

SUKKA

SUKKA: BEING INSIDE

Sukka: Being Inside: Requirements

There is no requirement to be in a sukka except when eating bread or mezonot, and possibly sleeping in the sukka, but there is some spiritual benefit from being in the sukka at other times.

SUKKA: EATING

Sukka: Eating: What To Eat

There is no requirement to eat any food other than mezonot or bread (and some opinions say also drinking wine) in a sukka. Eating other foods in a sukka is considered to be saintly behavior (midat chasidut).

Men: Eating Outside the Sukka

Bread: Men may not eat bread or a full meal outside the sukka during Sukkot.

Mezonot: Men may not eat more than 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of mezonot (within four minutes) outside the sukka during Sukkot, but they may eat 1.8 fl. oz. or less, wait nine minutes, and then eat another quantity up to 1.8 fl. oz.

Women: Eating Outside the Sukka

Women and girls may eat bread or mezonot outside of a sukka. They do not need to eat any meals in the sukka, but if they do, it is a mitzva and they say leishev ba'sukka.

Sukka: Eating: Uncomfortable Weather

Except for first night of Sukkot (and also the second night outside of Eretz Yisrael), there is no need to be discomforted at all by rain, cold, or heat. You may eat even bread outside of the sukka without waiting to see if the conditions will become more comfortable. This includes on Shabbat.

SUKKA: BLESSINGS

Sukka: Blessings: When To Say

Do not say the blessing leishev ba'sukka except when you will eat bread or mezonot. Even drinking wine is not an exception, so do not say leishev ba'sukka even for havdala (unless you will also eat mezonot at the same time).

NOTE We do say leishev ba'sukka at kiddush, but that is in anticipation of eating bread at the meal to follow.

Sukkot: Blessings: SheHecheyanu

First Night: Say she'hecheyanu after saying leishev ba'sukka (in kiddush), since she'hecheyanu covers the sukka and the Jewish festival.

Second Night: Say she'hecheyanu before leishev ba'sukka (since it only covers the Jewish festival itself).

NOTE There is no blessing on building a sukka; it is covered by the she'hecheyanu in the kiddush.

Sukkot: When To Say Leishev BaSukka

When you sit down in a sukka, only say the blessing leishev ba'sukka:

- If you are going to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml, or about 1/4 - 1/5 cup) of bread or mezonot within four minutes, OR
- Immediately after saying kiddush and before drinking the wine in anticipation of eating mezonot or bread, OR

- Before eating any food or beverage (except salt or water) when visiting any other person in his/her sukka.

Sukkot: Blessings: Forgetting Leisheiv BaSukka

If you washed hands, said ha'motzi, and ate some bread in a sukka but forgot to say the blessing leisheiv ba' sukka, you may still say that blessing until you have finished your meal; but you should eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) more of bread (within 4 minutes) after saying leisheiv ba'sukka.

Birkat HaMazon If You Ate Sukka Meals Indoors

If you ate your meal inside the house on Sukkot, you do not need to go to the sukka to say birkat ha'mazon.

SUKKA: SLEEPING

Sukkot: Sleeping at Someone Else's House

If you sleep at another person's house or sukka during Sukkot, you should consider their sukka as being yours. You do not say the blessing leisheiv ba'sukka except if you eat bread or mezonot there.

SUKKA: BUILDING

SUKKA: BUILDING OR FIXING

Building or Fixing a Sukka on Sukkot

A Jew may fix or build a sukka on chol ha'moed.

A non-Jew may fix or build a sukka on chol ha'moed or even on the Jewish festival days. A Jew may explicitly tell the non-Jew how to accomplish the repairs or the building of the sukka.

