

A GUIDE TO HOSTING

YOUR OWN SHABBAT EXPERIENCE

by Honeymoon Israel



honeymoon :: israel™

Shabbat is For You

Dear Host,

Shabbat is a period of time from sundown on Friday through sundown on Saturday that invites us each to rest, be present, and connect. Shabbat can be celebrated in so many ways and resonate differently for different people – all of which are beautiful and authentic. This can include intentional choices such as disconnecting from technology, spending time in nature, gathering with friends and family, and reciting Shabbat blessings.

Jewish tradition offers a covenantal framework to help us tap into the present through rituals and blessings, which fill many pages of this guide! Rituals help draw our attention to the little things and connect us to the global Jewish family.

It can feel overwhelming to host people for Shabbat and feel the pressure of leading rituals. This guide invites you to lean in, because experimenting with and claiming ownership over these practices is part of what it means to be a part of the Jewish family. These rituals belong to you whether you've never celebrated a Jewish ritual before or you celebrate Shabbat weekly. *Shabbat belongs to you – wherever you come from, however you got here, you're in the right place.*

The goal of this guide is that hosting Shabbat will feel more accessible to you and your partner, so that you can bring people together and celebrate the essence of this weekly moment of rest, thinking creatively about how to make it your own.

As you plan your Shabbat gathering, start with you – your gut feelings, your experiences, and your questions. This guide aims to walk you through the process, to bring a Shabbat celebration to life in a way that feels authentic for you and those you've gathered.

And remember, all of us at HMI are here for you!

Sincerely,
Your Friends at HMI

How This Guide is Set Up

This guide is intended for the host, and as such is divided into two main sections:

- “Preparation” - everything you need before guests arrive
- “A Journey through the Shabbat Blessings and Rituals” - everything you'll need once guests arrive

For each Shabbat ritual, we've included:

- Context for why we do what do
- Ways to connect with the spirit and meaning of each blessing
- The words of each blessing
- Choreography for each ritual
- Reflection questions that tap into the ritual's core meaning

Icon Key:



Helpful hint or
tip for the host



Meant to be read aloud
during your gathering

A Note About God Language

Talking about the Divine can feel complicated. Everyone holds different beliefs about God, God's existence, and God's actions in the world – all the more so when the room is filled with friends and family with different faith backgrounds.

In the blessings in this guide, we've chosen to reference the Divine through names such as “God,” “the Eternal,” and “Creator.” If this doesn't feel right for you – that's okay! Play around with different ways of referring to the Divine when you offer Shabbat blessings, or focus your attention on the spirit of Shabbat using the reflection questions throughout the guide.

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO

Prepare for Your Shabbat Gathering

Life gets busy and wild, so much so that it can be hard to make time for rest, recovery, and time with our loved ones. How cool is it that in Judaism we have Shabbat, a sacred time in our week to do just that? Shabbat is a time to shift from the hectic week to a time of rest, gratitude, and reflection.

Shabbat is a moment in time which happens whether we call attention to it or not, but we're able to harness the beauty and power of Shabbat through our preparation and celebration of it.

In the following pages, you'll find everything you need to know to host your family and friends for Shabbat. Whether in a traditional way, or a more unconventional and unique way, we'll guide you through to make sure you feel like you're the host with the most! Let's get into it!



Questions to Consider as You Begin to Plan:

Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and concludes with a ceremony called Havdalah at sundown on Saturday. When during this time do you want to gather?

This guide focuses on 1) Friday night Shabbat themes and rituals, and 2) Havdalah themes and rituals to mark the end of Shabbat on Saturday night. But these are not the only two options! Getting a crew together during the day on Saturday can also be a meaningful opportunity to rest and connect during Shabbat. Consider planning a Saturday brunch or picnic and incorporate the reflection questions and conversation starters throughout this guide to highlight the meaning of Shabbat!

How are your guests doing emotionally, physically, spiritually? What do you think people need from a Shabbat space right now?

Be prepared to adjust your space, the conversation, etc. based on your guests. For example, if there are current events on people's minds, how can you make space for those feelings, thoughts, and emotions in a productive way? Is one of your guests celebrating something special? How can you celebrate or honor them?

