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# Jewish Holidays in a JIFF

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## Your Step-by-Step Guide to Celebrating Shabbat In your Home

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**“More than the Jewish people have kept the Shabbat,  
The Shabbat has kept the Jewish people.”** *Ahad Ha'am*

*Since ancient times, the Jewish people have observed Shabbat – from generation to generation, through good times and bad. Whether you decide to celebrate Shabbat once a week or just once in awhile, or, whether you just want to learn a little something you didn't know before, we hope this guide will be a helpful resource to you in building your own unique and meaningful Jewish traditions...*

# Shabbat in a Second – One Page Primer



## **Say It:**

Shabbat is a Hebrew word that means ~~to~~ cease+or to ~~est.~~  
It is pronounced: Sha-baht

## **Define It:**

Typically celebrated each week from Friday night at sunset, until Saturday night at sundown, Shabbat is a day of rest and a separation from the rest of the week. See below for a more detailed description

## **Pray It:**

The following is an English translation of the three main prayers traditionally said before eating the Friday night meal. For additional prayers and their Hebrew transliteration, please refer to the **Step-By-Step Shabbat** section below.

### **1. The Blessing over the Candles:**

Blessed are You, God, Ruler of the universe  
Who has sanctified us with God's commandments,  
and has commanded us to light Shabbat candles.

### **2. The Blessing over the Wine:**

Blessed are You, God Ruler of the universe  
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

### **3. The Blessing over the Bread:**

Blessed are You, God, Ruler of the universe  
Who brings forth bread from the earth.

## **Dine It:**

The following is a list of some foods traditionally served on this holiday. Look for recipes at the end of this guide or do a keyword search online:

- Challah (ha-luh) . braided egg bread
- Sweet wine and/or grape juice
- Noodle kugel (koo-gul)
- Matzo ball soup/cabbage soup
- Brisket, roasted chicken, turkey

# Shabbat Fast Facts: Quick Q's and Easy A's



## What is Shabbat?

Shabbat (sha-baht) is the Jewish Sabbath, **a day of rest and separation from the rest of the week.** It officially begins 15 minutes before sunset every Friday evening, and ends approximately 45 minutes after sunset every Saturday night, or when three stars are visible in the sky. **However, those who are less observant are not as strict about the start and end times.**

The concept of a weekly %Sabbath+(a day of rest and a day off from the rest of the week) was unheard of in ancient times, and something that many consider to be **a special contribution that the Jewish people gave to all humankind.**

## What is the origin of Shabbat?

Shabbat is mentioned in the Torah (the Five Books of Moses, or the Hebrew Bible) on a number of occasions, including:

- 1.) **Genesis 2:1-3** -- God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh
- 2.) **Exodus 20:8 -11** -- Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
- 3.) **Exodus 31:16-17** -- The people of Israel shall keep Shabbat, observing it throughout the generations as a covenant between Me and the people of Israel
- 4.) **Deuteronomy 5:12-15** . %Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy,+because %God led us out of Egypt -- from slavery to freedom.+

## How is Shabbat Celebrated?

Shabbat is **traditionally** observed in any or all of the following ways:

- 1.) **Friday night Shabbat dinner** . A time to welcome the Shabbat, often with family and friends, which helps create a %separation+between Shabbat and the rest of the week.
- 2.) **Gathering with community for a prayer service** -- This includes a reading of the weekly portion of the Torah, usually in a synagogue or temple.
- 3.) **Relaxing** -- Enjoying the day
- 4.) **Havdalah (haav-dah-lah)** – A special ceremony recited in the home once three stars are visible in the sky to mark the %separation+between the Shabbat and the **beginning** of the rest of the week.

