10 Important Things to Know About Sukkot

1. Sukkot Celebrates the Harvest

Only five days after Yom Kippur is the holiday of Sukkot, the harvest festival. Historically, we link Sukkot with the way in which our ancestors traveled through the wilderness, and later gathered their grain at the harvest as they brought their offerings to the Temple. Today, we can fill a sukkah with pumpkins, gourds, apples and other fruits/vegetables that symbolize our autumn harvest.

2. It’s fun to build a sukkah

While it may seem like an overwhelming task, building a sukkah can actually be a fun project for the whole family! Make sure you have the space and find ways for everyone to get involved. Check out a ready-made sukkah that you can order online and is quick and easy to put together (try www.sukkot.com).

3. It’s also fun to decorate a sukkah

The sukkah is an ideal place to proudly display your child’s artwork and projects. Add some lights! Some families create a theme for their decorations. Make paper chains and string cranberries or popcorn.

4. It’s a mitzvah to eat in the sukkah

A sukkah is a wonderful place for your family to “camp out” or take a vacation right in your own backyard. Try to eat in the sukkah as often as you can. If you don’t have a sukkah at your home, check with a local synagogue--many welcome guests to bring meals to a community sukkah.

5. Some people even sleep in a sukkah

Bedtime rituals such as storytelling and singing can be moved outside along with sleeping bags--and lots of warm PJ layers! Even if you don’t sleep there, cuddle up and read a PJ Library book and look up through the roof of the sukkah to see the stars.
6. Welcome guests to the sukkah
   If you build a sukkah, invite family and friends (old and new) into your sukkah for a meal or snack. Or you can be a guest--check out our jkidphilley.org calendar for community sukkah events.

7. Shake the lulav and etrog
   On Sukkot we have a special ritual of shaking three species of plant (myrtle, willow, palm) and citron (a kind of lemon), known together as the lulav and etrog. You can purchase your own lulav and etrog for your home or take your kids to shake them at a community sukkah event.

8. Focus on joy
   Sukkot is also known as “z’man simhatenu”, the time of our joy! Whether or not you build a sukkah, focus on happiness in your family--play games, eat yummy food and enjoy each other’s company. It is a great mitzvah to be happy!

9. Remember those who need food and shelter
   Sukkot is also a good time to have children think about the blessing of having a permanent home and to think about those that do not. Families can discuss actions they can take to help out at local food banks, shelters and soup kitchens.

Cook delicious harvest recipes
   Apples, pumpkins and squash--oh my! Bring your kids into the kitchen to make a yummy seasonal treat--make a double batch to share with family, friends, or people in need of food. Visit our jkidphilley pinterest page for some great kid-friendly Sukkot recipes! www.pinterest.com/jkidphilley

...for families just like yours!