

Guidelines regarding travel with the Arba Minim

Recently released by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)



Transportation
Security
Administration

EXCERPT FROM THE TSA Notice

Some observant Jewish travelers may be carrying the four plants used during Sukkot – a palm branch, myrtle twigs, willow twigs, and a citron – in airports, through security checkpoints, or on airplanes. These plants or agricultural items are not on TSA's Prohibited Items List. However, all persons and property will undergo security screening at the checkpoint.

The Contact Center (TCC) is a toll-free helpline, 1-866-289-9673 or Federal Relay #711, available for travelers to ask questions about screening or to request help at the checkpoint...If you would like to arrange assistance at the checkpoint, TSA recommends that you call at least 72 hours ahead of travel so that The Contact Center (TCC) has the opportunity to coordinate checkpoint support. Checkpoint support may include coordination with a Passenger Support Specialist (PSS). Each airport has different resources; therefore, the level of assistance you receive at the checkpoint will vary...If you arrive at the checkpoint and have any concerns before, during, or after the screening process, you should immediately request to speak with a Supervisory Transportation Security Officer (STSO) or a PSS for assistance.

Planning Your Trip: Arrive early to allow time for security screening. Communicate your specific needs (e.g., religious headwear, sacred delicate/fragile items, sensitive items or body areas) to the TSA Officer before screening begins to have a smooth airport screening experience.



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

CBP Guidance

The estimated travel period for the Jewish holiday of Sukkot is from September 20, 2020 through October 19, 2020. The holiday begins October 2 (after sundown) until October 9 (after nightfall). U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) understands that observant Jewish travelers entering the United States during the Sukkot holiday might carry religious items (ethrogs, palm fronds, twigs of willow and myrtle) in their vehicles if arriving at land border ports of entry, or in their personal baggage if they are arriving by aircraft. These items are regulated to prevent the introduction of invasive pests and diseases; however, these items might be allowed into the United States after inspection by CBP Agriculture Specialists. **Thus, the following guidance is provided for travelers:**

Ethrogs:

- Personal shipments of ethrogs are allowed entry through North Atlantic and Northern Pacific ports of entry after inspection by CBP Agriculture Specialists. North Atlantic ports are defined as Atlantic ports north of and including Baltimore; ports on the Great

Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway; Canadian Border ports east of and including North Dakota; Andrews Air Force Base, Andrews Air Force base and Washington, D.C. (including Dulles) for air shipments. Northern Pacific ports are defined as Pacific ports north of California including Alaska, Canadian Border ports west of and including Montana, excluding Hawaii.

- Travelers will be asked to open the container with the ethrog and unwrap it. The Agriculture Specialist will inspect the ethrog. If either insect stings or pests are found, the ethrog will be prohibited from entering the United States. If neither is found, the traveler will be allowed to rewrap and re-box the ethrog for entry into the United States.

Palm Fronds:

- Single palm fronds, for religious purposes, will be inspected by Agriculture Specialists and released if no pests or symptoms of disease are found.

Twigs of Willow:

- If the twigs of willow are from Europe, they will be prohibited from entering the United States. If they are from other than Europe, they will be inspected by Agriculture Specialists and released if no pests or symptoms of disease are found.
- Also, if the twigs of willow are green in color, have soft tissue present, or have buds that sprouted, then they are capable of being grown and are prohibited from entering the United States.

Twigs of Myrtle:

- Twigs of myrtle will be inspected by Agriculture Specialists and released if no pests or symptoms of disease are found.

If travelers have any concerns resulting from the inspection of their religious items at a port of entry, a CBP supervisor is always available to answer questions and address their concerns. As always, CBP is committed to treating all travelers, including travelers who may be observing Sukkot, with respect and dignity at all U.S. ports of entry.

Agudath Israel of America

42 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
constituentservices@agudah.org
212-797-9000

