

-Save This Page as a PDF-

## Dr. Seuss Explains the Rules of the Sukkah With thanks to Rabbi Art Gould



**You can build it very small <sup>1</sup>**

**You can build it very tall <sup>2</sup>**

**You can build it very large <sup>3</sup>**

**You can build it on a barge**

**You can build it on a ship <sup>4</sup>**

**Or on a roof but please don't slip <sup>5</sup>**

**You can build it in an alley <sup>6</sup>**

**You shouldn't build it in a valley <sup>7</sup>**

**You can build it on a wagon <sup>8</sup>**

**You can build it on a dragon <sup>9</sup>**

**You can make the skakh of wood <sup>10</sup>**

**Would you, could you, yes you should**

**Make the skakh from leaves of tree  
You shouldn't bend it at the knee <sup>11</sup>**

**Build your Sukkah tall or short  
No Sukkah is built in the Temple Court**

**You can build it somewhat soon  
You cannot build it in the month of June <sup>12</sup>**

**If your Sukkah is well made  
You'll have the right amount of shade**

**You can build it very wide  
You can not build it on its side**

**Build if your name is Jim  
Or Bob or Sam or even Tim**

**Build it if your name is Sue  
Do you build it, yes you do!**

**From the Sukkah you can roam  
But you should treat it as your home <sup>13</sup>**

**You can invite some special guests  
Don't stay in it if there are pests**

**You can sleep upon some rugs  
Don't you build it where there're bugs**

**If in the Sukkah it should rain  
To stay there would be such a pain <sup>14</sup>**

**And if it should be very cold  
Stay there only if you're bold**

**So, build a Sukkah one and all  
Make it large or make it small**

**Sukkah rules are short and snappy**

**Enjoy Sukkot, rejoice be happy!**

**Footnotes:**

1. Maimonides (Rambam) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Sukkah, Chapter 4, Section 1.
2. The minimum height of a Sukkah is 10 tefachim. A tefach is a measure of the width of the four fingers of one's hand. My hand is 3 1/4 inches wide for a minimum Sukkah height of 32 1/2 inches. The minimum allowable width is 7 tefachim by 7 tefachim. This would result in a Sukkah of 22-and-three-quarters inches by 22-and-three-fourths inches.
3. The maximum height is 20 Amot. An Amah is the length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. My Amah is 15-and-a-half inches for a maximum height of 25 feet. Others say that 30 feet is the maximum.
4. According to Rambam the Sukkah can be built to a width of several miles. Shulchan Aruch also says there is no limit on the size of the width.
5. Rambam Hilchot Sukkah Chapter 4, Section 6.
6. Rambam Hilchot Sukkah Chapter 4, Section 11. Rambam states that one may construct a Sukkah by wedging poles in the four corners of the roof and suspending skakh from the poles. The walls of the building underneath are considered to reach upward to the edge of the skakh.
7. Rambam Hilchot Sukkah Chapter 4, Section 8-10 discusses the ins and outs of building your Sukkah in an alley or passageway.
8. There is a location referred to in the Talmud (Sukkah 2b) called Ashtarot Karnayim. According to the discussion there are two hills, with a valley in-between where the Sun does not reach. Therefore, it is impossible to sit in the shade of the roof of the Sukkah.
9. Rambam Hilchot Sukkah Chapter 4, Section 6. You can go into a Sukkah built on a wagon or a ship even on Yom Tov.
10. Rambam Hilchot Sukkah Chapter 4, Section 6. OK, it says a camel but dragon rhymes with wagon a lot better, don't you agree? Anyway, it says you can build your Sukkah on a wagon or in the crown of a tree, but you can't go into it on Yom Tov. There is a general rule against riding a beast or ascending into the crown of a tree on Yom Tov.
11. Chapter 5 deals with the rules for the skakh. Basically, you can use that which has grown from the ground, and is completely detached from the ground. So, for example, you cannot bend the branches of a tree over the Sukkah to form the skakh. But you can cut the branches from a tree and use them as skakh.
12. Shulchan Aruch, Hilchot Sukkah, Perek 636, Section 1. The Sukkah should not

**be built sooner than 30 days before the Hag. However, if the structure is built prior to 30 days, as long as something new is added within the 30 days, the Sukkah is kosher.**

- 13. Hilchot Sukkah Chapter 6, Section 6 explains that you should eat, drink and live in the Sukkah for the 7 days as you live in your own home. One should not even take a nap outside of the Sukkah.**
- 14. Hilchot Sukkah, Section 10. If it rains one should go into the house. How does one know if it is raining hard enough? If sufficient raindrops fall through the skag (roof covering) and into the food so that the food is spoiled - go inside!**