

How to Celebrate Yom Kippur 5787

Sunday, September 20 through Monday, September 21, 2026 | Thornhill, Ontario

PRACTICAL HALACHAH GUIDE | YOM KIPPUR 5787

5787 Thornhill Zmanim at a Glance

Date and Occasion	Key Times
Sunday, September 20 Erev Yom Kippur	Halachic midday: 1:10 PM Earliest candle lighting: 6:02 PM Candle lighting and fast begin no later than: 7:00 PM
Monday, September 21 Yom Kippur	Fast ends 50 minutes after sunset: 8:07 PM Shofar is sounded, followed by Maariv

This year Yom Kippur begins on Sunday evening. Times follow the current Westmount schedule for Thornhill.

Erev Yom Kippur Sunday September 20

1. **Shacharis.** Mizmor Lesodah, Tachanun, Lamenatzeach, and Avinu Malkeinu are not said this year.
2. **Kapparos.** It is customary to perform Kapparos on Erev Yom Kippur, using a chicken or money that is then given to tzedakah. If Sunday will be too rushed, it may be done earlier during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.
3. **It is a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur.** The established custom is to eat two festive meals—one around midday and one during the afternoon—and to drink adequately. Chicken and kreplach are customary; some eat fish at the first meal.
4. **Sins between people require forgiveness.** This includes hurtful words, lashon hara, damages, unpaid debts, business dishonesty, and failures of respect toward parents or teachers. Return money or property and repair the harm wherever possible.
5. **Ask personally and specifically when appropriate.** One may ask in person, by telephone, or in writing. A third party may be used when that will be more effective. Ordinarily the offence should be identified, but not if doing so would cause fresh pain. A person should not be cruel by refusing a sincere request.
6. **Mikveh.** Men are obligated by the established custom to immerse. The preferred earliest time in this year's schedule is halachic midday, 1:10 PM, before Minchah at 3:00 PM.
7. **Prepare for Yom Tov before Minchah.** Dress for Yom Tov and set out machzorim, non-leather shoes, medication instructions, and everything children or an ill person will need during the fast.
8. **Minchah and Vidui.** Daven Minchah before the final meal. Vidui is recited at the end of the silent Amidah so that every person has confessed before eating the seudah hamafsekes.

9. **The seudah hamafsekes should be light and easy to digest.** Chicken is preferred to beef. The custom is to avoid fish, although some permit cold fish. Avoid hot or spicy foods, eggs, garlic, and wine, and do not overeat.
10. **Bentching after the final meal.** It is customary to say Shir Hamaalos and wash mayim acharonim. Bentch with special concentration and clean the teeth well afterward.
11. **If you may wish to eat or drink again,** preferably say so explicitly before bentching, or at least have it in mind. Even without this condition, one may eat or drink again until accepting the fast and no later than 7:00 PM.

Candle Lighting and Entering Yom Kippur

1. **Light at home between 6:02 and 7:00 PM.** The berachos are Lehadlik Ner Shel Yom HaKippurim and Shehecheyanu. A woman should already be wearing Yom Kippur-compliant shoes because Shehecheyanu ordinarily constitutes her acceptance of the fast.
2. **When it is genuinely necessary to travel after lighting,** a woman may stipulate before lighting that she is not yet accepting Yom Kippur. She recites only the candle-lighting berachah and says Shehecheyanu later with the congregation. In every case, the fast must be accepted no later than 7:00 PM.
3. **Light a long-burning candle before Yom Kippur for Monday-night Havdalah.** This ner sheshavas must burn safely through the fast and beyond 8:07 PM; an ordinary 24-hour candle may be too short.
4. Three candle customs should not be confused. A married man customarily lights a standard 24-hour 'light of the living.' It is the same type of candle commonly sold as a Yahrzeit candle, but here it is not a memorial candle. A Yahrzeit candle is lit for departed relatives; a separate long-burning candle is reserved as the pre-existing flame for Havdalah.
5. **Clothing.** Married men customarily wear a kittel while awake on Yom Kippur. Women wear dignified Yom Tov clothing without dressing lavishly and follow the custom of wearing ordinary weekday jewellery rather than special Shabbos or Yom Tov jewellery.
6. **Parents bless their children before leaving for shul.** Men customarily accept Yom Kippur during Tefillah Zakkah and should arrive at least twenty minutes early to recite it properly. Put on the tallis with a berachah before sunset; if it is first put on after sunset, the berachah is not recited.

