

= Israeli cuisine =

Israeli cuisine (Hebrew : מִטְבַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל) comprises local dishes by people native to Israel and dishes brought to Israel by Jews from the Diaspora . Since before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 , and particularly since the late 1970s , an Israeli Jewish fusion cuisine has developed .

Israeli cuisine has adopted , and continues to adapt , elements of various styles of Jewish cuisine , particularly the Mizrahi , Sephardic and Ashkenazi styles of cooking . It incorporates many foods traditionally eaten in Levantine , Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines , and foods such as falafel , hummus , msabbha , shakshouka , couscous , and za 'atar are now widely popular in Israel .

Other influences on the cuisine are the availability of foods common to the Mediterranean region , especially certain kinds of fruits and vegetables , dairy products and fish ; the distinctive traditional dishes prepared at holiday times ; the tradition of keeping kosher ; and food customs specific to Shabbat and different Jewish holidays , such as challah , jachnun , malawach , gefilte fish , hamin and sufganiyot .

New dishes based on agricultural products such as oranges , avocados , dairy products and fish , and others based on world trends have been introduced over the years , and chefs trained abroad have brought in elements of other international cuisines .

= = History = =

= = = Origins = = =

Israel ' s culinary traditions comprise foods and cooking methods that span three thousand years of history . Over that time , these traditions have been shaped by influences from Asia , Africa and Europe , and religious and ethnic influences have resulted in a culinary melting pot . Biblical and archaeological records provide insight into the culinary life of the region as far back as 968 BCE , in the days of the kings of ancient Israel .

During the Second Temple period (516 BCE to 70 CE) , Hellenistic and Roman culture heavily influenced cuisine , particularly of the priests and aristocracy of Jerusalem . Elaborate meals were served that included piquant entrées and alcoholic drinks , fish , meat , pickled and fresh vegetables , olives , and tart or sweet fruits .

The food of the ancient Israelites was based on several products that still play important roles in modern Israeli cuisine . These were known as the seven species : olives , figs , dates , pomegranates , wheat , barley and grapes . The diet , based on locally grown produce , was enhanced by imported spices , readily available due to the country ' s position at the crossroads of east - west trade routes .

After the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile of the majority of Jews from the land of Israel , Jewish cuisine continued to develop in the many countries where Jewish communities have existed since Late Antiquity , influenced by the economics , agriculture , and culinary traditions of those countries .

= = = Old Yishuv = = =

The Jewish community that lived in Ottoman Syria prior to Zionist immigration that began in 1881 was known as the Old Yishuv . The cooking style of the community was Sephardi cuisine , which developed among the Jews of Spain before their expulsion in 1492 , and in the areas to which they migrated thereafter , particularly the Balkans and Ottoman Empire . Sephardim also established communities in the Old Yishuv . Particularly in Jerusalem , they continued to develop their culinary style , influenced by Ottoman cuisine , creating a style that became known as Jerusalem Sephardi cuisine . This cuisine included pies like sambousak , pastels and burekas , vegetable gratins and

stuffed vegetables , and rice and bulgur pilafs , which are now considered to be Jerusalem classics .

Groups of Hasidic Jews from Eastern Europe began establishing communities in the late 18th century , and brought with them their traditional Ashkenazi cuisine , developing , however , distinct local variations , notably a peppery , caramelized noodle pudding known as kugel yerushalmi .

Beginning with the First Aliyah in 1881 , Jews began immigrating to the area from Eastern Europe in larger numbers , particularly from Poland and Russia . These Zionist pioneers were motivated both ideologically and by the Mediterranean climate to reject the Ashkenazi cooking styles they had grown up with , and adapt by using local produce , especially vegetables such as zucchini , peppers , eggplant , artichoke and chickpeas . The first Hebrew cookbook , written by Erna Meyer , and published in the early 1930s by the Palestine Federation of the Women 's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) , exhorted cooks to use Mediterranean herbs and Middle Eastern spices and local vegetables in their cooking . The bread , olives , cheese and raw vegetables they adopted became the basis for the kibbutz breakfast , which in more abundant forms is served in Israeli hotels , and in various forms in most Israeli homes today .

= = = Early years of the State = = =

The State of Israel faced enormous military and economic challenges in its early years , and the period from 1948 to 1958 was a time of food rationing and austerity , known as tzena . In this decade , over one million Jewish immigrants , mainly from Arab countries , but also including European Holocaust survivors , inundated the new state . They arrived when only basic foods were available and ethnic dishes had to be modified with a range of mock or simulated foods , such as chopped ? liver ? from eggplant , and turkey as a substitute for veal schnitzel for Ashkenazim , kubbeh made from frozen fish instead of ground meat for Iraqi Jews , and turkey in place of the lamb kebabs of the Mizrahi Jews . These adaptations remain as a legacy of that time .

Substitutes , such as the wheat @-@ based rice substitute , ptitim , were introduced , and versatile vegetables such as eggplant were used as alternatives to meat . Additional flavor and nutrition was provided from inexpensive canned tomato paste and puree , hummus , tahina , and mayonnaise in tubes . Meat was scarce , and it was not until the late 1950s that herds of beef cattle were introduced into the agricultural economy .

Khubeza , a local variety of the mallow plant , became an important food source during the War of Independence . During the siege of Jerusalem , when convoys of food could not reach the city , Jerusalemites went out to the fields to pick khubeza leaves , which are high in iron and vitamins . The Jerusalem radio station , Kol Hamagen , broadcast instructions for cooking it that were picked up in Jordan convinced the Arabs that the Jews were dying of starvation and victory was at hand . In the past decade , food writers in Israel have encouraged the population to prepare khubeza on Israel Independence Day . Local chefs have begun to serve khubeza and other wild plants gathered from the fields in upscale restaurants . The dish from the Independence war is called Ktzitzot Khubeza and still eaten by Israelis today .

= = = Impact of immigration = = =

Immigrants to Israel have incorporated elements of the cuisines of the cultures and countries whence they came . During approximately fifty years before 1948 , there were successive waves of Jewish immigration , which brought with them a whole range of foods and cooking styles . Immigrants arriving from central Europe brought foods such as schnitzel and strudels , while Russian Jews brought borsht and herring dishes , such as schmaltz herring and vorschmack (gehakte herring) .

Ashkenazi dishes include chicken soup , schnitzel , lox , chopped liver , gefilte fish , knishes , kishka and kugel . The first Israeli patisseries were opened by Ashkenazi Jews , who popularized cakes and pastries from central and Eastern Europe , such as yeast cakes (babka) , nut spirals (schnecken) , chocolate rolls and layered pastries .

