

TASTES OF FREEDOM: A PESACH COOKBOOK

BY ELLIE RUDEE, IN COLLABORATION
WITH MOISHE HOUSE



Inspiring
Jewish
Homes



WELCOME!

I'M ELLIE "FOODIE" RUDEE, AMERICAN-ISRAELI CULINARY JOURNALIST AND TOUR GUIDE. I AM THRILLED TO LEAD THIS MINI CULINARY JOURNEY OUT OF EGYPT AND INTO THE PROMISED LAND – YOUR PASSOVER TABLE!

The Jewish world is made up of diverse cultures and perspectives, which adds a compelling complexity to the tapestry of our people. We know that differences can divide us, and the need to highlight marginalized voices has become increasingly clear in the United States and beyond, both in the Jewish community and the world at-large. However, when genuinely celebrated, our differences can create meaning and unity on a personal and communal level. We are a complex and strikingly beautiful 'mosaic' of ethnic minorities that shape our wider culture.

Through this cookbook, I aim to foster Jewish learning and engagement through the celebration of cultural differences and unity of the Jewish people, and uplift the voices of Jewish ethnic minorities.

Together, these recipes paint our colorful mosaic, and I can't wait to impart the stories behind them, which have been so generously shared by our chefs. As the Jewish saying goes, "they tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat!" In other words, we inherently understand that there is no better way to tell people's stories than through food. And there's no better time than Passover, where we are commanded to pass on what makes us, well, us, to the next generation.

As each of these recipes have been passed down (mostly by Jewish grandmothers, as you will read about), the amounts are not exact – amounts are truly learned when cooking together. So take each recipe with a grain of salt, and consult your local grandmother, or a friend you trust. Much is "to taste" and you may just need to taste as you go – which I'm sure will bring you much pleasure and fun. Do not stress, you've got this! Pesach Sameach from my seder table, to yours.

– ELLIE



WE BEGIN IN ISRAEL AT MOSHAV MASHEN, WHERE SOPHIE GIBLY'S YEMENITE TRADITION LEADS US TO DISHES FIT FOR OUR PASSOVER BREAKFAST AND DINNER TABLES. BOTH RECIPES USE CRUMBLED MATZAH, FOR WHICH WE LEARN THE ARABIC WORD– FATOOT (OR, FATTOUSH).



NEXT STOP IS CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA, WHERE WE LEARN TWO OF GAL ANDRES' MOROCCAN RECIPES, ONE VEGAN AND THE OTHER PISCATARIAN, AND BOTH GLUTEN FREE. THESE RECIPES ARE FIERCELY FLAVORFUL AND MIGHT BECOME A STAPLE AT YOUR HOUSEHOLD, PASSOVER OR NOT.

I HAVE CURATED EIGHT PASSOVER RECIPES FROM FOUR CHEFS AROUND THE WORLD, AND I HOPE THAT THIS JOURNEY INSPIRES YOU TO TRY NEW FLAVORS AND DISHES THIS PASSOVER.



THEN WE HEAD TO PARIS, FRANCE, WHERE WE LEARN TO MAKE LÉA CARDOSO'S WARMING TUNISIAN STEW AND HER FAVORITE DESSERT THAT IS PERFECT FOR SNACKING ON WHILE AWAITING THE SHULCHAN ORECH PART OF OUR SEDERS. (I KNOW, IT FEELS LIKE WE'VE ALREADY WAITED 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS BY THEN...)



FINALLY, WE HEAD TO SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL, WHERE NOÁ VAGO MODERNIZES THE SYRIAN KIBBE (AND MAKES IT KOSHER, VEGETARIAN, AND GLUTEN FREE FOR ALL OF OUR PASSOVER NEEDS). AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WE DISCOVER THE SYRIAN HAROSSET OF OUR DREAMS – WHICH NOÁ SAYS SHE EATS STRAIGHT WITH A SPOON!



SOPHIE GILBY



SOPHIE GIBLY, 29, LIVES ON MOSHAV MASHEN IN ISRAEL. HER FAMILY IS YEMENITE, ISRAELI, AND AMERICAN.



“THE CULINARY TRADITIONS ARE PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. MY MOM LEARNED TO COOK THE FOOD FROM MY GRANDMA, AND MY GRANDMA LEARNED FROM HER MOM.

I HAD TO LEARN FROM MY MOM, AND ALL THE MEASUREMENTS ARE BY FEEL AND BY EYE-MEASURE. I LIKE THAT IT FORCES YOU TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE THE RECIPES ARE FROM.”

