Understanding Eruv Tavhsilin

It is permitted to cook on a Jewish holiday (Yom Tob), as we learn from Shemot 12:16: "…No work shall be done on these days [Yom Tob], except to prepare food for everyone to eat; this alone may be done." However, our Hakhamim explained that it is only permitted to cook on Yom Tob what will be consumed during Yom Tob; one cannot prepare or cook on Yom Tob food that will be consumed after that particular day.

This year, the first day of Shabuot falls on Friday, the 6th of Sivan (May 22, 2026). Therefore, we are not allowed to cook on Yom Tob (Friday) for Shabbat unless we prepare an eruv tavshilin beforehand.

The eruv tavshilin consists of four elements:

- Preparing some cooked and baked food before Yom Tob.
- Declaring that we are preparing this food for Shabbat.
- Keeping that food for Shabbat.
- Eating that food during Shabbat.

In this way, technically, we begin to cook for Shabbat before the holiday starts, and we are then permitted to continue preparing food on Yom Tob for Shabbat.

How Do We Do It?

Preparing: Today, Thursday, the 5th of Sivan (May 21, 2026), in the afternoon before the Chag begins (7.53pm), we set aside a plate with some cooked food and a piece of bread, and we save this plate for Shabbat. This plate is what we call the eruv. Since some food has already been prepared for Shabbat before Yom Tob, the cooking that takes place during Yom Tob is considered an extension (the word eruv in this context means "extension") of the food that was already prepared before the holiday began.

Declaring: The following berakha is recited while holding the plate with the food (the eruv) in one’s hands:

“Barukh Ata A-donay E-lohenu Melekh haOlam, asher qiddeshanu beMitsvotav vetsivanu AL MITSVAT ERUV”

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Then the following text is recited, saying that by preparing this eruv we are permitted to do all necessary work and cook on Yom Tob for Shabbat:

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Storing: After reciting the berakha, we place the eruv in a safe place or in the refrigerator and keep it until Shabbat.

Consuming: For the eruv to be real—and not a legal fiction— we must eat that plate of food at some point during Shabbat—usually at Seuda Shelishit.

The general practice is to prepare the eruv with a boiled egg and a piece of bread. Many people also add meat, rice, or other cooked foods to their eruv.