

## HOSTING GUIDE

# MEAL IN A SUKKAH

**Sukkot is a festival that celebrates the autumn bounty and is known as “the festival of joy.”**

During the holiday, we put up a temporary structure called a *sukkah* (*sukkot* is the plural of *sukkah*) to represent the temporary dwelling used by the Israelites when they wandered in the desert for 40 years after their exodus from Egypt.

A *sukkah* can be any structure that has three walls and a roof that allows us to see the stars. Many decorate the *sukkah* with fruits, vegetables, and other ornaments to celebrate the fall harvest! Read on for some customs and blessings you can bring into your Sukkot celebration this year!



### Ushpizin | Welcoming Guests

During the week of Sukkot, people spend as much time in their *sukkah* as possible, enjoying meals and even sleeping in them! And because not everyone is able to build their own *sukkah*, a special custom called *ushpizin* encourages us to invite guests to come sit in our *sukkah*, enjoy meals, and celebrate together. A perfect opportunity to reconnect with your HMI friends and invite them to gather under the stars with you.

Another part of *ushpizin* is to inviting symbolic guests to join us. This could be historical or biblical figures, personal ancestors, or family and friends who are unable to be physically present in the *sukkah* this year.

**Take a moment to discuss these questions with your Sukkah guests:**

- Who do you want to invite to join you in the *sukkah*, as *ushpizin*, this year? Why?
- What do you hope to gain from your new guests' presence in the *sukkah* with you? What do you hope they add to your gathering?

### Blessing for Dwelling in the Sukkah

One way to celebrate Sukkot is to “dwell in the *sukkah*,” to sit, eat meals, and spend time together inside the *sukkah*. This encourages us to invite over family and friends to celebrate the holiday together.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu leishev basukkah.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בַּסֻּכָּה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who gives us commandments and commands us to dwell in the *sukkah*.

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### Lulav and Etrog

One ritual of Sukkot is to wave the *lulav* and *etrog*. The *lulav* is a combination of palm, myrtle, and willow branches, and the *etrog* is a citron similar to a large lemon. These 4 combined species are symbolic of the harvest time. If you have access to them, you can say this blessing before waving the *lulav* and *etrog* in the air.



*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher* בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
*kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.* בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֻלָב.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to take up the lulav.

### Shehecheyanu

The *Shehecheyanu* is a blessing said the first time something new is done each year. It's a blessing of thanks for being able to arrive at this special moment in the year and in life.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam,* בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ  
*shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.* וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are you, Eternal God, for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this season.