After 1948 , the greatest impact came from the large migration of Jews from Turkey , Iraq , Kurdistan and Yemen , and Mizrahi Jews from North Africa , particularly Morocco . Typically , the staff of army kitchens , schools , hospitals , hotels and restaurant kitchens has consisted of Mizrahi , Kurdish and Yemenite Jews , and this has had an influence on the cooking fashions and ingredients of the country .

Mizrahi cuisine , the cuisine of Jews from North Africa , features grilled meats , sweet and savory puff pastries , rice dishes , stuffed vegetables , pita breads and salads , and shares many similarities with Arab cuisine . Other North African dishes popular in Israel include couscous , shakshouka , matbucha , carrot salad and chraime (slices of fish cooked in a spicy tomato sauce) . Sephardic dishes , with Balkan and Turkish influences incorporated in Israeli cuisine include burekas , yogurt and taramosalata . Yemenite Jewish foods include jachnun , malawach , skhug and kubane . Iraqi dishes popular in Israel include amba , various types of kubba , stuffed vegetables (mhasha) , kebab , sambusac , sabich and pickled vegetables (hamutzim) .

= = = Modern trends = = =

As Israeli agriculture developed and new kinds of fruits and vegetables appeared on the market , cooks and chefs began to experiment and devise new dishes with them .

They also began using " biblical " ingredients such as honey , figs , and pomegranates , and indigenous foods such as prickly pears (tzabar) and chickpeas . Since the late 1970s , there has been an increased interest in international cuisine , cooking with wine and herbs , and vegetarianism . A more sophisticated food culture in Israel began to develop when cookbooks , such as ? From the Kitchen with Love ? by Ruth Sirkis , published in 1974 , introduced international cooking trends , and together with the opening of restaurants serving cuisines such as Chinese , Italian and French , encouraged more dining out .

The 1980s were a formative decade : the increased optimism after the signing of the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 , the economic recovery of the mid @-@ 1980s and the increasing travel abroad by average citizens were factors contributing to a greater interest in food and wine . In addition , high quality , locally produced ingredients became increasingly available . For example , privately owned dairies began to produce handmade cheeses from goat , sheep and cow ? s milk , which quickly became very popular both among chefs and the general public . In 1983 , the Golan Heights Winery was the first of many new Israeli winemakers to help transform tastes with their production of world @-@ class , semi @-@ dry and dry wines . New attention was paid to the making of handmade breads and the production of high quality olive oil . The successful development of aquaculture ensured a steady supply of fresh fish , and the agricultural revolution in Israel led to an overwhelming choice and quality of fresh fruit , vegetables and herbs .

Ethnic heritage cooking , both Sephardic and Ashkenazi , has made a comeback with the growing acceptance of the heterogeneous society . Apart from home cooking , many ethnic foods are now available in street markets , supermarkets and restaurants , or are served at weddings and bar mitzvahs , and people increasingly eat foods from ethnic backgrounds other than their own . Overlap and combinations of foods from different ethnic groups is becoming standard as a multi @-@ ethnic food culture develops .

The 1990s saw an increasing interest in international cuisines . Sushi , in particular , has taken hold as a popular style for eating out and as an entrée for events . In restaurants , fusion cuisine , with the melding of classic cuisines such as French and Japanese with local ingredients has become widespread . In the 2000s , the trend of ? eating healthy ? with an emphasis on organic and whole grain foods has become prominent , and medical research has led many Israelis to re @-@ embrace the Mediterranean diet , with its touted health benefits .

= = Characteristics = =

Geography has a large influence on Israel cuisine , and foods common in the Mediterranean region , such as olives , wheat , chickpeas , dairy products , fish , and vegetables such as tomatoes ,

eggplants , and zucchini are prominent in Israeli cuisine . Fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful in Israel and are cooked and served in many ways .

There are various climatic areas in Israel and areas it has settled that allow a variety of products to be grown . Citrus trees such as orange , lemon and grapefruit thrive on the coastal plain . Figs , pomegranates and olives also grow in the cooler hill areas . The subtropical climate near the Sea of Galilee and in the Jordan River Valley is suitable for mangoes , kiwis and bananas , while the temperate climate of the mountains of the Galilee and the Golan is suitable for grapes , apples and cherries .

Israeli eating customs also conform to the wider Mediterranean region , with lunch , rather than dinner , being the focal meal of a regular workday . ? Kibbutz foods ? have been adopted by many Israelis for their light evening meals as well as breakfasts , and may consist of various types of cheeses , both soft and hard , yogurt , labne and sour cream , vegetables and salads , olives , hard @-@ boiled eggs or omelets , pickled and smoked herring , a variety of breads , and fresh orange juice and coffee .

In addition , Jewish holidays influence the cuisine , with the preparation of traditional foods at holiday times , such as various types of challah (braided bread) for Shabbats and Festivals , jelly doughnuts (sufganiyot) for Hanukah , the hamantaschen pastry (oznei haman) for Purim , charoset , a type of fruit paste , for Passover , and dairy foods for Shavuot . The Shabbat dinner , eaten on Friday , and to a lesser extent the Shabbat lunch , is a significant meal in Israeli homes , together with holiday meals .

Although not all Jews in Israel keep kosher , the tradition of kashrut strongly influences the availability of certain foods and their preparation in homes , public institutions and many restaurants , including the separation of milk and meat and avoiding the use of non @-@ kosher foods , especially pork and shellfish . During Passover , bread and other leavened foods are prohibited to observant Jews and matza and leaven @-@ free foods are substituted .

= = Foods = =

Israel does not have a universally recognized national dish ; however , many consider it to be falafel , deep fried balls of seasoned , ground chickpeas . Street vendors throughout Israel sell falafel and it is a favorite " street food " . One book called the Israeli breakfast " the Jewish state 's contribution to world cuisine " .

= = = Salads and appetizers = = =

Vegetable salads are eaten with most meals , including the traditional Israeli breakfast , which will usually include eggs , bread , and dairy products such as yogurt or cottage cheese . For lunch and dinner , salad may be served a side dish . A light meal of salad (" Salat ") , hummus and French fries (" Chips ") served in a pita is referred to as hummuschipsalat .

Israeli salad is typically made with finely chopped tomatoes and cucumbers dressed in olive oil , lemon juice , salt and pepper . Variations include the addition of diced red or green bell peppers , grated carrot , finely shredded cabbage or lettuce , sliced radish , fennel , spring onions and chives , chopped parsley , or other herbs and spices such as mint , za 'atar and sumac . Although popularized by the kibbutzim , versions of this mixed salad were brought to Israel from various places . For example , Jews from India prepare it with finely chopped ginger and green chili peppers , North African Jews may add preserved lemon peel and cayenne pepper , and Bukharan Jews chop the vegetables extremely finely and use vinegar , without oil , in the dressing .

Tabbouleh is a Levantine vegetarian dish (sometimes considered a salad) traditionally made of tomatoes , finely chopped parsley , mint , bulgur and onion , and seasoned with olive oil , lemon juice , and salt . Some Israeli variations of the salad use pomegranate seeds instead of tomatoes .

