

A single, light-brown potato with a heart-like shape, featuring a small indentation at the top center. The potato is set against a plain white background with a soft shadow to its right.

Shavuot Resource
from the Jewish
Vegetarian Society



For a vegetarian world

Welcome to the JVS Shavuot Resource pack

An evening of reflection about food, place and ethics

We used this booklet as the basis for the 2015 JVS Shavuot event, held in May.

The evening centred on two key themes: food and place, and food and ethics. Our event included readings as well as discussions, and lasted 2.5 hours in total.

We sat in a circle and took turns reading from this pack, and discussed different issues in small groups of 3-4 participants. We had a break for dinner after the first section.

This version of the event plan includes both the materials we handed out to participants and suggested instructions for facilitating. The bold text is for the facilitator(/s). The rest are readings, to be taken in turn by participants.

Hazon's 'Food for Thought' booklet provided a key source for this programme.

At the end of this document are some of the recipes for the dishes we prepared for the event, which were all plant-based and free from refined sugar. We have also included links to websites that have more information about all the themes discussed and ideas about how to get involved.

We hope you enjoy using this resource.

*This pack was compiled by JVS' Project Officer Maayan Geva.

JVS Shavuot event plan

Part 1: Food and place

Question for discussion: What foods do you associate with home? Can you eat them where you live now? How does this food make you feel? ask people to discuss in small groups (leave approximately 5 minutes for discussion), then ask a one person from each small group to tell the larger group what they came up with.

1. How much do you know about where your food comes from? We are learning more and more about the social, environmental, cultural and health reasons for eating food that is grown near to where we live. But it is not only our food's relationship to place that is interesting, but also our own.

2. Jews have different stories about place: one hand, we have lived in nearly every country in the world, but on the other hand our tradition draws us to the Land of Israel. How then shall we proceed? Local and regional food traditions, *The Wandering Jew*, *The pull of Eretz Yisrael*. How does the way we relate to food in our own lives illustrate, clarify and complicate our relationship to food and place?

3. *The Wandering Jew*

We have lived in almost every country on earth and have varied food habits and likes. Our Jewish-ness exists in the time-based rituals of our tradition - not in space. In addition, as Westerners, our sense of rootedness to place is further eroded by an increasingly homogenized and global culture. We're not sure: what foods are English? What are the distinctive food traditions of English Jews?

4. *The Pull of Eretz Yisrael*

We are historically deeply connected to the Land of Israel. When we pray we face Jerusalem. We have longed for the renewal of Jewish life in Israel since the destruction of the Temple. The seven species described in the Torah were indigenous to Israel three thousand years ago and all still grow in Israel today. "Israeli foods", which are actually more accurately Middle Eastern foods,

such as hummus, pita and falafel are often served at Jewish events. Jewish tradition presumes that we should live in Israel, but many of us live elsewhere. How do we negotiate our relationship to Israel and Israeli food from overseas?

5. Local and Regional Food Traditions

The ubiquity of food transportation, national food companies and supermarket chains homogenize the food we eat. We can eat whatever we want, whenever we want, and Starbucks is the same everywhere. In response, many of us now argue for eating local food and reviving the food traditions that emerged in the places we live. We are starting to value farmers' markets, local farmers' initiatives such as Growing Communities, to cook with the season, to eat where we live. At the same time, we are used to certain foods being available all the time. What should we eat?

6. When your food comes from far away...

The average food item will travel 1,300 miles before you eat it, and sometimes twice that far. Fruits and vegetables shipped from distant states typically spend seven to fourteen days in transit before they arrive in the supermarket. Most fruit and vegetable varieties sold in supermarkets are chosen for their ability to withstand industrial harvesting equipment and extended travel, not taste. This results in little variety in the plants grown.

7. He used to say: During the time that a person eats from what he has grown himself—his mind is tranquil. Even one who eats from that which his father has grown or from that of his mother's or son's, his mind is not tranquil—and you do not [even] need to say [food grown] from that of others [non-relatives]. – *Avot de Rabbi Natan 31:1*

8. Question for discussion: How much do you know about where your food comes from? (leave approximately 5 minutes for discussion), then ask a one person from each small group to tell the larger group what they came up with.

Break for Dinner

Before we eat we'll mention where we got all the food, what decisions we made and what are considerations were, what we do in order to minimize food waste (this is also an introduction to the discussion that will follow about food and ethics)

Part 2: Ethics and Food

9. Question for discussion: What are some of the most pressing ethical food issues to you? Do you feel you know how they could be fixed? Do you know how you personally could help ameliorate them? (leave approximately 5 minutes for discussion), then ask a one person from each small group to tell the larger group what they came up with.

10. Jewish tradition has long made the connection between food and social justice, exhorting us whenever possible to share our table with the hungry and to remember the orphan, the widow, the stranger. We were once slaves in Egypt; our memory of our experience of injustice is intended to be a constant reminder to do justice in the world. The texts that follow raise a broad range of issues. The common thread is the relationship between ethical living and ethical eating and a consideration of our relationship with the world.