Who in your community might be willing to help you set the tone, lead blessings, etc.?

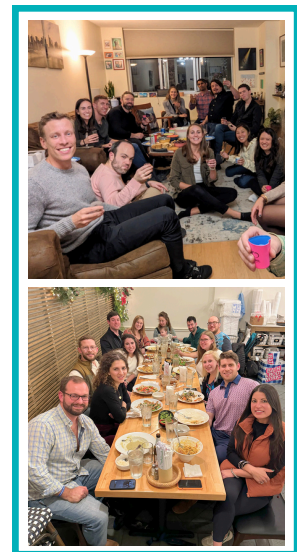
Invite others to help create ritual moments by asking them in advance to lead certain blessings or moments in the evening. Have a social butterfly in the group? Ask them to come up with some fun games to play throughout the night! Or maybe you have a talented baker who wants to make and bring a challah.

Select a Location

While Shabbat is a holiday often centered around the home, your celebration doesn't have to be! Choose the location that fits your vibe and works best for you and your guests.

Check out some of these ideas:

- Do you or a friend have access to a building party room or **communal event space**? You can often reserve these for free or for a nominal fee.
- **Take it outside!** A public park, beach, or recreational area could be great for a Shabbat gathering.
- Many local restaurants have **private rooms** you can use to host your Shabbat dinner.



- Looking for a fun and unique venue to host your Shabbat? Check out [Peerspace](#) to find **event spaces to rent by the hour**. This site has furnished apartments, homes, and a variety of other interesting spaces to choose from.
- Check with your **local Jewish organizations!** You can often rent space from synagogues, Jewish Community Centers (JCCs), and other Jewish community spaces for free or for a nominal fee. Check with your local HMI team member who can connect you with someone.

Curate Your Guest List

A few questions to consider:

- How many people can your location fit?
- Do you want to go for a more intimate small gathering? Or something larger and more social? Shabbat can even be a date night for you and your partner or double date with another couple!
- Are you inviting all folks you already know? Or opening it up to new guests?



If you're hosting a group of people who don't know each other, consider providing name tags and a few get-to-know-you activities during the evening.

Apply for Funding

If you've decided to host Shabbat, you're likely eligible for a few different subsidies to help offset the cost of your gathering.

If you're hosting Shabbat for other HMI couples, be sure to [apply for an HMI Alumni Micro Grant](#) before your event!

Important Notes for HMI Alumni Micro Grants:

- You'll need an estimated guest count and approximate cost for your application.
- During your Shabbat gathering, be sure to **take photos** and make a **list of everyone who attended**. You'll need these when you submit for reimbursement after your event.
- After your event, submit your photos, attendee list, receipts, and testimonials.
- After HMI reviews and approves your submission, you'll receive your partial Shabbat reimbursement check in the mail!

Additional Funding Opportunities

Check out [OneTable](#) to learn about getting additional subsidies for hosting your dinner and check out their fun Shabbat resources!

Plan Your Menu

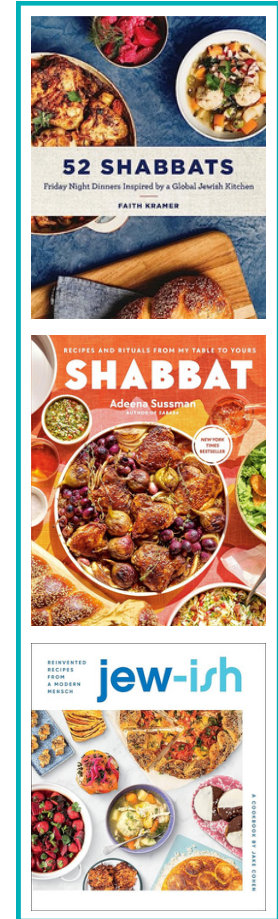
Food is the centerpiece of all Jewish gatherings, and there's a ton of ways to make the food at your Shabbat special!