The Five Yom Kippur Restrictions

From the beginning of the fast until 50 minutes after sunset—8:07 PM Monday night—Yom Kippur includes the Torah prohibition of melachah and five forms of physical abstention. The purpose is not self-harm, but to step away from ordinary physical comfort and devote the day to teshuvah and closeness to Hashem.

1. **Eating and drinking.** A healthy adult may not eat or drink even a small amount. One may not taste food and spit it out, chew gum, or rinse the mouth merely for freshness. Food preparation for children or a person who must eat requires care not to taste the food.
2. **Washing.** Washing for comfort or pleasure is prohibited. On waking, wash netilas yadayim only to the knuckles. After using the washroom, wash the fingers as required—once is sufficient when they are not soiled. An area that is dirty may be washed, but only that area. Kohanim wash the entire hands to the wrists before Bircas Kohanim.
3. **Anointing.** Do not apply oils, creams, lotions, cosmetics, or perfume for comfort or pleasure. Put on deodorant before the fast. A prescribed or genuinely therapeutic cream is a medical question and should be clarified before Yom Kippur.
4. **Leather footwear.** According to the strict letter of the law, the prohibition is leather footwear. Crocs, rubber or plastic shoes, canvas sneakers, and fabric slippers are permitted when they contain no leather. Check labels and trim carefully—some sneakers advertised as synthetic still contain leather. Those who follow the stricter practice of avoiding sturdy, fully protective footwear may choose thin-soled slippers when safe and practical.
5. **Marital relations.** Husband and wife observe the restrictions of physical separation applicable to Yom Kippur.

Eating, Drinking, Health, and Shiurim

1. **Healthy adults fast for the entire twenty-five hours.** This obligation begins for males at thirteen and females at twelve, subject to the ordinary halachic requirements of adulthood.
2. **Children.** See the Children section on page 4 for the laws of fasting and age-appropriate training.
3. **Pregnant and nursing women ordinarily fast.** They should rest as much as necessary, even if this means davening very little or remaining home. Pregnancy, nursing, postpartum status, or a medical complication may change the ruling and should be addressed before the fast.
4. **A person whose life may be endangered by fasting is forbidden to fast.** This includes a serious danger that may develop later. When normal eating or drinking is medically necessary, one must not substitute shiurim if doing so would be unsafe.
5. **When instructed to eat b'shiurim, measure before Yom Kippur.** The Westmount guideline is up to 30 cc—one fluid ounce—of solid food in one session, measured by volume rather than weight. Prepare portions or mark a measuring cup in advance.
6. **The Westmount liquid shiur is up to 40 cc—approximately 1.3 fluid ounces.** These measured quantities may be taken as often as necessary at nine-minute intervals. If a person's medical plan requires more frequent or larger amounts, health takes priority and that plan must be followed.

7. **Eating and drinking are calculated separately.** One need not wait between a food portion and a liquid portion because the two do not combine. The nine-minute interval is counted from one food portion to the next and separately from one liquid portion to the next.
8. **Prepare a written schedule.** Anyone likely to need shiurim should arrange the food, drink, measurements, clock or timer, and instructions before Sunday evening so that the procedure is clear during the fast.
9. **Medication.** When halachically permitted, bitter or tasteless tablets, capsules, or liquid medicine may be swallowed. Take medicine without water when possible. If liquid is required, a bitter-tasting liquid is preferable; when water is necessary, use less than 40 cc unless the medical plan requires otherwise. Essential medication must not be stopped without medical advice.
10. **A person who must eat remains fully part of Yom Kippur.** Observe the other restrictions and daven as able. No Kiddush is recited. If bread is eaten, wash and bentch normally and add Yaaleh Veyavo; Retzei is not said this year because Yom Kippur is not Shabbos.
11. **Food may be handled for someone who is eating.** It is permitted to touch and prepare food for children, an elderly person, or someone who is ill, taking care not to taste it.
12. **Do not rinse the mouth.** Rinsing with water or mouthwash is forbidden even when one feels uncomfortable. Tasting food and spitting it out and chewing gum are also forbidden.

