

Sukkot Fact Sheet

- ✦ *Sukkot* is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths.
- ✦ A *Sukkah* is the Hebrew word for 'booth' or 'tabernacle'. '*Sukkot*', the plural, is the name of the festival of booths. *Sukkot* were the huts in which the Jewish people lived during their years in the desert after they left slavery in Egypt and before they arrived in the Promised Land (Israel).
- ✦ *Sukkot* begins two weeks after Rosh Hashanah, on the eve of the 15th day of *Tishrei*. Inside Israel we celebrate it for seven days, until the 22nd of *Tishrei*, but outside Israel it lasts for one extra day until the 23rd day of *Tishrei*.
- ✦ During *Sukkot* we remember when God freed us from slavery in Egypt. After our ancestors left Egypt, they wandered for forty years in the desert before they reached the Promised Land of Israel. Along their way during these forty years, they built temporary homes out of dry palms and branches. To remind us of their journey and these temporary homes, and of how our ancestors relied on God to help them, on *Sukkot* we 'live' for seven days in huts made from branches and palms.
- ✦ *Sukkot* was also an autumn harvest festival, celebrated at the time when the Jewish people gathered the crops from the fields and the fruits of the orchards.
- ✦ These harvests were always celebrated with great excitement. As a result, we also call *Sukkot* '*Chag HaAsif*' ('The Festival of Gathering') and '*Zman Simchatenu*' ('The Time of Our Happiness').
- ✦ The Torah tells us to take up four species in hand to celebrate *Sukkot*: "On the first day you shall take the product of the goodly trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Adonai your God for seven days" [Leviticus 23:40]. The first three (willow, palm, and myrtle) are bound together and collectively called a *lulav*. The fourth is the *etrog* (citron), a sweet smelling citrus fruit.