- **Cook a meal.** Whether you want to do a themed cuisine dinner or cook something more traditional, here are some of our favorite Jewish cookbooks and recipes:
 - [52 Shabbats: Friday Night Dinners Inspired by a Global Jewish Kitchen](#) by Faith Kramer
 - [Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours](#) by Adeena Sussman
 - [Jew-Ish: Reinvented Recipes from a Modern Mensch](#) by Jake Cohen
 - [Jewish Food Society](#): an organization that works to preserve, celebrate, and revitalize Jewish culinary heritage
 - [The Nosh](#): Jewish food blog
- **Make it a potluck.** You can always ask your guests to help make Shabbat special by bringing a dish to share. Or just BYOB!



Make a signup sheet so people can see what everyone is bringing!

- **Catering or food delivery.** Have food delivered from your favorite restaurant, opt for something more formal with catering, or bring back the best moments of your childhood with a pizza party. Check out [EZCater](#) online for catering options near you.
- **Let's go out!** You can always take your Shabbat dinner out for a night on the town, and we recommend that you make a reservation in advance. Some restaurants have private dining rooms or prefix dinner packages you can use for large groups.



Blessing Sheets

See below for guides to all of the blessings in Hebrew, English, and an English transliteration! Be sure to share these links with your guests or print out a few copies so your guests can follow along and join you in words of blessing.

- [Shabbat Blessings](#)
- [Havdalah Blessings](#)



Check out our "Rest + Connect" playlist on page 11 for audio recordings of each blessing!

Gather Ritual Objects - Shabbat

Our Shabbat rituals combine action and intention. We co-create the energy of Shabbat with special objects, words of blessing, and those around us.

Blessing over the Light. For this ritual, it's helpful to have candles and candlesticks. Typically, two candles are lit for Shabbat to officially mark the beginning of this day of rest and renewal. Learn more on page 15.

You can use Shabbat candles, long tapered candles, tea lights, or any two candles you have laying around!



Blessing One Another. For this ritual, we don't need to gather anything as we ourselves become the special object of attention by celebrating loved ones and voicing appreciation. Learn more on page 16.

Blessing over the Wine. For this ritual, called *kiddush* in Hebrew, it's helpful to have a *kiddush* cup and some wine. A *kiddush* cup is a wine goblet used for making a blessing over wine (or grape juice). You can use a *kiddush* cup, a wine glass, or any cup that feels special to you. Learn more on pages 17-19.

Wine is traditionally used for this blessing, but any beverage of your choosing will work!



Blessing for Hand-Washing. For this ritual, it's helpful to have a large cup and a sink with running water. This ritual exists in memory of ancient Israelite worship in the Temple in Jerusalem, and can take on different meanings for us today. Learn more on page 20.

Blessing over Challah. For this ritual, it's helpful to have challah (or any kind of bread) and a challah cover. Challah is a delicious, braided bread. The Torah teaches when the Israelites wandered the desert, God provided them with nourishment each day. God also wanted to rest on Shabbat, so to sustain the people, God gave a double portion of food on Fridays. To symbolize this, some people choose to set out two loaves of challah, but one loaf works too! The challah cover is any sort of fabric or napkin. It's customary to keep the bread covered until it's time to bless them. The rabbis teach that the cover keeps the bread from getting jealous of the wine and candles, which are blessed earlier in our Shabbat rituals. Learn more on page 21. [Click here for a delicious challah recipe!](#)

Gather Ritual Objects - Havdalah

Mirroring the way Shabbat is welcomed, *Havdalah* (meaning “separation”) marks the end of Shabbat with a powerful series of blessings that engage our five senses. Learn more on page 25.

Blessing over the Wine. Just like on Friday nights, it’s helpful to have a *kiddush* cup and some wine or grape juice for this ritual, but you can use any cup and whatever beverage you have around, whether it’s wine, beer, juice, or water!

Blessing over the Spices. For this ritual, it’s helpful to have a container of good smelling spices that can be passed around.

Make your own spice mix by combining cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Alternatively, use fresh herbs like mint, or anything sweet smelling from your pantry!



Blessing over the Braided Candle. For this ritual, it is helpful to have a candle and something (like a plate or aluminum foil) to catch the wax as it burns. A traditional Havdalah candle is braided and has multiple wicks.

Havdalah candles can be purchased online or at a local Judaica shop. Don’t worry if you can’t get a hold of a braided candle – you can also rubber band two tapered candles together!



