



Shavuot Around the World



Shavuot in Biblical times was always an opportunity for Jews from all over the world to gather together in Jerusalem to offer their harvests at the Temple.

For the second year in a row, we still can't travel as much as we would wish to celebrate Shavuot, but we can still visit friends and family virtually. Our UJIA colleague Sydney has virtually visited her friends and family all around the world to hear about their Shavuot traditions and to celebrate together.

Click each video to hear about exciting Shavuot traditions, old and new, from around the world, and read the texts to learn more and participate in the activities. Chag Shavuot Sameach!



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Wellington, New Zealand Pavlova with Daniel

You may think that the pavlova, a rich dessert made of meringues, cream and fruit, is from Russia, but it's really a specialty of New Zealand, named for Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova's visit in the 1920s. But you may not know that the Jewish communities of New Zealand like to celebrate Shavuot with this delicious dairy concoction!

On Shavuot, it's traditional to eat dairy for a few different reasons. One of them is because on Shavuot the Jewish people were given the Torah, including all the different dietary laws. It was all so complicated, that they didn't want to make any mistakes, and so stuck to dairy deliciousness.

Try out this recipe for Shavuot Pavlova, and party like a Kiwi this Shavuot!

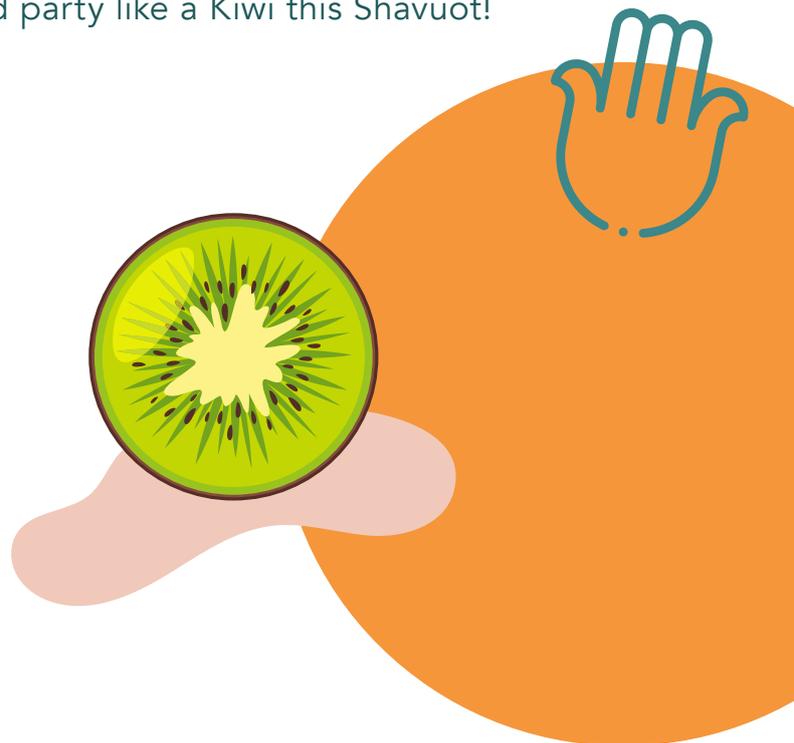
Shavuot Pavlova

Ingredients:

- 4 egg whites
- 250 grams caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp corn flour
- ½ litre double cream
- fruit for topping

Method:

- Preheat oven to 300 F / 150 C.
- Line a baking tray with parchment paper and draw a 9" circle.
- In a large bowl, beat the egg whites until stiff. Gradually add in sugar, mixing well. When shiny, fold in vanilla, lemon juice and corn flour.
- Spread mixture within the circle on the pan, starting in the centre and moving outwards. Bake for one hour, and cool on a rack.
- Beat double cream until peaks form. Fold cream over the meringue, and garnish with fruits. Daniel says his favourite is kiwi.



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Jerusalem, Israel Tehillim with Hodaya

Shavuot is when we celebrate the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. There is a Midrash that when the Jewish people gathered around the mountain, and prepared to receive the Torah in the morning, they fell asleep! Moshe had to wake them up in the morning for the big reveal. As a result, today we have a practice called *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, where we stay up all night learning Torah, and getting ready to hear the Ten Commandments being read in synagogue in the morning.

