

Shavuot (Pentecost)



Shavuot is one of the less known Jewish holidays and is another holiday with a double meaning. It celebrates the anniversary of the day the G_d gave the Torah to the nation of Israel and at the same time marks the harvest of wheat in Israel.

On the island of Rhodes a Velada ceremony took place on the first night, where men studied and chanted special prayers and songs in Ladino and Hebrew. At sunrise women offered them warm savory pies and pastries and rose scented milk pudding. The homes of the Sephardim in the east Mediterranean are decorated in greenery, flowers and especially roses, which is why this holiday is often described as Festival of the Roses.

It is customary among some Jews to have only dairy vegetable meals on Shavuot. The Sephardim of Rhodes did make special cheese filled pastries for the holiday

A special festive sweet bread shaped into seven layered loaves is often made, called “los siete cielos”, meaning seven heavens. It is said that it represents the passage of the soul’s ascent to eternal life and the seven weeks from Passover to Shavuot.

Sources: «Stella’s SEPHARDIC TABLE» by Stella Cohen.

Marc Angel «The Jews of Rhodes»