

Jlife

SGPV JEWISH LIFE

July 2026
Tammuz — Av, 5786

NITZANA
Diversity isn't just a
value; it is our DNA.

A BICENTENNIAL
MEMORY
'Miracle' at
Entebbe Recalled

THE TRAVEL
ISSUE

GOT KIDS?
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kiddish



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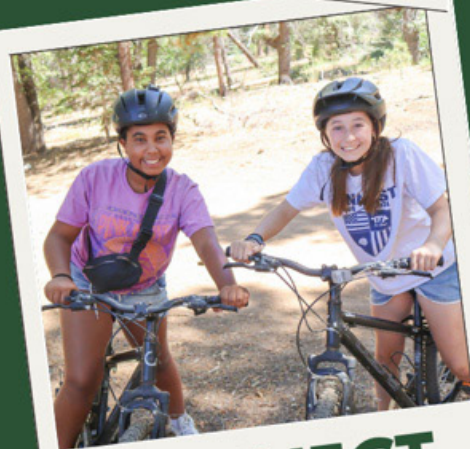


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From Where I Sit

INCREDIBLE JEWISH AMERICANS

Our tradition has a rich tradition of marking important moments in life. From a *bris* or a *brit bat* (baby naming) and *upsherin* (tradition surrounding a boy's first haircut (usually around the age of 3)), to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, weddings, conversions, and death, Judaism celebrates the events of a lifetime.

I share this idea as our country is about to commemorate and celebrate our 250th Anniversary as a nation. It is a momentous occasion, and we should all mark it by saying *Shechyanu*, because it is the perfect thing to say, as the prayer means: *Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.*

As we reflect on the history of the US, I feel it is important to highlight and honor the incredible contributions made by Jewish Americans. They have impacted various sectors of life... Science, Law, Education, Music, Fashion, Civil Rights, Media, Movies and TV, theater, Politics... the list could go on.

So here is a very brief list of people I have compiled (in no particular order) from numerous sources and the important and/or revolutionary work/innovation/impact on society today:

- Haym Solomon – a Jewish businessman who loaned and/or donated over \$600,000 to help fund the Revolutionary War
- Louis Brandeis – first Jewish Supreme Court Justice and pioneered the use of sociological data in legal briefs and fiercely defended free speech
- Lillian Wald - fought for public health care, women's rights, and children's rights and was involved in the founding of the NAACP
- Levi Strauss – Founder of the first company to manufacture blue jeans
- Jonas Salk – developed the first successful polio vaccine
- Samuel Gompers - founded the

American Federation of Labor (AFL), fundamentally improving conditions for American workers.

- Rose Schneiderman - a leading labor union activist was active in women's suffrage movement, and was a member of Roosevelt's "brain trust"

- Stan Lee - Comic book writer and publisher who built Marvel Comics, co-creating legendary superheroes like Spider-Man, the X-Men, Iron Man, and the Hulk

- Gloria Steinem - a pioneering feminist journalist, political activist, and leader of the women's liberation movement who founded Ms. magazine

- Irving Berlin - one of the most prolific songwriters in American history who composed "God Bless America" and other standards like "White Christmas"

- Jerry Lewis - one of the most popular actors and comedians of his time and the host of the Annual Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy Association for over 40 years

- Albert Einstein - revolutionized modern physics with his theory of relativity and helped alter history by alerting the U.S. to the potential for atomic energy

- George and Ira Gershwin – legendary American songwriting duo who are instrumental in the creation of the Great American Songbook

- Louis B. Mayer – Producer/studio chief at Hollywood's largest and most influential movie studio
- Julius Rosenwald - Under his leadership, the Sears, Roebuck and Company catalogue created the first dominant mail-order business

- David Levy Yulee - the first Jew to be elected to the House of Rep-



Mel Brooks attending a ceremony to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

representatives

- Emma Lazarus – an advocate for immigrants and a poet who composed America's most iconic lines of welcome that are inscribed on the Statue of Liberty
- Henry Kissinger – American diplomat who helped shape modern American foreign policy
- Betty Friedan - founded the National Organization of Women and wrote "The Feminine Mystique"

And in honor of his recent 100th birthday, I would add Mel Brooks - legendary filmmaker, comedian, and actor best known as the undisputed king of the Hollywood parody.

As you look to the sky to watch Saturday's fireworks, I hope you will think about the incredible contributions American Jews have had on helping shape not only our country, but also the impact they have made on society as a whole. ☆



JASON MOSS IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL AND POMONA VALLEYS.
@JLIFE JULY 2026 7

“For a while we fell silent. The companionship felt right.”

IDO AND THE JELLYFISH

Sacred Connections and Other Miracles

BY ANDREA SIMANTOV

The water was turquoise, cold and calm. Like an energetic 8-year old, I dropped my gear and raced into the ocean, tears of joy mixing into the salty brine. The gentle waves held me buoyant; I was not my age, my weight, my compromised knees and hips.

After 10 minutes of mindlessness, I staggered back to the blanket, collapsed onto my side and contemplated how little I needed to acquire a state of bliss. This was, for me, bliss.

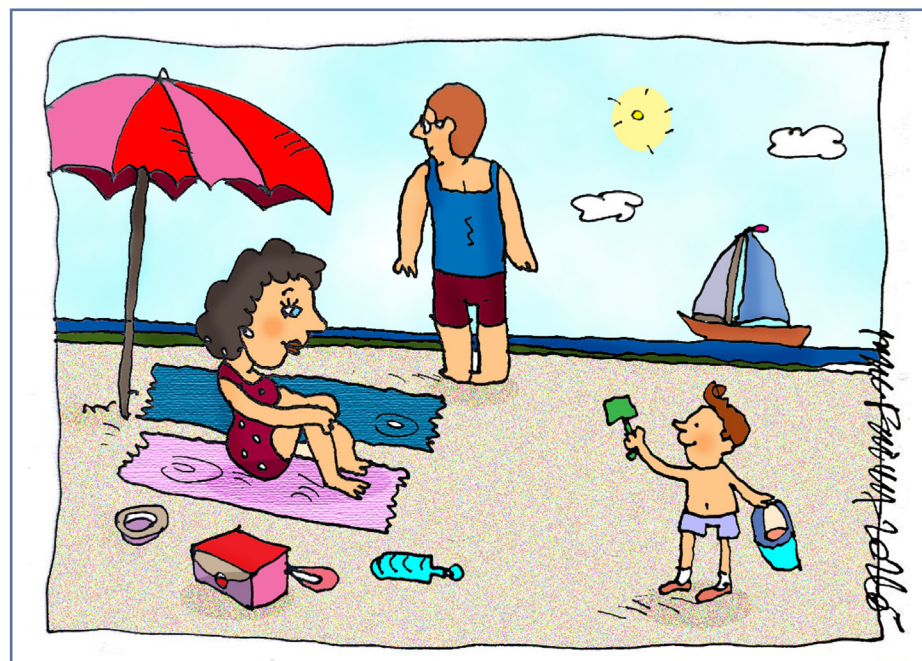
Israelis know how to party; they know how to barbecue and picnic and they really know how to “beach.” Throughout the grainy expanse in this Nature Society site, entire families and friend groups had set up aluminum tables filled with fruits, sandwiches, and all kinds of drinks and snacks. Ronney and I attempted to appear content with our hard-boiled eggs and cut vegetables, hastily tossed in used restaurant containers, but it was useless. Our refreshments were pathetic and we ate rapidly.

Only a few feet from where I lay, a little boy of 6, intently buttressed a hole in the sand, tirelessly running back and forth with pails of water that he summarily used to enlarge his lake. Despite the futility of the effort, his enthusiasm was boundless and in addition to proudly (and loudly) urging his parents to Look-Ima-Look-Abba while dragging a writhing toddler brother to enjoy the fruits of his labors, he was met with disinterest.

