

# Facts about Shavuot/Shavuas

## Tuesday, May 30 - Thursday, June 1

- Shavuot means “weeks.” It marks the completion of 7 weeks, or 49 days, between Passover and Shavuot.
- Shavuot celebrates the receiving of the Torah by the Israelites on Mt. Sinai. Another name for Shavuas is the Festival of the Giving of Torah.
- Shavuot is also connected to the season of the grain harvest in Israel. In ancient times, the grain harvest lasted 7 weeks, and it began with the harvesting of barley during Passover and ended with the harvesting of wheat at Shavuot.
- Shavuot also marks the ripening of the 1st fruits of the season. This is why another name for Shavuas is the Festival of the First Fruits.
  - The first fruits would be grapes, pomegranates, dates, fig trees, and olives. Along with wheat and barley, these 7 foods are known as the 7 Species.

 There are three reasons why Shavuot is celebrated by eating lots of dairy:



#1: When the Israelites were given the Torah at Mt. Sinai, it included the special instructions for slaughtering and preparing meat. Before then, the Israelites hadn't been following these laws, so all the meat and utensils they had in their possession weren't considered kosher. The only foods they could eat then were dairy, which don't need any advance preparation.



#2: Milk = Torah. The Torah is the spiritual nourishment of the Jews, just like a mom gives milk to nourish a newborn baby. It (meaning the Torah) is necessary for us to grow and thrive! This idea comes from a verse from Song of Songs 4:11: “Like honey and milk [the Torah] lies under your tongue.”



#3: In Hebrew, the word for milk is *chalav*. Its numerical value in gematria is 40, which is a significant number in the Torah (40 years in the desert & 40 days on Mt. Sinai).

 Shavuot customs:



Staying up all night learning Torah



Eating at least 1 dairy meal



Studying the book of Ruth



Hearing the reading of the 10 commandments at Shul