Sabich salad is a variation of the well known Israeli dish Sabich , the ingredients of the salad are eggplant , boiled eggs / hard boiled eggs , tahini , Israeli salad , potato , parsley and amba .

Kubba is a dish made of rice / semolina / burghul (cracked wheat) , minced onions and finely

ground lean beef , lamb or chicken . The best @-@ known variety is a torpedo @-@ shaped fried croquette stuffed with minced beef , chicken or lamb . It was brought to Israel by Jews of Iraqi , Kurdish and Syrian origin .

Sambusak is a semi @-@ circular pocket of dough filled with mashed chickpeas , fried onions and spices . There is another variety filled with meat , fried onions , parsley , spices and pine nuts , which is sometimes mixed with mashed chickpeas and breakfast version with feta or tzfat cheese and za 'atar . It can be fried and cooked .

Sigarim are soft minced meat with onions and spices or mashed potato filling wrapped in phyllo @-@ dough , and deep fried in oil or oven baked . They are commonly served at weddings and other celebrations ..

Roasted vegetables includes bell peppers , chili peppers , tomatoes , onions , eggplants and also sometimes potatoes and zucchini . Usually served with grilled meat

Hamusim are pickled vegetables made by soaking in water and salt (and sometimes olive oil) in a pot and withdrawing them from air . Ingredients can include : cucumber , cabbage , eggplant , carrot , turnip , radish , onion , caper , lemon , olives , cauliflower , tomatoes , chili pepper , bell pepper , garlic and beans .

A large variety of eggplant salads and dips are made with roasted eggplants . Baba ghanoush , called salat ?atzilim in Israel , is made with tahina and other seasonings such as garlic , lemon juice , onions , herbs and spices . The eggplant is sometimes grilled over an open flame so that the pulp has a smoky taste . A particularly Israeli variation of the salad is made with mayonnaise called salat ?atzilim b 'mayonnaise . Eggplant salads are also made with yogurt , or with feta cheese , chopped onion and tomato , or in the style of Romanian Jews , with roasted red pepper .

Tahina is often used as a dressing for falafel , serves as a cooking sauce for meat and fish , and forms the basis of sweets such as halva .

Hummus is a cornerstone of Israeli cuisine , and consumption in Israel has been compared by food critic Elena Ferretti to " peanut butter in America , Nutella in Europe or Vegemite in Australia " . Hummus in pita is a common lunch for schoolchildren , and is a popular addition to many meals . Supermarkets offer a variety of commercially prepared hummus , and some Israelis will go out of their way for fresh hummus prepared at a hummusia , an establishment devoted exclusively to selling hummus .

Salat avocado is an Israeli @-@ style avocado salad , with lemon juice and chopped scallions (spring onions) , was introduced by farmers who planted avocado trees on the coastal plain in the 1920s . Avocados have since become a winter delicacy and are cut into salads as well as being spread on bread .

A meze of fresh and cooked vegetable salads , pickled cucumbers and other vegetables , hummus , ful , tahini and amba dips , labneh cheese with olive oil , and ikra is served at festive meals and in restaurants . Salads include Turkish salad (a piquant salad of finely chopped onions , tomatoes , herbs and spices) , tabbouleh , carrot salad , marinated roasted red and green peppers , deep fried cauliflower florets , matbucha , torshi (pickled vegetables) and various eggplant salads .

Modern Israeli interpretations of the meze blend traditional and modern , pairing ordinary appetizers with unique combinations such as fennel and pistachio salad , beetroot and pomegranate salad , and celery and kashkaval cheese salad .

Stuffed vegetables , called memula ? im , were originally designed to extend cheap ingredients into a meal . They are prepared by cooks in Israel from all ethnic backgrounds and are made with many varying flavors , such as spicy or sweet @-@ and @-@ sour , with ingredients such as bell peppers , chili peppers , figs , onion , artichoke bottoms , Swiss chard , beet , dried fruits , tomato , vine leaves , potatoes , mallow , eggplants and zucchini squash , and stuffing such as meat and rice in Balkan style , bulgur in Middle Eastern fashion , or with ptitim , a type of Israeli pasta . The Ottoman Turks introduced stuffed vine leaves in the 16th century and vine leaves are commonly stuffed with a combination of meat and rice , although other fillings , such as lentils , have evolved among the various communities . Artichoke bottoms stuffed with meat are famous as one the grand dishes of the Sephardi Jerusalem cuisine of the Old Yishuv . Stuffed dates and dried fruits served with rice and burgul dishes . Stuffed half zucchini is called by its Ladino name , Medias ; it was brought from

Spain by Sephardic Jews in 1492 .

= = = Soups and dumplings = = =

A variety of soups are enjoyed , particularly in the winter . Chicken soup has been a mainstay of Jewish cuisine since medieval times and is popular in Israel . Classic chicken soup is prepared as a simple broth with a few vegetables , such as onion , carrot and celery , and herbs such as dill and parsley . More elaborate versions are prepared by Sephardim with orzo or rice , or the addition of lemon juice or herbs such as mint or coriander , while Ashkenazim may add noodles . An Israeli adaption of the traditional Ashkenazi soup pasta known as mandlen , called " shkedei marak " (" soup almonds ") in Israel , are commonly served with chicken soup .

Particularly on holidays , dumplings are served with the soup , such as the kneidlach (matzah balls) of the Ashkenazim or the gondi (chickpea dumplings) of Iranian Jews , or kubba , a family of dumplings brought to Israel by Middle Eastern Jews . Especially popular are kubba prepared from bulgur and stuffed with ground lamb and pine nuts , and the soft semolina or rice kubba cooked in soup , which Jews of Kurdish or Iraqi heritage habitually enjoy as a Friday lunchtime meal .

Lentil soup is prepared in many ways , with additions such as cilantro or meat . Other soups include the harira of the Moroccan Jews , which is a spicy soup of lamb (or chicken) , chickpeas , lentils and rice , and Yemenite bone marrow soup known as ftut , which is served on special occasions such as weddings , and is seasoned with the traditional hawajj spice mix .

White Bean soup in tomato sauce is common in Jerusalem because Sephardic Jews settled in the city after being expelled from Andalusia .

= = = Grains and pasta = = =

Rice is prepared in numerous ways in Israel , from simple steamed white rice to festive casseroles . It is also cooked with spices and served with almonds and pine nuts . " Green " rice , prepared with a variety of fresh chopped herbs , is a favored by Persian Jews . Another rice dish is prepared with thin noodles that are first fried and then boiled with the rice . Mujadara is a popular rice and lentil dish , adopted from Arab cuisine . Orez Shu 'it is a dish invented in Jerusalem by Sephardic Jews , it is made of white beans cooked in a tomato stew and served on white rice it is eaten widely in Jerusalem region .

