Shavuot

History and Significance:
The Jewish holiday of **Shavuot**, falls on the sixth and seventh days of the Hebrew month of *Sivan*. *Shavuot* is a Hebrew word which literally means "weeks". The holiday gets this name because it occurs exactly seven weeks after the start of holiday of Passover. Generally, Shavout is observed between mid-May and early June. As with all Jewish holidays, *Shavuot* begins at sundown the night prior to the two days of the holiday.

Shavuot marks the giving of the *Torah (*The Five Books of Moses*)*, including the Ten Commandments, to the Jewish people. Occurring at the end of the spring growing season, *Shavuot* also has an agricultural significance in addition to the commemoration of the historical and religious event of God's revelation, and the Jewish People's acceptance, of the Torah.

Customs and Special Foods:
Shavuot is a holiday on which traditional Jews do not do certain categories of "work", for example using electricity, riding in cars, writing, and using the telephone. In this way it is similar to *Shabbat*. However, cooking and carrying, which are not allowed on *Shabbat*, are allowed on this holiday. As always, each of our clients will differ in their individual observance.

There is a custom of eating dairy foods on *Shavuot,* such as blintzes and cheesecake. There also exists a beautiful custom of decorating the synagogue and the home on *Shavuot* with flowers.

It is traditional to spend the first night of the holiday studying Jewish texts, often through the entire night until dawn. Many local synagogues will offer this *Shavuot* study-session. Some synagogues also celebrate confirmation ceremonies for high school students on *Shavuot* because of the connection with the receiving of the *Torah*. The Biblical book of Ruth is traditionally read during this holiday.

For more information check out this great on-line resource:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Shavuot.shtml