Sephardi Jews have a custom to also read *Tehillim*. *Tehillim* is the Hebrew name for the book of Psalms, one of the 24 books of the Torah. Hodaya's family comes from Persia, and she has memories of her grandfather reading the entire book of *Tehillim* on Shavuot.

The *Tehillim* are an important piece of Jewish heritage. Whether you regard them as a religious text, or as part of Jewish culture and history, this Shavuot, try reading some of the psalms. We've picked out a few beautiful passages from these poems. Can you draw a picture of what is described in each psalm?

Tehillim 1:3

He shall be as a tree planted beside rivulets of water, which brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaves do not wilt; and whatever he does prospers.

וְהָיָה כְעֵץ שֶׁתּוֹלַעַל-פִּלְגֵי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ | יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְהוּ לֹא יְבוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ:

Tehillim 4:8

You gave joy into my heart from the time that their corn and their wine increased.

נִתְּתָה שְׂמֵחָה בְּלִבִּי מֵעַת דָּגָנָם וְתִירוֹשָׁם רַבּוֹ:

Tehillim 23:1-2

A song of David. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He causes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters.

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה רֹעִי לֹא אֲחַסֵּר: בְּנְאוֹת דָּשָׁא יְרִבִּיצְנִי עַל-מֵי מְנַחֹת יְנַהֲלֵנִי:

Tehillim 23:6

May only goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for many long days.

אֲךָ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית-יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:



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Mumbai, India Cheese Sambusaks with Dan

One of the most exciting aspects of Jewish tradition is how it shifts over time to blend into our current lives. Jewish people have spread all around the world, bringing their rituals with them. These practices can help us adapt to new places, helping us maintain our Jewish roots and enriching our experiences.

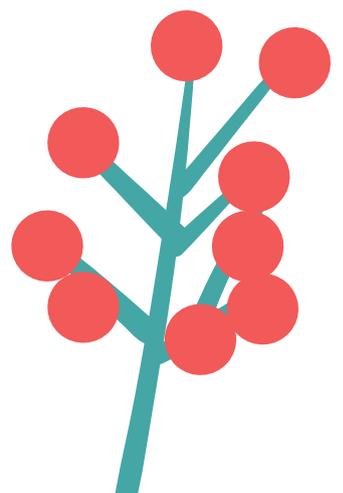
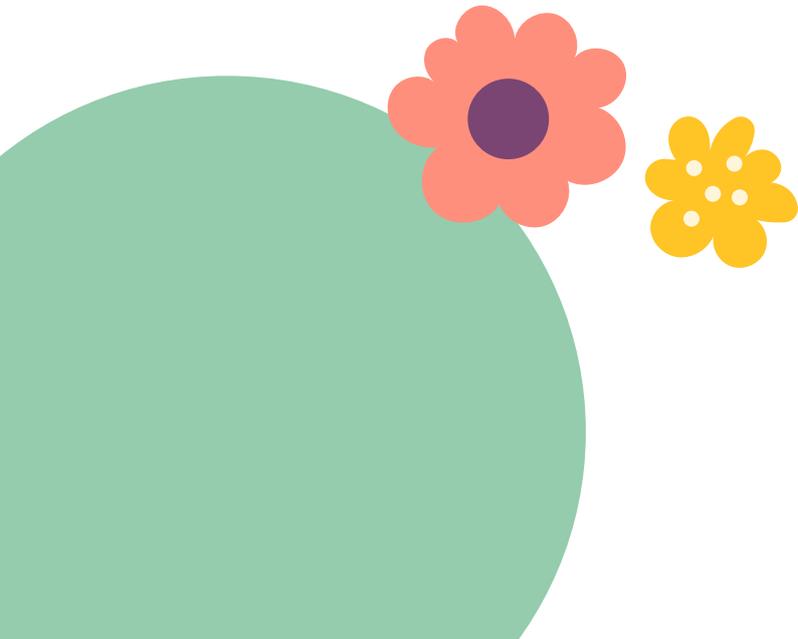
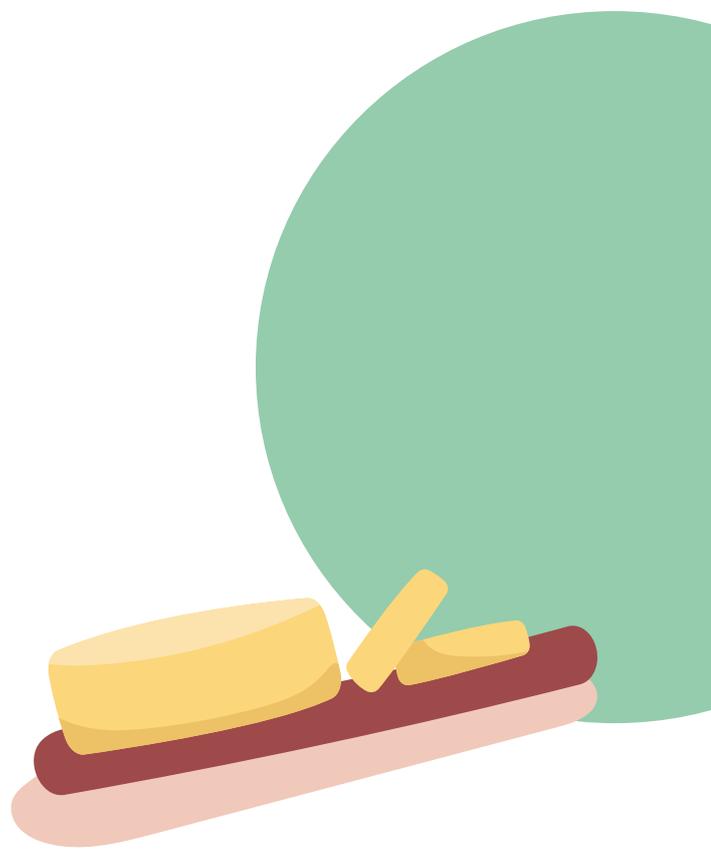
In the 1900's, Jewish traders from Baghdad, Iraq, travelled across Asia, establishing large communities in places like Singapore and India. Dan's family settled in Bombay (now Mumbai), bringing their Baghdadi traditions with them. These cheese sambusaks are a Shavuot tradition that brings Shavuot dairy, Arabic flavours and Indian spices together in a wonderful melting of cultures (and cheese).