Couscous was brought to Israel by Jews from North Africa . It is still prepared in some restaurants or by traditional cooks by passing semolina through a sieve several times and then cooking it over an aromatic broth in a special steamer pot called a couscoussière . Generally , " instant " couscous is widely used for home cooking . Couscous is used in salads , main courses and even some desserts . As a main course , chicken or lamb , or the vegetables cooked in a soup flavored with saffron or turmeric are served on the steamed couscous .

Ptitim are an Israeli pasta which now come in many shapes , including pearls , loops , stars and hearts , but were originally shaped like grains of rice , as they originated in the early days of the State of Israel as a wheat @-@ based substitute for rice , when rice , a staple of the Mizrahi Jews , was scarce . Israel 's first prime minister , David Ben @-@ Gurion , is reputed to have asked the Osem company to devise this substitute , and it was thus nicknamed " Ben @-@ Gurion 's rice " . Ptitim can be boiled like pasta , or prepared pilaf @-@ style by sautéing and then boiling in water or stock , or baking them in a casserole . Like other pasta , they can be flavored in many ways with spices , herbs and sauces . Once considered primarily a food for children , ptitim are now prepared in restaurants both in Israel and internationally .

Burgul is a kind of dried cracked wheat , served sometimes instead of rice .

= = = Fish = = =

Fresh fish is readily available , caught off Israel 's coastal areas of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea , or in the Sea of Galilee , or raised in ponds in the wake of advances in fish farming in Israel .

Fresh fish is served whole , in the Mediterranean style , grilled , or fried , dressed only with freshly squeezed lemon juice . Trout (called forel) , gilthead seabream (called denisse) , St. Peter 's fish (known as ' musht ') and other fresh fish are prepared this way . Fish are also eaten baked , with or without vegetables , or fried whole or in slices , or grilled over coals , and served with different sauces .

Fish are also braised , as in a dish called hraime , in which fish such as grouper (better known in Israel by its Arabic name lokus) or halibut is prepared in a sauce with hot pepper and other spices for Rosh Hashanah , Passover and the Sabbath by North African Jews . Everyday versions are prepared with cheaper kinds of fish and are served in market eateries , public kitchens and at home for weekday meals .

Fish , traditionally carp , but now other firm white fish too , are minced and shaped into loaves or balls and cooked in fish broth , such as the gefilte fish of the Ashkenazi Jews , who also brought pickled herring from Eastern Europe . Herring is often served at the kiddush that follows synagogue services on Shabbat , especially in Ashkenazi communities . In the Russian immigrant community it may be served as a light meal with boiled potatoes , sour cream , dark breads and schnapps or vodka .

Fish Kufta is usually fried with spices , herbs and onions (sometimes also pine nuts) and served with tahini or yogurt sauce . Boiled Fish Kufta is cooked in a tomato , tahini or yogurt sauce .

Tilapia baked with tahini sauce and topped with olive oil , coriander , mint , basil and pine nuts (and sometimes also with fried onions) is a specialty of Tiberias .

= = = Poultry and meat = = =

Chicken is the most widely eaten meat in Israel , followed by turkey . Chicken is prepared in a multitude of ways , from simple oven @-@ roasted chicken to elaborate casseroles with rich sauces such as date syrup , tomato sauce , etc . Examples include chicken casserole with couscous , inspired by Moroccan Jewish cooking , chicken with olives , a Mediterranean classic , and chicken albondigas (meat balls) in tomato sauce , from Jerusalem Sephardi cuisine . Albondigas are also prepared from ground meat . , similar to albondigas is the more popular Kufta which is made of minced meat , herbs and spices and cooked with tomato sauce , date syrup , pomegranate syrup or tamarind syrup with vegetables or beans .

Grilled and barbecued meat are common in Israeli cuisine . The country has many small eateries specializing in beef and lamb kebab , shish taouk , merguez and shashlik . Outdoor barbecuing , known as mangal or al ha @-@ esh (on the fire) is a beloved Israeli pastime . In modern times , Israel Independence Day is frequently celebrated with a picnic or barbecue in parks and forests around the country . Skewered Goose Liver is a dish from southern Tel Aviv . It is grilled with salt and black pepper and sometimes with spices like cumin or baharat spice mix .

Chicken or lamb baked in the oven is very common with potatoes , and sometimes fried onions as well .

Turkey schnitzel is an Israeli adaptation of veal schnitzel , and is an example of the transformations common in Israeli cooking . The schnitzel was brought to Israel by Jews from Central Europe , but before and during the early years of the State of Israel veal was unobtainable and chicken or turkey was an inexpensive and tasty substitute . Furthermore , a Wiener schnitzel is cooked in both butter and oil , but in Israel only oil is used , because of kashrut . Today , most cooks buy schnitzel already breaded and serve it with hummus , tahina , and other salads for a quick main meal . Other immigrant groups have added variations from their own backgrounds ; Yemenite Jews , for example , flavor it with hawajj . In addition , vegetarian versions have become popular and the Israeli food company , Tiv ? ol , was the first to produce a vegetarian schnitzel from a soya meat @-@ substitute .

Various types of sausage are part of Sephardi and Mizrahi cuisine in Israel . Jews from Tunisia make a sausage , called osban , with a filling of ground meat or liver , rice , chopped spinach , and a blend of herbs and spices . Jews from Syria make smaller sausages , called gheh , with a different spice blend while Jews from Iraq make the sausages , called mumbar , with chopped meat and liver

, rice , and their traditional mix of spices .

Moussaka is an oven @-@ baked layer dish ground meat and eggplant casserole that , unlike its Levantine rivals , is served hot .

Meat stews (chicken , lamb and beef) are cooked with spices , pine nuts herbs like parsley , mint and oregano , onion , tomato sauce or tahini or juices such as pomegranate molasses , pomegranate juice , pomegranate wine , grape wine , arak , date molasses and tamarind . Peas , chickpeas , white beans , cowpeas or green beans are sometimes also added .

Stuffed chicken in Israel is usually stuffed with rice , meat (lamb or beef) , parsley , dried fruits like dates , apricots or raisins , spices like cinnamon , nutmeg or allspice ; sometimes herbs like thyme and oregano (not the dried ones) are added on the top of the chicken to give it a flavor and than it is baked in the oven .

= = = Dairy products = = =

Many fresh , high quality dairy products are available , such as cottage cheese , white cheeses , yogurts including leben and eshel , yellow cheeses , and salt @-@ brined cheeses typical of the Mediterranean region .

Dairy farming has been a major sector of Israeli agriculture since the founding of the state , and the yield of local milk cows is amongst the highest in the world . Initially , the moshavim (farming cooperatives) and kibbutzim produced mainly soft white cheese as it was inexpensive and nutritious . It became an important staple in the years of austerity and gained a popularity that it enjoys until today .

