

How To – Build a Sukkah

You will need: Building materials (PVC pipe, wooden boards, cement blocks, etc), Material to cover the sides, S'chach - Tree or Palm branches (or other material to form a "roof"), Tools, twine, wire as needed depending upon construction needs

Information: The word Sukkot means booths, and refers to the temporary dwellings (sukkah) that we are commanded to live in during the holiday of Sukkot. The commandment to "dwell" in a sukkah can be fulfilled by simply eating all of one's meals there; however, if the weather, climate, and one's health permit, one should live in the sukkah as much as possible, including sleeping in it. It is common practice, and highly commendable, to decorate the sukkah. In the northeastern United States, Jews commonly hang dried squash and corn in the sukkah to decorate it, because these vegetables are readily available at that time for the American holidays of Halloween and Thanksgiving.

Instructions: A sukkah must have at least three sides - one of which may be the side of a permanent building. The sukkah may be put together with whatever sturdy material you are able to find. The sukkah must only be a temporary building and must not have a completely closed roof (or be under a permanent roof). The s'chach ("roofing") must be something that was growing from the ground but is now completely cut off such as bamboo shoots, tree branches, or corn stalks which are placed over horizontal supports. The s'chach must allow sunlight through but also block about half of the sunlight. Anything that is still in the ground may not cover the sukkah (even partially) - the sukkah must be under open sky. Once the frame and roof are set into place, the walls may be decorated with cloth, rugs, tarps, or anything else you desire. It is traditional to decorate the sukkah with fruit, posters, gourds, paper chains, and other decorative touches.