

SHABBAT ALONE, *together*



Friday night is an invitation to elevate time and space, and to encounter joy. We have created this dinner guide to support you as you do that alone, together.

Whether you are celebrating on your own, virtually with others online, or in person with your housemates, we hope these resources connect you to the experience of Shabbat in a way that is new and — perhaps surprisingly — sacred.

Welcome

Yes, the space between us is scary.
It is odd and at odds,
an area unoccupied where all things exist.
But the space between us is also liminal,
a threshold between old and new.

And so, in this space anything is possible:
to grow without gathering,
to connect without congregating,
to create without convening.

Which means the space between is sacred.

Yes, the space between us is scary.
But scared and sacred are so close —
and we need to make space for both.

Is this the first time you have gathered virtually for Shabbat dinner?
Is this the first time you have celebrated Shabbat on your own, or
only with your housemates, knowing that you'd include others if you
could?

Jewish practice offers a blessing for that — for first times — the
Shechecheyanu. Social distancing sets boundaries;
Shechecheyanu transcends them.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam shehecheyanu
v'kiyamanu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed is the Oneness that inspires the universe, sustains us, raises
us up, and enables us to reach this season.

Light

Shabbat candles symbolize the last act of the work week.

We welcome each other and the weekend, create light that inspires joy, and elevate Shabbat.

Friday night is about transforming time and space, which is particularly challenging when you are still in the same space.

Let the light do the work:

Consider more than one light, strategically (and safely) placed candles, even electric tea lights if you have them.

Try turning off lights that you usually leave on, using twinkly lights or nightlights to create a Shabbat glow.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.

Blessed is the Oneness that makes us holy through commandments and commands us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

Bless

May you* be filled with loving kindness.
May you* be safe from inner and outer dangers.
May you* be healthy in body and mind.
May you* find peace and be truly happy.

**On your own? Replace 'you' with 'I' for some well deserved self-love.*

Shabbat holds space for us to feel blessed, and empowers us to bless others.

If you are celebrating Shabbat on your own, sit for a moment in stillness before honoring yourself with a blessing below.

If you are gathering with housemates in person, we invite you to turn to one another and offer one of the blessings above or below, or whatever good wishes are in your heart.

If you are in a large virtual gathering space, consider using breakout rooms to create more intimacy for this ritual.

יְבָרַכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יְאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיַחַנְךָ
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִשֵּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

*Y'varechicha Adonai v'yishmirecha.
Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem l'cha shalom.*

May you* be blessed and guarded.
May you* know favor and grace.
May you* give and receive kindness and peace.

Kiddush

Kiddush sanctifies time.

We bless wine, we bless this moment, and we remember:
We are partners in the ongoing wonder of creation,
building a better world week after week, year after year.

In order to raise this glass to the weekend, you have to put down something from the week.

On your own, with your housemates, or on small virtual gatherings, give voice to something you want to let go from the week that was.

For large virtual gatherings, we invite you to use the chat function to do the same, creating a 'Let Go List' that everyone can share.

Once everyone has let go, take a collective deep breath before proceeding.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.
ברוך אתה יי מקדש השבת.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'gafen.
Baruch Atah Adonai m'kadesh ha'Shabbat.*

Blessed is the Oneness that creates the fruit of the vine.
Blessed is the Oneness that sanctifies Shabbat.

Cleanse

Wash your hands in a ritual sense,
knowing that this is a practice shared the world over.
Wash your hands with soap and water,
knowing this is one of the most powerful actions we can
take to keep our communities healthy.

Whether ritual hand washing is already a part of your Friday night experience, or a practice new to you, we invite you to explore and experiment.

Whether you are on your own, gathering in person, or virtually —
Pause. Wash. Bless. Breathe.

Consider sitting in silence until everyone returns to the table or the screen.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu
b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al netilat yadayim.*

Blessed is the Oneness that makes us holy through our actions and honors us as we raise up our hands.

Bread

Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.

— Rabbi Yosef Kamefsky

Blessing the bread we eat is a way to acknowledge our interconnectedness, our dependence on each other for the goods that enrich our daily lives.

Nourishment isn't a given, it is a gift. So many around the world are food insecure, so many are facing financial hardship.

If you are on your own or in a small group, consider giving voice to what you are grateful for at this time, what has brought you joy this week, before reading the blessing aloud.

Virtually, we invite each guest to hold up their bread to acknowledge their own nourishment and that of others. Each individual may bless, or one person may offer the blessing on behalf of everyone on screen.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Blessed is the Oneness that brings forth bread from the earth.

Gratitude

AFTER THE MEAL

What does it mean to truly be fulfilled?

In Hebrew, the root of the word for fulfillment — to be whole, to be complete — is shalom, the same as the word for peace.

May we find peace, a whole and complete peace.
May we be fulfilled, not only by our food, but by our family and friends, by our actions and our words.

It's a remarkable thing that Jewish tradition seeks to inspire us to be present *before* we eat, and all the more so that we are then directed to acknowledge our gratitude *after* we eat, not for the food itself, but for the incredible feeling of being full.

וְאַחַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַטָהּ וְבֵרַכְתָּ.

V'achalta v'savata u'varachta.

When you have eaten and are satisfied, bless.

— Deuteronomy 8:10

Endings matter just as much as beginnings, and we invite you to close your Shabbat dinner with intention by reading aloud the blessing and poem below.

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא מְרִיבָה דְהָא' פִּיתָא.

Brich rachamana malka d'alma marei d'hai pita.

We are blessed with compassion by the Oneness that sustains us with bread.

Pandemic

By Rev. Dr. Lynne Ungar (March 11, 2020)

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world different than it is.
Sing. Pray.
Touch only those to whom you commit your life.
Center down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love--
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.