

ONETABLE

# SOBER SHABBAT DINNER GUIDE



We invite you to hold tradition in one hand and your beliefs, experiences and passions in the other. Every week Shabbat dinner offers a chance to take a break and be fully present. Ritual and blessings might help carve out a moment to connect with yourself and others.

One of the gifts of recovery is that I am afforded the ability to show up. Today, I can show up physically, mentally, emotionally, as well as spiritually.

During my active addiction I did not have the capacity, even though I did have the desire from time to time, to show up in any of these ways. I can remember one dark day receiving a call from my mother and my aunt asking if I was planning on coming tonight.

"Coming to what," I asked, increasingly annoyed at the prospect of being on the phone with my mother and aunt while really high. "Marc, it's Rosh Hashanah, the High Holidays, aren't you coming?" I quickly got off the phone making some excuse as to why I, once again, would not be showing up. I didn't even know what day it was. This was a significant moment for me as the holidays had always been an important part of my life. I drowned the feelings of guilt with more drugs.

Today, I show up. I am a person in long-term recovery and for me that means since August 20, 2004, I have not had a drink or a drug and I show up. Sober Shabbat is such an important event for me as it allows me to make showing up sacred. **By showing up in community, sober, and celebrating the gift of Shabbat we make this time and space sacred. We set aside differences and celebrate the similarities we find in connection. It has been said the opposite of addiction is connection, and sober Shabbat allows sacred space for this to happen.**

In recovery, lighting the Shabbat candles takes on new meaning for me. We traditionally light them for kavod Shabbat and oneg Shabbat: to honor and to enjoy Shabbat. The candles are lit to bring a sanctity to the meal and to the rituals that surround it. The great commentator Rashi wrote: "Without light there can be no peace because [people] will constantly stumble." In my active addiction I constantly stumbled and indeed there was no peace. I was lost in the darkness and could not find my way home. Today in my active recovery, while I still stumble from time to time, I know peace. I know home. I know the meaning and the gift of light.

Today I celebrate living in the light. My prayer for us all is that we may know peace even if we stumble, and that we may find the light even amid the darkness.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Marc Pimsler  
*Addiction Counselor and OneTable Host*

# MEDITATION TO WELCOME SHABBAT

Begin this optional exercise by inviting everyone to relax in a quiet, preferably dimly lit space.

Welcome. Take a moment to get comfortable, whether sitting or lying down. Focus on your breath and your your body. Allow yourself to relax, to inhale (one-two-three) and exhale (three-two-one) as you settle into place.

We've joined to share Friday night together, to transition from the hectic demands of work and our daily routines into the rest and relaxation of Shabbat. You are invited to leave the week behind.

Let go of what has been, let go of what will be, and enter a place of stillness, a sacred space and time. Envision the sun beginning to set, slipping behind the horizon out of view. Breathe in the glow of the sunset, and pause, breathe out the stresses of the week; breathe in the calm of nightfall, and pause, breathe out and feel a sense of release. Breathe in the radiance of the moon and stars, and pause, breathe out all thoughts of doing, and become one with this present moment.

Feel the warmth of relaxation wash over you. Breathe in the radiant light, and pause, feel your mind become open and free. Breathe out and invite your soul to soar to new heights; breathe in the calm, and pause, feel yourself let go; breathe out everything and focus only on Now. Feel your body, mind, and soul become whole and at peace.

Now we are finally ready, to graciously accept this present, to embrace the gift of rest, to turn our complete attention toward Shabbat, to savor all that Shabbat provides, and become enveloped by holiness. As we breathe in and out once more, we pause, and welcome Shabbat.

*By Evette Nan Katlin at [ritualwell.org](http://ritualwell.org) modified by Rabbi Jessica Minnen*

# ORDER OF OPERATIONS



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### **1. Light**

Officially end the workweek and welcome the weekend  
with the light of two or more candles

### **2. Sanctify**

Fruit of the vine serves as a conduit to sanctify the seventh day of the week, the time of Shabbat, as “other,” set apart from the daily grind of the other six days

### **3. Cleanse**

A formal practice of washing hands that recalls an ancient practice during Temple times when Shabbat was accompanied by special offerings

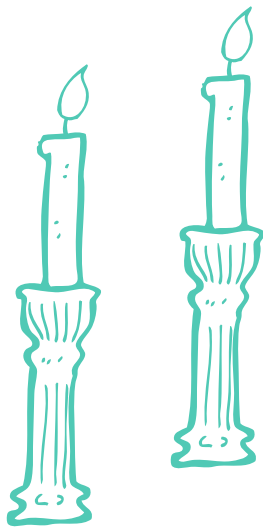
### **4. Nourish**

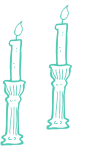
Breaking bread makes a meal, and Shabbat is a time to enjoy a special braided bread called challah that just might steal the show

### **5. Appreciate**

Friday night is a time when you can end your meal the same way you started it, with intention

# LIGHT





## THE RITUAL

Light two candles to begin Shabbat, just prior to sunset.