## We want to try observing Shabbat in our home, but don't know how.

**Remember, there is no such thing as Shabbat Police.** No one is going to come to your home and tell you that you have to do things a certain way. The beauty of this in-home celebration is that **you can be free to experiment with what works best for you!** The guide and step-by-step primer below will give you some ideas for how to get started. However, the main thing with Shabbat, and all the other Jewish holidays, customs and rituals, is to **make it your own so you can build unique memories and traditions that are meaningful to you!**

# Friday Night Lite: Easy In-Home Shabbat Starter Upper

## How do we get started?

Even if you haven't celebrated Shabbat in your home before, and even if it might feel a bit awkward, **you don't have to do everything all at once... and, you don't have to do everything "by the book!"** Simply start with what feels most comfortable for you.

**Remember, Shabbat is about creating a separation from the rest of the week.** So just doing something that's unique, special or different from your normal weekly routine, is one way of thinking about it. **Consider starting with one thing**, such as lighting the candles, or just having a nicer meal than you might otherwise have during the rest of the week. Once you are more comfortable, and have made that one observance part of your tradition, you may decide to add more, increasing your observance gradually at a pace that's right for you and your family.

## What do the items of the Shabbat dinner table symbolize?

Before the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem during ancient times, all ritual observance took place there. However, after it was destroyed, Shabbat began to be observed in the home. Hence, the dining table became the equivalent of the Temple's altar, and **the things on the table became symbols in remembrance of how the Jews once worshipped in the Temple.** For example:

- 1.) **Candles** -- Remembrance of the lighting of the Temple candelabra or menorah (men-oh-rah)
- 2.) **Wine** -- Remembrance of the wine offerings during Temple times
- 3.) **Challah** -- Remembrance of the 12 loaves of bread which were placed on a specially crafted table in the Temple, representing the 12 tribes of Israel

## What are some of the rituals of the Friday night Shabbat dinner?

There are three *main* rituals that are performed in a *typical* Friday night Shabbat observance:

- 1.) Lighting the Shabbat candles
- 2.) Saying Kiddush (kid-ish, or kee-doosh) the blessing over the wine
- 3.) Reciting the blessing over the challah

## What kind of candles and candlesticks should be used?

While **any candle holders can be used**, many people have special silver, ceramic, or other decorative candlesticks that they set aside just for Shabbat. Candles specifically made for use on Shabbat (although any candles are appropriate) can be purchased at your local grocery store and can typically be found in boxes in the kosher food aisle, in Jewish gift shops, or online by using the keyword search: Shabbat Candles.

### **Who should light the candles and say the blessing?**

Typically, the candles are lit and the prayer is recited by the woman of the house, but men and children can do it too. While **traditionally at least two candles are lit**, you can light more. For example, some people light additional candles for each family member, or child. The tradition is to light the candles first, and then say the blessing. Once the candles are burning, Shabbat has officially begun.

### **When should the Shabbat candles be lit?**

Typically, the Shabbat candles are lit about 15 - 20 minutes before sundown, however, those who are less traditional often prefer to recite all the prayers at the same time, right before sitting down to dinner, even after it has become dark.

### **Do we leave the candles burning?**

The tradition is to allow the candles to burn down naturally instead of being blown out. Should you need to leave your home, or if you're more comfortable, you can extinguish them or you might consider putting the burning candlesticks on the bottom of your kitchen sink, or on a foil lined tray as a safety precaution.

### **What's the tradition of circling the candles with your hands?**

Many people circle their hands above the flames (typically three times) before reciting the prayer to help usher Shabbat into their homes. Sometimes the person reciting the blessing uses that time to say a personal prayer aloud, or to themselves.

### **What does the word Kiddush mean and why do we do it?**

Kiddush (kid-ish or kee-doosh) means "holy," or "to sanctify" (to set apart for a sacred purpose.) Reciting the Kiddush, the blessing over the wine, at the beginning of the Shabbat meal helps to set it apart from other meals you have during the week. Wine is used because it's a symbol of joy.

### **Who recites the Kiddush?**

Traditionally the man of the house says the blessing over the wine, but it can be done by anyone. Often, everyone at the table says, or sings it together.

