.

Simchat Torah, which means “Rejoicing of the Torah”, marks the conclusions of an annual cycle of Torah readings (the 5 books of the Old Testament of the Bible). This is celebrated by singing, dancing and festive meals.

Note: Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are celebrated on a single day in Israel while Jews in the Diaspora (outside of Israel) celebrate the two holidays on distinct days.

When are Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah?

This year, Sukkot begins at sundown on October 6th and ends at sunset on October 13th at which point Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah begins, ending at sunset on October 15th (sunset on October 14th in Israel).

Will my Jewish colleagues be available over the festival?

For many observant Jews, typical labor is not allowed for the beginning two days (one day in Israel) of Sukkot and on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. This often includes travel and use of electronics so some colleagues may be completely offline during this time. On the interim days (days 2-7 in Israel and days 3-7 otherwise), although labor is permitted, it is still a holiday and many people take this time to continue celebrations with family and away from work.

Where can I learn more?

- [Why Jews celebrate Sukkot in 60 seconds](#)
- [Sukkot with Mayim Bialik | You Know How I Know?](#)
- [Jewish Virtual Library - Sukkot](#)
- [Jewish Virtual Library – Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah](#)

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