11. Caring for the stranger, the orphan and the widow is a constant refrain throughout Jewish tradition, and Jews have always been at the forefront of social justice issues—within and beyond the Jewish community. We thank God in the *Birkat Hamazon* (grace after meals) for 'feeding the world'—but we know in fact that many people are hungry every day, all over the world. Many of us are privileged to live in a world where we can meet our basic needs; yet for many even the ability to sit and study about food might be considered a luxury.

12. What is our obligation to share what we have with others? If we can never do enough to fix all the world's problems, how do we prevent our hearts from being hardened yet also protect ourselves from feeling overwhelmed? How should we act, as individuals and as communities, both to help people in need individually, and to create a healthier and more sustainable world for all?

13. There is a direct connection between agricultural production, social justice and our relationship with God in the Torah. We no longer live in the agrarian world of the biblical land of Israel; yet the underlying issues remain with us today.

14. *Shikhecha: Leaving sheaves*

[19] When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow — in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. [20] When you beat down the fruit of your olive trees, do not go over them again; that shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. [21] When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. [22] Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I command you to do this thing.

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

15. According to the UN data:

- Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year — approximately 1.3 billion tonnes — gets lost or wasted.
- Every year, consumers in rich countries waste almost as much food (222 million tonnes) as the entire net food production of sub-Saharan Africa (230 million tonnes).
- The amount of food lost or wasted every year is equivalent to more than half of the world's annual cereals crop (2.3 billion tonnes in 2009/2010).
- United Kingdom households waste an estimated 6.7 million tonnes of food every year, around one third of the food purchased.

16. *Gleaners today*

The Real Junk Food Project aims to raise awareness about our food production and distribution system. The project runs a network of over 40 cafés that serve food made entirely of surplus products. The prices for this food are set on a Pay-As-You-Feel basis. Over the past 12 months the project

used up close to 50 tonnes of food and fed thousands of people. This is a collaborative effort to bring about a radical change in our food system.

17. Eating animals

"It is impossible to imagine that the Master of all that transpires, Who has mercy upon all His creatures, would establish an eternal decree such as this in the creation that He pronounced "exceedingly good," that it should be impossible for the human race to exist without violating its own moral instincts by shedding blood, be it even the blood of animals."

Rav Kook, A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace

18. "When humanity reaches its goal of complete happiness and spiritual liberation, when it attains that lofty peak of perfection that is the pure knowledge of God and the full manifestation of the essential holiness of life, then the age of "motivation by virtue of enlightenment" will have arrived. ... Then human beings will recognize their companions in Creation: all the animals. And they will understand how it is fitting from the standpoint of the purest ethical standard not to resort to moral concessions, to compromise the Divine attribute of justice with that of mercy [by permitting mankind's exploitation of animals]. ... Rather they will walk the path of absolute good.

Rav Kook, A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace

19. Sustainability

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

[Brundtland Commission report to the United Nations on Sustainability (1987), "Our Common Future"]

20. In the hour when the Holy one, blessed be He, created the first human being, He took him and let him pass before all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: "See my works, how fine and excellent they are! Now all that I have created, for you have I created them. Think upon this and do

not corrupt and desolate My World, For if you corrupt it, there is no one to set it right after you" [Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28]

21. Chief Seattle in a letter to President Franklin Pierce in 1855:

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. . . . But we will consider your offer, for we know if we do not . . . the white man may come with guns and take our lands. . . . How can you buy or sell the sky— the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. Yet we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. . . . Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. . . . When the buffaloes are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the views of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone.

22. An ancient Jewish story: Two men are fighting over a piece of land. Each claimed ownership and bolstered his claim with proof. To resolve their differences they agreed to put the case before the rabbi. The rabbi listened but could come to no decision because both seemed to be right. Finally he said, "Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land". He put his ear to the ground and, after a moment, straightened. "Gentlemen, the land says it belongs to neither of you, but that you belong to it"

23. Questions for discussion:

Much of the conversation about food in the Jewish community revolves around kashrut. Do you keep kosher? If so, why? And in what ways, and what does it mean to you? Has your observance or understanding changed over time?

How many different positive consequences can you think of that derive from keeping kosher? Do you think there are any negative consequences of keeping kosher, and if so, what?

Leave approximately 10 minutes for discussion, then ask a one person from each small group to tell the larger group what they came up with.

24. A conversation about food Judaism branches out in so many directions. Where does our food come from? How do we grow it, transport it, package it? Do we eat the flesh of animals? Do we cook our own food, eat with our families, or at school, or at work, or in a restaurant? How do rhythms of eating connect us or separate us from other people? Does what and how we eat influence our sense of Jewish-ness in the world? Does being Jewish influence the ethics of our eating? How do we treat those who have less – much, much less – than we do? Does a relationship with Israel influence the food we eat – or does a commitment to local food distance us from a connection to Israel? Can these different values be reconciled – and if so, how?

Thank the participants, encourage them to continue and explore the themes discussed.

