JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: WHEN TO LIGHT

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Earliest Time To Light

You may not light *Jewish festival* (or *Shabbat)* candles before *plag ha'mincha.* The candles must burn until at least dark (*tzeit ha'kochavim*) and someone must be there to see the light from the candles after dark.

SITUATION *Mincha minyan* begins at *plag ha'mincha. Y*ou cannot light candles at home and still get to *mincha minyan* on time.

WHAT TO DO You may light a candle without a blessing, just so you can have a flame for after the festival has begun. You go to *synagogue* and after *ma'ariv* you return home and light the candles from the flame which was burning from before sunset. If you will not have a flame burning from before sunset, you must say *mincha* on your own (anytime from half an hour after mid-day until sunset). You will light candles after *plag ha'mincha* but before sunset and not join the *mincha minyan.* Women should skip *mincha* and light candles either 18 minutes before sunset or have a flame burning from before sunset and light candles from that flame once the festival has begun (but she may not light from a new flame or a match).

Jewish Festivals: Candle-Lighting Times

In most countries, candle lighting time is 18 minutes before sunset. In Jerusalem, many people have the custom of lighting candles 40 minutes before sunset.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting Two Days

The custom is to light candles:

- Before sunset on the first day of a *Jewish festival,* and
- After dark on the *Jewish festival's* second day (except when the second day coincides with *Shabbat*!).

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting after Sunset

Men and women may light candles after sunset on *Jewish festivals*, with these conditions:

- You may light only from an already-burning flame.
- You may not light *Jewish festival* candles after sunset on Friday nor on the evening before *Yom Kippur* begins.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting with Delay until Sunset

As on *Shabbat*, you may say “I am lighting *Jewish festival* candles but not starting the *Jewish festival* until sunset” to delay observing the *Jewish festival* until sunset, but this in only *b'diavad.*

NOTE As for *Shabbat*, women should not routinely start *Jewish festivals* at sunset since the proper time for women to begin *Jewish festivals* is at candle lighting (typically 18 minutes before sunset).

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