But I was interested. And said so, complimenting his industriousness. Certainly I had enough Hebrew to tell him that he could be an architect. He put down his pail and shovel and sauntered over to me, thin-limbed, bare-chested and filled with bravado.

“Eich korim lach? What’s your name?” he asked.

‘Ani Andrea. I am Andrea.’ My husband sat reading, oblivious to



another man making moves on his wife.

“Ani Ido. You speak English? I know English. Blue. Orange. Red.”

His mother called him to lunch and, finally, *sof sof*, I dozed. Strange dreams filled my head, transporting me back to first jobs, first apartments, early boyfriends who were today old men. Sweat pooled in the creases of my neck and I became aware of someone blocking the sun. Ido sat next to me, a cucumber clasped in one fist, a chorizo sausage in the other.

“Where you from?” he queried.

‘I live in Jerusalem. But many years ago, I lived in America.’

Clearly Ido did not understand the secrecy of his assignment because, void of furtiveness, he shouted over his shoulder to his parents, “He m’Amerika. Hem Amerikanim!!!” “She’s from America. They are Americans.” I did not mention that Ronney was South African by birth. The point was moot.

Ido and I sat together for a while, considering the vista. He identified a military ship in the distance and used some jargon which I could not

understand. For a while we fell silent. The companionship felt right.

“At mifchadet mimdoozot? At rotza lir’ot achat? Are you afraid of jellyfish? Do you want to see one?”

“Uh, no, think again,” said my inner voice. “Of course!” is what came out.

He led me to a small sand dune, a translucent, gelatinous grey mound quivering beneath the surface. Children poked at it, screaming in terror and glee. Ido held onto my fingers.

His family was packed when we returned and he did not say goodbye. They merely left. Ronney looked up.

“Where’d you go? he asked. “Who’s the kid?”

My heart answered, “He’s a student, a father, a grandson and a precious baby to his parents. He’s a holy Israeli soldier, bravely protecting this land and her inhabitants. He is a child of G-d. He is my friend.”

I said, “His name is Ido.” ✨

NEW YORK NATIVE ANDREA SIMANTOV HAS LIVED IN JERUSALEM SINCE 1995. SHE WRITES FOR SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS, APPEARS REGULARLY ON ISRAEL NATIONAL RADIO AND OWNS AN IMAGE CONSULTING FIRM FOR WOMEN.

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WHEN YOUR FAMILY VACATION MAKES YOU REALIZE YOU DON'T HAVE THAT WORK-LIFE BALANCE THING

BY MAHARAT RACHEL KOHL FINEGOLD, MY JEWISH LEARNING



When we travel as a family, my husband and I don't use the word "vacation." We call it a "family trip."

We know that traveling with three children, ages 6, 4, and 3, is nothing like a vacation. It is not relaxing to attend to the needs of little people 24/7 without the respite of dropping them at school or daycare. It is not a vacation to drive long hours together, listening to the kvetching of "Are we there yet?" and "I need to pee."

It is stressful to manage travel to areas with no kosher restaurants, bringing a cooler full of kosher cheese and meat that you hope the kids will eat all week. We have discovered that it is better to acknowledge the inherent stresses of travel, and not to expect to relax. It is a trip, a change of scenery, but not a vacation.

And yet, having just returned from a week-long family trip, I realize that I found this past week mysteriously calming. True, it was not vacation, and yet I feel clear-headed and refreshed. Toward the end of the week, it occurred to me why I felt so free of mind.

As a full-time working mother, I am used to keeping track of the kids' needs, while working at a very busy clergy job. I often feel pulled in many directions at once. When I'm at home, I am answering emails or phone

calls. I may be quickly getting dinner on the table and then giving baths, before running back to synagogue for a meeting or lecture.

By the same token, when I'm at work, there are times when I'm worrying about the fact that I forgot to pack the water bottle into the lunch box, or I am thinking about what's for dinner that night. During a meeting, I may suddenly remember that the laundry needs to be done tonight so that my daughter will have her camp t-shirt ready for tomorrow's trip. As I write a sermon, I might also text my husband about the items on our Shabbat shopping list.

But on our trip, I was only *Ima* (mom). And yes, being a mom is still many things—it is doctor with a band-aid for a scraped knee, it is referee for an argument over a toy that both kids want, it is trip planner, singer of bedtime lullabies, wiper of tears and noses—not to mention an attempt to be spouse and friend to my husband. But for the week, I was not doing all those things while also running to a meeting or *minyan*, managing synagogue programs, or officiating life cycle events. I was only *Ima*.

A couple of weeks ago, after dropping my 4-year-old at her day camp, and while pushing my 3-year-old to her day camp (and while my husband was driving my 6-year-old to her camp—yes, we were foolish enough to put three



kids into three different day camps for that week...) I got a phone call. Normally, I would finish dropping off the kid, and then see what call I may have missed. But on that day I would be officiating a funeral later in the morning, and I knew that the family might need to reach me.

Sure enough, the granddaughter of the deceased was calling me to talk about her eulogy. If it hadn't been about a funeral, it would have been comical to watch—I struggled to keep the phone to my ear without letting the stroller be diverted into oncoming traffic, praying that my daughter would not need my direct attention in that moment, so that I could be completely present for the young woman on the other end of the line, who was experiencing loss and grief.

The blogosphere churns with parents' struggles for work-life balance (no, this is not only a mom thing; it's a parent thing). That phrase irks me, because it implies that there is some balance that can be reached, some equilibrium between work and home life which, if we try hard enough, we can achieve. But I have not found this possible.

Instead, we should call it what it is: work-life imbalance. I feel I am constantly walking a tightrope, never quite balanced. I am jumping from one world to the other, keeping many balls in the air at once, worrying when I'm at work that I should be with the kids, and worrying that when I'm at home I am neglecting something at work.

And it is not only about managing logistics of work and home. It is the mental shift that needs to happen internally, in order to go from singing "The Wheels on the Bus" to my toddler, to showing empathy and support as a member of clergy about to do a funeral.

There is nothing balanced about it.

And even in my imbalance, I am blessed with an incredible and supportive spouse, who keeps his own work schedule flexible so that he can jump in for child care, grocery shopping, and anything else that needs to be done when I drop everything and attend to the demands of my job. A *shiva* visit, a *bris*, a funeral, and halachic questions often cannot wait. And often, the kids cannot wait either, or a babysitter can't be found, which means my husband needs to be there.

As I return to my busy job this week, I reflect on how lucky I am to have him, and that my ungraceful work-life imbalance would be simply impossible without his flexibility and support. It took a tragedy for Sheryl Sandberg to realize how difficult single parenting is. For me, it took a week of vacation to throw into relief how essential my flexible spouse is to my ability to do my job.

I don't think that any of this is unique to me. I know that parents with all types of careers experience work-life imbalance on a regular basis. And I am not complaining about it. I simply want to name it. Just like my husband and I discovered that calling it a "family trip," not a vacation, helps us to adjust our expectations to meet reality, calling it work-life imbalance may allow more working parents to accept the imbalanced reality that is our life. If we adjust our expectations, then we won't feel like a failure for not finding the elusive, I would even say impossible, balance between work and family.

So while it's true that family trips are not relaxing, this week my mind found calm. What a relief it was to be able to multi-task at just one job. It means that half my brain got a vacation. Not bad, I'll take it. ☆

MAHARAT RACHEL KOHL FINEGOLD IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

2026 CAMP GAN SHALOM

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July 27 - August 7 (Weeks 7-8)
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WHEN DO WE WANT IT? AFTER MY NAP!

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JEWISH FEDERATION
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A BICENTENNIAL MEMORY

‘Miracle’ at Entebbe Recalled

BY ELLIOT FEIN



Yoni Netanyahu 1946-1976

"I would rather live here with ongoing fighting than be part of a wandering Jewish people...because I have zero intention of telling my grandchildren of a Jewish state that [existed] in the 20th century as a short, passing episode in a millennia of wandering Jews."