Links for more information about vegetarianism, Jewish perspectives on food and ethics, sustainability, food waste, and what we can do:

jvs.org.uk

hazon.org/educational-resources/curricula

feedbackglobal.org/about-us

foodcycle.org.uk

england.lovefoodhatewaste.com

savethedate.london

therealjunkfoodproject.co.uk

growingcommunities.org

Recipes:

Wild Rice, Butter Bean, and Garlic Roasted Carrot Salad

[mynewroots.org/site/2010/02/warm-salad-month-wild-rice-butter-bean-and-garlic-roasted-carrot-salad-2/]

**Ingredients:**

1/2 cup wild rice
1 cup dried butter beans
4-5 medium carrots
1 small red onion
4 cloves garlic
2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 bunch fresh dill
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

Dressing:

1 tbsp. mustard
1 tbsp. maple syrup
2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
pinch of sea salt

Directions:

1. Soak beans for 8 hours or overnight. Drain, rinse well and cover with fresh water. Add a teaspoon of sea salt. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook until beans are soft – about 45 minutes.

2. While the beans are cooking, rinse the wild rice well, drain, and put in a pot. Cover rice with 1.5 cups fresh water, add a couple pinches of sea salt, bring to a boil, and reduce to simmer. Cook until rice is chewy-tender – about 45 minutes. You will know the rice is done when the grains open up to reveal their purple-gray inner portion.

3. Preheat the oven to 400F. While the rice is cooking, wash the carrots and slice them on the diagonal into 'coins', place on a baking sheet. Mince the garlic and combine it with the oil. Pour over carrots and toss to coat. Sprinkle with salt. Place in the oven and roast, turning them a few times over the course of 15-20 minutes. The carrots should be cooked but not mushy – al dente!

4. Make the dressing by combining all ingredients together, shake well.

5. Now all the elements come together: Drain and rinse beans in cool water to stop the cooking process. Pour dressing over warm beans and toss. Let sit for 5 minutes or so. Drain the rice if any water remains, cool slightly. Mix with beans. Toss in the carrots, scraping the pan to add garlic oil to the remainder of the ingredients. Throw in some paper-thin onion slices, a heap of fresh, chopped dill, and grind some black pepper to finish.

6. Serve immediately.

This salad is also delicious with red or black quinoa instead of wild rice; roasted sweet potatoes instead of carrots; or try any other mild white bean in place of the butter bean: cannellini, great northern, navy bean etc.

Creamy Maple Mustard Dressing [taken from Salad Samurai by Terry Hope Romero]

Makes: 1 1/2 cups

Ingredients:

1/2 cup unroasted cashews
1/2 cup hot water
1/4 cup wholegrain mustard
2 tbsp maple syrup
1 tbsp minced shallots
1/2 tsp salt

1. Soak the cashews in the hot water for 30 minutes. Then pour into a blender (including the soaking water) and blend until very smooth. Alternatively, if you have a high-powered blender (like a Vitamix or Blendtec), no soaking is required: just pulse the cashews into a fine powder, add the hot water, and pulse again until very smooth.

2. Add the remaining ingredients and pulse until creamy and smooth. Chill the dressing in a tightly covered container until ready to use, or at least 20 minutes for the flavours to blend. Store chilled and use within 2 days.

We poured this over fresh vegetables and grains to make a really tasty salad.

Raw Chocolate 'Cheesecake'

[<http://www.jvs.org.uk/raw-chocolate-tart/>]



Ingredients for the crust:

1 cup of nuts: pecans / almonds / hazelnuts, blitzed up in a blender -
1 cup of dates: / prunes / raisins
1 pinch sea salt

Ingredients for the filling:

2 cups raw cashews, soaked and rinsed
¼ cup + 2 tablespoons cashew butter
½ cup coconut oil, melted
½ cup agave nectar / maple syrup
½ cup raw cacao powder
½ cup water
½ tsp salt

Ingredients for the garnish

Sprinkle a small handful of cocoa nibs / dried rose petals / crushed nuts on the top
Instructions.

Directions:

To make the base: add the dried fruit and sea salt to the pre-blitzed nuts and blend in a food processor until almost fully combined. Press the crust into the bottom of desired pan (preferably a silicon one), about ¼ inch thick. Now you can start making the delicious filling.

Add the cashews, agave nectar / maple syrup, salt and water to your food processor. Blend until 100% smooth. You may need to pause to scrape down the sides of the processor to ensure that everything is incorporated.

Next add the cacao powder, cashew butter and coconut oil to the cashew mixture and blend them all together.

Pour the filling over the base, and place in the freezer for 4 hours – or until it is solid all the way through.

Remove the cheesecake from the tin / mould and place in the fridge.

Garnish with your preferred topping.

Fruit Salad with Tahini Dressing [mynewroots.org/site/2012/08/chakra-fruit-salad-with-enlightened-tahini-sauce/]



Ingredients:

¼ cup tahini

1 tbsp raw honey (or maple syrup)

2 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon or orange juice

¼ tsp. cinnamon

pinch dried ground ginger

pinch of sea salt (unless you are using salted tahini)

4-6 tbsp. water

Place all ingredients in a jar with a tightly fitting lid and shake well to combine. Add more water to thin if desired. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to a week.

1. Choose fruits representing every colour of the rainbow.
2. Wash and prepare with love and gratitude.
3. Drizzle with tahini sauce and sprinkle with hemp seeds. Share and enjoy.