Sophie Gibly, 29, lives on Moshav Mashen in Israel. Her family is Yemenite, Israeli, and American. Sophie recalls growing up having Passover at her home in Arizona, with 40 guests at each of the two seders. Her parents made sure they were interactive for guests, coming up with trivia questions, dressing up (her mom as Moses!), and decorating the house with road signs pointing out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

When Sophie’s mother married into the Yemenite side of her family, she took on all the traditions, including the culinary traditions. Sophie notes that the Yemenite connection to Judaism is “very pure, simple, and communal.”

Though she is a proud Yemenite Jew, Sophie says, “I am first and foremost proud to be Jewish. The traditions of Yemenite Jewry are a means to an end – the same with other cultures. It’s important to preserve traditions and realize the world is changing and understand it’s not the Yemenite part that’s the most defining factor but the Judaism.” Even still, Sophie defines her Yemenite identity as “a soul connection that has only increased over the years.”

Sophie is especially close with her grandmother, who came to Israel from Yemen in 1949 at age 8 (give or take a few years, as her grandmother does not know her exact birthdate). As a child, Sophie had a difficult time communicating with her grandmother because of the language barrier, but loved spending time together, nevertheless. She recalls her grandmother dressing her up in Yemenite bridal wear and jewelry and playing Yemenite music. Now that Sophie speaks Hebrew, she and her grandmother speak about what it was like to grow up in Yemen, and how she feels about her life in Israel. “It’s a gift that I am able to understand those stories now.” Sophie chose to share two classic Passover dishes from her family – fatoot chalav for breakfast and fatoot marak for dinner. At her grandmother’s dairy farm on Moshav Mashen, they use boiled, full-fat milk straight from the cows (who go on a Passover diet a month before the holiday begins!).

“The culinary traditions are passed down from generation to generation. My mom learned to cook the food from my grandma, and my grandma learned from her mom. I had to learn from my mom, and all the measurements are by feel and by eye-measure. I like that it forces you to have a relationship with the people the recipes are from.”

Outside of Passover foods, Sophie’s favorite Yemenite dishes are carbohydrates such as jachnun, kubane, and solet. When she puts her own modern twists on the classics, such as adding honey to solet (farina), her grandmother calls it an “abomination.”

“But she still loves me and invites me to eat with her,” Sophie says with a smile.



**FATOOT MEANS
“CRUMBLED” IN ARABIC.**

**SEE ALSO: FATOOSH, A DELICIOUS SALAD
WITH TORN PITA.**

**SOME ASHKENAZIM, PRIMARILY
HASIDIC JEWS, FOLLOW THE
CUSTOM TO REFRAIN FROM
GEBROCHTS (YIDDISH: “BROKEN”),
OR MATZAH THAT HAS
ABSORBED LIQUID.**

**SOPHIE GIBLY, 29, LIVES ON MOSHAV MASHEN IN ISRAEL.
HER FAMILY IS YEMENITE, ISRAELI, AND AMERICAN.**



FATOOT CHALAV

BY SOPHIE GIBLY

INGREDIENTS:

2 liters (half gallon) milk
2 tbsp margarine
2 tbsp sugar
8-10 pieces of matzah,
crushed into small pieces
with hands
Salt, optional

This dairy matzah porridge is traditionally eaten as a breakfast on Passover and can be made sweet (by adding powdered sugar, maple syrup, etc.) or savory (by adding salt).

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fill a medium pot with the milk, room temperature margarine, and sugar.
2. Heat on medium flame and stir frequently so the mixture doesn't burn or froth over.
3. When the mixture is warm and frothy, add the crushed matzah and mix, decreasing the flame to low heat.
4. Let cook to your desired thickness, until the mixture is soft, but not runny. As the mixture will thicken over time, add milk again before serving if it gets too thick.
5. Serve hot with desired toppings.

YEMENITE JEWISH PRACTICE



In the 16th century, the spread of Kabbalah throughout the Jewish world led to a split in the traditions and practices of the Jews of Yemen (also called Teimanim). The influence of Sephardi practice and mysticism resulted in the Shami tradition, while the Baladi style of prayer maintained older Yemenite practices. One unique practice of the Baladi tradition is an abbreviated version of the Kaddish (mourner's prayer), meant for use by an individual praying without a minyan (quorum of ten).

While the communal requirement for reciting Kaddish is meant to ensure mourners are surrounded by community, the Baladi tradition recognizes that's not always possible.

WHAT'S A COMMUNAL PRACTICE YOU PREFER TO DO ALONE?

