



Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

[she-meanee aut-zer-at](#) 

Jewish

[sim-hot toe-ra](#) 

These two holidays are observed differently among the Jewish community at U-M. Some combine the two holidays and celebrate it all in one day. Others celebrate them on two consecutive days at the end of Sukkot. Shemini Atzeret means the “Eighth Day of Assembly,” while Simchat Torah means “rejoicing in Torah.”

The Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, is the central text of the Jewish people, and the foundation by which Jewish identity was built. Every week throughout the year, Jews read a section from the Torah. On Simchat Torah, Jews celebrate by completing a full cycle of reading of the Torah. Because of the centrality of love for Torah and study, this is a joyous holiday with singing and dancing.



This collection of information sheets on major holidays and cultural events is a joint partnership of the School of Information staff, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Office of the Provost. Facts have been vetted by U-M’s Association of Religious Counselors (ARC), and other campus groups. Public feedback is welcome; please email DEIHolidayFacts@umich.edu.

Date

- Jewish holy days begin and end at sundown.
- Dates may vary depending on how one observes
- Check the [Calendar Index](#) for Religious Holidays during the current academic year for the exact date.

Greetings

None for non-Jewish people. Depending on tradition, Jewish people might say, “[Chag Sameach!](#)”, which translates to “happy holidays”, one another.

Common Practices and Celebrations

- On Shemini Atzeret, special holiday services are held and some eat in the sukkah.
- Readings from the Torah in the synagogue; the book of Deuteronomy is read followed by the book of Genesis.
- Simchat Torah is characterized by joyful dancing, singing and rejoicing with the Torah scrolls.
- The Jewish community begins to pray for rain in the land of Israel.

Common Dietary Restrictions

- Some, not all, observers of Judaism follow kosher rules of eating.
- Meat and dairy are not eaten together. Pork and seafood are not eaten.

Impact to U-M Community

- During the first day and the last two days of Sukkot, avoid scheduling important academic deadlines, events, or activities.
- Expect that observers will not attend meetings or communicate during the three days.
- Link to [U-M Guidance Regarding Conflicts](#).

U-M Campus Resources

- [Maize Pages - Jewish](#), U-M
- [Association of Religious Counselors](#), U-M

Information Sources

- [Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah](#)
- [Kosher Eating](#)

Photo credit:

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