Children

1. Healthy children from age nine fast for part of the day. Give them their meals later than usual, both at night and during the day, according to their strength. Children below nine eat normally and may be given proper Yom Tov meals and treats.
2. Children old enough to understand should be educated in the other laws of the day. They should wear non-leather shoes, avoid washing for pleasure, participate in age-appropriate tefillah, and treat the day with respect without being kept in shul beyond what they can manage.
3. Training begins gradually. Even young children should be taught the washing and anointing rules. From approximately age two or three, children should be trained to wear non-leather footwear.

Washing and Bathing

1. **Washing for pleasure is forbidden in hot or cold water.** Dirt may be washed off, but only the affected area should be washed.
2. **Morning netilas yadayim is performed to the knuckles—the ends of the fingers—three times on each hand.** One need not be concerned if a little water splashes farther. Stickiness around the eyes may be removed with the already-moist fingers.
3. **After using the washroom, wash only to the knuckles.** When the hands are not actually soiled, washing each hand once is sufficient.

4. **Kohanim wash the entire hands to the wrists before Bircas Kohanim.** Children should be trained in these washing rules. Hands may become wet when washing food or dishes for a child or another person who is permitted to eat.

Applying Oils, Cosmetics, and Deodorant

1. **Oils and similar liquids may not be applied even in a small amount** for pleasure, cleanliness, hygiene, or personal comfort. This includes perfume and liquid cosmetics, whether bottled or sprayed.
2. **Apply perfume, cosmetics, deodorant, and antiperspirant before Yom Kippur.** The continued benefit during the fast is permitted. Talcum powder may be used for personal comfort.
3. **Children are included in these rules.** A sick person who is halachically permitted to use a therapeutic oil or cream on Shabbos may use it on Yom Kippur as well.

Footwear

1. **Only leather footwear is forbidden according to the strict letter of the law.** Even a small leather component—in the sole, upper, lining, or straps—renders the shoe unsuitable. If one cannot determine whether material is genuine leather or imitation, do not wear it.
2. **Crocs, rubber or plastic shoes, canvas sneakers, and fabric slippers may be worn when they contain no leather.** Check the label and trim: some sneakers described as synthetic contain leather components.
3. **Most opinions permit comfortable non-leather sport shoes, but some discourage fully protective footwear.** It is praiseworthy, when safe and practical, to use thin-soled shoes that preserve the sense of affliction.
4. **Leather footwear may be worn for a genuine medical need.** Because many synthetic alternatives are now available, use one when possible. Leather orthotics may be placed inside otherwise non-leather shoes.

Marital Relations

1. **Husband and wife observe the laws of physical separation both at night and during the day.** The harchakos of Niddah apply, and affectionate or overly familiar conversation should be avoided.

Vidui — Confession

1. **Every person recites the full communal Vidui** even when one believes that a particular listed sin was not personally committed. One should also mention privately any personal wrongdoing not adequately covered by the printed text.
2. **Stand bent slightly forward, similar to Modim.** During the extended Vidui, remain bent through Arba Misos Beis Din. Do not lean so heavily that one would fall if the support were removed.

3. **A sick or elderly person may lean as much as necessary and may sit when standing is too difficult.** Health and the ability to complete the fast take priority.
4. **Strike the chest gently at each sin in Al Chet.** Strike at the word shechatanu and, in V'al Chata'im, at the words she'anu chayavim.