Up through the 20th century, Yemenite Jews tended to study manuscripts rather than ordering expensive printed copies from abroad. Children would often gather in a circle around their teacher or father in order to learn from singular handwritten texts. As a result, many Teimanim learned to read Hebrew from any angle, even upside down!

WHEN HAVE YOU APPROACHED YOUR JUDAISM (OR YOUR LIFE) FROM A NEW ANGLE? WHAT DID YOU GAIN FROM THIS APPROACH?





THIS RECIPE CALLS FOR ADDING MATZAH TO THE TOP OF THE SOUP AFTER COOKING, AS ONE WOULD USE CROUTONS, BUT SOME ASHKENAZIM, PRIMARILY HASIDIC JEWS, FOLLOW THE CUSTOM TO REFRAIN FROM GEBROCHTS (YIDDISH: “BROKEN”), OR MATZAH THAT HAS ABSORBED LIQUID.

FATOOT MARAK

BY SOPHIE GIBLY

INGREDIENTS:

500-1000g (1-2lbs) chuck steak, cut into cubes
1 onion, whole
1 tomato, whole
2 potatoes, cut into sixths (a third potato cut into small cubes can be added for a thicker soup)
1 bunch cilantro
¼ cup chicken soup mix
2-3 tbsp paprika
1 tbsp cumin
2 tbsp hawaiij (can use curry if not hawaiij)
Matzah, optional

This Yemenite Passover soup is the same as a traditional Yemenite soup, but with kosher for Passover spices. Kosher for Passover chicken soup mix contains potato starch, making for a thicker soup.

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large pot filled halfway with water, let the water come to a boil.
2. Reduce flame to medium, add the meat, and cook for 10 minutes.
3. Clean off the foam and add the vegetables and spices.
4. Continue to cook at a low boil, with the lid mostly covering the pot.
5. Continue to cook for 4-5 hours, adding salt to taste and water as needed.
6. Break matzah into pieces and add to the top of the soup like croutons.



MAH NISHTANAH?



WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT PESACH IN YEMENITE TRADITION?



The Yemenite Jewish community is one of several today that bakes matzah by hand in roughly five minutes, resulting in a “soft” matzah somewhat reminiscent of pita.

MATZAH IS KNOWN AS “THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION,” RECALLING OUR OPPRESSION UNDER SLAVERY. “SOFT” MATZAH’S QUICK BAKING TIME RECALLS THE HASTE WITH WHICH THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT. WHEN IN YOUR LIFE DO YOU FEEL AFFLICTED BY A NEED TO RUSH?

Teimanim traditionally don’t use a seder plate because the entire table is the seder plate. Seder hosts arrange layers of lettuce, scallions, and other greens on the table, along with plates of charoset, eggs, and roasted meats.

IN TRANSFORMING THE ENTIRE TABLE INTO A SEDER PLATE, YEMENITE TRADITION LESSENS THE DIVIDE BETWEEN SEDER AND PARTICIPANT. WHAT HELPS YOU BETTER IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE SEDER EXPERIENCE?



GAL ANDRES



GAL, 33, WAS BORN IN ISRAEL AND MOVED TO PHILADELPHIA, PA AS A CHILD. SHE NOW LIVES IN CLAREMONT, CA.



BEING A MOROCCAN JEW, TO GAL, “CAME FROM MY GRANDMOTHER’S HOUSE TO MY MOTHER’S HOUSE, TO MY HOUSE.” IT IS “IN THE WAY WE SING OUR SONGS, THE TRADITIONS OF SPICY FOODS, THE WARMTH OF MY HOME, THE VALUES OF FAMILY, AND EATING MEALS AT THE TABLE TOGETHER, ENJOYING THE TIME TOGETHER.”

Gal, 33, was born in Israel and moved to Philadelphia, PA as a child. She now lives in Claremont, California.

Her earliest food memories are of the smell of her grandmother’s Moroccan kitchen in Israel. “That’s how I remember her – in the kitchen. The Moroccan spicy fish was there, and there were always two of them, one that was normal spicy and another that she said wasn’t spicy but was actually spicier than the first.”

When thinking of Passover, Gal remembers “being really hungry and not allowed to eat yet. As I got older, the waiting became easier.” She loves reading through the stories, singing the songs, and now, even waiting for the special Passover dishes.

Moroccan fish was commonly made for Shabbat “by the matriarch of the family” with couscous and with challah (Gal remembers finishing the meal with a plate that looks totally clean because it’s so good, you use challah to wipe off every last morsel), but on Passover it’s made with rice. “I also remember my grandmother rolling her couscous by hand, insisting that the one you buy in a box is not the same. “Everything had to be made fresh, from scratch. She fed all her kids, and all her neighbors. She even fed the birds as well.”