Follow Dan's recipe to make your own cheese sambusaks this Shavuot!

Cheese Sambusaks

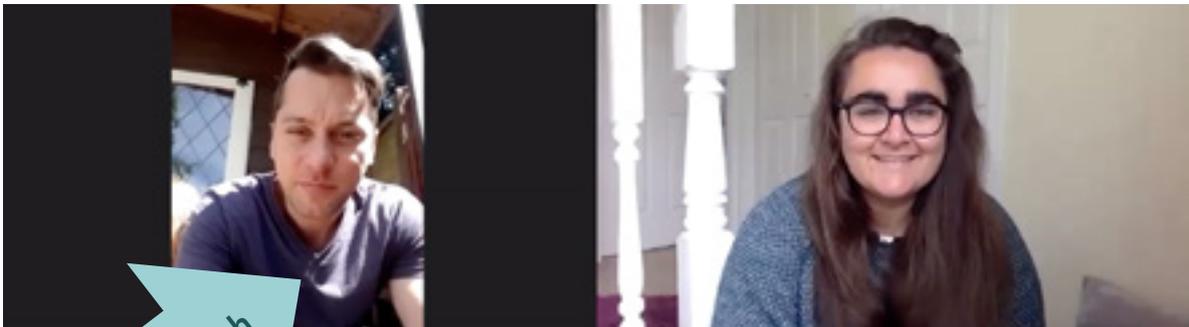
Ingredients:

- 120 ml vegetable oil
- 120 ml melted unsalted butter
- ½ tsp salt
- 120 ml hot water
- 380 grams flour
- 170 grams feta or ricotta cheese
- 170 grams grated cheddar cheese
- 3 large eggs
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- sesame seeds

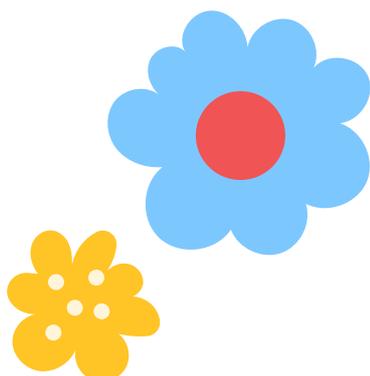


Method:

- Combine oil, melted butter, and salt in a bowl. Add in hot (not boiling) water. Slowly mix in flour, a ½ cup at a time, until a soft and oily dough forms.
- When it's too thick to stir, mix in flour with your hands. When it's smooth, cover with cling film and let sit while you make the filling.
- In another bowl, mix both cheeses, 2 of the eggs and black pepper. Blend until creamy.
- Preheat oven to 350 F / 180 C.
- Roll a walnut-sized piece of dough out onto a lightly floured board until it's quite thin and approximately 12 cm wide.
- Place 1 tbsp of filling in the centre. Fold the dough in half, forming a half moon shape. Seal the edges by pinching gently with your fingers. Score the edges with a fork.
- Beat the remaining egg with 1 tsp of cold water. Brush the sambusak with a thin layer of egg wash and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
- Bake for 35-40 minutes until golden brown.



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Mumbai, India Indian Basundi with Nissim

The Bene Israel community has lived in India for 2,000 years. Originally landing in Navgaon, off the Konkan Coast, today they primarily live in the city of Mumbai. The Bene Israel community has many rich traditions, including the *Malida* thanksgiving ceremony. They also have a vibrant community, with many beautiful historic synagogues.

Nissim is the Director of the Evelyn Peters Jewish Community Centre in Mumbai, and his father is the *chazzan* for a synagogue in nearby Pune. One of his Shavuot favourites is *basundi*, a milky drink spiced with saffron and cardamom. You can drink it, or dip bread in and use it like a condiment.

Basundi is part of the tradition of eating dairy on Shavuot. There are a number of reasons why we do this. One of them is because milk is associated with infancy, and Shavuot was the birth of the Jewish people as a nation. Another is because the numerical value of the Hebrew word *chalav* חָלָב, milk, is the number 40, and Moshe spent 40 days and 40 nights on Mount Sinai in preparation for receiving the Torah.

Try your hand at making some creamy *basundi* this Shavuot!

Indian Basundi

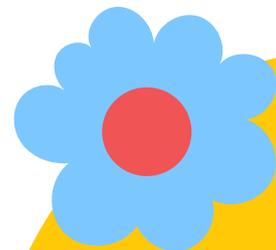
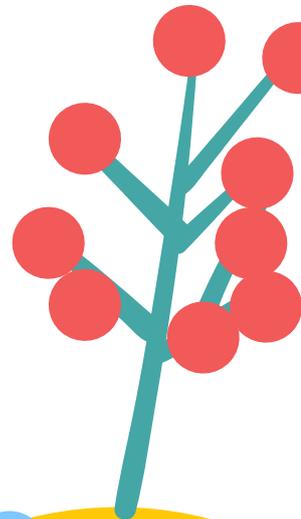
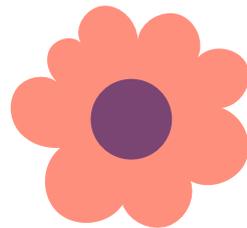
Ingredients:

- 400 grams sweetened condensed milk
- 1 litre whole milk
- 5 green cardamom pods, ground
- 15 cashews
- 15 pistachios
- 15 almonds
- a pinch of nutmeg
- 8 strands of saffron



Method:

- Heat the milk and condensed milk in a pot. Bring to a gentle boil but stir continuously so the bottom doesn't burn. Some solids might form, but incorporate them into the texture. Heat for around 20 minutes, until the mixture thickens.
- Chop the nuts and stir them into the mixture. Add in the nutmeg, saffron and cardamom.
- Simmer for one minute. Serve hot, warm or chilled, garnished with nuts and saffron.





Yarim, Yemen Sabaya with Sahar

Jews from Yemen have maintained strong ties with their traditions. Sahar's grandmother brought tasty *Sabaya* with her when she moved from Yarim, Yemen to Eliyachin, Israel, a village founded by new immigrants from Yemen. Sahar's grandfather became mayor of the town. He remembers her rolling out the dough into large circles, and the delicious, rich taste of all the layers coming together.

While eating dairy is an important Shavuot tradition, it's not always cheesecake! In Israel, Jews from around the world come together to share their rich and vibrant traditions. Yemenite food has become a favourite across Israel, for its rich, distinctive flavours. You may have tried *malawach* before, and this *sabaya* is its close relative!