Blessing for Separation/Distinction. You don’t need any additional ritual objects for this moment in the Havdalah ceremony! This blessing helps draw our attention to the very human experience of needing to hold both light and darkness.

Setting the Vibe

What is a vibe? A vibe is a distinctive feeling or quality that can be sensed. All five senses come together to create and identify a vibe.

The way we enter a space can influence an entire experience. When thinking about what vibe you want your Shabbat to have, consider how you want your guests to experience the gathering:

- **Smell.** When your guests walk into your space, what are they smelling? Maybe it's the smell of fresh baked challah, a delicious dinner, or some nice candles.
- **Sight.** What are folks seeing when they come in? Is the lighting dim and romantic? Maybe you have some fun lights or your windows open with lots of natural light coming in. Does the flow of the space make sense for the evening? Try moving some furniture around or declutter a bit to make the space feel more open.
- **Sound.** Music is a great way to set the ambiance of your Shabbat! Make sure the volume is loud enough for folks to hear, but not too loud that it's overpowering. [Click here for a few playlists we've created for you:](#)
 - **Rest + Connect:** More traditional and prayer focused
 - **HMI Shabbat Vibes:** More lighthearted and fun
- **Touch.** What are your guests interacting with physically at your Shabbat gathering? Are guests being greeted with a welcome cocktail or wine? Consider what seating looks like for your guests. Is everyone seated at a dining table or is it more lounge seating or cocktail style?
- **Taste.** Food and drink are staples of any Jewish gathering. You may want to offer some appetizers before the meal, or you can just dive right into dinner! What beverages are you offering your guests?



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE

Shabbat Blessings and Rituals

A Note to the Host

Dear Host,

Shabbat Shalom!

You've made it. You decided to host a Shabbat gathering, and you dealt with all the details and the chaos of planning. Location has been chosen, guests have been invited and RSVPs gathered, menu has been set, food has been ordered, and ritual items acquired. You've thought through how you want to welcome your guests and what vibe you want to create.

Take a moment to re-center and ground yourself because Shabbat is here, and it's time to transition from the chaos of the preparation to the tranquility of Shabbat. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths in and out. With each breath in, settle more and more into the stillness of Shabbat, and with each breath out, leave behind any stress from the week.

Hosting Shabbat is not a small feat. **The act of gathering for Shabbat is sacred because it brings people together and builds community.** By stepping into the role of convener, you've done something amazing and helped to bring the beauty of Shabbat to life.

So as you transition into the main event, bring with you the magic of Shabbat. The beauty, the stillness. Remember why you wanted to host in the first place. Bring all that joy and warmth together to have the best night with your guests, and enjoy the community that you are building.

Sincerely,
Your Friends at HMI

A Note About Blessings

Whether you've celebrated Shabbat and/or recited Shabbat blessings before or not, speaking in another language can feel tricky. For each Shabbat ritual, we've provided the songs and blessings for you in Hebrew, transliteration (Hebrew words spelled out using English letters), and English, and we encourage you to offer these blessings in whichever language you're comfortable with!

Reciting a blessing connects us to one another, and there are multiple ways to be involved in these blessings whether or not you're saying the words. You can participate by reciting the words aloud, joining in for some of the words that feel right, quietly appreciating the voices around you, or responding with "Amen" when the blessing ends (which literally means "truth" or "certainly" in Hebrew, and is used to support or affirm something that's been said).

Arrival and Welcoming Guests

Shalom Aleichem, a song often sung to bring in Shabbat, translates to "peace be with you," which are words of welcome. The song imagines that Shabbat is joined by a group of angels who add holiness, blessings, and peace to this time of rest. This moment helps everyone around the table mentally arrive and honor the beauty of spending this time together.



We've included a rendition of *Shalom Aleichem* on the Shabbat playlist on page 11. You can also mark this moment by reading the poem on page 14 or setting an intention with your guests.