Her connection to Israel, she said, gave her an “innate connection to my Judaism,” offering her a different understanding of her identity compared to other American Jews.


Gal’s grandmother made aliyah to Israel in the 60s from a small village outside of Casablanca, Morocco, where her family was “rebirthed.” Being a Moroccan Jew, to Gal, “came from my grandmother’s house to my mother’s house to my house. It is “in the way we sing our songs, the traditions of spicy foods, the warmth of my home, the values of family, and eating meals at the table together, enjoying the time together.”

“Food is just as important [to Jewish identity] as all the other traditions, prayers, and rituals we do,” she said. “Those things are the makeup, but the magic of it all that brings everyone together is food.”



“FOOD IS JUST AS IMPORTANT
[TO JEWISH IDENTITY] AS
ALL THE OTHER TRADITIONS,
PRAYERS, AND RITUALS WE DO,”
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-GAL ANDRES



ASHKENAZIM GENERALLY
REFRAIN FROM KITNIYOT
(LEGUMES) ON PASSOVER,
INCLUDING RICE.

GAL, 33, WAS BORN IN ISRAEL AND MOVED TO PHILADELPHIA, PA
AS A CHILD. SHE NOW LIVES IN CLAREMONT, CA.



MOROCCAN SPICY FISH

BY GAL ANDRES



INGREDIENTS:

3 tbsp oil (can use olive, vegetable,
avocado or coconut oil)

1 red bell pepper, cut into strips

1 serrano pepper, cut into disks

2-3 chili peppers, cut in half or
fourths, lengthwise

4-5 cloves garlic, sliced

1 bunch cilantro, roughly
chopped, with a small handful of
cilantro stems set apart

2 large, ripe tomatoes, diced

2 tbsp tomato paste

Vegetable broth, as needed

500-700g (1-1.5lbs) white fish,
like cod, sea bass, or tilapia

Spices: garlic and onion powder,
cumin, salt and pepper

1-2 tsp spicy paprika in oil
(or spicy paprika)

1 can chickpeas

On Shabbat, this dish is traditionally eaten with challah, but can be served with rice or bread that is kosher for Passover.

DIRECTIONS:

1. On medium flame, add olive oil to a large pan or shallow pot turn.
2. Add red bell pepper, serrano pepper, chili peppers, garlic, and cilantro stems and sauté for about 5 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes and tomato paste to pan. Cook down for about 3-5 minutes, until tomatoes have softened, and tomato paste is incorporated. Add small amount of vegetable broth, if needed.
4. Add fish on top of tomato and pepper mixture.
5. Sprinkle spices on top of fish, to taste, and add the spicy paprika in oil over the entire pan.
6. Adjust heat so that sauce underneath is at a slow simmer, and cover. Cook for 5-7 minutes before adding chickpeas and roughly cut cilantro. Cover again and cook until fish is cooked through, about another 5-10 minutes.
7. During the last few minutes, occasionally remove lid and spoon sauce over the fish.

MOROCCAN JEWISH HISTORY



In the 15th century, Morocco established its first Jewish quarter in Fez, calling it a mellah (Arabic for “salt”, due to the presence of a salt warehouse). The name caught on for Jewish quarters throughout the country, including the notable Mellah of Marrakesh. When the Alhambra Decree expelled Jews from Spain in 1492, waves of Sephardi immigrants journeyed to Morocco and other North African (or Maghrebi) countries. Local communities referred to these immigrants as megorashim (“expelled”), in part to distinguish them from the indigenous population of toshavim (“residents”). The two communities maintained separate synagogues, customs (minhagim), cemeteries, and more for centuries.

**JEWISH NEIGHBORHOODS, FROM MELLAHS TO GHETTOS, MANAGE TO KEEP
JEWISH COMMUNITIES STRONG BUT SEPARATE (IF NOT ISOLATED).
WHEN IN YOUR LIFE IS MAINTAINING SEPARATE COMMUNITY A POSITIVE VALUE?
WHEN IS IT NEGATIVE?**

Casablanca is home to The Museum of Moroccan Judaism, the only Jewish museum in the entire Arab world. Established in a former orphanage for Jewish children, the museum is next to the Ettedgui Synagogue, which had been destroyed in a World War II bombardment. Restoration of the synagogue began in 2011, culminating in a rededication ceremony on December 20, 2016, attended by Morocco’s current King, Mohammed VI.

