

Put Them Together and Shake: Assembling the Arba Minim (Four Species)

Framing this unit

The Arba Minim (Four Species) are a unique ritual item used on the festival of Sukkot. In Israel, a few days before the festival begins, special markets open for buyers to select and purchase the individual components of their set. In this unit, we will analyze photographs taken at the markets and study classical Jewish texts in order to gain a deeper understanding of the Arba Minim and Sukkot.

Group Activity

Each group gets [copies of the four photographs](#) and answers the following questions:

- What are the people doing?
- What objects are the people holding?
- What questions do you have about the photographs?
- What would you want to ask the people in the photographs?

Using the [source sheet](#), students work in pairs to further examine the background behind the photographs.

Discussion

- Have you or your family ever had your own Arba Minim?
- Why do you think the people in the photographs chose to buy each component separately?
- How do the photographs enhance your understanding of the mitzvah (commandment) of the Arba Minim?
- What is the reason for the Arba Minim? What do they represent? (There are many answers to this question.)
- How are the Arba Minim used?
- The festival of Sukkot is also called zman simchateinu (the time of our happiness). Why is Sukkot a happy time? How do the Arba Minim add to or express our joy?
- Sukkot is the final harvest festival of the year. How do you think the farmers felt at the end of the harvest?
- What emotions, besides happiness, do you think are experienced on Sukkot?

Creative Activity

Choose one of the following individually or in pairs:

- Design an infographic of the Arba Minim. Include photographs and the requirements for each component. Suggested websites: [Venngage](#) and [Canva](#).
- Imagine you are walking around the Arba Minim market where the photographs were taken and you meet people who are assembling their own sets of Arba Minim. Record a conversation with the people that you meet. (Note: Although the photographs are of Haredim choosing their Arba Minim, Jews from all walks of life buy Arba Minim.)

- What are they looking for when they choose the best one?
- What does the mitzvah of the Arba Minim mean to them?
- What is their favorite aspect of the festival of Sukkot?

Primary sources in this lesson

- [Selecting Hadassim \(Myrtle\) in Mea She'arim, 1993](#)
- [Selecting Willow Branches, 1970](#)
- [The Perfect Etrog, 1978](#)
- [Checking the Lulav, 1980](#)