In Jewish tradition, lighting candles at sundown on Friday is the last act of the workweek, the literal spark that carries us into the weekend. While you will find no verse in the Torah instructing you to light two candles at dusk, the rabbinic sages over the centuries linked the practice to the concepts of *shamor Shabbat* and *zachor Shabbat*, the commandments to keep and remember Shabbat.

The beauty of Jewish tradition is not its certitude but its ambiguity; even the rabbis disagree on what exactly it means to keep and remember Shabbat.

What might it mean for you?

While it's heartening that the rabbis took the time to create a text-based conceptual framework around the practice of creating light, it is possibly more remarkable — and in its way even more spiritually moving — to recognize that the ritual of candle lighting is first and foremost a practical exercise. Before there was electricity, an embedded candle lighting ritual ensured that you and your friends would not be celebrating Shabbat in the dark. In fact the Jewish legal sources clearly state that if you can only afford to buy one thing for Friday night it should be candles, because if you can't see your table, your food, or your guests, it's impossible to enjoy Shabbat.

Many Jewish celebrations begin with the lighting of candles to separate the holy from the mundane. By lighting candles, one is reminded of God's first act of creation. Just as creation began with "let there be light" so does the celebration of Shabbat.

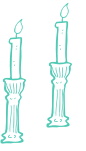
This is the moment when Shabbat begins. By lighting the candles, we begin the transition from the week to Shabbat, from the mundane to the holy.

## THE GOODS

**CANDLES AND CANDLESTICKS** – try for at least two, but this is a place to experiment; some folks like to light two candles per home, others light two per person.

**MATCHES** – a lighter also works, but we prefer matches for the olfactory effect.

**SAFE PLACE TO LET 'EM BURN** – ideally your Shabbat candles will burn out on their own over the course of the evening, but do blow them out if you're heading out after dinner.



## BLESS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

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

Blessed are You, Infinite One, Who makes us holy through our actions  
and honors us with the light of Shabbat.

*or*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who commands  
us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

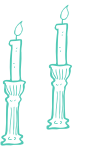
### Reflection

On Shabbat, the light within everyone and everything is revealed.

We need only the will to see it.

— *Sfat Emet (1847-1905, Poland)*





# CANDLE LIGHTING MEDITATION

Light your Shabbat candles, preferably two, in any way you feel comfortable. This is an open-eye meditation that focuses attention on the candlelight, letting go of the week that was, and welcoming Shabbat.

Bring your attention to the flame. Draw in a long, slow breath through your nose, and as you slowly exhale through your mouth let the busyness of the day drop away. Take in another long, slow, deep breath through your nose, and as you slowly exhale through your mouth, let go of the worries that may have been troubling you this week. Take a third long, slow, deep breath, breathing all the way down into your belly. As you slowly breathe out through your nose, allow yourself to sink comfortably into your posture, to settle into Shabbat. Whether you are sitting or standing, become aware of your back and gently straighten it, allow your shoulders to gently slope downwards, let your face be smooth and serene.

Now allow your breathing to come naturally, keeping your focus on the candle flame. Hear these words and let them go, just being aware of the guidance but not holding onto the words. Gaze softly at the flame, and as you continue to do so if you feel you are starting to stare at the light, ever so gently blink and refocus your eyes, gazing softly at the candlelight once more and allowing your mind to quiet down, allowing the thoughts that enter your mind to be there, but like these words just letting them drift by. As you softly gaze at the flame, you will notice that thoughts will come into your mind. Just allow them to be there, and allow them to float out of your mind like passing clouds. Just as Shabbat rest takes time to enter your night, your mind takes time to rest, to come to a place of quiet. When your mind influences you with thoughts, bring it gently but firmly back to the flame. This is a meditation practice, this is a Shabbat practice, and it takes time and patience to change.

Continue to gaze gently at the flame. Keep your awareness on the flame, gently gazing at the flame, remaining aware, remaining focused, remaining concentrated, aware, focused, and at rest. Remain aware, letting all thoughts pass through your mind like clouds in the sky.

Allow time for silence.

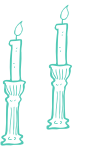
And now when you are ready, gently lower your gaze from the flame. Bring your consciousness back into the room. Give thanks for having been able to spend this time in meditation. Give thanks for the gift of Shabbat. Slowly turn your head from side to side. Become aware of the temperature in the room. Become aware of your body. Become aware of your thoughts. When you are ready, take a deep and clearing breath.

Option 1) Close with the blessing over the candles:

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.* Blessed are you, Infinite One, who makes us holy through our actions and honors us with the light of Shabbat. Amen. Shabbat shalom.

Option 2) Close with Shabbat Shalom.

*By Elisabeth Blaikie, modified for Shabbat by Rabbi Jessica Minnen*



## THE BREAKDOWN

There's no right or wrong way to approach ritual; there are simply options. As a host, you might have already lit Shabbat candles before your friends arrive. Others might want to wait and light with or for your guests.

If you light with your guests, you can set the table with multiple tea lights and matchbooks, and as you take your seats invite everyone to light one or two and say the blessing or share a reflection together.

If you light for your guests, you as the host or an invited guest can light one set of candles on behalf of everyone present, and lead the blessing or offer an intention.

Because lighting candles can be understood as the last act of work we do on Friday, there exists a custom in many homes to light the candles and draw your hands toward yourself three times in a circular motion before covering your eyes and reciting the blessing. When you open your eyes, the light has been transformed from light of the week into the light of Shabbat.



## A LITTLE EXTRA

Because of its home-based nature and Judaism's patriarchal roots, candle lighting has, over the centuries, become one of the few ritual practices traditionally dominated by women. However, as the great 12th century rabbi and scholar Maimonides writes in his legal compendium *Mishneh Torah*, "Both men and women are obligated to ensure that a candle is lit in the home, and obligated to bless before lighting."

So, my friends, by whatever gender you may identify if any, let's get lit.

# SANCTIFY





## THE RITUAL

Pour a glass of grape juice or your favorite beverage and sanctify Shabbat before drinking.

Pretty much all Jewish ceremonies and celebrations involve the fruit of the vine, and Shabbat dinner is no exception. But ritual doesn't exist for the sake of itself, it exists to accomplish something, almost like an ancient form of technology.

That's the magic of *kiddush*, from the Hebrew word for holy — our ability to demarcate time, to say that this Friday night, this Shabbat dinner, this exact moment, which has never occurred before and never will again, is special.  
Cheers to that.

Through the blessing of the fruit of the vine (*kiddush*), one acknowledges two of God's greatest gifts: creation of the world and the exodus from Egypt. Kiddush also creates a moment to express gratitude for Shabbat. It is composed of two blessings: to bless the fruit of the vine and to sanctify the day.

In Judaism, the fruit of the vine represents joy. By taking a moment to bless the juice, we acknowledge joy as a value unto itself, not as it serves something else.

## THE GOODS

**TASTY BEVERAGE** - the traditional go-to is the fruit of the vine. If you don't have grape juice, or just feel like experimenting, use a beverage you don't normally drink throughout the week, perhaps another type of juice, or even a mocktail.

**KIDDUSH CUP** - your favorite cup, a cup reserved for this purpose, not your everyday cup. At some point, people got the idea that a kiddush cup has to be a chalice or a goblet or something. Nope. As long as it holds about four ounces of liquid or more, what matters about the cup is that it's different, special, other.



## BLESS

Traditional kiddush in its entirety is pretty long, as it includes an introductory passage taken directly from the book of Genesis, a one line blessing (*borei pri ha'gafen*) that acknowledges the fruit of the vine itself, and a closing passage that evokes both the creation narrative and the exodus from Egypt. It's the final line of that closing passage (*mikadesh ha'Shabbat*) that makes the juice a symbolic conduit for marking this time as sacred.

There are two main approaches to a traditional kiddush, one short and sweet, the other full and robust. You can choose whatever feels best to you.

### Short & Sweet

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 mikadesh ha'Shabbat.*

Blessed are You, Infinite One, Creator of the fruit of the vine. Blessed are You,  
Infinite One, Who sanctifies Shabbat.

or

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the  
vine. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Who sanctifies Shabbat.





## Full + Robust

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי.  
וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צָבָאָם.  
וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה  
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.  
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ  
כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְנִרְצָה בָּנוּ  
וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחִילָנוּ וְזָכְרוֹן לַמַּעֲשֵׂה בְּרִשִּׁית.  
כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ וְזָכַר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם.  
כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֶרֶת וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשָׁהּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשָּׁבַת.

*Va'yihi erev va'yihi voker yom ha'shishi  
Va'yichulu ha'shamayim va'ha'aretz v'chol tziva'am.  
Va'yichol Elohim ba'yom ha'shivi'i milachto asher asah  
va'yishbot ba'yom ha'shivi'i mi'kol milachto asher asah.  
Va'yivarech Elohim et yom ha'shivi'i va'yikadesh oto  
ki vo shavat mi'kol melachto asher bara Elohim la'asot.*

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

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'ratzah vanu  
v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu zikaron l'ma'aseh v'reishit.  
Ki hu yom tehilah l'mikra'ei kodesh zeicher litziat Mitrayim.  
Ki vanu vacharta v'otanu k'dashta mi'kol ha'amim  
v'Shabbat kodshicha b'ahavah uv'ratzon chinchaltanu.  
Baruch Atah Adonai mikadesh ha'Shabbat.*





There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. And the heavens and earth and all their components were completed. God completed by the seventh day the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all of the work that God had done. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, for on it God rested from all of the work that God had created to do.

Blessed are You, Infinite One, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, Infinite One, Source of the universe  
Whose love allows us to become holy through our actions.  
With that same love You made the sanctity of Shabbat our heritage  
and a reminder of the work of creation.  
As first among our sacred days, it recalls liberation from Egypt.  
We seek to be holy to You, to embrace this sacred potential among all people,  
for out of love You have passed down to us Your holy Shabbat.  
Blessed are You, Infinite One, Who sanctifies Shabbat.

*or*

It was evening and it was morning, the sixth day. So the heavens and the earth were finished, with all their complement. On the seventh day, God had completed the work that God had undertaken, and rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had been doing. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God ceased from all creative work that God had brought into being to fulfill its purpose.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who made us holy with commandments and favored us, and gave us this holy Shabbat in love and favor to be our heritage as a reminder of Creation. It is the foremost day of the holy festivals marking the Exodus from Egypt. For out of all the nations You chose us and made us holy, and You gave us Your holy Shabbat in love and favor as our heritage. Blessed are You God, Who sanctifies Shabbat.







### **Reflection**

During the week ... we lose some of the light in our eyes; it is restored to us by the reflection of light in our kiddush cup. — *Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 113b*

All of creation comes closer to its origin on Shabbat. That moment, that movement, begins with kiddush. — *Likutei Moharan*



# SOBER KIDDUSH MEDITATION

Let's start by taking a few breaths, quieting and slowing ourselves down, breathing in and breathing out. I invite you to close your eyes, to breathe with intention, to invite the peace of the Sabbath into your heart and your mind.

Take a moment to ground yourself, to feel your feet on the floor or your body in your seat, to be truly present in this special moment. When you're ready, open your eyes and look around, see your friends and fellows, those in recovery and those who are allies.

The Sabbath invites us to reflect on the week behind us, to ask ourselves if we've been kind and loving toward all, and if needed, to ask for others' forgiveness as much as we ask for God's. We also use the Sabbath to mark the beginning of a new week, an opportunity to consider our goals and plans, to ask for God to direct our thinking and help us remain peaceful and focused on living in his will.

Take another breath, breathing in the promise of the coming week, and with your exhale, let go of negative thoughts and feelings from the week before.

The Sabbath invites us to gather as a *kehillah*, a community, one where we love without judgment and thank God for the many blessings of life in recovery and beyond. The *Kiddush* is, in itself, a blessing of thanks, acknowledging that we are but one small part of a much larger universe. We thank the God of our understanding for the creations that give us small pleasures – the fruit of the vine, which gives us the grape and the juice that comes from it. The simple beauty of this fruit of the vine is that our blessings and thanks to God ring true regardless of whether we enjoy the juice or the wine.

We are so much more than our addictions, we are human beings, perfectly imperfect, with the ability to create a path for ourselves that brings us peace and fulfillment. We say the Kiddush in the way that fills our hearts, knowing that God grants his blessing upon us as we bless his creations in all forms.

We are human beings, created by a loving, forgiving God. Our strength lies in the understanding of our own powerlessness, finding comfort in the notion that we can accept what we cannot change, and find courage to change the things we can. Like the grape, we are just small miracles here on this earth, adding our own sweetness to the journey we share together.

Now, I invite you to think of all that went into the Kiddush cup that we are holding, and take a moment to feel gratitude, to feel blessed, and to bless. Reflect upon the week before, the week to come, and the beauty of this *kehillah* coming together to celebrate the Sabbath and nourish each other's souls. Let our voices come together, and join us as we bless this fruit of the vine today with the Kiddush.

*Adapted for the recovery community by Leslie Lubell from Alison Laichter's Meditation for Kiddush*



## THE BREAKDOWN

Often one person recites or chants kiddush on behalf of everyone present. Short or long, that's a tall order. It is undeniably intimidating to stand up in front of your guests make kiddush.

The words are hard enough. Then there's the choreography. In some circles, everyone remains seated for kiddush, in others everyone stands, and in still others you stand while reciting the kiddush but sit down to drink. What about the grape juice itself? Does the person who chants kiddush pass their cup around the table for everyone to taste? Or do you invite your guests to pour from the bottle into their own glasses before kiddush, recite the blessing, then everyone drinks their own?

The short answer is yes. There are as many ways to make kiddush as there are words in the kiddush itself. Some hosts recite on behalf of everyone present. Some people sit during kiddush and others stand. Women can make kiddush according to some interpretations, while in others kiddush is always recited by men.

There are also ways to use grape juice as a conduit to sanctify Shabbat without the formal recitation of kiddush. In fact, the best part about kiddush might be its parallels to a modern ritual everyone can relate to: making a toast.

Framing kiddush in terms of toasting is a perfect way to step into ritual without feeling stepped on. Every language has a different word for cheers — in Hebrew it's *l'chaim*, "to life" — and your guests will most probably bring to the table some expertise in this regard. Another approach is to explain the purpose of kiddush, to use the juice as a conduit to sanctify time, then go around the table and invite each guest to say, as they raise their glass to the weekend, what they're putting down from the week. At the end, you can raise your glasses and toast together, *l'chaim*.

# CLEANSE





## THE RITUAL

Wash your hands before the meal.

The practice of hand washing dates back, all the way back to the time of the first and second Temple period when the Israelites made special offerings on Shabbat. In order to make these offerings, they needed to cleanse their hands with fresh water then raise up their hands and recite a blessing.

## THE GOODS

**FRESH TAP WATER** - head to the kitchen

**A CUP FOR WASHING** - ideally one with two handles, although any cup with a handle works



## BLESS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי 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 are You, Infinite One, Who makes us holy through our actions  
and honors us as we raise up our hands.

*or*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who sanctifies us  
with commandments and commands us to raise up our hands.







## THE BREAKDOWN

Ritual hand washing isn't for everyone, and you shouldn't feel any pressure to try it out until you're ready to, um, get your hands wet.

Invite your guests to the kitchen sink. Even if you're familiar with the blessing, it's a good idea to have a copy of it by the sink as a prompt for your guests. Fill your cup with fresh water from the tap. Take the cup in your left hand and cleanse your right hand with three splashes of water. Pass the cup directly to your right hand and cleanse your left hand with three splashes of water. Put the cup down, raise your hands up, and as the water trickles down recite the blessing. Dry off, you're good to go.

## A LITTLE EXTRA

Two splashes or three? They're both correct, according to Jewish tradition. As long as you're generous with your splashes, even one splash is enough, especially in cases when water is scarce. The Kabbalists, who wanted every ritual to be imbued with as much intention as possible, opted for three splashes, a practice followed by many today.

As a mark of hospitality, many people will place the empty cup back under the tap and begin to refill it for the person behind them in line. Similarly, it is common to hold the towel after drying your own hands, and pass it directly to the person behind you.

You may notice that it gets quiet around the Shabbat dinner table around the time of ritual hand washing. This practice comes from the idea that you shouldn't interrupt yourself between rituals. Because the cleansing of hands is understood as directly connected to the blessing of the bread, many have the custom of not speaking between hand washing and eating the first piece of challah to connect the two rituals as seamlessly as possible.

# NOURISH





## THE RITUAL

Bless (then eat) the challah.

## THE GOODS

**BREAD** - preferably challah because it's delicious in every conceivable way. But don't stress — any bread will do. Two full loaves is ideal. Small crowd? Waste not! Serve up two pitas or two dinner rolls. Whatever kind of bread you use, take it out of its packaging and place it on its own plate on the table.

**CHALLAH COVER** - any kind of cover to place over your bread, from a napkin on short notice to an ornate embroidered cloth.

**SALT** or **HONEY** - Celebrating something special like a birthday or a wedding? Skip the salt and add honey to your challah instead.



## BLESS

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

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

Blessed are You, Infinite One, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

*or*

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

### Reflection

Challah is one of the three things for which God created the world.

— *Bamidbar Rabbah 15*

On Shabbat, challah represents a taste of *tikkun olam*, the possibility of the world restored.

— *The Maharal of Prague*





## CHALLAH MEDITATION

This is an open-eye mindful eating meditation that can be done after *motzi*, the blessing over the challah or whatever bread you use to nourish your table, or in its place. Make sure everyone at the table has a piece of challah or bread before beginning.

Find a comfortable position in your seat. Come into the present of this Shabbat gathering by taking a few breaths, noticing how you feel physically. Take a piece of challah your hand. Notice the impulse you might have to pop it in your mouth right away. Look at the challah, examining it with curiosity as if you've never seen bread before. Notice how it feels in your hand – the texture, shape and weight. You may want to close your eyes while doing this. Notice the color of the challah and if it has any unique features. Imagine where the challah came from before arriving at this Shabbat dinner table, how it started as ripe stalks of wheat in a field. Picture the workers on the farm harvesting the wheat and another set of workers transporting the wheat to a mill. Imagine the process of grinding the wheat into flour, and that flour being mixed with water, oil, and eggs, and baked into bread. Slowly bring the challah to your nose to learn what it smells like. Notice the natural motion of your arm as it moves to do this. Continue to notice any thoughts of like or dislike you might have as you observe the bread. Notice whether you're anticipating what it will taste like. Perhaps you're starting to salivate or feeling an impulse to put the challah into your mouth. Now, ever so slowly, place the challah in your mouth, without biting into it. Explore what it feels like in your mouth, notice what your tongue is doing. Keep it in your mouth without chewing for at least 10 seconds. Notice what it's like to take this time before eating the bread. When you are ready, slowly and softly bite into the challah. Without swallowing, notice what it tastes like, how its flavor and texture changes as you chew. Notice your natural impulse to swallow it. When you are ready, swallow the challah. Imagine it nourishing your body as you enter Shabbat. Sit quietly and notice what you are feeling.

And now, let's eat.

*By Jon Kabat-Zinn, modified for Shabbat by Rabbi Jessica Minnen*



## THE BREAKDOWN

In the ancient near east, if there wasn't bread on the table it wasn't a meal, and as a result the Jewish sages viewed bread as the primary source of nourishment, both literally and spiritually. Challah, the slightly sweet, ridiculously good braided bread many enjoy at modern Shabbat dinners, comes from a commandment in the Torah requiring the Israelites to set aside a portion of dough every week as an offering; that donation was called challah. The practice of braiding the bread evolved over time, some with three strands, others six, each with their own referential symbolism to Temple times.

On many tables you will find two loaves of challah rather than one. On Shabbat, we revel in possibility and abundance. We have a double portion of everything just as the Israelites received a double portion of manna on Shabbat during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Also, challah French toast is the best, so don't feel pressure to make it through both loaves in one sitting.

Why cover the bread? In general when faced with more than one food, Jewish tradition dictates that the first blessing offered should be on the species that comes first in the list of the Seven Species (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, dates) mentioned in the Torah. As such, you would say the blessing on the bread (wheat) before juice (grapes). But since you definitely say *kiddush* to sanctify Shabbat before blessing the bread, there is a dilemma of precedence. So, the sages (in the Jerusalem Talmud, redacted around ca. 400 CE) suggest covering the challah to hide it while we drink the juice first. No one wants a jealous challah.

Yes, the custom anthropomorphizes the bread. No, the bread doesn't actually know what's going on. But that's ritual. It accomplished something for our ancestors and it can accomplish something for us, in this case turning our Shabbat dinner table into a stage upon which Jewish history and learning and drama is enacted in our very homes. It's kind of fantastic.

Once we uncover the challah, the blessing over the bread connects us to the process of work that has to happen in order for the challah to get to our table. Bread isn't just brought forth from the earth, it requires the work of many hands. The possibility and abundance of Shabbat comes with the responsibility to work to make a better world the other six days of the week.

Pass it, rip it, cut it, tear into it like you mean it. There's no right or wrong, as long as the bread makes its way around the table. Lastly, it is common to add some salt to the pieces challah before sharing them with your guests. While this practice has its roots in, you guessed it, Temple times (when offerings were accompanied by salt) it also has a more mystical explanation. According to Isaac Luria, the great 16th century Kabbalist, both bread (לחם) and salt (מלח) are representations of the divine; salt is divine severity and bread is divine kindness. We seek to overpower the severity of the salt with the kindness of the bread. Therefore, when you salt your challah, do not sprinkle the salt on top the bread, but instead to touch the bread to the salt — kindness over severity.



**And with that, we head mouth-first into dinner.**



## THE ONETABLE CHALLAH RECIPE



1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups lukewarm water  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  packages active dry yeast  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1/2 heaping cup sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive or vegetable oil  
more oil for greasing bowl  
5 eggs + 1 for the top  
1 overflowing tablespoon salt  
8 to 8  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups all-purpose flour  
2-3 tablespoons of honey (optional)





[1] In a large bowl, dissolve yeast and 1 tbsp sugar in 1 3/4 cups lukewarm water.

[2] Whisk oil into yeast, then beat in 4 of the eggs, one at a time, with remaining sugar, salt, and honey if using. Gradually add flour. When dough holds together, it's ready for kneading. (You can also use a mixer with a dough hook for mixing and kneading.)

[3] Turn dough onto a floured surface and knead until smooth. Clean out bowl and grease it, then return dough to bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for 1 hour, until almost doubled in size. Punch down dough, cover and let rise again in a warm place for another half-hour.

[4] Split dough into two sections, one for each challah. Braid dough using a standard braid, get fancy with a 6-braid challah (look up a YouTube tutorial), or get creative with your own designs.

[5] Place loaves on a greased cookie sheet with at least 2 inches in between. Beat the remaining egg and brush it on loaves. Let rise another hour in refrigerator.

[6] Preheat oven to 375 degrees and brush loaves again. Add poppy seeds, sesame seeds, sprinkles, cinnamon, or anything your heart desires.

[7] Bake in middle of oven for 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden. Try to let loaves cool before devouring.

# APPRECIATE





## THE RITUAL

Many faiths and cultures have a grace before meals, not quite as many have a grace after meals. The blessing after the meal, or *Birkat ha'Mazon* in Hebrew, like all Shabbat dinner rituals, evolved over time. We do however have a source text for this practice in the Torah, from Deuteronomy 8:10: “When you have eaten and are satisfied, bless.”

It's actually pretty radical that in Judaism, the ritual of grace after meals isn't about expressing gratitude for food itself, but for food and a full feeling. To say grace therefore requires a sense of intention around the act of consumption, nourishment, and feeling good as a result.

The traditional grace after meals is long. So long it makes the long version of kiddush seem short. It's long because the sages kept finding more and more things to be grateful for. Food, the earth, God, dinner hosts, parents, Shabbat, Torah, the exodus from Egypt, the list goes on. You can find the full version [here](#), courtesy of our friends at Hillel International.

At OneTable, we are grateful that there is also a succinct grace after meals recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (Brachot 40b) that serves precisely the same purpose in seven words of beautiful second century Aramaic. Way to show up, sages.

## THE GOODS

All you need is the intention to end your Shabbat dinner with gratitude.



## BLESS

ברוך רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעָלְמָא מְרִיָּה דְהָאִי פִּיתָא.

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

We are blessed with compassion by You, Infinite One, Who sustains us with bread.

*or*

Blessed are You, Merciful One, Ruler of the universe, Who sustains life with bread.

*or*

You are the Source of life for all that is, and Your blessing flows through me.

### **Reflection**

What shifts in your experience of gratitude at the Shabbat dinner table?

What else nourishes you, besides food itself?





## THE BREAKDOWN

Shabbat dinner doesn't end with the food runs out. Shabbat dinner doesn't even end with grace after meals. Shabbat dinner ends when you walk your guests to the door. It's a last act of ritual hospitality, and one that makes hosting on Shabbat so deeply rooted in Jewish practice.

As Maimonides wrote: "The reward you receive for accompanying guests on their way is greater than for all other *mitzvot*. Our sages teach that showing hospitality for guests is the greatest expression of gratitude, greater even than study or prayer. Accompanying guests on their way is greater still."

Shabbat shalom.

# TABLE TOPICS

If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?

If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

What is one goal you'd like to accomplish during your lifetime?

When you were little, who was your favorite super hero and why?

Who is your hero now?

What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?

If they made a movie of your life, who would you want to play you? What genre would it be?

What's your favorite cartoon character, and why?

If you could visit any place in the world, where would you choose to go and why?

What's your dream job?

Are you a morning or night person?

What are your favorite hobbies?

What are your pet peeves or interesting things about you that you dislike?

What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

Name one of your favorite things about someone in your family.

Tell us about a unique or quirky habit of yours.

What are three words to describe yourself?

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?

What's your favorite movie?

If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?

What is one wish you want to come true this year?

If you could live in any period in history, when would it be?

What's the worst TV show you've watched?

If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?

If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?

If you sat down next to Beyoncé on a bus, what would you talk about?

If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?

What day would you choose to live over again?

What's the one skill you wish you could learn?

What are the three personal items you'd bring with you to live on a space station?



# ICEBREAKERS

## **Two Truths and a Lie**

Each person goes around the table and introduces themselves and shares two truths and a lie. It is up to the rest of the group to determine which one is the lie.

## **Who Am I?**

Prior to the dinner have people submit interesting facts about themselves. Throughout the meal read them out loud. Have guests guess who the fact is about. Try playing for points - winner gets to take home the leftover challah? (Just kidding, there is never leftover challah.)

## **Where Have my Shoes Taken me?**

Have everyone share a story that happened in the shoes they are wearing.

## **Fishbowl**

Everyone writes a get to know you question on a slip of paper. All of the papers go into a bowl or jar and then each person grabs one and introduces him or herself and answers the question they grabbed. You can have guests write out their question when they arrive at your dinner or have them submit them in advance.

## **Throw a Ball**

Throw the ball to someone. That person introduces him or herself and then throws the ball to someone else to do the same. Shabbat edition - try throwing a challah roll instead!

## **Palace in Time**

Abraham Joshua Heschel calls Shabbat a palace in time. The meaning of Shabbat is to celebrate time rather than space. What time is most holy to you? What time do you treasure?

## **Two-Handed Kiddush**

For some, there is a custom to fill their kiddush cup all the way to the top until it spills over to represent the overflowing joy and blessings of Shabbat. In order to hold such a full cup you must use two hands. What do you need to put down to have two hands available to hold your overflowing cup with two hands this week?

# SONGS

## SINGING ON FRIDAY NIGHT

The singing of songs has a purpose on Shabbat - both to honor Shabbat and to enhance one's spiritual closeness to the Divine.

## NIGGUNIM

On Friday night, some forego songs with words altogether in favor of niggunim, melodies without words. In Jewish tradition, songs without words are often more meaningful and moving, because words (especially when they're in a language everyone at your table might not know) can be distancing and limiting.

## ZEMIROT

Zemirot literally means "songs" in Hebrew, and generally refer to traditional songs in Hebrew or Aramaic. Most songs have many different tunes, and new tunes are always being written... there's no "right" melody.



# SONGS

## אני מאמין | ANI MA'AMIN

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח, ואף על פי שימתמהמה, עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא  
*Ani ma'amin b'emuna shelema be'viat hamashiach, Vi'af al pi sheyit'mame'ha im kol zeh  
achakeh lo bechol yom sheyavo.*

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and even though he may delay,  
I will await him every day.

[LISTEN](#)

## כי-בא מועד | KI VA MOED

אתה תקום תרחם ציון כי-עת לסננה כי-בא מועד  
*Ata takum terachem Tzion ki et lechenena ki va moed*

You will rise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the time has  
come.

[LISTEN](#)

## כל העולם כולו | KOL HA'OLAM KULO

כל העולם כולו גשר צר מאד והעיקר לא לפחד כלל  
*Kol ha'olam kulo, gesher tzar me'od. Vecha'ikar lo lifached k'lal*

The whole world is a very narrow bridge, and the most important part is not to be afraid.

[LISTEN](#)

## עבדו | IVDU

עבדו את-ה' בשמחה באו לפניו ברננה  
*Ivdu et Hashem be-simchah, bo'u lefanav bir'nana*

Serve the Divine with gladness, come before Him with joyous song.

[LISTEN](#)

## טוב להודות | TOV L'HODOT

טוב להודות לה', ולזמר לשמחה עליו. להגיד בבקר חסדה, ואמונתה בלילות  
*Tov l'hodot la'hashem, ulizamer l'shimcha elyon, l'hagid baboker chasdecha v'emunatcha  
baleylot*

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the the Divine, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most  
High; To declare Thy loving kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness in the night seasons.

[LISTEN](#)