**WHAT PIECE OF JEWISH HISTORY, PRACTICE, CULTURE, OR TRADITION
WOULD YOU WANT TO SEE CAPTURED BY A JEWISH MUSEUM?**





ASHKENAZIM GENERALLY
REFRAIN FROM KITNIYOT
(LEGUMES) ON PASSOVER,
INCLUDING RICE.

MOROCCAN VEGETABLE STEW

BY GAL ANDRES



INGREDIENTS:

3 tbsp oil
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 medium butternut squash, cut into cubes. (Can be washed with skin left on, or peeled)
2 medium-large potatoes, peeled and cubed
Vegetable broth, as needed
1 red bell pepper, cut into half strips (strips that are cut in half)
1 orange or yellow bell pepper, cut into half strip
2 medium zucchinis
1 can chickpeas
Spicy paprika in oil (or spicy paprika), cayenne pepper, onion powder, salt and pepper

Moroccan Vegetable Stew is traditionally served over couscous, but can be served over rice, or on its own, during Passover.

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large pot, add oil and turn on heat to medium.
2. Once oil is warm, add onions and sauté for 3-5 minutes until onions are translucent.
3. Add butternut squash and potatoes and cover with vegetable broth. Slowly bring to slow simmer and cook for about 10 minutes, until vegetables start to soften.
4. Add bell peppers, zucchini, and chickpeas, along with all of the spices, to taste.
5. Continue to cook on slow simmer for another 10-20 minutes, until all of the vegetables are soft and there is a rich broth.

MAH NISHTANAH?



WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT PESACH IN MOROCCAN TRADITION?

Before starting the maggid section, the seder leader walks around the table with the seder plate, waving it over each guest's head one at a time while everyone chants:

Bivhilu yatzanu miMitzrayim. Ha lachma anya. B'nei horin.

In haste, we went out from Egypt. [With] the bread of affliction. [Now, we are] free people.

You can hear a version of Bivhilu [here](#), arranged by Cantor Eyal Bitton.

**BIVHILU AND THE WAVING SEDER PLATE IS A BLESSING FOR SEDER PARTICIPANTS
(IN FACT, THE GREAT KABBALIST, RABBI ISAAC LURIA, TEACHES THAT THE SEDER PLATE
SYMBOLIZES SHEKHINAH, GOD'S PRESENCE AND DWELLING ON EARTH).**

WHAT WOULD YOU BLESS ALL OF YOUR SEDER GUESTS WITH?

Moroccan and other Maghrebi Jews celebrate the end of Pesach with Mimouna, a festive meal marking the return of chametz (leavened products) to their diet. Families open their homes and offer a wide spread of moufletta, cakes, and other sweetmeats. Symbols of luck and fertility abound as well. Additionally, communities may read passages from Mishlei (Proverbs) or the Mishnah to kick off the celebration.

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO MARK THE END OF PESACH?



LÉA CARDOSO



LIVING IN THE PARISIAN SUBURBS, LÉA, 25, IS FROM A LARGE TUNISIAN FAMILY (HER MOTHER IS ONE OF EIGHT) WHO IMMIGRATED TO FRANCE IN 1964.



“I INTEND TO TEACH MY CHILDREN KNOWING ABOUT THE RELIGION, THE TRADITIONS, AND OF COURSE THE BIG HOLIDAY DINNERS WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY – ALL THE MEMORIES FROM MY CHILDHOOD THAT I REALLY LOVE.”

Living in the Parisian suburbs, Léa, 25, is from a large Tunisian family (her mother is one of eight) who immigrated to France in 1964. She learned to cook from her grandmother, whose home she would go directly to after school every Friday, to help cook for Shabbat.

On Passover, Léa would have one seder with her mother’s side of the family and the other with her father’s – each with “one big table with all of the cousins.” Now, many of her family members have moved elsewhere, including Israel, and the Passover tables have gotten smaller over the years.

But some things stay the same. Every year, Léa looks forward to the Msoki – a Tunisian dish made on Passover. After her grandmothers made aliyah to Israel, her mother needed to learn how to make it. Her grandmother, over the phone, told her to add “a little bit” of certain ingredients, what Léa calls “the grandmother’s way,” and Léa recalls her mother’s exasperation when she would ask, “how much is a little bit??”

As a lot of chopping is required, the whole family sits at one table while preparing the dish, with herself, her father and brothers chopping while her mother cooks it.

“It’s a family made dish,” says Léa. When Léa moved out of the house, her mom gave her a notebook with all her family’s traditional recipes.

The croquants are another dish that her family makes, and this recipe, adapted to Passover, “is great for a little snack because waiting for the seder, we were always hungry.”