Shalom Aleichem

שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם מְלֹאכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מִמְּלַךְ מְלֹאכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
 בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשֵׁלוֹם מְלֹאכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מִמְּלַךְ מְלֹאכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
 בְּרַכּוֹנִי לְשֵׁלוֹם מְלֹאכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מִמְּלַךְ מְלֹאכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
 צַאֲתְכֶם לְשֵׁלוֹם מְלֹאכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מִמְּלַךְ מְלֹאכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא

*Shalom aleichem mal'achei hashareit mal'achei elyon mimelech malchei
 ham'lachim, ha-kadosh baruch hu*

*Bo'achem l'shalom mal'achei hashalom mal'achei elyon mimelech malchei
 ham'lachim, ha-kadosh baruch hu*

*Barchuni l'shalom mal'achei hashalom mal'achei elyon mimelech malchei
 ham'lachim, ha-kadosh baruch hu*

*Tzeitchem l'shalom mal'achei hashalom mal'achei elyon mimelech malchei
 ham'lachim, ha-kadosh baruch hu*

Peace be with you, messengers of peace, messengers of the Eternal, the Holy One of blessing.

Come in peace, messengers of peace, messengers of the Eternal, the Holy One of blessing.

Bless us with peace, messengers of peace, messengers of the Eternal, the Holy One of blessing.

Go in peace, messengers of peace, messengers of the Eternal, the Holy One of blessing.

Excerpt from “A Shabbat Eve Meditation” by Dr. Evette Nan Katlin

We are here,
Together,
As one.
One people,
One community.
We’ve joined
To share in this treasured moment together.
As we transition from the hectic demands of life and daily routines,
We are invited to leave the week behind.
Let go of what has been,
Let go of what will be,
And enter a place of stillness, a sacred space and time.
As the sun begins to set,
Breathe in the glow of the sunset, and pause,
Breathe out the stresses of the week,
Breathe in the calm of nightfall, and pause,
Breathe out and feel a sense of release.
Breathe in the radiance of the moon and stars, and pause,
Breathe out all thoughts of doing,
And become one with this present moment.

Reflection Questions

- What is one word that describes your feeling right now?
- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel teaches, “‘Rest’ is not a negative concept but something real and intrinsically positive.” What does “rest” mean to you?
- What are a few techniques that you use to separate yourself from your work and the hectic pace of the week, even if it’s just for an hour or two?

Blessing over the Light

Lighting candles signifies the official start to Shabbat. The two Shabbat candles remind us of the **joy and warmth** Shabbat brings into our lives, and teach us of the two times the Israelites were commanded to “keep” and “remember” Shabbat in the Torah.

After lighting the candles, some wave their hands in three big circles moving from the flames towards their body. This movement symbolically brings the light closer to us.



How to Perform the Ritual: Gather everyone around the candles. Light the candles. Cover your eyes, if you wish, and recite the blessing. Take a moment after the blessing to revel in the beauty of the candlelight – Shabbat is officially here.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has hallowed us with commandments and commands us to kindle the lights of Shabbat.

Reflection Questions

- Brocha Shanes of OneTable suggests that the candles can remind us of the inner flame inside us: “this inner flame can give off a light, or a clarity, to see through the ‘darkness,’ the stress and worries of the rest of the week.” What do you need from this Shabbat to help fuel your inner flame?
- Who or what is one person/moment that brought light into your past week?

Blessing over One Another

One Shabbat tradition is taking a moment to bestow blessings; partners bless one another and parents bless their children. This is a special opportunity to **celebrate loved ones and voice appreciation**, whether sharing the ancient words of blessing below or sharing words from your heart.

These ancient words called the Priestly Benediction, ask for God's presence in this step of our journey and through all the movement in our lives. Some people choose to share this blessing by placing their hands on the head or shoulders of their loved one. Others may choose to face one another or connect in other ways.



How to Perform this Ritual: Recite the blessing together as a group or give space for couples to have a private moment with their partners.

יְבָרְכֶךָּ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָּ. יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַחַנְךָ. יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים.

Y'var'e'checha Adonai v'yish'm'recha. Ya-er Adonai panav eilecha vi'chuneka. Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim l'cha shalom.

May God bless you and keep you. May God's light shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you. May you feel God's Presence within you always, and may you find peace.

Alternative Ritual

Share words of love and appreciation with the following prompts:

- You made me smile this week when...
- I appreciated when/how you...
- This Shabbat, my hope for you is...