SUKKA: SHAPES

Permitted Sukka Shapes

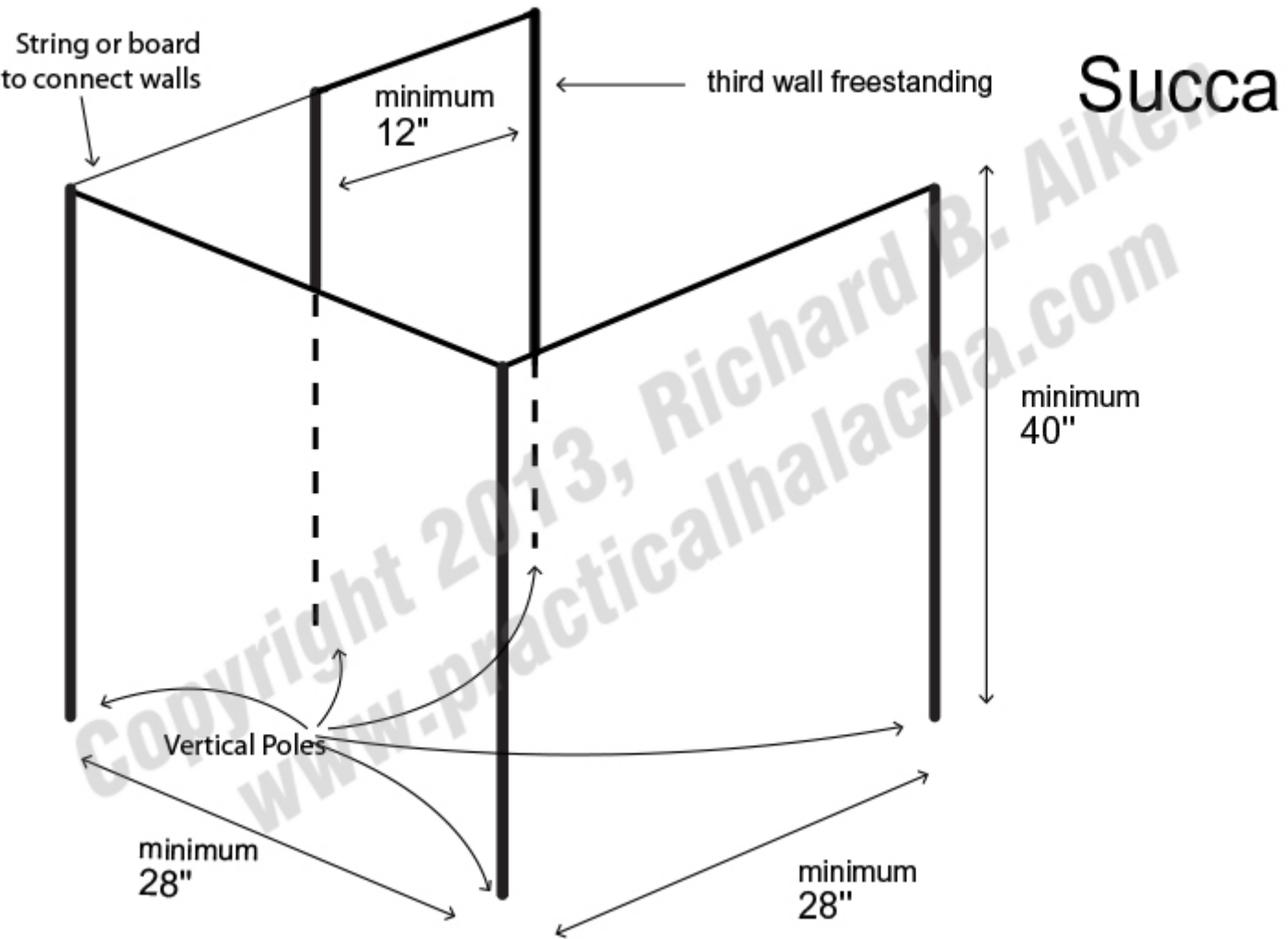
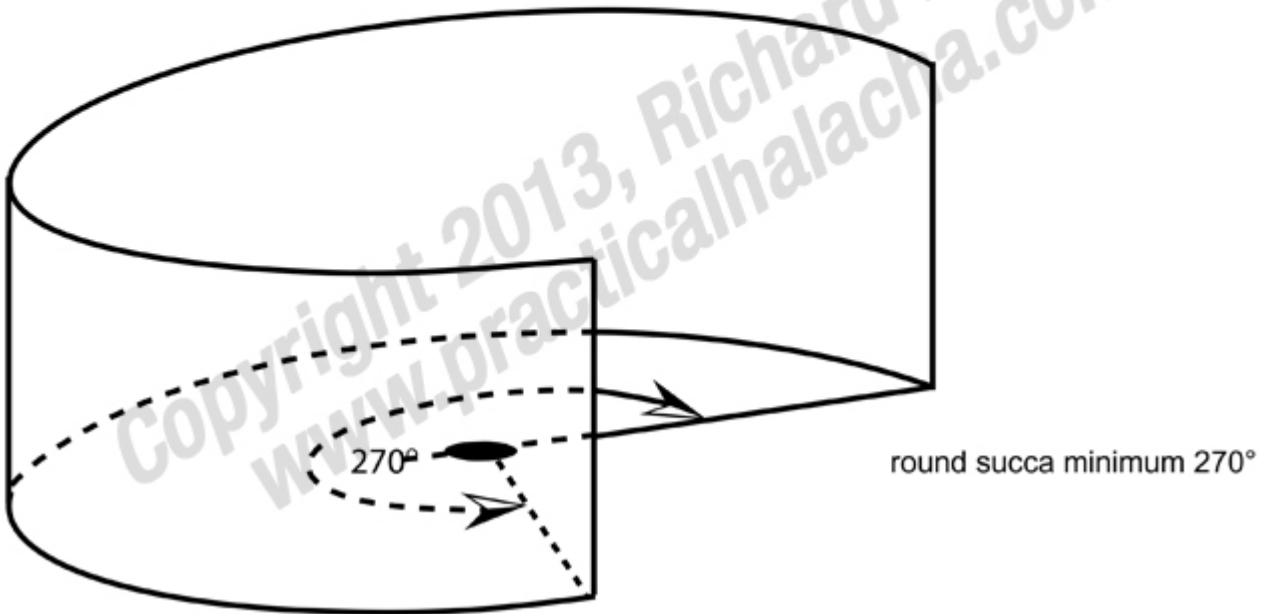
A sukka may have many sides and may even be circular, but it may not have a pointed top (shaped like a teepee).