Looking for a challenge, Léa began baking during the second lockdown in France while looking for a job and started her Instagram account, @croquelalife, where she shares recipes and restaurants.

Though she shares recipes with the world, Léa says that there is something special about the “instant connection” she feels with other Jews – which she defines as a spirit of community that share the same values. Most of the Jews in her community in Paris are also of Mizrahi descent.

“I intend to teach my children knowing about the religion, the traditions, and of course the big holiday dinners with the whole family – all the memories from my childhood that I really love.”



THE CROQUANTS ARE ANOTHER DISH THAT HER FAMILY MAKES, AND THIS RECIPE, ADAPTED TO PASSOVER, “IS GREAT FOR A LITTLE SNACK BECAUSE WAITING FOR THE SEDER, WE WERE ALWAYS HUNGRY.”

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CROQUANTS

BY LEÁ CARDOSO

INGREDIENTS:

4 eggs
2 cups of sugar
1 packet (7.5g) of vanilla sugar
(or ¼ tsp of vanilla extract)
1 cup of sunflower oil
1 cup of potato starch
2 cups of almond flour
2 cups of matzah flour
1 cup of almonds, crushed
coarsely

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F)
2. Mix together the eggs, sugar and vanilla sugar, then add the oil.
3. Add the potato starch, almond flour, then the matzah flour (it's normal if it's a little sticky, but if the dough is too thin to form into logs, add more flour).
4. Oil your hands and form 4 long logs on two baking sheets.
5. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes.
6. Take them out and carefully cut the logs, horizontally, into slices.
7. Separate the slices on the trays and put them back in the oven for 15 minutes, turning the cookies on each side to toast evenly.

TUNISIAN JEWISH PRACTICE



According to tradition, the first Jews in Tunisia arrived on the island of Djerba after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE and built a temple there. In the 19th century, the Jewish community built El Ghriba synagogue on that site.

Tunisian Jews celebrate an annual pilgrimage to the Djerba Synagogue every Lag B'Omer. In addition to three days of prayer and dance, pilgrims light candles in the sanctuary and write personal wishes by hand onto eggs, which they leave in a small cave within the synagogue.

PASSOVER, SHAVUOT, AND SUKKOT ARE KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS THE SHALOSH REGALIM, OR THREE PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS (LITERALLY "THREE FEET").

BEFORE THE ROMAN EXILE, ISRAELITES USED TO TRAVEL BY FOOT TO THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM THESE THREE TIMES EVERY YEAR FOR WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION.

WHAT MIGHT BE A MEANINGFUL PILGRIMAGE YOU WANT TO MAKE?





**OPTIONAL: BEFORE SERVING,
BREAK SOME MATZAH IN THE
MSOKI AND LET THEM SOFTEN
FOR ABOUT 10 MINUTES.**

**SOME ASHKENAZIM, PRIMARILY
HASIDIC JEWS, FOLLOW
THE CUSTOM TO REFRAIN
FROM GEBROCHTS
(YIDDISH: “BROKEN”),
OR MATZAH THAT HAS
ABSORBED LIQUID.**

MSOKI

BY LEÁ CARDOSO

INGREDIENTS:

1/3 cup olive oil
2 onions, diced
5 garlic cloves, minced
2 tomatoes, diced
1 kg (2.2lbs) chuck steak or beef shank
500g spinach (18oz)
2 carrots, diced
3 turnips, diced
2 kohlrabi, diced
2 leeks, diced

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large pot on medium heat, add oil. Fry onions until translucent.
2. Add the garlic, tomatoes and meat, and let it cook for 10 minutes.
3. Add the spinach and let it reduce.
4. Add all the vegetables, and cover with water.
5. Cook for 2-3 hours over medium heat uncovered, stirring frequently.
6. Add 1 cup of water, the herbs, and a tablespoon of harissa.
7. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
8. Cover the pot and cook over medium heat for 30 minutes.

1 zucchini, diced
1 fennel, diced
1 celery, diced
150g green peas (5oz)
250g fresh beans (9oz)
3 artichoke hearts, diced
Chopped parsley, cilantro, dill, mint, to taste
1 tbsp harissa
Salt and pepper



MAH NISHTANAH?



WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT PESACH IN TUNISIAN TRADITION?



According to Exodus 40:17, the first day of Nisan is the date on which the Israelites finished constructing the Mishkan in the wilderness. Both Tunisian and Libyan Jews celebrate Rosh Chodesh Nisan with the ritual of Bsisá, named after a mixture of wheat and barley with spices, legumes, fruits, honey, and nuts.

The ritual includes the turning of a key in bsisá, mothers offering blessings to their families, and a gathering of gold jewelry into the bsisá. This last act recalls the gold women donated to the construction of the Mishkan.

