SHAVUOT BRIEFING

Evening of Saturday 4th June to Monday 6th June 2022
Shavuot is a jubilant and enjoyable festival celebrated in Jewish communities all over the world with bible readings, studying and lots of cheesecake!

The festival commemorates the giving of the Torah (Old Testament) by God to Moses and the Israelites on Mount Sinai.

The festival is either two or one days depending on religious denomination, this year celebrated from the evening of Saturday 4th June to Monday 6th June (5th-6th Sivan in the Hebrew Calendar). It is held exactly 50 nights after the second night of Passover.
The word Shavuot means ‘weeks’ and is used to represent the counting of the Omer between Passover and the festival.

The Omer was a sheaf of wheat brought to the Temple in Jerusalem on the second day of Passover, from which we count 7 weeks until Shavuot.

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 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.
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 an ‘tikkun leil’ - an all-night learning of Torah. We remain awake to show that, unlike the situation of our heavy-lidded ancestors at Sinai, there is no need to bring us to our senses; we are ready to receive Torah. The tikkun (which refers both to the study session and to the text used for it) was the only observance developed specifically for Shavuot.

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 she was not born Jewish 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.
Cheese Cake Recipe

- 1x 500g chevington cooking cheese
- 4 x eggs
- 6oz sugar
- Loose bottomed tin

Pour on and bake for 15/20 mins on 160 till just set.
Fridge overnight.
Sour cream on top and you can add some berries
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. This includes the following synagogue denominational bodies:

Contact the JLC: adam@thejlc.org

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