Jewish Festivals: Earliest Mincha

The earliest permissible time to say *mincha* before a *Jewish festival* is one-half hour after *halachic midday*, as with all *mincha* prayers including before *Shabbat*.

NOTE You may begin the second day of any *Jewish festival* as early as *plag ha'mincha*. You should ideally say *mincha* before *plag* and then say *ma'ariv* after *plag;* but if you are praying with a *minyan*, you may say *mincha* anytime after *plag* and then say *ma'ariv* immediately afterward, just as on *Shabbat*.

NOTE However, there is nothing gained by saying *mincha* early before a *Jewish festival*:

- We don't want to start *Rosh Hashana* (Yom HaDin) early and no one wants to start *Yom Kippur* early.
- You may not start either *seder* until after dark on *Passover*.
- You could eat in a *sukka* before dark on either of the first two days of *Sukkot*, but you would not fulfill the requirement of eating in a *sukka* since it was not dark.
- Likewise, the first day of *Shavuot* does not begin until after dark.
- Since you may not say the blessing on eating in a *sukka* on *Shmini Atzeret* (which you would have to do if you eat before dark), there is nothing gained by saying *mincha* and *ma'ariv* early on that day, either.

So, as a practical matter, the only days on which saying *mincha* and *ma'ariv* early would allow beginning the holiday early are the second day of *Shavuot*, the second day of *Rosh Hashana*, and the last days of *Passover*.

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