Blessings over the Wine

The wine represents the joy and **sweetness** of Shabbat as we celebrate together. While we use the wine as a conduit to sanctify time, it's not actually about the wine – it's about honoring the moment.

The blessing, called *kiddush*, is made up of four parts:

- A reminder of creation and the value of rest
- The specific blessing over wine
- A reminder of the covenant of the Jewish people and the commandment to observe Shabbat
- A blessing over the joy and holiness of this moment together

We have provided the words for all four parts of the blessing on the next pages, but kiddush looks and sounds different for everyone!

How to Perform the Ritual: Fill your kiddush cup with wine or grape juice, and invite each person around the room or table to fill their cup. Recite all or part of the blessing in Hebrew or English, share a reflection question, or simply 'cheers' together as a group to honor this moment.

Reflection Questions

- *Kiddush* comes from the Hebrew word for "holy." This idea of holiness repeats itself a lot in the Shabbat blessings, but can mean different things for each of us. What does the word "holy" mean to you? What does "holy" look, feel, sound, smell, and taste like?
- What was one sweet moment from the past week?



Blessings over the Wine

A reminder of creation and the value of rest

יהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל-צבאם. ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה. וישבת ביום השביעי מכל-מלאכתו אשר עשה. ויברך אלהים את-יום השביעי ויקדש אתו, כי בו שבת מכל-מלאכתו אשר ברא אלהים לעשות.

Vay'hi erev vay'hi voker yom hashishi. Vay'chulu hashamayim v'haaretz v'chol tz'vaam. Vay'chal Elohim bayom hash'vi-i m'lachto asher asah. Vayishbot bayom hash'vi-i mikol m'lachto asher asah. Vay'varech Elohim et yom hash'vi-i vay'kadeish oto, ki vo shavat mikol m'lachto asher bara Elohim laasot.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. On the seventh day God finished the work that God had been doing, and God ceased on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that God had done. (Genesis 1:31-2:3)

The specific blessing over wine

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

A reminder of the covenant of the Jewish people and the commandment to observe Shabbat

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וּרְצָה בְּנוֹ,
 וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשׁוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחִילָנוּ, זְכוֹרֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית. כִּי הוּא
 יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ, זְכוֹר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֶרֶת, וְאוֹתָנוּ
 קִדְּשַׁת מְכַל הָעַמִּים. וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשָׁךְ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu
 b'mitzvotav v'ratzah vanu, v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah
 uv'ratzon hinchilanu, zikaron l'maaseih v'reishit.
 Ki hu yom t'chilah l'mikra-ei kodesh, zecher litziat Mitzrayim.
 Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, mikol haamim.
 V'Shabbat kodsh'cha b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu.*

Blessed are You, Infinite One, Ruler of the Universe, who finding favor with us and sanctified us with commandments. In love and favor, You made the holy Shabbat our heritage as a reminder of the work of Creation. As first among our sacred days, it recalls the Exodus from Egypt. You chose us and set us apart from the peoples. In love and favor You have given us Your holy Shabbat as our inheritance.

A blessing over the joy and holiness of this moment together

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadeish haShabbat.

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, who sanctifies Shabbat.

Blessing for Handwashing

Ritual handwashing can be traced back to ancient times when the Israelites would ritually cleanse themselves before acts of worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. It is thought that handwashing is a way to symbolically **prepare ourselves to meet holy moments**. Hand washing can help us think about the relationship between our inner world and the world around us.

How to Perform this Ritual: Fill a cup with water. Pour the water over your right hand with three splashes from the cup. Switch hands to pour three splashes of water over your left hand. Recite this blessing as you dry your hands.



To ensure that words of blessing are the first words one speaks after washing their hands, some choose not to speak between washing their hands and reciting the blessing over bread in the next section.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל
נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kidshanu
b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al netilat yadayim.*

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who sanctifies us with commandments and commands us to raise up our hands.

Reflection Questions

- What steps might feel meaningful to you to prepare for holy moments?
- Water is a symbol of sustenance, life, and renewal. What is one thing, idea, or song that helped to sustain you this week?

