



# Understanding Sukkot and Simchat Torah

## The Feast of Booths - A Biblical Holiday Rejoicing in the Torah

What the Church Needs to Know  
Jewish Roots 101



# Sukkot

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Leviticus 23:33-36 “The Lord said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord’s **Festival of Tabernacles (Booths)** begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present food offerings to the Lord, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the Lord. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.

also known as Chag - Ha - Asif - The End of the Harvest  
Leviticus 23:42-43 “So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the Lord for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest.

On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees—from palms, willows and other leafy trees—and rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month.

Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

## What is a Sukkah?

This is a temporary dwelling (booth) constructed to live in for the week of Sukkot. Traditionally meals are eaten here. The roof is usually made of reeds, stalks, or branches of palm.



## Arba Minim - The Four Species

The Four Species are often understood to represent different types of people in the Jewish community. By bringing them together, it emphasizes the importance of unity, where all are necessary for completing the mitzvah of Sukkot.



### 1. Etrog (Citron)

- **Symbolism:** The etrog is said to represent the heart, symbolizing emotions and desires.
- **Biblical Connection:** In Leviticus 23:40, it is referred to as a “fruit of goodly trees.”
- **Spiritual Meaning:** The etrog, which has both a pleasant taste and smell, represents those who are both knowledgeable in Torah (taste) and perform good deeds (smell).

### 2. Lulav (Palm Branch)

- **Symbolism:** The lulav represents the spine, symbolizing uprightness and action.
- **Biblical Connection:** Also mentioned in Leviticus 23:40, the palm branch represents a tall, strong stance in life.
- **Spiritual Meaning:** The palm tree produces dates, which have a taste but no smell. This represents people who are knowledgeable in Torah but might not focus on good deeds.

### 3. Hadas (Myrtle Branch)

- **Symbolism:** The myrtle symbolizes the eyes, as its leaves are shaped like an eye.
- **Biblical Connection:** Myrtle is often associated with fragrance and is mentioned in Nehemiah 8:15 as part of the ritual of Sukkot.
- **Spiritual Meaning:** Myrtle has a pleasing fragrance but no taste, symbolizing those who perform good deeds but may not be deeply knowledgeable in Torah.

### 4. Aravah (Willow Branch)

- **Symbolism:** The willow represents the mouth, as its long, slender leaves resemble lips.
- **Biblical Connection:** Mentioned alongside the other species in Leviticus 23:40.
- **Spiritual Meaning:** The willow has neither taste nor smell, symbolizing those who lack both Torah knowledge and good deeds. Despite this, the willow's inclusion shows that every Jew, no matter their level of spiritual attainment, is valued in the community.



# How to Observe Sukkot

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We highly recommend locating your nearest Jewish Neighbor and requesting to participate in their Sukkot observances. Sukkot is meant to be observed in community.

If you want to build your own sukkah, here are some instructions:

- The sukkah should be large enough to eat meals and comfortably sit in.
- During the festival of Sukkot, it's customary to eat, pray, and even sleep in the sukkah as much as possible.

Materials You'll Need:

1. Four walls (can be wood, canvas, or fabric)
2. Schach (the natural roofing, made of leaves, branches, or bamboo)
3. Hammer, nails, or screws (or hooks and ties for fabric walls)
4. Optional: Decorations like hanging fruits, lights, and art

# Steps to Build a Sukkah:

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Find an outdoor space, such as your yard, patio, or balcony. The sukkah should be built under the open sky (not under a roof or tree).

## Build the Frame (Walls)

- Create a frame for the sukkah with four walls. The walls can be made from wood planks, fabric, or other sturdy materials.
- Shape: The sukkah can have 3 or 4 walls. If you choose 3 walls, leave one side open as an entrance.
- Height: The sukkah should be at least 40 inches high (about 1 meter), but not taller than 30 feet.

## Place the Schach (Roof)

- The schach (natural materials like bamboo, palm branches, or any plant material) should be placed loosely over the top of the sukkah. This roof must provide more shade than sunlight, but you should still be able to see the stars through it at night.
- Do not use anything that is attached to the ground, like a tree, as the

## Secure the Walls and Roof

- Make sure the walls are sturdy enough to withstand some wind. Use nails, screws, or hooks to secure the materials. If using fabric walls, tie them securely to the frame.
- The schach should rest on the sukkah without being tied or fastened tightly, so it stays natural and temporary.

## Decorate (Optional)

- Many people enjoy decorating their sukkah with festive items like hanging fruits, leaves, lights, and artwork. This makes it feel more joyful and inviting.

# Simchat Torah

Rejoicing in the Torah!

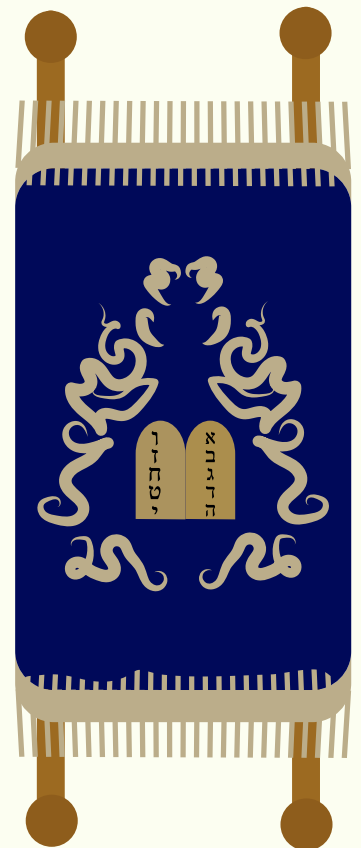
Simchat Torah marks the completion of the yearly cycle of Torah readings.

It is a time of celebration, where the scroll of the Torah is rolled back to the beginning to start a new year of Torah readings.

The last chapter of Deuteronomy is read and immediately followed by Genesis 1.

Making the reading of the Torah a neverending circle.

This day would make a great starting point to follow the Torah reading schedule found at [www.netivyahinternational.org](http://www.netivyahinternational.org)





**[www.netivyahinternational.org/JewishRoots101](http://www.netivyahinternational.org/JewishRoots101)**

**Visit for more resources on the Jewish Roots of Faith in Yeshua**

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