

# SHAVUOT BRIEFING

jlc  
jewish  
leadership  
council

Evening of Thursday May 25th to Sundown  
Saturday May 27th June 2023



# THIS OMER

- The word Shavuot means ‘weeks’ and is used to represent the counting of the Omer between Passover and the festival.
- The Omer was a **sheath of wheat** brought to the Temple in Jerusalem on the second day of Passover, from which we count 7 weeks until Shavuot.
- Every year on the holiday of Shavuot we renew our acceptance of God’s gift, and God “regives”, the Torah (the Jewish Holy book). Because of this, Shavuot is also known as Zeman Matan Torahteinu- the time of the giving of the Torah.
- This counting between Passover until Shavuot reminds the Jewish people that although we were freed from **slavery on Passover, the greater freedom came with the giving of the Torah.**
- The giving of the Torah was a far-reaching spiritual event. It is taught that every soul throughout time was present when the Torah was given; it was not just given to one generation but to all generations.
- The sages have **compared it to a wedding between God and the Jewish people.** Shavuot also means “oaths”, for on this day God swore eternal devotion to us, and we in turn pledge our loyalty to obey his commandments.
- The festival is also known as ‘Yom HaBikkurim’- The day of the First Fruits. Shavuot is a **celebration of the wheat harvest** as well as the **ripening of the first fruits of the year.**



the Omer

# SHAVUOT

- Shavuot is observed by attending synagogue to hear a public reading of the Ten Commandments to reaffirm a commitment to God and the Torah.
- **It is customary to eat dairy foods, especially cheesecake.** One reason is that the Torah is likened to ‘nourishing milk’. Another is that reminds us of the Promised Land - a land “flowing with milk and honey”
- Many communities have a ‘tikkun leil’ - an all-night learning of Torah. This is because the Midrash (a biblical commentary) says the Jewish people slept in on the day the Torah was given, so some people stay up learning to prove our enthusiasm for the Torah has not diminished.
- Most communities read the Book of Ruth. This tells the story of Ruth the Moabite (the Moabites were people living in Moab in biblical times which is now modern day Jordan). Ruth accepted the Jewish faith even though it was not her God and this is supposed to mirror the Israelites acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai.
- Many have the custom of **decorating their homes and synagogues with flowers and sweet-smelling plants** - a reminder of the harvest and the beauty of the Torah.
- Some denominations, as well as those in Israel celebrate one day of Shavuot. Many in the diaspora in the UK celebrate two days.



# SOCIALS

Here are our suggestions of what to post on social media:

- Happy Shavuot!
- Chag Sameach! (Meaning Happy Festival)
- Chag Sameach/Happy Shavuot to all my Jewish friends: don't eat too much cheesecake!

Please follow @jlc\_uk on Twitter and @jlc.uk on Instagram to see content from the JLC, our members and Jewish communities across the country.





The JLC connects and coordinates the Jewish charitable sector, strengthens and supports leadership across our community, and magnifies and amplifies the collective voice of our member organisations.

If you would like to find out more about the festival of Shavuot visit My Jewish Learning's educational resource.

Contact the JLC:

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