Soft white cheese , gvina levana , is often referred to by its fat content , such as 5 % or 9 % . It is eaten plain , or mixed with fruit or vegetables , spread on bread or crackers and used in a variety of pies and pastries .

Labneh is a yogurt @-@ based white cheese common throughout the Balkans and the Middle East . It is sold plain , with za 'atar , or in olive oil . It is often eaten for breakfast with other cheeses and bread . In the north of the country , Labneh balls preserved in olive oil are more common than in the central and the southern parts . Adding spices like za 'atar , dried oregano or sumac and herbs like thyme , mint or scallions is common when preserving the Labneh balls . It is especially common to eat them during breakfast because meat is usually not eaten in the morning .

Tzfat cheese , a white cheese in brine , similar to feta , was first produced by the Meiri dairy in Safed in 1837 and is still produced there by descendants of the original cheese makers . The Meiri dairy also became famous for its production of the Balkan @-@ style brinza cheese , which became known as Bulgarian cheese due to its popularity in the early 1950s among Jewish immigrants from Bulgaria . Other dairies now also produce many varieties of these cheeses . Bulgarian yogurt , introduced to Israel by Bulgarian Jewish survivors of the Holocaust , is used to make a traditional yogurt and cucumber soup .

In the early 1980s , small privately owned dairies began to produce handmade cheeses from goat and sheep ? s milk as well as cow ? s milk , resembling traditional cheeses like those made in rural France , Spain and Italy . Many are made with organic milk . These are now also produced by kibbutzim and the national Tnuva dairy .

= = = Egg dishes = = =

Shakshuka , a dish of eggs poached in a spicy tomato sauce , is a national favorite , especially in the winter . It is traditionally served up in a cast iron pan with bread to mop up the sauce . Some variations of the dish are cooked with liberal use of ingredients such as eggplant , chili peppers , hot paprika , spinach , feta cheese or safed cheese .

Omelette is seasoned with onions , herbs such as dill seeds (Shamir) , spinach , parsley , mint , coriander and mallow with spices such as turmeric , cumin , sumac , cinnamon and cloves and with cheese such as Safed cheese and Feta cheese

Haminados is an egg that is baked after being boiled it is baked alongside stew or meals , when it is

in hamin when it is mainly taken outside the stew at morning for breakfast , it is also sometimes replaces normal egg at sabich . It is also eaten as a breakfast alongside jachnun , grated tomatoes and skhug .

= = = Fruit = = =

Israel is one of the world 's leading fresh citrus producers and exporters , and more than forty types of fruit are grown in Israel , including citrus fruits such as oranges , grapefruit , tangerines and the pomelit , a hybrid of a grapefruit and a pomelo , developed in Israel . Fruits grown in Israel include avocados , bananas , apples , cherries , plums , lychees , nectarines , grapes , dates , strawberries , prickly pear (tzaabar) , persimmon , loquat (shesek) and pomegranates , and are eaten on a regular basis : Israelis consume an average of nearly 160 kilograms (350 lb) of fruit per person a year .

Many unique varieties of mango are native to the country , most having been developed during the second half of the 20th century . New and improved mango varieties are still introduced to markets every few years . Arguably the most popular variety is the Maya type , which is small to medium in size , fragrant , colourful (featuring 3 @-@ 4 colours) and usually fiberless . The Israeli mango season begins in May , and the last of the fruit ripen as October draws near . Different varieties are present on markets at different months , with the Maya type seen between July and September . Mangos are frequently used in fusion dishes and for making Sorbet .

A lot of Israelis keep fruit trees in their yards , citrus (especially orange and lemon) being the most common . Mangos are also now popular as household trees . Mulberry trees are frequently seen in public gardens , and their fruit is popularly served alongside various desserts and as a juice .

Fruit is served as a snack or dessert alongside other items or by themselves . Fresh @-@ squeezed fruit juices are prepared at street kiosks , and sold bottled in supermarkets . Various fruits are added to chicken or meat dishes and fresh fruit salad and compote are often served at the end of the meal .

= = = Baked dishes , cookies , pastries , bourekas , Rugelach = = =

There is a strong tradition of home baking in Israel arising from the years when there were very few bakeries to meet demand . Many professional bakers came to Israel from Central Europe and founded local pastry shops and bakeries , often called konditoria , thus shaping local tastes and preferences . There is now a local style with a wide selection of cakes and pastries that includes influences from other cuisines and combines traditional European ingredients with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern ingredients , such as halva , phyllo dough , dates , and rose water .

Examples include citrus @-@ flavored semolina cakes , moistened with syrup and called basbousa , tishpishti or revani in Sephardic bakeries . The Ashkenazi babka has been adapted to include halva or chocolate spread , in addition to the old @-@ fashioned cinnamon . There are also many varieties of apple cake . Cookies made with crushed dates (ma 'amoul) are served with coffee or tea , as throughout the Middle East .

Jerusalem kugel (kugel yerushalmi) is an Israeli version of the traditional noodle pudding , kugel , made with caramelized sugar and spiced with black pepper . It was originally a specialty of the Ashkenazi Jews of the Old Yishuv . It is typically baked in a very low oven overnight and eaten after synagogue services on Sabbath morning .

Bourekas are savory pastries brought to Israel by Jews from Turkey , the Balkans and Salonika . They are made of a flaky dough in a variety of shapes , frequently topped with sesame seeds , and are filled with meat , chickpeas , cheese , spinach , potatoes or mushrooms . Bourekas are sold at kiosks , supermarkets and cafes , and are served at functions and celebrations , as well as being prepared by home cooks . They are often served as a light meal with hardboiled eggs and chopped vegetable salad .

Ashkenazi Jews from Vienna and Budapest brought sophisticated pastry making traditions to Israel . Sacher torte and Linzer torte are sold at professional bakeries , but cheesecake and strudel are

also baked at home .

Jelly donuts (sufganiyot) , traditionally filled with red jelly (jam) , but also custard or dulce de leche , are eaten as Hanukkah treats .

Tahini cookies are an Israeli origin cookies made of tahini , flour , butter and sugar and usually topped with pine nuts .

= = = Breads and sandwiches = = =

In the Jewish communities of the Old Yishuv , bread was baked at home . Small commercial bakeries were set up in the mid @-@ 19th century . One of the earliest , Berman 's Bakery , was established in 1875 , and evolved from a cottage industry making home @-@ baked bread and cakes for Christian pilgrims .

Expert bakers who arrived among the immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe in the 1920s and 30s introduced handmade sourdough breads . From the 1950s , mass @-@ produced bread replaced these loaves and standard , government subsidized loaves known as le?em a?id became mostly available until the 1980s , when specialized bakeries again began producing rich sourdough breads in the European tradition , and breads in a Mediterranean style with accents such as olives , cheese , herbs or sun @-@ dried tomatoes . A large variety of breads is now available from bakeries and cafes .

