

# Wheat and Bread: The Story of the Jewish Calendar and the Land of Israel

*Source Sheet by David Katz*

We are all familiar with the three major Jewish holidays: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot.

It is interesting to chart them along the yearly calendar, where we experience the four seasons: summer, winter, spring and fall.

Sukkot is celebrated in the fall, bridging summer and winter.

Pesach marks the end of winter and the beginning of the spring.

Shavuot arrives at the end of spring and the beginning of summer.

The biblical festivals are celebrated at significant times during the agricultural year in the land of Israel. While we often focus on the historical aspects of the holidays (leaving Egypt! Matan Torah!), at our core, our stories revolve around land.

We made this video for Pat Bamelach, an artisan sourdough bakery, focusing on the role agriculture plays in the land of Israel and the Jewish calendar.

There are sources and guided questions below.

Here is a curated list of places in the Torah where the Chagim are presented:

פרשת המועדות: אמר ויקרא כ"ג

מועדים: ראה דברים ט"ז

פרשת החודש: שמות י"ב

Read through these sources as a farmer. Ask:

- When do I begin the harvest?
- When do I finish the harvest?
- When do I plant my fields?

Look for key words that are repeated throughout:

קציר, באספכם, אביב, תבואה.

When we burn our Chametz on Erev Pesach, essentially we are removing all bread products from the previous grain harvest year from our homes. That evening, at the Seder, we are reliving the origin narrative of the Jewish people. And it is the following day, the 16th of Nissan, that we have an "opening ceremony" for the new grain harvest which traditionally was the Korban **HaOmer**. Then we settle in and count 49 days for Sfirat **HaOmer**. On Day 50, we celebrate Shavuot, the first milled wheat of the new grain year is baked into two sourdough loaves in the Beit HaMikdash, the קרבן שתי הלחם.

Pesach is the annual reset of the new grain year in the land of Israel. How much more significant is each holiday when viewed through an agricultural lens.