In *Shir HaShirim*, the Song of Songs (4:11), we say

Honey and milk are under your tongue

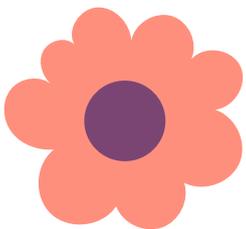
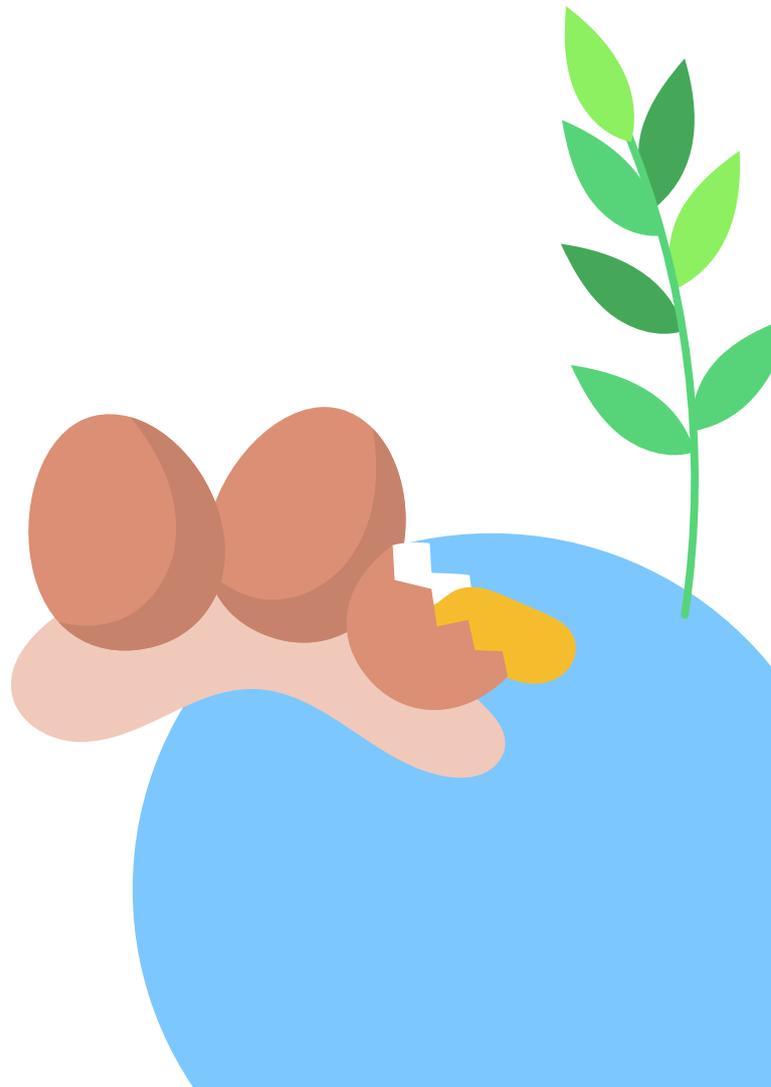
דָּבַשׁ וְחֵלֶב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנֶךָ

referring to the Land of Israel, the land of milk and honey, which sustains us. By eating dairy on Shavuot, we're continuing the tradition of Jews all over the world yearning for their homeland.

Yemenite Sabaya

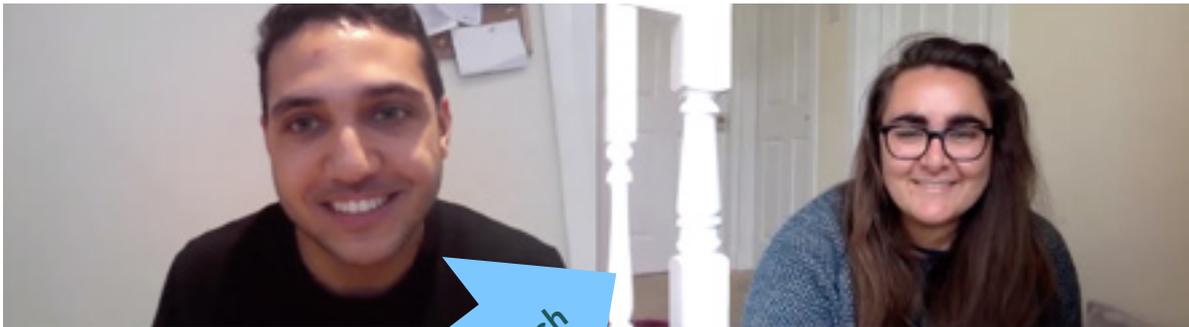
Ingredients:

- 500 grams plain flour
- 4 eggs
- 60 ml water and additional water
- 175 ml melted butter
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp yeast
- 60 ml additional melted butter
- black cumin or sesame seeds
- 1 egg yolk for egg wash



Method:

- Preheat oven to 400 F / 200 C.
- Dissolve the yeast in a quarter cup of water. Mix flour, 4 eggs, 175 ml melted butter and salt, and add yeast mixture. Knead for 10-15 minutes.
- Slowly add additional water (around 60 ml) until the dough is soft but not sticky. Cover and let sit for 10 minutes.
- Divide into 10 pieces and roll into balls. Gently coat with oil, cover, and let sit for 30 minutes.
- Roll each ball into a flat circle, thin enough to let light through. Place the first ball in the bottom of a greased round cake pan, and brush with melted butter. Repeat with each ball.
- Brush the top layer with egg wash and sprinkle with seeds. Bake for 18-20 minutes, until golden brown.



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Nanaimo, Canada First Fruits with Oliver

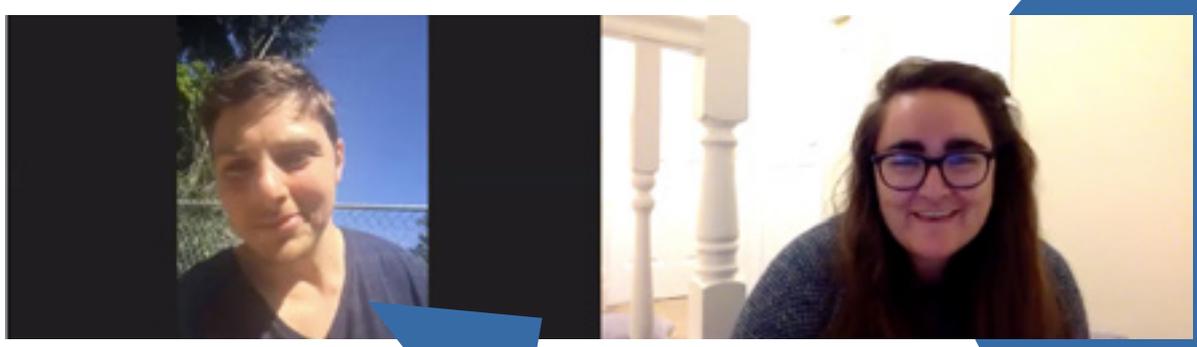
In Biblical times, Shavuot was practiced by bringing the first fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem. Traditionally, Shavuot marked the end of the barley harvest, and the beginning of the wheat harvest. Today, we no longer have the Temple to bring our harvests to, but that doesn't mean we can't share our bounty! We have a *mitzvah* to share our crops with others, to leave some for the poor and needy.

We read in Vayikra 19:9

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.

וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת־קְצִיר אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פֶּאת שְׂדֶךְ לִקְצֹר וּלְקַט קְצִירָהּ לֹא תִלְקֹט:

Although it might not be ready for Shavuot, try planting some seeds. If you have a garden, you can try for vegetables like peppers, sugar snap peas, or tomatoes. If you don't, herbs like parsley and mint can be grown in a pot on your window ledge. When you gather in your harvest, share it with others - friends, family, neighbours, or people in need. Growing something is reward in itself but sharing your reward with others makes it all the better!





Berlin, Germany

Meditation with Martin

Going to the synagogue to pray is an important part of Shavuot. Traditionally, we gather first thing in the morning to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments, and remember when we received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.

Prayer is a great opportunity to pause from the busyness of everyday life and look inwards. What are you grateful for? How have you been doing? Traditionally, Jews pray three times a day - in the morning, afternoon, and evening. This is a constant reminder to take care of ourselves. It can be helpful to keep a journal and write down some of our thoughts.

Breathing can also be a really effective way to pause and reflect. Martin shares with us some exercises we can do to help us center ourselves and use Shavuot as a time to reflect on the wonderful things in our lives.