SUKKA: DIMENSIONS

Sukka: Dimensions: Minimum/Maximum

- A sukka must have at least three walls, but one of those walls may be as little as 1 tefach wide.
- A round sukka must extend to at least 270 degrees.
- Sukka height: More than 10 tefachim (40" or 1 m) high and less than 20 amot (33'4" or 10 m) tall.
- Minimum sukka width: 7 tefachim x 7 tefachim (28" x 28" or 71.1 cm x 71.1 cm).
- Maximum wall-to-ground gap for sukka: walls must be within 3 tefachim, or 10 1/2" (27 cm) of the ground.
- Maximum permissible angle (slope) of a roof on a sukka is less than 45 degrees from horizontal.
- Schach: Must cover the sukka so that there is more shade than sun when the sun is directly overhead and must have at least enough space between the schach elements for rain to penetrate.

Round Sukka



SUKKA: WALLS

Sukka: Walls: Tree Trunk

You may use the trunk of a tree as part of a sukka, but consult a rabbi about the spacing and curvature of the roots.

Sukka: Walls: Flapping

The walls of a sukka must be able to withstand wind without flapping up from the bottom to more than 10.5 inches above the ground.

Sukka: Walls: Bracing

The sukka does not need to be freestanding. When setting up a sukka, you may brace the walls with rope, boards, against tree or house... in any way you wish. You may not brace or attach supports to the walls on the festival but you may directly ask a non-Jew to do that work for you.

SUKKA: SCHACH

Sukka: Schach: Timing

Sukka: Schach: Timing: Within 30 Days

You must put schach on your sukka within 30 days of Sukkot. If you are using a porch that has slats year round as a roof for your sukka, you must lift up and put back the slats within 30 days of Sukkot.

Sukka: Schach: Materials

Non-Kli

You may not use a kli for sukka schach.

A kli is any item created with the intention of being used as a tool or utensil to make an activity easier.

EXAMPLES

- Bamboo if it had been used for any other purpose.
- Wooden ladder.
- Walking stick.

Non-Edible

A sukka's covering (schach) must consist of non-edible branches, leaves, or other materials of plant origin such as boards. You may use wooden boards (such as 2" x 4"s) to hold up schach, even though lumber is intended to be used for construction.

Size

Boards or tree trunks—whether used as schach or used to hold up schach--must be not more than 15 inches (38 cm) wide. A board--whether used as schach or used to hold up schach--more than 15 inches wide invalidates the area below it and you would have to sit under kosher schach in order to fulfill the mitzva. In the case of a board more than 15 inches wide: If the sukka has only three walls, the board may invalidate the sukka. Consult a rabbi.