**BSISA ALSO HELPS TO SERVE AS A TRANSITION FROM PURIM IN THE
PREVIOUS MONTH TO PASSOVER IN THE MONTH AHEAD.**

HOW DO YOU TRANSITION FROM A PURIM MINDSET TO A PASSOVER MINDSET?

**IS THERE ANY ASPECT OF PURIM YOU WANT TO INTENTIONALLY
BRING INTO YOUR SEDER THIS YEAR?**

Adapted from the Spanish practice, Tunisian Jews pass the seder plate from person to person, placing it briefly on each person's head for a moment.

**THE WEIGHT OF THE SEDER PLATE ON ONE'S HEAD RECALLS
THE HEAVY BURDENS WE CARRIED IN EGYPT.**

WHAT BURDENS ARE ON YOUR MIND THIS YEAR?



NOÁ VAGO



NOÁ, 27, LIVES IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL AND WAS RECENTLY MARRIED TO A MAN OF SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN DESCENT. EXCEPT FOR HER PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER, WHO WAS TURKISH, NOÁ'S FAMILY IS ASHKENAZI, AND HER MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER WAS A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR.



“I LIKE THE FAMILY WE ARE CREATING WITH MULTIPLE JEWISH CULTURAL INFLUENCES, AND I LOVE BEING JEWISH – THE KASHRUT, SHABBAT, AND CHAGIM. IF I FOUND OUT I WASN’T JEWISH, I’D STILL WANT TO HOLD THOSE TRADITIONS.”

Noá, 27, lives in São Paulo, Brazil and was recently married to a man of Syrian/Egyptian descent. Except for her paternal grandmother, who was Turkish, Noa’s family is Ashkenazi, and her maternal grandmother was a Holocaust survivor.

Growing up, many of Noá’s food memories come not from her parents, but from Zilma, a fulltime cook in her home, who is like another member of her family. In Brazil, it is common to have a cook who does most of the cooking for the family. “Zilma has worked in my home since I was born. She’s from Bahia (northern Brazil), and we are very close. She makes very cozy, good food and growing up, I was always in the kitchen with her.”

Unlike most Brazilian cooks, Zilma cooks kosher food. Growing up, Noá recalls Zilma making kosher chicken for Shabbat as well as kosher feijoada, Brazil’s national dish that usually contains pork, beef, and black beans, and is served with white rice and oranges, collard greens and a topping called farofa, made of cassava.

Noá recalls Passovers at her grandmother’s, where the whole family (including at least 10 children, in addition to Zilma, aunts, and uncles) would move into her home for the week, as she had kosher for Passover dishes. “My grandmother would become crazy,” laughs Noá. “I remember her soaking all of her glass in the bath for three days before Passover to kasher them.”

Passovers are much easier now, Noá says, because she has taken on her husband Erik’s Halabi (Syrian) traditions. She now eats kitniyot, which she says puts her mother “in panic.” “Ashkenazim like to suffer, they enjoy it,” Noá jokes.

Erik’s mother taught Noá Syrian/Egyptian recipes, including the Syrian Harosset that she has shared. “When we were dating for 8 years, his mother would make it with 8 kilos (nearly 18lbs) and put some in a Tupperware for me, and I’d eat it outside of my family’s seder with a spoon.”

The harosset recipe comes from Erik’s grandmother, who moved to Brazil as a refugee. Kibbe, says Noá, has been popularized in Brazil because of the large Lebanese, Syrian, and Egyptian populations. “It’s super important to know where we came from,” Noá reflects.

“I like the family we are creating with multiple Jewish cultural influences, and I love being Jewish – the kashrut, Shabbat, and chagim. If I found out I wasn’t Jewish, I’d still want to hold those traditions.”



THIS IS A MODERN, DAIRY TAKE ON SYRIAN KIBBE, WITH QUINOA INSTEAD OF BULGUR SO IT IS KOSHER FOR PASSOVER.

KIBBE IS USUALLY MADE WITH MEAT, BUT THIS VERSION, WITH RICOTTA AND SQUASH, STILL USES TRADITIONAL KIBBE SPICES LIKE ALEPPO PEPPER, CINNAMON, AND FRESH MINT. IT IS GREAT FOR VEGETARIANS AND PEOPLE WITH CELIAC, AS WELL AS THOSE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW TO ADD TO THEIR PASSOVER REPERTOIRE.