Challah bread is widely purchased or prepared for the Shabbat . Challah is typically an egg @-@ enriched bread , often braided in the Ashkenazi tradition , or round for Rosh Hashana , the Jewish New Year .

The Shabbat and festival breads of the Yemenite Jews have become popular in Israel and can be bought frozen in supermarkets . Jachnun is very thinly rolled dough , brushed with oil or fat and baked overnight at a very low heat . It is traditionally served with a crushed or grated tomato dip , hard boiled eggs and skhug . Malawach is a thin circle of dough toasted in a frying pan . Kubaneh is a yeast dough baked overnight and traditionally served on Shabbat morning . Lahoh is a spongy , pancake @-@ like bread made of fermented flour and water , and fried in a pan . Jews from Ethiopia make a similar bread called injera from millet flour .

Pita bread is a double @-@ layered flat or pocket bread traditional in many Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines . It is baked plain , or with a topping of sesame or nigella seeds or za 'atar . Pita is used in multiple ways , such as stuffed with falafel , salads or various meats as a snack or fast food meal ; packed with schnitzel , salad and French fries for lunch ; filled with chocolate spread as a snack for schoolchildren ; or broken into pieces for scooping up hummus , eggplant and other dips . A lafa is larger , soft flatbread that is rolled up with a falafel or shawarma filling . Various ethnic groups continue to bake traditional flat breads . Jews from the former Soviet republic of Georgia make the flatbread , lavash .

= = = Confections , sweets and snack foods = = =

Baklava is a nut @-@ filled phyllo pastry sweetened with syrup served at celebrations in Jewish communities who originated in the Middle East . It is also often served in restaurants as dessert , along with small cups of Turkish coffee .

Kadaif is a pastry made from long thin noodle threads filled with walnuts or pistachios and sweetened with syrup ; it is served alongside baklava .

Halva is a sweet , made from tehina and sugar , and is popular in Israel . It is used to make original desserts like halva parfait .

Ma 'amoul are small shortbread pastries filled with dates , pistachios or walnuts (or occasionally almonds , figs , or other fillings) .

Ozne Haman is a sweet yeast dough filled with crushed nuts , raisins , dried apricots , dates , halva or strawberry jam then oven baked . It is a specialty of Purim . The triangular shape may have been influenced by old illustrations of Haman , in which he wore a three @-@ cornered hat

Sunflower seeds , called garinim (literally , seeds) , are eaten everywhere , on outings , at

stadiums and at home . They are usually purchased unshelled and are cracked open with the teeth . They can be bought freshly roasted from shops and market stalls that specialize in nuts and seeds as well as packaged in supermarkets , along with the also well @-@ liked pumpkin and watermelon seeds , pistachios , and sugar @-@ coated peanuts .

Bamba is a soft , peanut @-@ flavored snack food that is a favorite of children , and Bissli is a crunchy snack made of deep @-@ fried dry pasta , sold in various flavors , including BBQ , pizza , falafel and onion .

Malabi is a creamy pudding originating from Turkey prepared with milk or almond milk (for a kosher version) and cornstarch . It is sold as a street food from carts or stalls , in disposable cups with thick sweet syrup and various crunchy toppings such as chopped pistachios or coconut . Its popularity has resulted in supermarkets selling it in plastic packages and restaurants serving richer and more sophisticated versions using various toppings and garnishes such as berries and fruit . Sahlab is a similar dessert made from the powdered tubers of orchids and milk .

Watermelon with Feta cheese salad is a popular dessert , sometimes mint is added to the salad .

Krembo is a chocolate @-@ coated marshmallow treat sold only in the winter , and is a very popular alternative to ice cream . It comes wrapped in colorful aluminum foil , and consists of a round biscuit base covered with a dollop of marshmallow cream coated in chocolate .

Milky is a popular dairy pudding that comes in chocolate , vanilla and mocha flavors with a layer of whipped cream on top .

= = = Sauces and condiments = = =

Chili @-@ based hot sauces are prominent in Israeli food , and are based on green or red chili peppers . They are served with appetizers , felafel , casseroles and grilled meats , and are blended with hummus and tahina . Although originating primarily from North African and Yemenite immigrants , these hot sauces are now widely consumed .

Skhug is a spicy chili pepper sauce brought to Israel by Yemenite Jews , and has become one of Israel 's most popular condiments . It is added to falafel and hummus and is also spread over fish , and to white cheese , eggs , salami or avocado sandwiches for extra heat and spice .

Other hot sauces made from chili peppers and garlic are the Tunisian harissa , and the filfel chuma of the Libyan Jewish community in Israel .

Amba is a pickled mango sauce , introduced by Iraqi Jews , and commonly used a condiment with shawarma , kebabs , meorav yerushalmi and falafel and vegetable salads .

Concentrated juices made of grape , carob pomegranate and date are common in different regions , they are used at stews , soups or as a topping for desserts such as malabi and rice pudding .

Almond syrup flavored with rose water or orange blossom water is a common flavor for desserts and sometimes added to cocktails such as arak .

= = = Drinks = = =

There is a strong coffee @-@ drinking culture in Israel . Coffee is prepared as instant (nes) , iced , latte (hafu?) , Italian @-@ style espresso , or Turkish coffee , which is sometimes flavored with cardamom (hel) . Jewish writers , artists , and musicians from Germany and Austria who immigrated to Israel before the Second World War introduced the model of the Viennese coffee house with its traditional décor , relaxed atmosphere , coffee and pastries .

Cafés are found everywhere in urban areas and function as meeting places for socializing and conducting business . Almost all serve baked goods and sandwiches and many also serve light meals . There are both chains and locally owned neighborhood cafés . Most have outdoor seating to take advantage of Israel 's Mediterranean climate . Tel Aviv is particularly well known for its café culture .

Tea is also a widely consumed beverage and is served at cafés and drunk at home . Tea is prepared in many ways , from plain brewed Russian and Turkish @-@ style black tea with sugar , to tea with lemon or milk , and , available as a common option in most establishments , Middle Eastern

@-@ style with mint (nana) . Tea ith Rose water is also common .

Limonana , a type of lemonade made from freshly @-@ squeezed lemons and mint , was invented in Israel in the early 1990s and has become a summer staple throughout the Middle East .

Rimonana is similar to Limonana , made of Pomegranate juice and mint .

Sahlab is a drinkable pudding once made of the powdered bulb of the orchid plant but today usually made with cornstarch . It is usually sold in markets or by street vendors , especially in the winter . It is topped with cinnamon and chopped pistachios .