### **Is there a special cup and type of wine that should be used for the Kiddush?**

While **any cup or glass will do**, many people have a special decorative Kiddush cup that they use specifically for Shabbat and other Jewish holiday celebrations. Kiddush cups can be purchased online or are available in abundance at local Jewish gift shops. Wine or grape juice of any kind is acceptable, but special sweet Shabbat wine is a more traditional option and available in most grocery stores. Some brand names include Manishevitz and Mogan David.

### **Is there a "right way" to do the Kiddush?**

Typically, the wine is poured and **the Kiddush is said while raising the glass**. Some people drink from the cup and pass it around, and others pour the wine from the main cup into smaller wine glasses or Kiddush cups for each individual.

## **What is Challah?**

Challah (hah-lah) is a sweet, braided egg bread. The taste and texture is somewhat similar to egg twist rolls. In ancient times, bread made with eggs was considered something only the rich could enjoy. For that reason, challah represents something extra special that is eaten in honor of Shabbat.

## **Where can I get Challah?**

Challah is easy and fun to make. You can go online and choose from literally thousands of recipes. Challah freezes well so you can make several at one time. Other options range from purchasing frozen and pre-braided challah dough at the grocery store, to purchasing already prepared challah at local grocery stores, bakeries or specialty bread stores.

## **What does the word “hamotzi” mean?**

Hamotzi (ha-moat-zee) is the name of the blessing that is said over the challah. The literal translation is %who brings forth.+ This prayer praises God for bringing forth grains from the earth. Bread is used as the symbol for all food.

## **Why do some people use two challahs when saying the blessing?**

It's written in the Torah that while the Israelites were wandering through the desert for forty years, God sent down a daily portion of manna for them to gather and eat. However, on Fridays, God sent down a double portion for them so they would not have to gather on Shabbat. Using two challahs is a reminder of that double portion.

**However, one challah, or any kind of bread you have available is perfectly acceptable.**

## **Why is the challah covered?**

One explanation that is often given is that a layer of dew was sent down from the heavens that covered the manna in the desert and helped to preserve it. **It is customary to uncover the challah before saying the blessing.**

## **Where do I get a challah cover?**

While you can order beautiful challah covers online, or purchase them in any local Jewish gift shop, they are not necessary. **Any covering, including a cloth or paper napkin, will do.**

## **Should the challah be pre-cut?**

It is customary to say the blessing over a challah(s) that has not yet been sliced. Once the blessing is said, the challah is cut or torn into pieces and distributed to everyone before the meal is eaten. However, **using a pre-sliced challah or other type of bread is perfectly fine.**

# Simple Shabbat Rituals and Traditions to Try



Remember, whether you do it by the book or start from scratch and create your very own prayers and customs, observing Shabbat in whatever way you feel comfortable is a great first step to creating meaningful Jewish memories. Come up with your own ideas, or try adding some of these to your Shabbat celebration either now, or in the future:

- **Tzedakah (seh-dah-kah)** – While some people translate this word as %charity+it actually means “justice.” **The Torah commands “Justice, justice you shall pursue”** While pursuing justice can take many forms, some people have the custom of putting a few coins or bills in a tzedakah box before lighting the Shabbat candles. The money is for the purpose of tikkun olam (tee-coon oh-lam) or repairing the world, and is **a great way to remember and help those less fortunate**. This is an especially nice tradition to start with young children.
- **Blessing the children** - Many families bless their children, using the special ancient priestly blessing (although it's not necessary) as an intimate chance to **express their love and appreciation for their children**. Some also add their own personal prayers for their children's well being and/or **use it as an opportunity to praise their children** for something special or good they did recently, or to say something nice about them. *Please see below for this blessing.*
- **Singing special songs** – This is a great way for young children to help welcome Shabbat. Many adults and children also sing the song Shalom Aleichem (ah-lay-chem) translated as %peace be with you+after the candles are lit, which asks for the home and community to be blessed with peace and serenity. You can search for a rendition of this and other Shabbat songs and prayers on Youtube. To listen to one version go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-w-0Z7MN9cw>
- **Reciting the prayer for washing of the hands** . After the kiddush is said, some people get up to wash their hands, using a special pitcher at the sink, and say a blessing. This is also a remembrance of the ritual that people performed before entering the Temple. *Please see below for this blessing.*
- **Make your own challah** – A fun project for couples and/or families to do together. *Please see below for a traditional recipe.*