"אני מעדיף לחיות כאן תוך לחימה מתמשכת מלהיות חלק מן העם היהודי הנודד... כיוון שאין לי כוונות לספר לנכדים שלי על מדינת-היהודים במאה העשרים כעל אפיזודה חולפת וקצרה באלפי שנות נודדים."

StandWithUs

Yoni Netanyahu (brother of current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu) made the ultimate sacrifice in the Entebbe Operation, rescuing 105 Jewish and Israeli hostages held in Uganda by PFLP terrorists. Yoni, just 30 years old, was the only Israeli casualty. Source: Stand With Us Facebook

It wasn't just any Fourth of July. It was America's Bicentennial, the 200th anniversary of the USA. I turned on the radio but couldn't find any music. Everyone on-air was talking about something spectacular that just happened. One radio DJ described the event as a "miracle."

The week before, on June 27, an Air France jet was scheduled to fly from Tel Aviv to Paris. The flight never reached its destination. After a brief scheduled stop-over in Athens, the plane was hijacked by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The terrorists first diverted the plane to Benghazi Airport in Libya, and then to their intended destination, the Entebbe Military and International Airport in Uganda.

The jet carried 258 passengers. The PFLP would soon release 152 of them. The remaining 106 were held for political ransom. The PFLP was demanding a prisoner exchange with the State of Israel. The terrorists would release their 106 captives in exchange for 53 Palestinian prisoners held mostly in Israel.

The majority of the hostages were Israeli citizens. They were easy to identify. They flew using their passports as identification. The PFLP used a less precise means to identify their other victims. They merely chose passengers who, in their minds, possessed a "Jewish look" or a "Jewish

sounding last name".

And there was a third group. The 12-member Air France crew who serviced the plane. They showed genuine courage, refusing the PFLP's offer of clemency. Until all innocent captives were freed, they (as a team) refused to abandon their professional assignments.

If Israel did not give in to their demands, the PFLP threatened to randomly start executing captives. Yitshak Rabin, Israel's Prime Minister, gave signs that Israel would negotiate. Behind the scenes, however, he and other Knesset leaders had other intentions.

Israel sent a military unit on a special mission. With amazing expertise and precision, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) rescued almost all of the hostages. Only three passengers were killed, as were all seven hijackers. In performing the near perfect rescue operation, IDF troops suffered only a few injuries. There was one casualty. Yonatan Netanyahu, the commando leader (and older brother to Benyamin, Israel's later prime minister) was the lone fallen soldier.

That evening, my family celebrated America's Bicentennial. We ate barbecue, watched fireworks, and had birthday cake for dessert. The subject of "Israel" naturally dominated our conversation. Everyone marveled about the heroic act Israel's army had just performed. Mere words felt inadequate

to describe the event. It was hard to disagree with the Seattle radio broadcaster who earlier proclaimed Israel's rescue operation a "miracle."

The next day, I watched the network news. I felt pride viewing the reception the hostages and IDF soldiers received returning to Israel. A huge crowd greeted them immediately after they deplaned.

Among the sea of jubilation, the network news focused its coverage on one individual man in the center of a circle of people. He swayed with a Torah scroll in his arms while hundreds sang and danced around him. In the background, one could hear periodic blasts of shofar horns.

A few days later, I traveled down to Camp Solomon Schechter. I had signed up that summer, with a number of friends, to be an *Oded*, a junior counselor. Together, we participated in the program for the final two sessions of the summer's three-session encampment.

My brother, Warren, was already there. He was spending his entire summer working in the camp's kitchen. After we greeted one another, it wasn't long before we talked about Israel's amazing rescue operation.

I told him about the celebration I watched on TV from Israel. "It was so great seeing Israel take command of the situation," I said. "I still can't believe their army did what they did with so few casualties.

"I will travel to Israel next summer like you did last year," I continued. "I feel much safer doing that now than I did before."

Warren then told me what he was doing when he learned about the rescue.

"When I completed my morning routine, I took my usual break before I started preparing for lunch. I was sitting alone at the dock in front of the lake dangling my feet in the water. At the top of the hill, I saw a number of counselors and campers standing around and mingling with one another. They were waiting for the bell to ring, signaling that the next scheduled camp activity was about to begin. All of a sudden, Mylan Tanzer, another camp counselor, appeared. He screamed in exaltation.

"You won't believe what just happened! You won't believe what just happened! You won't believe what just happened!"

"Mylan then told everyone at the top of the hill the news about what just happened. He then danced his way down to me in front of the lake.

"You know how tall Mylan is?" Warren said to me. "You know how steep and uneven the hill at camp is? Mylon's a good athlete. He played on a state championship basketball team. I still couldn't believe he maneuvered that incline at the speed he traveled without falling or twisting his ankle."

Mylan's euphoria wasn't surprising. He grew up in Portland, Oregon, but, at an early age, made the decision to make *Aliyah*. Mylan's passion and love for Israel and Zionism were no secret.



Memorabilia from America's Bicentennial

After camp that summer, Mylan would spend a number of years at the University of Washington earning his undergraduate degree. Then, soon after graduation, he fulfilled his dream and made Israel his home.

Mylan put on quite a show that morning. Not everyone at camp, though, possesses a TV or radio, so many, if not most, wouldn't find out about "what just had happened" for a number of hours.

Since I wasn't there, I wanted to know what the rest of that day at camp was like. I spoke with a friend, Beth Huppin, who also served as a Solomon Schechter counselor that summer. She was the one who ultimately informed everyone about the amazing event.

"At the end of *tefillah* every morning that week," she told me, "we included a special prayer for the captives who were kidnapped. Everyone at camp knew about the situation. Before lunch, I got the staff together. We quieted everyone in the dining hall down as quickly as we could. We were excited to make the announcement.

"I have the most unbelievable news to share with you today," Beth said. "The IDF, Israel's army, has just conducted a military operation. It may have been the most successful rescue of its kind ever performed. Only three out of 106 innocent passengers lost their lives. In the mission, a number of Israeli soldiers were injured, but, from what we know, there was only one casualty.

"The innocent captives, and the soldiers who rescued them, are all now safely back in Israel. . . . This time, most of our prayers were answered!

"After I spoke, there was a moment of silence. It took a minute for everyone to digest the remarkable news. Then, one girl camper started clapping her hands and singing *Am Yisrael Chai*-The People of Israel Live!

"Everyone immediately joined in with her. No one remained seated. Spontaneously, we moved tables and chairs and began singing and dancing together. It was the most intense and memorable *ruach* session. . . .The celebration only ended when we all got hungry and started eating lunch. . . . No one complained that their food was cold."

☆

ELLIOT FEIN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.



NITZANA

Diversity isn't just a value; it is our DNA

BY JLIFE

Nitzana is an educational community and eco-village located in the western Negev desert in southern Israel, adjacent to the Egyptian border. Founded in 1986, it serves as an ecological field school and a unique social incubator for youth from diverse backgrounds, including new immigrants, at-risk students, and Bedouin teenagers. *Jlife* magazine caught up with Itai Divinsky to learn more about this unique program. Itai is the Chief Development Officer and Director of Resource Development at the Nitzana Educational Community. He is a former Shaliach (emissary) to *JEWISHcolorado*, he is a prominent figure in regional growth and has also served as a tank commander in the IDF Reserves.

1. When was Nitzana founded and what is its mission?

Nitzana was founded in 1986 by the legendary Arieh Eliav, a man who believed the Negev was not a desert to be feared, but a space to be blossomed. Our mission is to serve as a laboratory for the future of Israel—integrating environmental education, social cohesion, and Zionist pioneering. We aren't just an educational community; we are a bridge between the different "tribes" of Israel and a gatekeeper of the Negev's potential."

2. How important is the diversity of students to your school?

Diversity isn't just a value at Nitzana; it is our DNA. On any given day, you will see Jewish-Israeli teens, Bedouin youth from the surrounding villages, and new immigrants from the FSU all sharing the same campus. We believe that the challenges of the 21st century—be they ecological or social—cannot be solved in silos. By learning together in the desert, our students build a shared Israeli identity that is stronger than the headlines suggest.