Malt beer , known as black beer (?????? ??????? , bira sh?ora) , is a non @-@ alcoholic beverage produced in Israel since pre @-@ state times . Goldstar and Maccabi are Israeli beers . Recently , some small boutique breweries began brewing new brands of beer , such as Dancing Camel , Negev , and Can 'an .

Arak , is a Levantine alcoholic spirit (~ 40 ? 63 % Alc . Vol . / ~ 80 ? 126 proof) from the anis drinks family , common in Israel and throughout the Middle East . It is a clear , colorless , unsweetened anise @-@ flavored distilled alcoholic drink (also labeled as an Apéritif) . It is often served neat or mixed with ice and water , which creates a reaction turning the liquor a milky @-@ white colour . It is sometimes also mixed with grapefruit juice to create a cocktail known as ' Arak eshkoliyyot ' , literally ' Arak grapefruit ' .

Other spirits , brandies , liquors can be found across the country in many villages and towns .

== = Wine == =

The vast majority of Israelis drink wine in moderation , and almost always at meals or social occasions . Israelis drink about 6 @.@ 5 liters of wine per person per year , which is low compared to other wine @-@ drinking Mediterranean countries , but the per capita amount has been increasing since the 1980s as Israeli production of high @-@ quality wine grows to meet demand , especially of semi @-@ dry and dry wines . In addition to Israeli wines , an increasing number of wines are imported from France , Italy , Australia , the United States , Chile and Argentina .

Most of the wine produced and consumed from the 1880s was sweet , kosher wine when the Carmel Winery was established , until the 1980s , when more dry or semi @-@ dry wines began to be produced and consumed after the introduction of the Golan Heights Winery ' s first vintage . The winery was the first to focus on planting and making wines from Cabernet Sauvignon , Merlot , Sauvignon blanc , Chardonnay , Pinot noir , white Riesling and Gewürztraminer . These wines are kosher and have won silver and gold medals in international competitions . Israeli wine is now produced by hundreds of wineries , ranging in size from small boutique wineries in the villages to large companies producing over ten million bottles per year , which are also exported worldwide .

Wine made of fruits other than grapes such as fig , cherry , pomegranate , carob and date are also common in the country .

== = Non @-@ kosher foods == =

Foods variously prohibited in Jewish dietary laws (Kashrut) and in Muslim dietary laws (Halal) may also be included in pluralistic Israel 's diverse cuisine . Although partly legally restricted , pork and shell @-@ fish are available at all the non @-@ kosher restaurants (which are the majority) and stores all over the country which are widely spread , including by the Maadaney Mizra , Tiv Ta 'am and Maadanei Mania supermarket chains . A modern Hebrew euphemism for pork is " white meat " . Despite Jewish and Muslim religious restrictions on the consumption of pork , pigmeat consumption per capita was 2 @.@ 7 kg in 2009 . A 2008 survey reported that about half of Israeli Jews do not always observe kashrut . Israel 's anomalous equanimity toward its religious dietary restrictions may be reflected by the fact that some of the Hebrew cookbooks of Yisrael Aharoni are published in two versions : kosher and non @-@ kosher editions .

== = Eating out == =

== Street foods ==

In Israel , as in many other Middle Eastern countries , " street food " is a kind of fast food that is sometimes literally eaten while standing in the street , while in some cases there are places to sit down . The following are some foods that are usually eaten in this way :

Falafel are fried balls or patties of spiced , mashed chickpeas or fava beans and are a common Middle Eastern street food that have become identified with Israeli cuisine . Falafel is most often served in a pita , with pickles , tahina , hummus , cut vegetable salad and often , harif , a hot sauce , the type used depending on the origin of the falafel maker . Variations include green falafel , which include parsley and coriander , red falafel made with filfel chuma , yellow falafel made with turmeric , and falafel coated with sesame seeds .

Shawarma , (from çevirme , meaning " rotating " in Turkish) is usually made in Israel with turkey , with lamb fat added . The shawarma meat is sliced and marinated and then roasted on a huge rotating skewer . The cooked meat is shaved off and stuffed into a pita , plainly with hummus and tahina , or with additional trimmings such as fresh or fried onion rings , French fries , salads and pickles . More upscale restaurant versions are served on an open flat bread , a lafa , with steak strips , flame roasted eggplant and salads .

Shakshouka , originally a workman ? s breakfast popularized by North African Jews in Israel , is made simply of fried eggs in spicy tomato sauce , with other vegetable ingredients or sausage optional . Shakshouka is typically served in the same frying pan in which it is cooked , with thick slices of white bread to mop up the sauce , and a side of salad . Modern variations include a milder version made with spinach and feta without tomato sauce , and hot chili shakshouka , a version that includes both sweet and hot peppers and coriander .

Jerusalem mixed grill , or me 'urav Yerushalmi , consists of mixed grill of chicken giblets and lamb with onion , garlic and spices . It is one of Jerusalem ? s most popular and profitable street foods . Although the origin of the dish is in Jerusalem , it is today common in all of the cities and towns in Israel .

Jerusalem bagels , unlike the round , boiled and baked bagels popularized by Ashkenazi Jews , are long and oblong @-@ shaped , made from bread dough , covered in za ? atar or sesame seeds , and are soft , chewy and sweet . They have become a favorite snack for football match crowds , and are also served in hotels as well as at home .

Malabi is a creamy pudding originating from Turkey prepared with milk or cream and cornstarch . It is sold as a street food from carts or stalls , in disposable cups with thick sweet syrup and various crunchy toppings such as chopped pistachios or coconut . Its popularity has resulted in supermarkets selling it in plastic packages and restaurants serving richer and more sophisticated versions using various toppings and garnishes such as berries and fruit . Sahlab is a similar dessert made from the powdered tubers of orchids and milk .

Sabikh is a traditional sandwich that Mizrahi Jews introduced to Israel and is sold at kiosks throughout the country , but especially in Ramat @-@ Gan , where it was first introduced . Sabi? is a pita filled with fried eggplant , hardboiled egg , salad , tehina and pickles .

Tunisian sandwich is usually made from a baguette with various fillings that may include tuna , egg , pickled lemon , salad , and fried hot green pepper .

== Places to eat ==

There are thousands of restaurants , casual eateries , cafés and bars in Israel , offering a wide array of choices in food and culinary styles . Places to eat out that are distinctly Israeli include the following :

Falafel stands or kiosks are common in every neighborhood . Falafel vendors compete to stand apart from their competitors and this leads to the offering of additional special extras like chips , deep fried eggplant , salads and pickles for the price of a single portion of falafel .

Hummusia is an establishment that offers mainly hummus with a limited selection of extras such as

tahina , hardboiled egg , falafel , onion , pickles , lemon and garlic sauce and pita or taboon bread .