# Step-by-Step Shabbat



1. **Give Tzedakah** (seh-dah-kah) - This is a great opportunity to empty your pockets of loose change. Give some to young children, or ask them to give their own. Use the time to talk to them about the importance of giving back.
2. **Light the Candles** -- Wave your hands three times as if gathering the light toward you, then cover your eyes and recite the following

**Barukh ata adonai**

**Blessed are You, God**

**Eloheinu melekh ha'olam**

**Ruler of the universe**

**Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav**

**Who has sanctified us with God's commandments**

**V'tzivanu l'hadlik neir shel shabbat**

**And has commanded us to light Shabbat candles**

3. **Sing songs, including Shalom Aleichem:** To hear this song please go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw-0Z7MN9cw>.
4. **Bless the Children** – One or both parents place their hands on the child's head, or hold him or her close and recite this blessing which invokes the names of Joseph's sons (the great grandsons of Abraham) and the matriarchs:

**For boys:**

**Y'sim kha Elohim k'Ephraim v khi Menashe**

**May God bless you as He blessed Ephraim and Menashe**

**For girls:**

**Y'simeyh Elohim k'Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, v'Leah**

**May God bless you as He blessed Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah**

Then say:

**Y'va re kh'kha Adonai v'yish m'rekha**

May God bless you and keep you

**Yaer Adonai panav ei lekha vi khun eka**

May the Lord cause His spirit to shine upon you  
and be gracious unto you

**Yisa Adonai panav ei lekha v'yasem lekha Shalom**

May the Lord turn His spirit unto you and grant you peace

**Please note:** As an alternative, or in addition to the blessing above, some people use this time as an opportunity to praise their children for a special accomplishment or for doing something that week that was noteworthy.

5. **Recite the Kiddush (blessing over the wine)** – Raise the kiddush cup and say:

**Barukh ata adonai**

Blessed are You, Lord

**Eloheinu melekh ha'olam**

Our God, Ruler of the universe

**borei p'ri hagafen.**

Who creates the fruit of the vine

6. **Wash Hands** – Fill a pitcher or large cup and pour water on each hand front and back up to three times each, starting with the right hand and say:

**Baruch ata Adonai**

Praised are You, God

**Eloheni melech haolam**

King of the universe

**Asher ki'd'shanu b'mitz-votav v'tzi-vanu, Al n'tilat yadayim**

Who has sanctified us by commanding us to wash our hands

7. **Recite the blessing over the challah** - Uncover the challah and say:

**Barukh ata adonai**

Blessed are You, Lord

**Eloheinu melekh ha'olam**

Ruler of the universe

**Hamotzi lehem min ha'aretz.**

Who brings forth bread from the earth

**8. Enjoy your meal.**

**9. Recite the Grace after the meal, also known as *Birkat Hamazon* –**

The full blessing is available online. However, for those who would like to round out their Friday night Shabbat celebration, the following is a loose translation that you can read aloud or use it for the basis for your own blessing:

Thank you God for giving food to the world  
and for bringing us out from the land of Egypt.

Thank you for making Your covenant with us,  
and for giving us the Land of Israel as an inheritance.

We pray for the rebuilding of Jerusalem  
and the eventual coming of the Messiah.

Thank you for the glory and goodness of Your actions.