Kol Nidrei Night

1. **Arrive early enough to say Tefillah Zakkah.** If time is short, say at least the short confession and the paragraph forgiving other people. Women may recite Tefillah Zakkah while omitting passages that refer specifically to men.
2. **Read Kol Nidrei quietly together with the chazzan.** Because it is a declaration concerning vows, one should understand its meaning. Kol Nidrei does not cancel debts, promises to another person, or harm that still requires repair.
3. **Shehecheyanu.** A woman who recited Shehecheyanu at candle lighting listens and answers Amen but does not repeat it. Everyone else recites it with the chazzan, finishing slightly before him in order to answer Amen.
4. **A person davening alone may recite Kol Nidrei,** but should recite only the portion referring to future vows, not the language purporting to address past vows.

Tefillah and Conduct During the Day

1. **Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso is said aloud after Shema.** This special practice applies throughout Yom Kippur.
2. **Yizkor may be said at home without a minyan.** There are differing customs during the first twelve months after a death; one without an established custom should say Yizkor.
3. **If a man removes his tallis during the day,** he repeats the berachah when putting it back on only if he completely took his mind off it, generally after an interruption of approximately two or three hours.
4. **It is permitted to smell spices on Yom Kippur.** Many do so to help complete one hundred berachos during the day.
5. **Rest when necessary, but protect the atmosphere of the day.** Avoid socializing, idle chatter, ordinary entertainment, business, and unnecessary conversation throughout Yom Kippur.
6. **It is customary to stand during Neilah while the Aron is open.** Anyone who feels weak may sit. Safe fasting takes priority, and the fast continues until the announced ending time of 8:07 PM.

Monday Night After the Fast

1. **The fast ends 50 minutes after sunset—Monday night at 8:07 PM.** No food, drink, or preparation for breaking the fast may begin earlier. At 8:07 PM the shofar is sounded, followed by Maariv; Atah Chonantanu is added in the Amidah.

2. **Daven Maariv carefully rather than rushing through it.** A woman who does not daven Maariv must say Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Lechol before doing melachah.
3. **One may not eat or drink before making or hearing Havdalah.** After Maariv—or after saying Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Lechol—plain water may be drunk before Havdalah when necessary.
4. **Havdalah consists of Borei Pri Hagafen, Borei Meorei HaEish, and Hamavdil.** Wine or grape juice is used. Besamim are not used.
5. **The Havdalah flame must come from a fire that burned throughout Yom Kippur.** Use the ner sheshavas lit before the fast or obtain such a flame from a neighbour. If no pre-existing flame is available, omit Borei Meorei HaEish.
6. **After the fast, wash the entire hands three times.** This completes the morning washing, which extended only to the knuckles.
7. **Wish others a good year when leaving shul.** This continues the atmosphere of blessing with which Yom Kippur concludes.
8. **There are two customs regarding Kiddush Levanah:** some say it immediately after Maariv; others wait until after they have eaten. Each person should follow his established custom.
9. **The meal after Yom Kippur is treated as a Yom Tov meal.** Break the fast sensibly with fluid and light food first, and then eat a dignified meal celebrating Hashem's forgiveness.
10. **Begin a mitzvah connected with the sukkah after eating.** Even a small act of construction or preparation carries us immediately from one mitzvah to the next.
11. **It is customary to arise earlier than usual on the morning after Yom Kippur.** The spiritual alertness of Yom Kippur should continue into the new year.

Scope and Sources

This revised guide is based directly on Westmount's complete 5778 'How to Celebrate Yom Kippur' guide and the earlier 5776 schedule and halachah booklet, adapted to the 5787 Sunday-evening/Monday calendar and current Westmount times. It summarizes common Ashkenazic practice and is not a substitute for personal halachic or medical guidance. Principal sources: Shulchan Aruch and Rema, Orach Chaim 606-624; Mishnah Berurah ad loc.; Mateh Ephraim, Hilchos Yom Kippur.

Gmar Chasimah Tovah