3. How important is the village's location in the Negev to its overall mission?

The Negev is 60% of Israel's landmass but holds only a fraction of its population, it is literally Israel's next frontier. Our location is our greatest educator; it fulfills Ben-Gurion's vision that the future of Israel will be forged in the south. We are proving that the periphery can, and should, be the center of innovation.

Beyond the logistics, however, the desert is essential to the "Nitzana Experience" because of its silence. In a world of constant digital noise, the vastness of the Negev offers a rare space for deep reflection and a reconnection to one's inner self. When our students go out into the dunes at night, they aren't just learning geography; they are learning who they are. This connection to the land and to oneself creates a level of resilience and mental clarity that you simply cannot find in the city. We don't just build the land; the land builds us.

4. The "Gap Year" (*Mechina*) is a crucial time. What does Nitzana offer in this respect?

The year between high school and military service is perhaps the most critical "fork in the road" for an Israeli young adult. At Nitzana, we recognize that for many of our students—most of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds and the social periphery—this year is about more than just preparation; it is about changing their life's trajectory.

For a young person who may not have had the same starting line as those in the center of the country, Nitzana provides a radical shift in environment. We offer a "Mechina" (Pre-Military Academy) experience that builds the "soft skills" of leadership: discipline, self-efficacy, and a sense of belonging to the Zionist story. By the time they finish their year in the desert, they don't just enter the IDF as more capable soldiers; they enter as young leaders who believe they can achieve anything. We aren't just preparing them for the army; we are equipping them with the resilience and vision to break cycles and build successful lives productive adults and engaged citizens of a democratic state.

5. Tell us about your agricultural program and its role after October 7.

The aftermath of October 7 created an unprecedented crisis for Israeli agriculture, particularly in the south. When foreign workers and local laborers were forced to leave, Nitzana became a center of gravity for national mobilization. We hosted thousands of volunteers—from young students to older professionals, from Israel and around the world—who arrived at Nitzana to work the land and ensure that the farms remained alive. This collective effort was a testament to the Israeli spirit; we refused to let the desert retreat.

Building on that momentum, we are incredibly proud that in 2024, we opened a new school specifically dedicated to this mission. At Adam V'Adama Nitzana, students spend their days working directly on the farms and their evenings studying the science and philosophy of agriculture. It is a "work-study" model that addresses both the immediate labor needs of our region and the long-term need for a new generation of high-tech, resilient farmers who are deeply connected to the soil of the Negev.

6. You welcome *Olim* (new immigrants) in Nitzana, most from Russia and Ukraine. How do you prepare them for life in Israel? Do you focus on preparing them for military service?

At the end of the program we offer an optional intensive "sprint". This month-long program is actually the culmination of our flagship Sela program, run in close partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel. Sela is an immersive, eight-month absorption framework designed for young adults aged 18 to 21 from the Former Soviet Union who have chosen to make *Aliyah* (immigrate to



Israel) ahead of their families. For nearly a year, Nitzana becomes their first home in Israel. We provide them with a supportive ecosystem where they live on campus, study intensive Hebrew, explore the landscapes of the country, and build a deep, personal sense of Israeli identity. They arrive as teenagers from abroad, and through Sela, they transform into confident new citizens ready to fully integrate into Israeli society.

Once they complete the broader Sela framework, they transition into our specialized one-month pre-IDF track. This unique phase is designed to give these brave *Olim Hadashim* (new immigrants)—many of whom will serve as lone soldiers—a technical and mental “soft landing” into the military.

The preparation focuses on three essential pillars: **Technical Hebrew:** We bridge the language barrier by teaching the specific military terminology, slang, and commands they will need to understand from day one. **Physical & Mental Readiness:** They undergo rigorous physical conditioning to prepare their bodies for the demands of basic training, combined with workshops on mental resilience.

Real-World Orientation: We take them to visit active IDF bases and arrange direct meetings with military personnel. This allows them to ask questions and gain a realistic picture of what to expect, ensuring they enter their service not just as recruits, but as prepared, highly motivated soldiers who know Nitzana is always standing behind them as their adoptive home.

7. You mention that Bedouin youth are a core part of your student body. Looking at the demographics of the south, the Bedouin population is projected to

constitute nearly 50% of the Negev’s population in the coming decade. How is Nitzana’s Neve Midbar program addressing the immense challenge of integrating this community into the broader Israeli fabric?

The demographic reality of the Negev means that the future of southern Israel is completely intertwined with the future of the Bedouin community. True integration is no longer just a moral ideal; it is a strategic necessity for the entire nation. At Nitzana, we believe that the continued prosperity of the State of Israel depends on the full, genuine integration of Arab society into all aspects of civic and economic life.

Our Neve Midbar Bedouin Youth Village addresses this head-on by serving roughly 150 Bedouin teens from across the south, many of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds and unrecognized villages that lack basic resources. We offer a comprehensive residential high school framework where a diverse, collaborative staff of both Jewish and Arab educators guide these students through core academic subjects, high school matriculation, agriculture, and ecology.

Crucially, we do this in an environment that respects Bedouin culture while actively fostering shared civic responsibility and the values of equality and democracy. By living and learning on a shared campus alongside Jewish peers and new immigrants, these youth build the language skills, self-discipline, and social networks required to thrive in a modern economy. We aren’t just giving these teenagers an education; we are preparing them to become independent adults, pursue higher academic studies, and step into high-demand professions. In the coming decades, Neve Midbar alumni will form the



local leadership needed to drive economic growth and social cohesion, proving that successful integration is the ultimate key to a secure and thriving Negev. We are very proud that out of last year’s graduating class 45% chose to enroll in meaningful volunteer service programs.

8. You have a shelter for farm animals, Where do you rescue them from and how are they cared for? How does an animal shelter fit in an educational community?

Our shelter is a sanctuary for farm animals—donkeys, goats, and others—that have often been abandoned or found in distress. These animals come to us from across the Negev, many from the surrounding Bedouin villages. We provide them with a dignified home, high-quality veterinary care, and a peaceful environment where they can thrive.

The care of these animals is a shared responsibility between our staff, volunteers, and, most importantly, our students. For a young person, there is no better way to develop deep empathy than by caring for a living creature that depends on them. Working in the shelter teaches our students patience and compassion; they see firsthand that even the most vulnerable have value. It’s a beautiful cycle where the animals find a new life, and our students find a new perspective on kindness.

9. What can youth and educators gain by visiting your village for ongoing education?

“The most unique thing about Nitzana—and what I believe is our most important contribution to the world

right now—is that we are a living laboratory for a shared society. It is no secret that many modern democracies are currently struggling with polarization. The challenge of how to integrate different groups and build a unified, shared vision is a global crisis. Nitzana is a model of an educational community that aspires to solve that.

We don’t just talk about coexistence; we live it. By bringing together Jewish-Israeli youth, Bedouin communities, and new immigrants from the FSU within the quiet, demanding environment of the desert, we strip away the noise of the outside world. We prove that when you give people a common mission—like protecting the environment or building the Negev—the differences that seem insurmountable in a city or on social media begin to dissolve. We aren’t just educating students; we are prototyping a way for people to live together with a shared sense of purpose and a unified vision for the future.

10. When we speak of Nitzana as a “living laboratory” or a “center of gravity,” what is the actual scale of your reach? How many lives are you touching in the desert?

