

To talk about

Topics you might run through before yom tov to make sure you both are aware an on the same page.

FAMILY MINHAGIM/ TRADITIONS/ MEMORIES

- Talk about about each yom tov separately: days leading up to the yom tov, special foods, on the actual yom tov, wrapping up after the yom tov.
- How would you like to incorporate those into your family? What about those aspects are so meaningful to you? How might you work out conflicting minhagim (be creative: do both, alternate years, create a mix of both of yours, determine who has a stronger attachment to the minhag, accommodate the other, come up with something entirely new)
- You might also talk about things that happened in your upbringing or you observed in other homes that you do or do not want to happen in your own home.

YOM TOV MEALS

As guests:

- Where are you eating each meal? What time are you expected at your host's home? What should you bring? What ought you know about the host family?
- Exact address and apartment number. The route will you be taking from home/shul to get there (this is helpful when one of you might be running late and/or need support, the other can walk toward you).

As hosts:

- Who is coming to each meal? What time are the guests expected to arrive? What ought you know about each guest? Will any need explanation about what is happening at the meal (who will do the explaining)?
- How will you involve the guests?
- What will you be serving; is it enough/ too much? Which will be bought or homemade? Any specific foods either wants? Food budgets.
- Who will be setting, serving, clearing the table?
- Topics to discuss or to absolutely not discuss.
- Review the minhagim, simanim and wording (and order) before the yom tov.

The children:

- How will you involve the children (and all their crafts and dvar Torahs)?
- What are your expectations for the children's participation and behavior? Who/how will you address the inevitable 'children acting as children' during the meals (think of each meal separately).
- Who will take care of cranky, tired, hungry children during the meal? How will the meal proceed while one is tending to the children?

PEACEFUL & JOYFUL YOM TOV

ENHANCING YOUR SHALOM BAYIS DURING THE HECTICNESS OF TISHREI

To talk about

THE DAVENING/ SHUL

- Before each yom tov, discuss the shul's schedule – when is shachris, shofar, krias hatorah, birchas kohanim, hakafos, end of davening.
- Exact address and route you will be taking to and from shul.
- What both of you can do to ensure that davening and shul participation is not stressful. (This might include preparing the children in the morning, snacks for the children, etc.)

THE SHOPPING BEFORE

- Realistic budgets for food, wine, clothing, paper goods and table décor, lulav/ esrog, etc.
- When and who? Where? What be ordered online, ordered from the store? What must be bought in the stores?
- Who will unpack? Where will things be stored?

THE CHILDREN

- How might you include the children in the buildup for the yom tov; how can they be part of physical preparations, how can you get them excited for yom tov?
- What can you do to prepare the children for the change of schedule?
- What can you do to help the children be inspired by and have happy memories of the Yomim Tovim?
- Chol hamoed experiences – wake up times, trips, meals (what if one or both of you have to work)
- Late nights on Sukkos (Simchas Bais Hashoeva)

MAKING YOM TOV AS STRESS-FREE AS POSSIBLE

- Figure out which aspects are most stressful for each of you. Work on those first. Be creative. Share cooking responsibilities with a friend (one makes all the salad dressings, the other cuts the vegetables, etc.). Buy some prepared foods (pre-cleaned chicken or meat that doesn't need cleaning). Share shopping responsibilities (one friend goes to store A for both of you, you go to store B for both of you).
- Get help for your most stressful responsibilities. Some people prefer someone take the kids, others prefer food prep help, others prefer cleaning help, other prefer shopping help.
- Schedule 'me time' for each of you – coffee, exercise, a walk, alone time to read, etc.

DON'T FORGET TO NURTURE YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIP

- Schedule some alone time in the busyness of the Yom Tov. A cup of tea after the table is cleared, a walk around the block. Get a babysitter for a short while.
- Little gifts of appreciation (doesn't have to be expensive).
- Be nice. Lots of expressions of appreciation – in the busyness of the yom tov, there are lots of things that each of you do that can be noticed and appreciated.
- Give your spouse some 'me-time' to do as they please.