**10. Have a Song session –** there are a variety of CDs on the market to choose from online for adults and children which feature special songs to sing around the Shabbat table.

**11. Shabbat Shalom!** (a common greeting on Shabbat which means "Have a peaceful/restful Shabbat")

# Shabbat Table Checklist:



**Choose from all or some of the items below (feel free to adapt or substitute items):**

## **Here's what you'll need:**

- Candle holders
- Candles, preferably white
- Matches or lighter
- Wine/grape juice . however, any fruit of the vine+or beverage will do
- One or two loaves of challah or other bread
- Challah cover . a fabric or paper napkin can be substituted
- Plate for challah
- Knife for cutting challah (or it can be torn from the loaf)

## **You also may want to opt for:**

- Tablecloth/placemats/fresh flowers . if possible, try to make your table look more festive than other times of the week.
- Tzedakah box . can be substituted with any bank, closed container
- Hand washing pitcher . decorative pitchers for Shabbat can be purchased online or in local Jewish gift shops. However, any pitcher, glass or cup will do

# Traditional Shabbat Recipes

## Super Easy Challah



### Here's what you need:

- \* 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water
- \* 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp yeast
- \*  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- \*  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil
- \* 1 tbsp salt
- \* 5 large eggs
- \* 8  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour

### Here's how:

Stir together all ingredients except flour and eggs. Add the eggs and whisk together. Slowly add the flour. Knead the dough into a ball or use a mixer instead. Grease a bowl and add the dough. Cover with a cloth or plastic wrap for one hour or until dough has doubled in size. After the hour is up punch the dough down, cover and let rise for half hour.

Cut dough in half. Cut each half into thirds. Roll out each piece about 12 inches in length. Braid as seen on video. Coat with egg (add sesame or poppy seeds if desired) and let rise for another hour or until doubled. Preheat oven to 375. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until golden brown. Remember, there is no such thing as Shabbat Police. No one is going to come to your home and tell you that you have to do things a certain way. The beauty of this in-home celebration is that you can be free to experiment with what works best for you!

# Chicken Soup



## Here's what you need:

- 1 chicken (whole, take out the insides)
- 2 turnips cut into cubes
- 1 bag parsnips cleaned, cut off ends, cut into chunks
- 6-8 stalks celery cleaned, cut into chunks
- 6-8 carrots cleaned, cut into chunks
- 3 yellow onions cut and leave the skin on (to color the soup)
- kosher salt, white pepper

## Here's how:

Put everything EXCEPT THE SEASONINGS into a large stockpot. Put cold water over it, filling the pot full. Bring to a boil then simmer. Let it simmer until the chicken is falling off the bone (about 2 to 3 hours). Then line a colander with paper towels or cheesecloth and put the colander over another stockpot. Slowly pour the soup through it, changing the towels as necessary. Bring the new broth up to a boil, then simmer another hour (this intensifies the flavor). Season with kosher salt and white pepper. Add chicken canned chicken stock or powdered bullion if needed for more flavor.

# Matzo Balls



Plain and simple, purchasing a box(es) or matzo ball mix (usually in the Kosher food aisle of most grocery stores) is the best and easiest way to make matzo balls. And they're delicious! You can also get a mix that includes chicken soup mix as well, but it's not as good as the kind you can make yourself. However, it will do in a pinch. Add carrots, celery and even bits of chicken to give it a richer flavor.

# Noodle Kugel



## Here's what you need:

- 10 ounces noodles
- 1/4 pound butter
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 8 oz heavy sour cream
- 6 eggs, separated
- 12 oz milk
- 2/3 C sugar
- 3/4 tsp. vanilla

Boil noodles - drain, put back in pan  
Add cream cheese and butter to hot noodles and stir to melt. Add sour cream, yolks, milk and sugar. Beat egg whites until stiff, fold into the noodle mixture. Add vanilla. Pour into a dish, bake at 350 degrees for one hour.  
Delicious hot or cold.

## Here's how: