

TRAVELING THIS SUKKOS? HERE'S SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Applicable for Sukkos 2016/5777

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Guidelines regarding travel with the Arba Minim

Recently released by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

TSA Notice

The Jewish Holiday of Sukkot will commence the evening of Sunday, October 16, 2016 to the evening of Sunday, October 23, 2016. Sukkot travel will begin on approximately October 2, 2016, and end on Sunday, October 26, 2016.



Transportation
Security
Administration

TSA's screening procedures do not prohibit the carrying of the four plants used during Sukkot - a palm branch, myrtle twigs, willow twigs, and a citron - in airports, through or security checkpoints, or on airplanes. These plants or agricultural items are not on TSA's Prohibited Items List. However, all persons and property will undergo security screening at the checkpoint.

Travelers requiring special accommodations or concerned about checkpoint screening may ask a checkpoint officer or supervisor for a Passenger Support Specialist who will provide on-the-spot assistance. Travelers may also request a Passenger Support specialist ahead of time by calling the TSA Cares hotline at 1-855-787-2227.

To inquire about screening procedures or provide feedback, call or email the TSA Contact Center at 1-866-289-9673 and TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov.

CBP Guidance

The travel period for the Jewish holiday of Sukkot is from October 2, 2016 thru October 31, 2016. The holiday begins October 16th [after sundown] until October 23rd [after nightfall]. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) understands that observant Jewish travelers entering the United States during the Sukkot holiday might carry religious items [ethrogs, palm fronds, twigs of willow and myrtle] in their vehicles if arriving at land border ports of entry, or in their personal baggage if they are arriving by aircraft. These items are regulated to prevent the introduction of invasive pests and diseases; however, these items might be allowed into the United States after inspection by CBP Agriculture Specialists. **Thus, the following guidance is provided for travelers:**



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

Ethrogs:

- Personal shipments of ethrogs are allowed entry through North Atlantic and Northern Pacific ports of entry after inspection by CBP Agriculture Specialists. North Atlantic ports are defined as Atlantic ports north of and including Baltimore; ports on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway; Canadian Border ports east of and including North Dakota; Andrews Air force Base, Andrews Air force base and Washington, D.C. [including Dulles] for air shipments. Northern Pacific ports are defined as Pacific ports north of California including Alaska, Canadian Border ports west of and including Montana, excluding Hawaii.

- Travelers will be asked to open the container with the ethrog and unwrap it. The agriculture specialist will inspect the ethrog. If either insect stings or pests are found, the ethrog will be prohibited from entering the United States. If neither is found, the traveler will be allowed to rewrap and re-box the ethrog for entry into the United States.

Palm Fronds:

- Single palm fronds, for religious purposes, will be inspected by agriculture specialists and released if no pests or symptoms of disease are found.

Twigs of Willow:

- If the twigs of willow are from Europe, they will be prohibited from entering the United States. If they are from other than Europe, they will be inspected by agriculture specialists and released if no pests or symptoms of disease are found.
- Also, if the twigs of willow are green in color, have soft tissue present, or have buds that sprouted, then they are capable of being grown and are prohibited from entering the United States.

Twigs of Myrtle:

- Twigs of myrtle will be inspected by agriculture specialists and released if no pests or symptoms of disease are found.

If travelers have any concerns resulting from the inspection of their religious items at a port of entry, a CBP supervisor is always available to answer questions and address their concerns. As always, CBP is committed to treating all travelers, including travelers who may be observing Sukkot, with respect and dignity at all U.S. ports of entry.

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