Blessing over Challah

The braids of the challah remind us of how we are all **intertwined in community**. The Hebrew root of the word challah is “*chol*,” meaning “ordinary” or “mundane.” The process of making the dough, however, transforms ordinary into extraordinary, and the challah is elevated by its uncanny ability to bring people together around the table. While the blessing specifically mentions bread, this moment allows us to give thanks for all the food on our table!

How to Perform this Ritual: Uncover the challah, hold up the loaves, recite the blessing, and then enjoy delicious challah.



Some have a tradition for each person to touch the challah while the blessing is recited, or to touch someone who is touching the challah. Some choose to dip their challah in honey during the first year of marriage to remind themselves of the sweetness of their love.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, haMotzi lechem min haaretz.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Reflection Questions

- The blessing highlights the origin of our foods (the earth) and the final product (the food on our table). It calls our awareness to the process itself and cultivates gratitude for all that needs to happen from origin to final product. What is something “in process” in your own life? What role are you playing?
- Food can hold memories for each of us. What is one food that holds a particular memory or meaning for you?

IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME...

Let's Eat!

Now that most of the traditional rituals are complete, here are some games and table topics you can use to continue to get to know each other and keep the conversation flowing!

Icebreaker Games

Two Truths and a Lie

Each person introduces themselves and shares two truths and a lie. It is up to the group to determine which one is the lie.

Who Am I?

Before dinner, have people submit interesting facts about themselves. Throughout the meal, read them out loud and have guests guess who the fact is about.

Where Have My Shoes Taken Me?

Each person shares a story that happened in the shoes they're wearing.

Fishbowl

Everyone writes a "get to know you" question on a slip of paper and puts them in a bowl. Each guest takes a slip and answers the question as they introduce themselves.

HMI-Style Questions

1. On Shabbat, we celebrate time rather than space. **What time is most holy to you? What time do you treasure?**
2. There's a custom to fill the *kiddush* cup until it spills over to represent the overflowing joy and blessings of Shabbat. In order to hold such a full cup, you must use two hands. **What do you need to put down** to have two hands available to hold your overflowing cup with two hands this week?
3. Lighting candles at the beginning of Shabbat symbolizes the separation between the ordinary weekday and the sacred time of Shabbat. The light represents the spiritual illumination and sanctity of the day. **What has been a light of your week?**
4. In what ways do you think the **observance of Shabbat is relevant or meaningful in modern times?**

Table Topics

Here are some fun table topics to keep the conversations flowing! You can write each question on a piece of paper, put them in a bowl, and have each guest pull one out and answer. You could pick a few to ask all of your guests to go around the table and share their answers. You can also have folks discuss these questions with the person next to them to make it more intimate.



Have your guests introduce themselves before answering these questions if they don't all know each other!

Topics

- If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?
- If you had a super power that only worked on Shabbat, what super power would you want to have? Why?
- Who is your hero?
- What is one goal you'd like to accomplish in your lifetime?
- When you were little, who was your favorite super hero? Why?
- What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?
- What's your favorite cartoon character? Why?
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you choose to go? Why?
- Are you a morning or night person?
- What are your favorite hobbies?
- Tell us about a unique or quirky habit of yours.
- What are three words to describe yourself?
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?
- What's your favorite movie or TV show?
- If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
- If one wish could come true this year, what would it be?
- If you could live in any period in history, when would it be?
- If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
- If you could learn any skill, what would it be?

Gratitude After the Meal

Expressing gratitude can lift our spirits and bring us joy. One tool that Jewish tradition provides for sharing gratitude is the Blessing After a Meal, called *Birkat HaMazon*. This blessing does not focus on the food itself – instead it highlights a feeling of nourishment and fullness. While food fills our bodies, the energy of Shabbat and time spent in community can fill us up emotionally or spiritually. *Brich ra'chamana*, a one-line blessing, is one of a few succinct versions of the Blessing After a Meal. It is written in Aramaic (rather than Hebrew), so sounds a little different from all the other Shabbat blessings!

How to Perform this Ritual: As your Shabbat gathering comes towards a close, find an opportunity to each reflect on and lift up gratitude. Read this blessing aloud on behalf of everyone at your table or teach these seven Aramaic words so they can join you, and then invite each person to reflect on their own gratitude.