It is easy to think of a desert community as isolated, but the reality is that Nitzana is a high-volume powerhouse of human transformation. On any given day, we have close to 400 full-time participants living on our campus across our various long-term programs. This includes 150 Bedouin youth who call our Neve Midbar youth village home, alongside 120 *Mechina* participants, 35 young *Olim* (new immigrants), 35 students of agricultural high school and 35 gap year volunteers. Over our history, we’ve proudly



absorbed more than 1,800 new immigrants into Israeli society and graduated over 580 visionary leaders from our gap-year tracks. But our footprint extends far beyond our full-time residents. Every single year, Nitzana welcomes over 17,000 visitors and youth from across Israel and around the globe to our education and recreation center. They come to touch the soil, learn modern climate resilience, and experience what it means to build a shared society in light of Zionist values. When you invest in Nitzana, you aren't funding a quiet retreat; you are driving an ecosystem that touches thousands of lives annually, fundamentally reshaping the demographics, economy, and leadership of the Negev.

11. In what ways do your alumni still contribute to the school?

Our alumni are our most important ambassadors. Many return as mentors or "Madrichim" (guides), while others contribute to our strategic growth. We are currently developing an alumni network that acts as a professional "ecosystem," where past students help current ones with career guidance and social initiatives, keeping the Nitzana spirit alive long after they've left the desert.

12. What kind of impact and legacy do you hope the school imparts?

We want our legacy to be a "Resilient Israel." We hope every person who passes through Nitzana leaves with the "Desert Bloom" mindset—the belief that with enough grit, creativity, and community, you can make the most challenging environments thrive. Our goal is to graduate citizens who don't just ask what Israel can do for them, but who are actively building the Israel of 2050.

13. Looking ahead to the Israel of 2050, what does Nitzana need right now to fully realize this vision, and

how can communities like ours in North America partner with you?

When we think about our future, we are acutely aware that Nitzana is built on foundations of deep friendship. In fact, our connection to Southern California is incredibly personal. For decades, we have been blessed by the extraordinary, generational support of one specific family whose commitment has helped shape the very landscape of our community. One of the sisters, Roberta Trachten Zeve, is a cherished member of the Southern California community. To Roberta and her family, we owe a debt of gratitude for decades of unwavering partnership—they have stood by us through thick and thin, and they embody the true spirit of what it means to build the Negev.

As we look to the post-October 7 reality and Israel's long-term recovery, the biggest challenge Nitzana faces today is one of capacity—we need to do more, to reach more. To meet this moment, we are actively expanding. We need to build new housing, expand the campus of our Adam V'Adama agricultural school to train more pioneer-farmers, launch a robust alumni initiative to ensure our impact continues, upgrade our agricultural and climate-resilience education and much more.

We are inviting the broader Jewish community of Southern California to follow the inspiring example set by Roberta and her family—to roll up your sleeves and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us as co-founders of Israel's next chapter. Whether through philanthropic investment in our physical expansion, sponsoring scholarships for youth from the social periphery, or sending your own young people to experience Nitzana firsthand, your partnership ensures that the desert continues to bloom, and that the promise of Israel remains unbreakable.

If you would like to visit Nitzana next time you are in Israel and see firsthand, or just want to learn more you can contact Itai at itaidi@jafi.org. ✨



SGPV'S JEWISH YOUTH & PARENTS

kiddish

*Family
Vacation
Time*

JULY 2026

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kiddish

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How in the World Do I Pack for Four Kids?

BY JORDANA HORN, MY JEWISH LEARNING

When I finish packing for this [expletive deleted] cruise, I will need a vacation.

That is what I found myself muttering as I brushed my hair back out of my eyes. In doing so, I wrote on my face with the permanent Sharpie marker that I'd been using to label Ziploc bags full of clothes in every size, for every possible sort of climate. Mike Tyson's facial tattoo ain't got nothin' on me.

This Ziploc thing is me fighting my nature: I am a naturally disorganized person. I am definitely one of those people who sees my messiness as a sign of my creativity and latent genius. My lack of organization (or, as my mother has called it somewhat pejoratively, "slovenliness"), never bothered me back in my pre-child life. When I was looking for my black lace bra, I'd know it was probably on either the chair in my bedroom or under my dresser. Problem solved.

As the years passed, however, disorganization has become, sadly, unacceptable. Being the mother of four kids—especially if two of them are under two—means you really need to have your stuff together. An example of this presented itself in my inbox just today. "I missed seeing you at Field Day yesterday," a friend emailed me this morning. If I read between the lines correctly, that probably means that I was supposed to be at Field Day at the elementary school yesterday. Damn it. Hopefully my kid didn't notice.

I've been busy getting ready for our family trip. I did not say "vacation." Traveling with four children, your husband, and your parents (thank G-D for the husband/parents factor) is not particularly restful. Once you understand that, it's a significant difference in how you view your trip. I have fully processed that my 1-year-old will not intuitively understand that when one is on a beach, one is meant to lie down, say nothing, and vegetate like a beached whale while listening to an iPhone and sipping a drink with an umbrella in it. I will try to explain this point to her, but it will be in vain. The trip will be a lot of fun—I am actually really excited—but it will be a lot of work.

The work begins with the packing. There is really nothing quite like packing for four



children, two of whom are in diapers: it is an exercise in anticipation, space conservation, and planning. And list-making.

I am not ordinarily a list-maker (see under aforementioned "disorganized"). But this time around I made the list two weeks ago. I listed how many diapers and wipes each kid would have to take. How many ounces of powdered formula. What medications I needed to get beforehand. How many new pairs of shorts each growing kid would need.

I lost the list.

With a few days to go, I find myself waking up at 3:35 in the morning, sitting straight up in bed and saying things like, "Socks! Bibs! Benadryl!" My husband tells me to go back to sleep. Not before I write these revelations down, of course....and of course, there is no pen or paper by my bedside.

It will all be okay. We will forget something, whether it is the toothbrush or the goggles (goggles!). We will live. Whoever coined the expression "getting there is half the fun" was in a van where everyone was partying, not an early morning flight to Florida packed with toddlers. But we will get there and it will be fun.

And maybe before our flight leaves this weekend, I'll even have packed some clothes for myself. ☆

JORDANA HORN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

10 Tips for Surviving Road Trips with Kids

BY CARLA NAUMBURG, MY JEWISH LEARNING



My husband and I took our daughters (ages 3.5 and just barely 2) on a 10 hour car drive for our summer vacation last week. Yes, I said 10 hours. Each way.

To answer your initial questions, yes, we all survived, and yes, my husband and I are still sane. I think.

We've made the 3.5 hour drive down to New York to visit the girls' great-grandparents three to four times each year since my older daughter

was born. Between those drives and our most recent vacation, I have decided that I am now an expert on road trips, and well qualified to give advice to all of you idiots brave folks who have decided to venture forth on the great American highways this summer.

Now, don't worry. I'm not going to tell you to make some fancy spreadsheet in preparation for your trip (although that does help calm my pre-travel anxiety) or buy some fancy-pants gadget (except the in-car DVD player). When the

poop hits the fan (or the vomit hits everything, as the case may be), no gadget is going to save you. But there are a few things that may make the trip a little more bearable. So, in no particular order, here you go:

1. Know thyself, and thy children. I love car trips, I love driving and riding and heading out and being on the road. I've driven from California to Vermont and back by myself more than once, and I would do it again (especially the alone part). The girls can handle the car, which we learned by experimenting on shorter trips. If you hate car rides, or your kids do, you may want to consider other modes of travel, if possible.

2. Make sure the drive is worth it. Even if you and your kids love being in the car, long drives with little ones are damn hard. So, be sure that whatever is waiting for you at the other end of the car is worth the suffering you may have to endure to get there. For us, great-grandparents definitely make the grade, as does a week on the beach with good friends who have moved away.

3. Lower your expectations. Really, really low. Even lower. Imagine the worst, and then cover that in vomit and poop and set that nightmare to a soundtrack of screaming. All inside a tiny box barreling down the road at 65 miles an hour, from which you can't escape. Hopefully that won't happen, but if it does, you'll be prepared. Anything even slightly better than that will feel like a success.

4. Prepare your kids. Talk to them about what's going to happen and what to expect. A lot. For at least 24 hours before the trip. (But not for too long before that, because then you'll have to hear about it constantly for the week before, and you'll go insane before you ever set foot in the car.) Talking about it might not make much difference, but it probably will, and it's worth a shot.

5. Music, music, music. Make a playlist of your little ones' favorite tunes, and prepare to listen to it over and over and over again. And then one more time after that. And then just when you feel like your ears might start bleeding if you have to listen to that damn dizzy dreidel song even once more, play it again. Because it's better than screaming.

6. Make sure the kids are well fed. And that you have lots of diapers and wipes in the car, as well as extra clothes for EVERYONE. (Also, plastic bags to hold wet or dirty clothes.) These may seem obvious suggestions, but let's just say they weren't always so obvious to me. Ahem.



7. If your little ones are forward facing, bust out the DVD player. Seriously. Even if TV is verboten in your house, I highly recommend you make an exception for the car. Explain that the Olivia videos are a special treat for long car rides, not for the house, and not for short trips. (Tip: If you haven't already, preview the shows before offering them up. My head almost exploded by the third episode of Max and Ruby.)

8. Break the rules. Or at least flex them. You're in survival mode here, people, and if you're not, you should be. Let them watch hours of TV. Slap a pull-up on your potty-trained kid. Feed them the damn nuggets and fries (especially if they come with a toy—the novelty should entertain those little back-seat monsters for at least eight minutes). It may turn out that you don't have a choice, and even if you do, these little exceptions to the rules will help make the trip feel like a special treat.

9. Don't feel the need to entertain them the whole time. I've made this mistake too many times, and by the end of the trip I am completely depleted. Make sure each child has his or her favorite toy or lovey, turn on the music or the videos, and leave them alone. Switch it up—after an hour of TV, listen to music, and then back again. Or just let them stare out the window. But don't start out the drive by entertaining them, as they will expect that level of attention for the whole ride. Save it for when you really need it, when things start to fall apart. Which they will.

10. Take a deep breath, go find your sense of humor, and remind yourself that this, too, shall pass. We've all survived road trips, and your family will too. Hopefully there will be some wine or chocolate waiting for you at the other end. ✨

CARLA NAUMBURG IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

How to Have a Great Staycation with Kids

BY ADINA KAY-GROSS, MY JEWISH LEARNING



The So, let's say you've got a bunch of kids, and it's the summertime, and all around you people are posting expertly filtered photos of their family beach trip to the Cape, and you are stuck in your parched and quiet suburb, twiddling your thumbs to the tune of 1,000,000 cicadas. Let's say your kids are little, or sick, or you have limited funds, or your partner can't take time off from work, or you can't take time off from work.

Let's just say that your classic summer vacation—the one in your fantasy, complete with chic straw hat, excellent beach read, and cute-dresses-with-carefree-sandals at dinner on a dock somewhere—isn't happening, for whatever reason.

Fear not. You are going to plan yourself one kick-ass staycation—with kids.

[Disclaimer: This is not going to feel anywhere

near the same as that fantasy I describe above. That fantasy is best put to rest until your children are much, much older than they are now. Don't torture yourself. There are plenty of years ahead where they'll either be at sleepaway camp, or college, or off with families of their own. It is then that you will take your cruise to Antarctica or Barbados or backpack through Southeast Asia and beam photos directly into the chips we'll all likely have implanted in our brains.]

For now, dear readers, let's get cracking on that staycation plan. Here are 10 tips to get you started:

1. Identify a week when your kids are otherwise unscheduled. This means, do not plan your staycation for a week when they are in day camp or when you have a sitter. Pull out the staycation card when there is nothing else going

on, there is no one else available to pitch in with childcare, and you have a blank slate to contend with. Let's say, oh, those two hellish glorious! weeks between the end of day camp and the start of preschool.

2. Print out a blank calendar. Yes, we all have calendar apps on our smartphones, but printing out a hard copy calendar, even if it's just for one or two weeks' use, is a great way to have your kids follow along with you, as you review what will happen each day. You can fill in the boxes in advance, and then, over breakfast, as the first, "What are we going to do today?" emerges from the mouths of your babes, you can whip out your calendar, show how busy you're going to be, and cross things off as they occur, so that you can regularly remind your children how fortunate they are to be on a staycation at all.

3. Make a quick list of the things you want to do. Sure, it's really about what your kids want to do, but you don't want this to be a total drag for you, either. Maybe you'd be happy sitting in a cool and quiet theater while the kids watch a college production of "Jack and the Beanstalk." Maybe you can tolerate an afternoon at a local beach. Maybe you like pancakes and early movies during the week. Perhaps you'd be up for a drive a few hours away, just to get a change of scenery. Consider your own priorities as you consider those of your kids. You'll all be happier for it.

4. Determine a budget. Staycations, while they don't have the added cost of lodging, can be pricey. So decide what kind of staycation you want to take. Is it going to be a DIY staycation? Complete with art projects in the backyard and baking cookies in the afternoon? Or do you plan to spend a little bit more money and take the kids to some "attractions" or theaters or otherwise expensive events? If you figure this out ahead of time, you'll stress less.

5. Make a promise to yourself that even though you are staying home and not going "anywhere," you will still let your kids live like they are on vacation. That means following up an afternoon at the pool with ice cream every day during this "vacation" week even if you would normally never do that. Go out to eat—even if it's just to the local diner. Let them watch movies; let them stay in their pajamas all morning; let them eat dinner in the backyard in their underwear. Those rules that you would normally chuck while on vacation should be chucked while on staycation, too.

6. Be intrepid. Plan a day in a nearby city, if you don't already live there. Have your kids been on

the commuter train? The subway? Take public transportation. Get some culture. Take them to a kids' theater production, or an art museum, or the old-timey carousel in the park. Ride the ferry. Take lots of photos. Filter the hell out of them; post them on social media. (Make sure to buy a pretzel or ice pop from a street vendor, and let the kids pass out on the train ride home. Post pics.)

7. Have a few surprise goodies on hand at home. You don't have to spend a lot. Forty-five minutes in the dollar store or Target and you'll be set. A new backyard sprinkler, a big jar of bubbles, new paints, magic pen books, bouncy balls, ingredients for cookies, or a new puzzle will do it. Pull a different one out each day. Savor being the hero.

8. Make one day a playdate day. Call another parent in advance; schedule it all down to a tee. Meet up for breakfast, and share in the joy of shuttling your brood out to that waterpark/amusement park that's an hour away. Take someone's minivan so that you can drive together and talk. Get an enormous iced coffee and enjoy the ride. Time it so that all the children fall asleep on the way home.

9. Don't be afraid to "get stuff done." Sure, this sort of contradicts my decree in #5 that you should chuck all rules while on staycation, but this could be fun. Been waiting all spring to empty the kids' drawers of their winter clothes? Get them in on the action. Make sure their bellies are full, pick a good station on your favorite music app, and let them dump everything out of their dressers and onto the floor in their room. Sort through what you're going to donate, keep, put in storage, etc. Or do the same with books and toys. Then, reward yourselves with a trip to a local town pool or beach, slice of pizza, etc.

10. Maintain a rich and detailed narrative with your kids, of each and every staycation day.

Review the photos you took to remind them of the fun you all had. Pull out the calendar each morning and ask them what they most loved about the previous day. Talk about your staycation until it becomes a thing of legend, one for the history books—that time when Mommy and Daddy got us ice cream every day, let us wear pajamas to the bagel store, skipped baths for days in a row, and showed us how to have some good old-fashioned fun.

Who needs a fancy beach vacation anyway? ☆

ADINA KAY-GROSS IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

COOKING JEWISH

Lifestyle

INDIAN CUISINE THE KOSHER WAY

**Jewish Communities
Take Root Around the
World**

BY JUDY BART KANCIGOR

Orange Spanish Sponge Cake
Pan d'España

When G-d said, "I will scatter you among the nations" (Leviticus 26:33), He wasn't kidding

around. Throughout the ages, Jewish communities have taken root in such far-flung places as China, Japan, Botswana, Gibraltar, Siberia and even India.

In "660 Curries" (Workman, \$25.95), the late Raghavan Iyer—chef, master teacher and award-winning cookbook author—describes three distinct Jewish communities in India. Jews are believed to have settled in Cochin, in southwestern India, as early as 370 CE. Today, the historic neighborhood known as Jew Town preserves that legacy, with an active synagogue dating to the 1700s and a cemetery that traces its roots to the 1300s.

Better known is the larger community of Bene Israel, or Children of Israel, who settled on India's west coast south of Bombay, now Mumbai. A third Jewish community, the Baghdadis—Sephardic Jews from Iraq—settled along the eastern coast. Today, only a handful of Cochini Jews remain, and while Mumbai still has an active synagogue, most of its Jewish residents have emigrated to Israel.

Like Jewish communities everywhere, India's Jews absorbed the flavors of their homeland while maintaining their religious traditions. Their cuisine reflects a fascinating blend of Jewish practice and Indian ingredients.

It would be hard to think of a culinary term more misunderstood than the word "curry." "The word 'curry' itself is unknown in the Indian vocabulary," writes Iyer. To most Americans, curry means a spice blend or a fiery dish. In reality, "curry" is simply a catch-all term for India's countless sauce-based dishes. "Every sauce we do we punctuate with flavor," he explains. "There are many curries in parts of India that are flavored not with spices, but herbs. For heat we use peppercorns and chiles—that's about it. So, when I say 'spicy,' I mean well-seasoned, not hot. That's the beauty and complexity of curries."

Much of Indian cuisine lends itself naturally to kosher cooking because of its emphasis on fresh vegetables and use of coconut milk and coconut byproducts – a pareve and sadly underused ingredient in the kosher kitchen – which provide richness traditionally supplied by dairy in other cuisines, like the Coconut Chicken with Potatoes included here.

"There is an agreement that the concept of this sauce-based, spice-laden dish has been India's legacy for thousands of years," he writes. "Spices, you see, are the backbone of these dishes, and with India's 6000-year tradition of using them in cooking, I consider the Indian subcontinent to be their master. In my India, curry is never added – it just is!

Not so long ago, exploring international cuisine often meant choosing between Chinese and Italian food. Today, home cooks can travel the world without leaving their kitchens, thanks to readily available global ingredients and a wealth of cookbooks, websites and cooking shows. One of the most transporting culinary journeys arrives in "Stella's Sephardic Table" (Hoberman, \$45), a cookbook by Stella Cohen that is as rich in history and culture as it is in recipes.

Lavishly photographed and deeply personal, the book preserves the food traditions of the Jewish community of Rhodes, the Greek island once known as La Chica Yerushalayim – little Jerusalem.

Located just off the coast of Turkey and along the sea route to Israel, Rhodes was home to a thriving Sephardic Jewish community for centuries. That world was largely destroyed by economic upheaval, emigration and the Holocaust, which claimed many of Cohen's relatives. Today, fewer than 20 Jews remain on the island. Cohen's family eventually settled in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, where she was born. "My mother's ancestors include my great-grandfather, Yaacov Capouya, the rabbi of Rhodes," she told me. "It was my children who urged me to document not only our Sephardic

family recipes, but also our vanishing customs."

What her children longed for was the comfort food of their childhood: simple stews, flaky borekas, baklava, stuffed grape leaves, fragrant rice pilafs and creamy rice pudding. "They remembered how we used to sprinkle their initials on the rice pudding with cinnamon," Cohen recalled, "just as my parents did for us."

Cohen credits her mother as her greatest culinary inspiration. "When I came home from school, I would be mesmerized watching her fingers shape savory pastries. As a small child, I watched her roll filo dough paper-thin and drape it over pillows to dry." Those memories helped her understand the Ladino word "necutchera" — an accomplished woman blessed with taste, wisdom and intuition. "My mother took pride in creating something beautiful made with love," Cohen said. "I wanted to preserve our Rhodesli food as a tribute to the extraordinary skills of our foremothers." For Cohen, cooking was never simply about nourishment. "It involved not just feeding the body, but nurturing the soul." ✧

“**For Cohen, cooking was never simply about nourishment. “It involved not just feeding the body, but nurturing the soul.”**”

JLIFE FOOD EDITOR JUDY BART KANCIGOR IS THE AUTHOR OF "COOKING JEWISH" (WORKMAN) AND "THE PERFECT PASSOVER COOKBOOK" (AN E-BOOK SHORT FROM WORKMAN), A COLUMNIST AND FEATURE WRITER FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEB AT WWW.COOKINGJEWISH.COM.

Coconut Chicken with Potatoes Batata Murghi



Yield: 6 servings

- 1 can (13.5 ounces) unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons unsalted dry roasted peanuts
- 1 1/2 teaspoons coarse kosher or sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 5 large cloves garlic
- 4 to 6 fresh green Thai, cayenne, or Serano chilies, stems removed
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom seeds from green or white pods
- 1 or 2 cinnamon sticks (each 3 inches long), broken into smaller pieces
- 1 chicken (3 1/2 pounds), skin removed, cut into 8 pieces
- 2 medium-size potatoes, such as russet or Yukon Gold, peeled, cut into 1-inch cubes, and submerged in cold water to prevent browning
- 2 tablespoons peanut or canola oil
- 1 medium-size red onion, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves and tender stems
- 12 to 15 medium-size to large fresh curry leaves

1. Pour 1/2 cup coconut milk into blender jar. Add ginger, peanuts, salt, turmeric, garlic, and chilies. Purée, scraping inside of jar as necessary, to make a slightly smooth but still gritty paste. Transfer paste to medium-size bowl.
 2. Preheat small skillet over medium-high heat. Add coriander, cardamom, and cinnamon, and cook, shaking pan occasionally, until coriander turns reddish brown, cardamom looks ash-gray, and blend smells fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer spice mixture to a plate and cool about 5 minutes. Grind mixture in spice grinder until it has texture of finely ground black pepper. Fold ground spices into coconut-milk mixture.
 3. Place chicken pieces in baking dish and thoroughly coat with this marinade. Cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes up to overnight.
 4. Drain potatoes and pat dry.
 5. Heat oil in non-reactive wok (if it isn't non-reactive, the coconut milk, which you will add later, will discolor), large skillet, or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add potatoes and cook, stirring, until golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer to a plate.
 6. In same pan, cook onion until light brown around edges, 5 to 8 minutes; add onion to potatoes.
 7. Arrange chicken pieces in single layer in same pan (make sure you reserve marinade), and cook until underside is golden brown, 3 to 5 minutes; turn pieces over and sear that side to a golden-brown color, 3 to 5 minutes.
 8. Stir potatoes, onion, remaining coconut milk, reserved marinade, cilantro, and curry leaves into pan. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer, turning chicken occasionally and basting with sauce, until meat in thickest parts is no longer pink inside and juices run clear, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove chicken pieces and arrange on serving platter. Skim off any excess oil that may be floating on surface of curry, and then ladle sauce, along with vegetables, over chicken pieces.
- Source: '600 Curries' by Raghavan Iyer



Orange Spanish Sponge Cake Pan d'Espana

- 8 large eggs
- 1 cup super fine sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable or sunflower oil
- 2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest
- 3/4 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange blossom water
- 2 cups sifted cake flour
- 2 heaping teaspoons baking powder
- Pinch salt
- 3/4 teaspoon cream of tartar.

