

Congregation Tiferes Yisroel  
A Peanut-free Zone  
Shalosh Seudos Guidelines — Updated for Purim

Mazel tov! So you've decided to have a shalosh seudos. Well, you've come to the right shul, because we guarantee it will be a lot of fun. That is, for everyone but you. Unless you have fun by working hard and spending money.

So let's get started. We have a sheet on our website that tells you all about having a shalosh seudos, although no one reads it and if they do, they pretend they didn't, because no one follows it. So here are the new guidelines.

First, check with Eileen Rosenbaum about the date. She'll have you fill out a rental agreement and send a check to her. If you don't have a check, use bitcoins. Then check with Hinda Blum about what to buy and how to get it to the shul. Hinda has been doing this for a long time, so listen politely to everything she says. Once you hang up the phone you can go ahead and buy whatever it is you wanted to buy anyway. If you can't get the food to the shul during one of the times when the shul is open, simply find a 14-year-old boy. They all know how to break in. Or you can find someone with a key. This shouldn't be too hard because most of the members have one. If they don't have a key, they probably know the combination to the lock. Don't spend too much time wondering why you don't have a key or know the combination, you'll be too busy writing a speech.

Guidelines for your speech. Remember that we're a family and we will judge everything you do and say. So be sure to have your facts straight and don't forget to be funny. Stand up straight and don't fidget. Be sure to thank everyone even if they weren't very helpful. Start with your morah. You have plenty of time and everyone at the shalosh seudos is pretty much captive. Besides, if you've bought the right food, they don't really care what you say. Reminder: The shul is a peanut-free zone. Be sure to include a dvar Torah in your speech. If you don't, that means the Rabbi has to do one and you know what that means.

Guidelines for the food. Keep in mind you'll be feeding about 100 people. Just like when you have people over for Shabbos, some food gets snarfed up right away and some just stays on the table. So when you buy food, consider what you want to eat the following week and buy accordingly. So if you don't want leftover hummus, don't buy 3 quarts of hummus. Reminder: The shul is a peanut-free zone. Also, keep in mind that a good percentage of the food will be eaten during setup. The people who set up are volunteers and are counting on your discretion to buy food that they want to sample. You can never go wrong with bakery cookies or anything else from a bakery. Or chocolate. Chocolate things get scooped up right away, especially by roving bands of shul people under the age of 71. Chocolate chips in the tuna and egg salad have great appeal, as do chocolate-covered carrots, grapes and grape tomatoes. But we suggest you don't buy little pots of liquid chocolate in which to dip the Rebbetzin's challah, which is truly a stand-alone item needing no embellishment. That is the only exception to the chocolate rule. Or is it? Chocolate-covered challah. Hmmm. Reminder: The shul is a peanut-free zone.

Set up: We set up for shalosh seudos one hour before mincha. If the Rabbi has a class we set up one hour before his class. If both the Rabbi and Rebbetzin have classes, we set up an hour before the Rebbetzin's class. This means you need to nap during the Rabbi's class, which shouldn't be too hard because you probably already do that. Be sure to obtain a pair of glasses from our Box of Plagues Kit, the ones that have eyes painted on a screen. When you sponsor a shalosh seudos, we expect you to help set up. That means showing up when the crew does, not 10 minutes before mincha. Just show up and bring as many people with you as possible. We will tell you what to do. You might not think which side of the tablecloth shows is important or which side the cup or fork goes on makes a difference, but you'll find out differently when you help set up. And don't even think about questioning which chairs go where. The most important decision, and the only decision we let you make, will be the color of the tablecloth. And we need for you to make this decision as soon as possible. Without tablecloth color, setup comes to a complete standstill.

Extra guidelines for men: You will undoubtedly forget to thank all the folks who helped to set up. That will give your wife a chance to show her superiority by reminding you. The most important thing to remember is to thank your wife, because without her, you'd be a shlub who couldn't do anything right.

Extra guidelines for women: You don't need any extra guidelines. You're a woman. You've got this covered. You'll know exactly the right thing to say and do. You will have planned the color scheme of the napkins to match the veggie platter. You will have placed flowers on all the tables and made sure they were non-allergenic. You will have remembered to give the Rabbi Caffeine-Free Coke Classic. You will have kept your remarks down to no more than 7 minutes, and acknowledged everyone you've ever known in the shul who guided you on your path. You will have given the shul a special Shabbos clock that knows exactly when Shabbos ends each week; it will announce "Baruch hamavdil ben kodosh l'chol" 3 minutes after Shabbos is over. In your consideration of the cleanup crew, you will have purchased paper goods that self-biodegrade 5 minutes after Shabbos is over. Your menu choices will be so perfect there will only be enough food left over to give to our resident hangers-on, thus reducing cleanup to practically nothing. You will have provided organic lavender sachets, engraved with the initials "TY" for havdalah, and you will let the shul keep them for the future. You will have provided a deconstruction crew to fold up the tables and chairs. And, you will have provided car service for all those people walking home in the dark.

Clean up: You've paid for the rental and the food, you've helped set up, you've given your speech and you've davened at maariv. You might think you're done. Well, you're not. Clean up is just as important as everything else and we won't let you leave until it's done. Luckily for you you don't have all that much to do. By the time you've finished maariv it's mostly all done. Except for putting away the tables and chairs. Most people help with this by getting in the way. This gives us a chance to work on our middos by not yelling or screaming and just working around everyone. Really, it's a good thing. We'll send you a bill for therapy later. Just make the check out to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.