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Budapest, Hungary Flowers with Lea

Before receiving the Torah, G-d told Moshe to keep the sheep and cows from grazing while facing Mount Sinai.

We read in Shemot 34:3

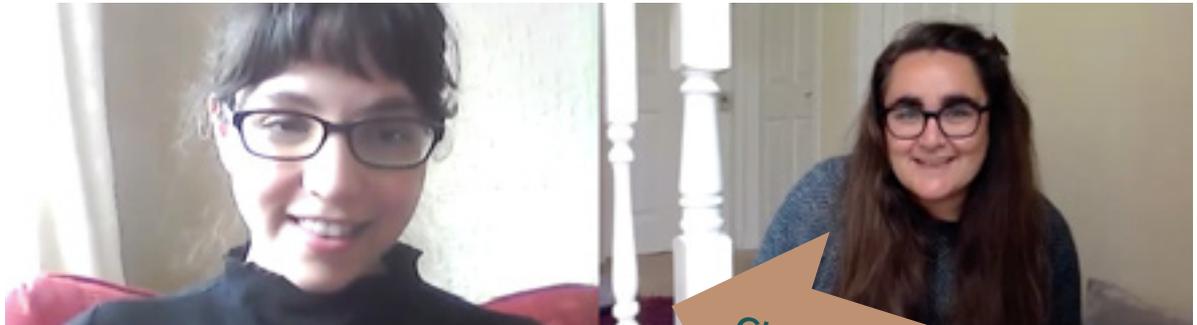
No one shall ascend with you, neither shall anyone be seen anywhere on the mountain, neither shall the sheep and the cattle graze facing that mountain.

וַאִישׁ לֹא-יַעֲלֶה עִמָּךְ וְגַם-אִישׁ אֶל-יָרֵא בְּכָל-הָהָר גַּם-הַצֹּאן וְהַבָּקָר אֶל-יָרְעוּ אֶל-מֹול הָהָר הַהוּא:

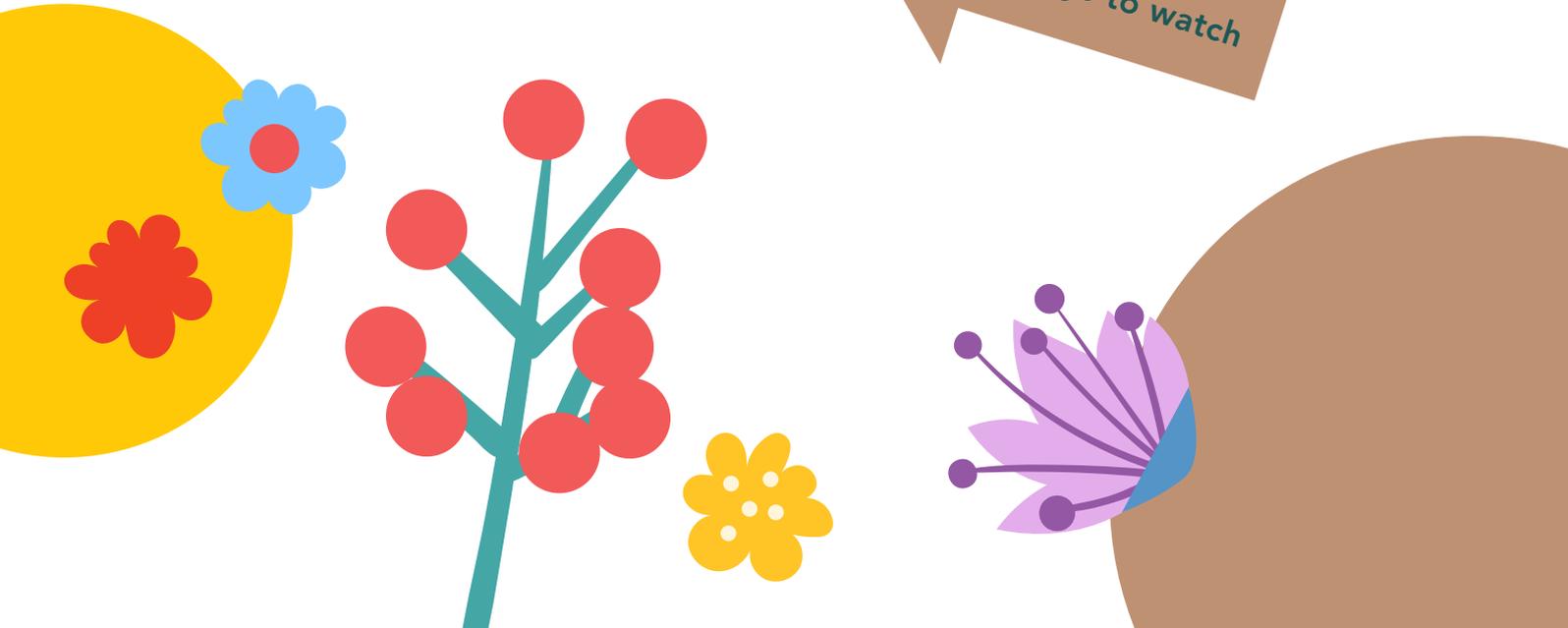
But Mount Sinai was in the middle of the desert, where there were no plants for grazing! The Rabbis explain this by saying that the Torah was so powerful, that the desert burst into bloom when it was given. As such, it's become a tradition to decorate our houses and synagogues with greenery around Shavuot time.

