

Grapes

- The most grown fruit in the world.
- A symbol of peace, plenty and the good life, grapevines are a source of pure water when cut open and make excellent building material for shelters. (No doubt our ancient ancestors used the vines to build their sukkot!)
- Grapes grow in beautiful clusters and correspond to tiferet (beauty). This trait is characterized by the balance between its different and sometimes contrary components. Since tiferet is the perfect balance between chesed and gevura, grapes include both nourishing and eliminating qualities.



Barley

- It was so important in the ancient world—before and during biblical times—that it was used as the basis of measurement and a common denominator for bartering.
- After the Roman conquest, wheat became the primary grain of Israel and barley was reduced to being the poor man's food and animal fodder.
- Barley corresponds to gevura (restraint). Its characteristic is contraction, reduction, and setting boundaries. This is reflected by each barley seed being enclosed in a strong hull (boundary) which remains intact even during threshing.



Dates

- One of the oldest cultivated fruits.
- Most of the honey consumed in ancient Israel was fruit honey extracted from dates and grapes. "The land flowing with milk and honey" refers to date honey.
- Dates correspond to malchut (kingdom). Malchut is the channel that allows everything to manifest below. Therefore malchut is connected with the digestive system. The Talmud teaches that dates heal intestinal illnesses (Ketubot 10b).



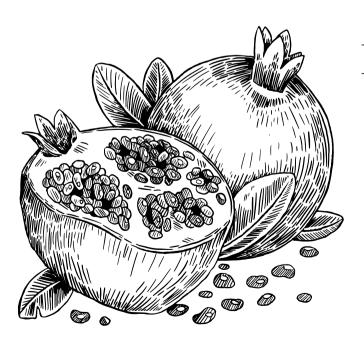
Wheat

- Two types are used for baking: hard (spring) and soft (winter). Hard wheat is high in gluten and mostly used by commercial bakers. Unbleached all-purpose flour, which the everyday consumer uses, is a mixture of hard and soft wheat.
- The rabbis considered flour so important that they said, "Where there is no flour, there is no Torah. Where there is no Torah, there is no flour" (Pirkei Avot 3:21).
- Wheat corresponds to chesed (kindness), the first of the seven lower sefirot. The characteristic of chesed is expansion, to reach out and extend oneself toward others.



Olives

- In Israel, it's against the law to cut down a living olive tree.
- Black and green olives are harvested from the same tree. Olives start as a green drupe and ripen to purple or black. They may be eaten ripe or cured (pickled).
- Olive oil corresponds to yesod (foundation).



Pomegranates

- Symbolize hope, fertility and eternity, and have legendary longevity—pomegranate trees over 200 years old have born fruit.
- Not actually a fruit—rather, a tough, leathery skin that covers a mass of small and shiny red, pink or clear fruit.
- Pomegranate, a very beautiful and majestic fruit, even has a crown. It corresponds to hod, which means majesty and glory. Hod is also related to the Hebrew word toda which means thanks and recognition.



Figs

- There are over 800 species of figs in many sizes and colors, including brown, purple, green, yellow and black.
- Symbols of prosperity, security and fertility, figs are a natural confection and often dried for preservation.
- Figs correspond to netzach (endurance), which engenders longevity. The fig tree reflects everlasting fruitfulness as it has one of the longest periods of ripening, spanning more than three months.