Fresh

You may not use branches whose leaves will dry up in less than 8 days, intending to replace the branches with fresh ones during chol ha'moed; the custom is to use evergreen leaves only if you want to use leaves as schach.

Fasteners

Schach on the sukka must stay by itself without fasteners or connectors, even in a place with normally high wind. Any man-made fasteners--such as plastic, metal, or even hemp cord or rope--will invalidate the schach. If the schach will stay without them, then you may use fasteners or connectors as reinforcements.

Year-Round Structures

You may use a pergola, gazebo, or other type of awning frame or roof structure that exists year-round for a sukka as long as the other conditions (size, slope, materials, timing, etc.) are kosher. You must first remove any permanent roof coverings before putting on the schach.

NOTE The slope of the sukka roof must be less than 45 degrees from horizontal.

Sukka: Schach: Gap

Sukka: Schach: Gap: What Invalidates

A gap in schach of 10.5 inches by 10.5 inches or larger will not invalidate the entire sukka, but you may not sit under that part of the sukka when eating or saying the blessing leishev ba'sukka. A gap of more than 14 inches wide may invalidate the sukka.

Sukka: Schach: Normal Wind (Ru'ach Metzuya)

Ru'ach metzuya is defined as a normal wind for each location and season (this is relevant for schach on Sukkot).

SUKKA: OVERHANGS

Sukka: Overhangs: Vines/Trees

Vines or tree branches that overhang even a small part of a sukka may make it not kosher. A tree that overhangs a large part of the sukka invalidates the portion below the tree and may invalidate an entire side or even more. Consult a rabbi.

Sukka: Overhangs: Wood Structures

You may not normally use a sukka that has any wood structure such as a pergola/gazebo above the schach, but there are exceptions: ask a rabbi.

Sukka: Overhangs: Balconies

A sukka built under a balcony, even if the balcony is many stories above the sukka, is not kosher.

SITUATION

Only part of a sukka is under the balcony.

STATUS

To be kosher, the sukka must have a footprint at least 7 by 7 tefachim and must have at least three walls that are not under the balcony.

NOTE If you have only two walls with the overhanging balcony, consult a rabbi.

Sukka: Overhangs: Women and Children

Women and children of either gender may sit under an invalidated part of the sukka since they are not required to sit in the sukka at all. However, if they wish to say the blessing leishev baSukka, they must sit under a valid part of the sukka while they say the blessing. They must also eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. of bread or mezonot while under the valid part.

SUKKA: CAR

How To Make a Car into a Sukka

To make a car into a sukka:

- Open two doors on the same side of the car and put schach on top/across the doors.
- Make sure the doors reach to within 10 ½ inches (26.7 cm) of the ground or curb (so you might need to park at a curb).
- Make sure the schach over the doors is at least 40 inches (1 m) above the curb.

SUKKA: INTIMACY

Sukka: Intimacy

Intercourse is permitted in a sukka.

SUKKA: LEAVING

SUKKA: LEAVING: FIRST NIGHT

Sukka: Leaving: First Night: Rain

Rain on the first night of Sukkot is only considered a bad omen in Eretz Yisrael.

REASON It does not normally rain there at that time of year.

Sukka: Leaving: First Night: Rain, Cold, Bees

You may leave the sukka due to extreme cold or heat, rain, or bees. **You should not stay in a sukka if it is raining or very cold or will otherwise make people suffer.**

If it is raining on the first night of Sukkot and the rain is sporadic, wait until midnight before saying kiddush indoors.

If it is raining on the first night of Sukkot and the forecast predicts rain all evening, you do not need to wait to see if the rain will stop before saying kiddush. Instead:

- Say kiddush in the sukka (without saying leishev ba'sukka), even in the rain.
- Wash hands and say ha'motzi.
- Eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread in the sukka.
- Go inside the house and finish your meal inside.

NOTE You do not need to say birkat ha'mazon in the sukka. If the rain stops, go back outside, say leishev, eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) more of bread in the sukka, and finish your meal in the sukka.

SUKKA: SHMINI ATZERET

Sukka: Shmini Atzeret

Outside Eretz Yisrael, you should eat your meals in the sukka on Shmini Atzeret, but do not make a blessing on the sukka.