But it doesn't stop there! Keeping plants and flowers in your home can help keep your air fresh, and keep you feeling happy! When we practice Jewish rituals, we try and do them in as beautiful a way as possible, bringing more beauty into the world and into our lives.

Try going for a walk. Are there any parks or forested areas near your house? Can you collect anything there - any flowers, beautiful stones, nice leaves? Bring them home (make sure they're clean and it's okay to collect them) and let them remind you of the beautiful things in life this Shavuot!



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Glasgow, Scotland

Cheesecake with Adele

We've seen some beautiful dairy recipes from Jewish communities around the world, and here's a traditional version of the classic. Another reason why we eat dairy on Shavuot is because we say that Torah is like milk, it sustains us and gives us lots of nourishment! Shavuot is the time when we receive the Torah, and so we eat dairy to celebrate our strength!

We also gain a lot in life from traditions. Bringing Jewish practices into our daily lives gives us vision and purpose and helps us think intentionally about the way that we interact with the world. While new ideas are important and exciting, it's also nice sometimes to sink into something classic and traditional.

Adele remembers this traditional cheesecake made using a yeast dough, which is popular at Glasgow's Synagogue Shavuot Buffet! Try it out for a classic twist on that favourite of Shavuot treats!

Kaese Kuchen (Traditional Cheesecake)

Dough Ingredients (double recipe):

- 2 eggs
- 75 ml milk
- 75 ml hot water
- 1 tbsp dry yeast
- 75 grams soft butter
- 75 grams caster sugar
- 480 grams plain flour
- ½ tsp salt

Filling Ingredients (single recipe):

- 300 grams cream cheese
- 1 egg
- 50 grams caster sugar
- a pinch of salt
- 2 tsp flour
- grated rind of ½ lemon
- A handful of raisins (optional)

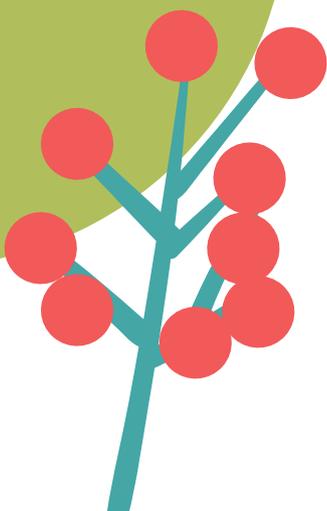


Method:

- In a bowl mix eggs, cold milk, and hot water. Add yeast and let sit for 10 minutes. Stir to dissolve.
- Add butter, sugar, flour and salt and beat for 5 minutes until dough is smooth and stretchy and leaves the bowl clean.
- Cover with cling film and leave for one hour, until doubled. Knead, and let rise for another 30 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 350 F / 180 C.
- Blend filling ingredients until smooth. Add raisins for extra fun!
- Roll half of the dough into a circle and place in the bottom of a greased round baking tin. Let rise for 10 minutes.
- Spoon the cheese filling on top. Roll extra dough into strips, and form into a lattice design on top.
- Leave to rise for 30 minutes. Brush with milk or egg wash and bake for 40 minutes.



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