

Why Does Your Sukkah Look Like That?

Framing This Unit

Dwelling in a sukkah is the focal point of the festival of Sukkot. Wherever Jews have lived, they have built sukkot for the festival. The materials that were used for the sukkot or the places where they were built depended on a variety of factors, such as the local climate and living conditions. In this unit, we will analyze and compare three depictions of sukkot from communities around the world. We will then engage in a creative writing assignment to imagine what life was like in those communities and reflect on sukkot in our own communities.

Group Activity

Read the verses about sukkot from Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:42–43 and ask the group the following questions:

- If everyone bases their sukkah on the same verse, why do they vary so much in different places and at different times?
- What environmental and societal factors might influence what a sukkah looks like?

Divide into three groups and have each group examine one of the three sukkot with the corresponding worksheet:

1. [Sukkot in Russia Worksheet](#)
2. [Sukkot in Mea Shearim Worksheet](#)
3. [Sukkot in Germany Worksheet](#)

Then form new groups, each comprising one person from each of the original groups. Each person presents their resource and explains what they learned about it. Compare and document the shared findings in a [Venn diagram worksheet](#).

Discussion

- What environmental and societal factors influence what a sukkah looks like?
- How does that manifest in your sukkah or other sukkot you have seen?
- What can you learn about Jewish culture and tradition from this activity?

Creative Activity

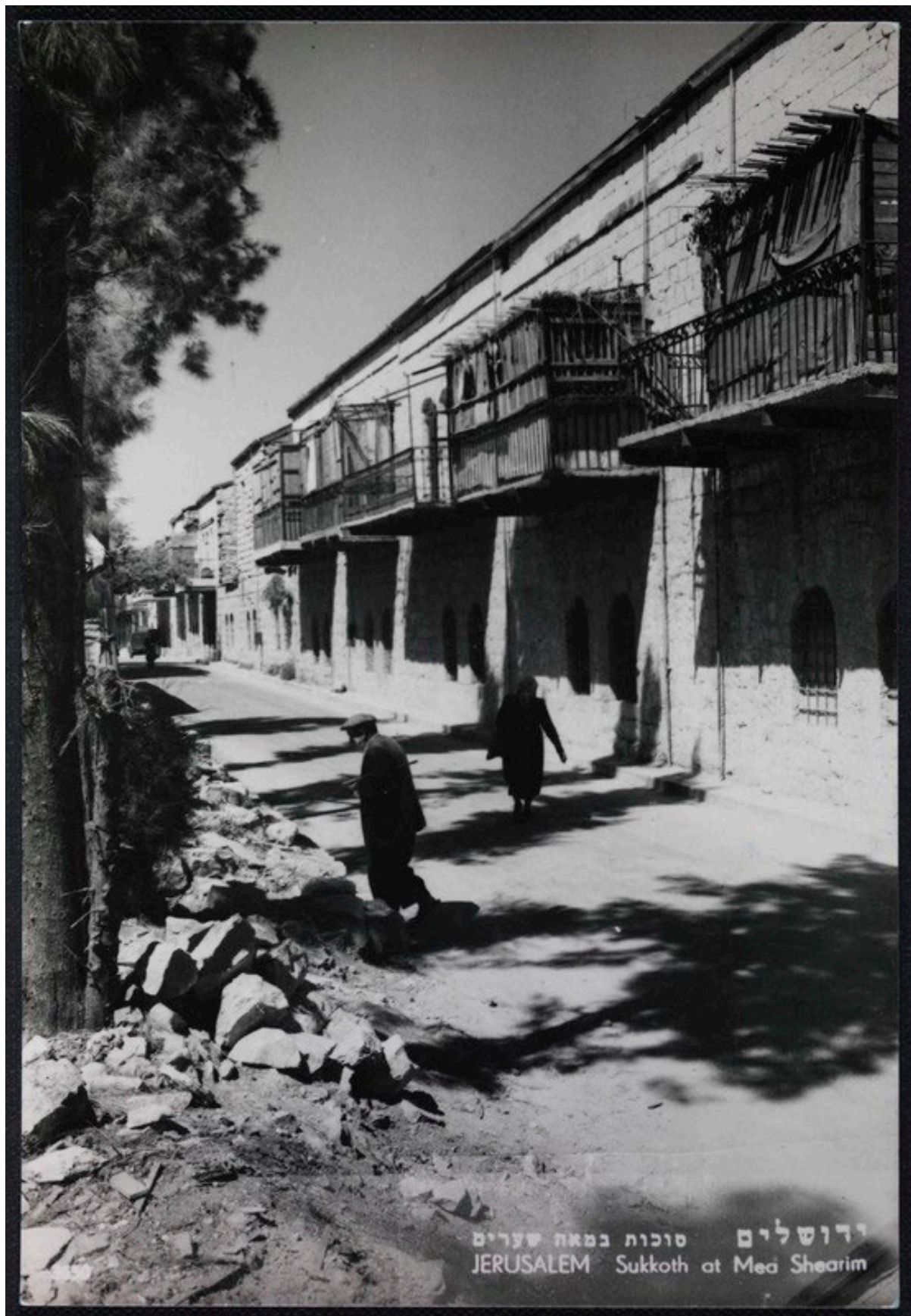
- Write a journal entry for someone who visited one of the sukkot examined.
- Draw or describe your family's sukkah or a sukkah in your community. Explain how it reflects the environment and society in which you live.

- Write a short story that takes place in one of the sukkot examined.

Primary Sources in This Lesson



Postcard, Sukkot in Russia, 1916



Sukkot in the Mea Shearim Neighborhood of Jerusalem



Sukkot, Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, 1867