SQUASH AND RICOTTA KIBBE

BY NOÁ VAGO



INGREDIENTS:

½ cup quinoa
2 cups of cooked and mashed squash
½ onion finely chopped
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp Aleppo pepper
2 tsp salt
Chopped fresh mint, to taste
300g (10oz) fresh ricotta
½ cup plain yogurt
1 cup walnuts, chopped coarsely
1 TBSP salt
Fresh parsley to taste
Freshly grated nutmeg to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Combine ½ cup dry quinoa with 2 cups of water in a saucepan and boil, covered, for 10 minutes.
3. In a large bowl, add the cooked quinoa and with a large spoon or your hands, mix in the mashed squash, the raw onion, and the spices. Add salt and chopped mint and mix it until it becomes a soft, uniform dough.
4. In another bowl, mash the ricotta with a fork. Add the yogurt, the walnuts, the salt, the parsley, and the nutmeg.
5. In a rectangle or square pan, place half of the squash dough. Add the ricotta filling over it and cover with the other half of the dough.
6. Bake it in a pre-heated oven for 30-40 minutes, until it becomes golden on top.

SYRIAN JEWISH PRACTICE



Music and *hazzanut* plays a large role in Syrian tradition, especially among the Halabi Jews of Aleppo (as opposed to the Shami Jews of the Damascus community). The prayer liturgy in Syrian communities changes musically according to a rotating series of weekly *maqams* - a melody type or scale of tones applied to the entire service.

EACH MAQAM EXPRESSES A DIFFERENT IDEA OR THEME, FROM NEW BEGINNINGS TO CONCLUSIONS, FROM MARKING INSTABILITY TO HIGHLIGHTING BEAUTY.

WHAT ASPECT OF JEWISH LIFE WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO HIGHLIGHT MUSICALLY?

HOW WOULD IT SOUND?

The center of Syrian *hazzanut* is currently Jerusalem's Ades Synagogue, located in the Nachlat neighborhood. The cantors of Ades still practice a ritual of singing *baqashot* (special supplications, prayers, and poems) every Shabbat starting at 3 a.m.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES HOLD A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT RESONANCE AT NIGHT THAN THEY DO DURING THE DAY TIME.

ARE YOU MORE OPEN TO SPIRITUAL PRACTICE DURING THE DAY OR NIGHT TIME?

WHY?



**“WHEN WE WERE DATING
FOR 8 YEARS, HIS MOTHER
WOULD MAKE [HAROSSET]
WITH 8 KILOS (NEARLY 18LBS)
AND PUT SOME IN A TUPPERWARE
FOR ME, AND I’D EAT IT OUTSIDE
OF MY FAMILY’S SEDER
WITH A SPOON.”
-NOÁ VAGO**

SYRIAN HAROSSET

BY NOÁ VAGO

INGREDIENTS:

½ kg (1lb) dates
2 tbsp red wine
¼ cup walnuts

DIRECTIONS:

1. Soak the dates in a bowl for 2 hours, then remove the pits and pour out the water.
2. In a small pot, over medium heat, add the soft dates, firmly mix, and cover them with fresh water.
3. Continue to cook, stirring and adding more water incrementally, until it becomes a firm paste, about 15 minutes.
4. Add the wine and mix it until the date paste absorbs the wine. Remove from the heat and let it cool for 15 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, chop the walnuts until crumbly. Add the walnuts to the date paste.
6. Serve with walnuts on top.



MAH NISHTANAH?



WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT PESACH IN SYRIAN TRADITION?



At Syrian seders, the youngest child places the afikomen into a sort of satchel or knapsack that they swing over their shoulder. Participants then ask the child three questions, to which the child replies with three ritual answers:

Where do you come from? “Egypt”

Where are you going? “Israel”

What are you carrying? “Matzah”

Some families may have guests taking turns giving the same answers; others may answer “Jerusalem” rather than “Israel.”

IF YOU COULD NOT USE THE RITUAL RESPONSES, HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE THREE QUESTIONS FOR THIS POINT IN YOUR LIFE?

Rather than splitting the middle matzah in half, Syrian Jews break it into the shape of two letters: a dalet ד and a vav ו. These letters carry mystical significance, as their numeric values (“4” and “6”) give a sum of 10, representing the 10 Kabbalistic sefirot (emanations of God).

**THE AFIKOMEN REMINDS US THAT SOMETHING BROKEN CAN HAVE
A PROFOUND AND HOLY PURPOSE.**

**WHAT MEANING MIGHT YOU FIND IN THE BROKEN ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD
OR YOUR OWN LIFE?**

CHEFS

SOPHIE GIBLY, LÉA CARDOSO, GAL ANDRES, AND NOÁ VAGO

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