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא מְרִיבָה דְהַאי פִּיטָא.

Brich ra'cha-mana malka d'alma ma'ray d'hai pita.

You are the Source of life for all that is, and Your blessing flows through me.

Alternative Reading (by ritualwell.org)

That which we ate, may it satiate us;
And that which we drank, may it give us good health;
And that which is left over, may we see it as a blessing.

Reflection Questions

- What fuels and nourishes you beyond food?
- What is one thing you are feeling grateful for in this moment?

MARK THE END OF SHABBAT WITH

Havdalah Blessings and Rituals

As Shabbat ends on Saturday night, it is marked by a short, powerful series of blessings called *Havdalah*, meaning “separation.” These blessings acknowledge how Shabbat is different from the rest of the week.

Each blessing uses one of the five senses to hold on to and remind us of the power and beauty of Shabbat:

- The sweet taste of wine
- The aroma of spices
- The beauty of fire
- The warmth of the flame
- The music of the blessings

These blessings take the memories and peace of Shabbat and bring them into the week ahead.



Once you have all of your ritual objects for Havdalah, **begin by lighting the Havdalah candle**, a twisted candle with multiple wicks. Whereas Shabbat is a time of rest, the braided candle calls us to collective action as a reminder of the work we can do throughout the week to bring light into the world.

Lift up the glass of wine and offer the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Next, lift up the spices and pass them around so everyone can smell their aroma. As the spices are passed around, offer the blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי בְשָׁמִים.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei minei v'samim.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all, Creator of varied spices.

Lift up the Havdalah candle. Some people have a tradition of holding their hands up towards the candle to see the reflection of the light in their fingernails. Others look into the eyes of those near them to see the light reflected in them. This is a powerful reminder of the idea that we can bring light into our world. Offer the following two blessings:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei m'orei ha-esh.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all, Creator of the lights of fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol, bein or l'choshech, bein Yisrael laamim, bein yom hash'vi-i l'sheishet y'mei hamaaseh. Baruch atah Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: who distinguishes between the holy and ordinary, between light and dark, between different nations, between the seventh day and the six days of work. Blessed are You, Eternal our God, who distinguishes between the holy and ordinary.

After the blessing, **take a sip of the wine, then extinguish the lit candle in the remaining wine in the glass.** Savor the sound of the sizzle as the flames meet the wine, and then wish everyone a “*Shavua tov!*” meaning “a good week!” Wishing one another *Shavua tov* at the end of Shabbat expresses the hope that some of the power, beauty, and rest of Shabbat will be carried with us into the normal week.



Reflection Question

Havdalah comes from the word that means “separation.” What do you want to release from your mind and heart – “separate from” – as you enter a new week?

Alternative Reading

Twilight People Prayer by Rabbi Reuben Zellman (transtorah.org)

As the sun sinks and the colors of the day turn, we offer a blessing for the twilight, for twilight is neither day nor night, but in-between.

We are all twilight people. We can never be fully labeled or defined.

We are many identities and loves, many genders and none. We are in between roles, at the intersection of histories, or between place and place.

We are crisscrossed paths of memory and destination, streaks of light swirled together.

We are neither day nor night.

We are both, neither, and all.

May the sacred in-between of this evening suspend our certainties, soften our judgments, and widen our vision.

May this in-between light illuminate our way to the God who transcends all categories and definitions.

May the in-between people who have come to pray be lifted up into this twilight.

We cannot always define; we can always say a blessing.

Blessed are You, God of all, who brings on the twilight.

You did it!

Mazal tov – Congratulations! You've done an amazing job hosting Shabbat for your community and making it special. **We hope you found this guide helpful, and that you'll return to it to continue exploring the presence of Shabbat in your life.**

Want to reflect on this experience?

- How did the beauty of Shabbat come to life for you?
- What felt meaningful about this time together as a community?
- What moments of connection did you experience?

We'd love to see any photos you took and feature them on our social media! Tag us on Instagram [@honeymoonisrael](https://www.instagram.com/honeymoonisrael), or email your photos to us at marcomm@honeymoonisrael.org.