Misada Mizrahit (literally " Eastern restaurant ") refers to Mizrahi Jewish , middle eastern or Arabic restaurants . These popular and relatively inexpensive establishments often offer a selection of meze salads followed by grilled meat with a side of french fries and a simple dessert such as chocolate mousse for dessert .

Steakiyot are meat grills selling sit down and take away chicken , turkey or lamb as steak , shishlik , kebab and even Jerusalem mixed grill , all in pita or in taboon bread .

= = Holiday cuisine = =

= = = Sabbath = = =

Friday night (eve of Sabbath) dinners are usually family and socially oriented meals . Along with family favorites , and varying to some extent according to ethnic background , traditional dishes are served , such as challah bread , chicken soup , salads , chicken or meat dishes , and cakes or fruits for dessert .

Shabbat lunch is also an important social meal . Since antiquity , Jewish communities all over the world devised meat casseroles that begin cooking before the lighting of candles that marks the commencement of the Sabbath on Friday night , so as to comply with the religious regulations for observing the Sabbath . In modern Israel , this filling dish , in many variations , is still eaten on the Sabbath day , not only in religiously observant households , and is also served in some restaurants during the week .

The basic ingredients are meat and beans or rice simmered overnight on a hotplate or blech , or placed in a slow oven . Ashkenazi cholent usually contains meat , potatoes , barley and beans , and sometimes kishke , and seasonings such as pepper and paprika . Sephardi hamin contains chicken or meat , rice , beans , garlic , sweet or regular potatoes , seasonings such as turmeric and cinnamon , and whole eggs in the shell known as haminados . Moroccan Jews prepare variations known as dafina or skhina (or s ? hina) with meat , onion , marrow bones , potatoes , chickpeas , wheat berries , eggs and spices such as turmeric , cumin , paprika and pepper . Iraqi Jews prepare tebit , using chicken and rice .

For desserts or informal gatherings on Shabbat , home bakers still bake a wide variety of cakes on Fridays to be enjoyed on the Sabbath , or purchased from bakeries or stores , cakes such as sponge cake , citrus semolina cake , cinnamon or chocolate babkas , and fruit and nut cakes .

= = = Rosh Hashanah = = =

Rosh Hashana , the Jewish New Year , is widely celebrated with festive family meals and symbolic foods . Sweetness is the main theme and the Rosh Hashana dinners typically begin with apples dipped in honey , and end with honey cake . The challah is usually round , often studded with raisins and drizzled with honey , and other symbolic fruits and vegetables are eaten as an entree , such as pomegranates , carrots , leeks and beets . Fish dishes , symbolizing abundance , are served ; for example , gefilte fish is traditional for Ashkenazim , while Moroccan Jews prepare the spicy fish dish , chraime . Honey cake (lekach) is often served as dessert , accompanied by tea or coffee . Dishes cooked with pomegranate juice are common during this period .

= = = Hanukkah = = =

The holiday of Hanukkah is marked by the consumption of traditional Hanukkah foods fried in oil in commemoration of the miracle in which a small quantity of oil sufficient for one day lasted eight days .

The two most popular Hannukah foods are potato pancakes , levivot , also known by the Yiddish latkes ; and jelly doughnuts , known as sufganiyot in Hebrew , pontshkes (in Yiddish) or bimuelos (

in Ladino) , as these are deep @-@ fried in oil . Hannukah pancakes are made from a variety of ingredients , from the traditional potato or cheese , to more modern innovations , among them corn , spinach , zucchini and sweet potato .

Bakeries in Israel have popularized many new types of fillings for sufganiyot besides the standard strawberry jelly filling , and these include chocolate , vanilla or cappuccino cream , and others . In recent years downsized , " mini " sufganiyot have also appeared due to concerns about calories .

= = = Tu Bishvat = = =

Tu Bishvat is a minor Jewish holiday , usually sometime in late January or early February , that marks the " New Year of the Trees " . Customs include planting trees and eating dried fruits and nuts , especially figs , dates , raisins , carob , and almonds .

Many Israelis , both religious and secular , celebrate with a kabbalistic @-@ inspired Tu Bishvat seder that includes a feast of fruits and four cups of wine according to the ceremony presented in special haggadot modeled on the Haggadah of Passover for this purpose .

= = = Purim = = =

The festival of Purim celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the plot of Haman to annihilate them in the ancient Persian Achaemenid Empire , as described in the Book of Esther . It is a day of rejoicing and merriment , on which children , and many adults , wear costumes . It is customary to eat a festive meal , seudat Purim , in the late afternoon , often with wine as the prominent beverage , in keeping with the atmosphere of merry @-@ making .

Many people prepare packages of food that they give to neighbors , friends , family , and colleagues on Purim . These are called mishloach manot (" sending of portions ") , and often include wine and baked goods , fruit and nuts , and sweets .

The food most associated with Purim is called ozne haman (" Haman 's ears ") . These are three @-@ cornered pastries filled most often with poppy seed , but also other fruit fillings . The triangular shape may have been influenced by old illustrations of Haman , in which he wore a three @-@ cornered hat .

= = = Passover = = =

The week @-@ long holiday of Passover in the spring commemorates the Exodus from Egypt , and in Israel is usually a time for visiting friends and relatives , travelling , and on the first night of Passover , the traditional ritual dinner , known as the Seder . Foods containing ?ametz ? leaven or yeast ? may not be eaten during Passover . This means bread , pastries and certain fermented beverages , such as beer , cannot be consumed . Ashkenazim also do not eat legumes , known as kitniyot . Over the centuries , Jewish cooks have developed dishes using alternative ingredients and this characterizes Passover food in Israel today .

Chicken soup with matza dumplings (kneidlach) is often a starter for the Seder meal among Israelis of all the ethnic backgrounds . Spring vegetables , such as asparagus and artichokes often accompany the meal .

Restaurants in Israel have come up with creative alternatives to ?ametz ingredients to create pasta , hamburger buns , pizza , and other fast foods in kosher @-@ for @-@ Passover versions by using potato starch and other non @-@ standard ingredients .

After Passover , the celebration of Mimouna takes place , a tradition brought to Israel by the Jewish communities of North Africa . In the evening , a feast of fruit , confectionery and pastries is set out for neighbors and visitors to enjoy . Most notably , the first leaven after Passover , a thin crepe called a mofletta , eaten with honey , syrup or jam , is served . The occasion is celebrated the following day by outdoor picnics at which salads and barbecued meat feature prominently .

= = = Shavuot = = =

In the early summer , the Jewish harvest festival of Shavuot is celebrated . Shavuot marks the peak of the new grain harvest and the ripening of the first fruits , and is a time when milk was historically most abundant . To celebrate this holiday , many types of dairy foods are eaten . These include cheeses and yogurts , cheese @-@ based pies and quiches called pashtidot , cheese blintzes , and cheesecake prepared with soft white cheese (gvina levana) or cream cheese .