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. You will need a 10-inch ungreased tube pan.
2. Separate eggs and place 6 yolks in bowl. Put 8 egg whites in large clean bowl and cover with plastic wrap, keeping at room temperature. In bowl of electric stand mixer, beat sugar and egg yolks at high speed until pale and creamy. Stir in oil, orange zest, orange juice and orange blossom water.
3. In separate bowl combine flour, baking powder and salt. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture to sugar-egg mixture. Beat to combine, scraping down sides of bowl as needed.
4. Beat egg whites in clean bowl with whisk attachment until foamy and shiny. Add cream of tartar. Continue to beat until they hold stiff peaks. In 2 batches, gently fold egg whites into batter with large silicone spatula or metal spoon. Pour batter into ungreased tube pan and smooth surface with spoon. Bake until cake is firm to the touch and a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean, 55 to 60 minutes. Immediately invert cake pan on wire rack. Let cool completely before removing from pan (about 1 1/2 hours). To remove cake from pan, loosen outer edges of cake with a long, thin knife around inside of pan and center core. Gently ease out onto a wire rack.

Rose water syrup: 2 cups of water, 1 cup superfine sugar, 2 teaspoons rosewater, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. In small pan over high heat, bring ingredients to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Add whole and halved strawberries and syrup and serve warm.

Source: "Stella's Sephardic Table" by Stella Cohen ☆

JAMIE LEE CURTIS RECALLS VISITING BUDAPEST SYNAGOGUE WITH HER LATE SISTER, KELLY CURTIS

Kelly Curtis, Tony Curtis' eldest daughter, recently passed away at age 69.

BY LIOR ZALMAN

When posting about her sister's death, Jamie Lee Curtis invoked the language that their paternal Jewish grandparents spoke in an ode to both her late sister, Kelly Lee Curtis, and to their roots. "Kelly always signed off any message or fare thee well with a Hungarian blessing," Curtis wrote on Instagram. "Isten Veled, G-d is with you," is an expression used to say goodbye to someone for a long time.

"Isten Veled to my sister of the sun and the moon," Curtis wished her late sibling, who died at age 69 in her home while in hospice care on Saturday, May 30.

Kelly Curtis, an actor and producer who starred in shows like "The Sentinel" and movies like "Trading Places," was Tony Curtis' eldest daughter with his first wife, Janet Leigh. According to her sister, she was known as Aunt Cookie for her "powdered, almond, crescent cookies at Christmas," and she was "proud of her Danish roots and Hungarian Jewish ancestry and was a devoted American patriot."

Kelly passed away mere days before what would have been Tony Curtis' 101st birthday, and Jamie wrote that "there's a little bit of solace knowing that in whatever realm you end up in that he has two of his children with him, my late brother Nicholas and now my sister Kelly." (Nicholas died in 1994 of a heroin overdose).

In the days since Kelly's passing, Jamie, 67, is spending time revisiting old photos of the two of them (as many of us do in grief). Pictures taken on the eve of her wedding, in which the two are seen embracing. And then, pictures



Jamie Lee Curtis with her sister Kelly Curtis at Dohány Street Synagogue Photo Courtesy Jamie Lee Curtis

from their joint trip to trace the roots of their family (both their father's Jewish Hungarian family and their mother's Danish family)



Jamie Lee Curtis with Her Late Sister, Kelly Curtis in 2012. Photo Courtesy of Kveller

"We started out in Hungary, in Budapest, where Tony Curtis' family, Schwartz, was from, a small town, Mátészalka near Budapest," Curtis wrote to her followers.

The two went to Dohány Street Synagogue, the largest synagogue in Europe, which they joined efforts to restore, along with a group of Hungarian Jews. Their father, Tony Curtis, founded the Emmanuel Foundation, named after his own father, Emmanuel Schwartz, to help restore Jewish historical sites and promote Holocaust education, which became a vital part of the restoration.

"It's a magnificent building with incredible history, and there's a tree of life in this courtyard and each leaf has the name placed in memory of someone lost during the [Holocaust]," is how Curtis wrote of the synagogue. That Tree of Life memorial, created by sculptor Imre Varga in fact, was a donation from the Emmanuel Foundation. It commemorates the 400,000 Hungarian Jews murdered during the Holocaust, with 30,000 victims' names engraved on the weeping willow tree's silver leaves.

Jamie shared the picture of her and her sister holding hands, dressed in black, with straw hats shielding them from the sun, sitting under that tree.

Curtis and her sister were so moved to find plaques in honor of their father and his family under the tree, placed there by friend and producer Deborah Oppenheimer. In 2021, Curtis wrote that the tree is a "permanent reminder of the past and a motivator for change for the future of the Jewish people!"

"It was a once in a lifetime trip with my sister Kelly, and it bonded us in our history and family," Curtis recalled, and counseled anyone who has a sibling to take "at least one trip, just the two of you, to trace a little bit of your family history. It will be a lasting and permanent and important memory. It is for me and is helping me in these days of grief and mourning."

May her memory be for a blessing. ☆

LIOR ZALMAN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

July 2026

**FRIDAY, JULY 3
6:30 PM**

Kinder Shabbat
and Main Service
Temple Beth David, TBD

**FRIDAY, JULY 3
7:30 PM**

Shabbat Zoom Service
with Rabbi Ira
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAYS, JULY 5, 12, 19 &
26**

8:45 - 9:15 AM
Men's Club
Weekly Zoom Chat
Breakfast Get-Togethers
Selected Dates at Nearby
Restaurants
Other events include annual
Sukkah building, Super Bowl
Party, Museum and other
places of interests, The Quakes
minor league baseball games,
BBQs, and more.
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAYS, JULY 5, 12, 19 &
26**

9:30 - 10:30 AM
Adult Hebrew Intermediate
Temple Beth David, TBD

**CAMP GAN SHALOM
NOW THROUGH JULY 24**

**PASADENA
JULY 27 - AUGUST 7
(WEEKS 7-8)
POMONA**

Our Programs
Kehilla (K - 5th)
Manheegim (6th - 8th)
CIT* (9th - 10th)
*Must complete application
and interview process.
JFGSGPV

**FRIDAY, JULY 10
7:30 PM**

Shabbat Service with Laurie
Averitt, Steve Berman, Edward
Kwiatkowski & Russell Mark
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAY, JULY 12
2:00 - 4:00 PM**

**MONDAY, JULY 13
7:00 - 9:00 PM**

**TUESDAY, JULY 14
7:00 - 9:00 PM**

JFed Players Auditions: Murder
on the Orient Express
The JFed Players announce
auditions for their Fall
production, Agatha Christie's
Murder on the Orient Express,
adapted for the stage by Ken
Ludwig, directed by John
Carlton and Lori McKenna.
Set in 1934, Murder on the
Orient Express focuses on
Hercule Poirot as he boards
the opulent Orient Express in
Istanbul. En route, the train
gets stuck in the snow and
a murder ensues. It is up to
Poirot to solve the murder
We open on Saturday,
September 26 at Lineage
Performing Arts Center in
Pasadena, on Mountain and
Lake.

For more information or if you
would like to help us in a non-
acting capacity (we can always
use backstage help), please
contact Cantor Judy Sofer.
Location:
Jewish Federation Office 114A
West Lime Ave., Monrovia
JFGSGPV

**THURSDAY, JULY 16
4:30 - 6:00 PM**

Join PJ Library SGPV and the
East Side LA Jbabies crew
for a summer park hang! Is a
donut an acceptable afternoon
snack? Absolutely. Help us
bring a little Hanukkah spirit
to the dog days of summer.
Suggested for ages 0-5.
Glenhurst Park
2932 Glenhurst Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90039

**FRIDAY, JULY 17
7:00 PM**

L'Dor VaDor
Temple Beth David, TBD

**FRIDAY, JULY 24
7:30 PM**

Shabbat Service "Summer
Comfort"
with Rabbi Ira
Temple Beth David, TBD

**FRIDAY, JULY 31
7:30 PM**

Shabbat Service "Summer
Jewish Live"
with Rabbi Ira
Temple Beth David, TBD

**Beth Shalom
of Whittier (BSW)**
www.bethshalomofwhittier.net

**B'nai Simcha
Community Preschool**
www.bnaisimcha.org

**Chabad Jewish Center of
South Pasadena**
www.jewishsouthpasadena.com

**Chabad of Arcadia
(CoA)**
www.jewisharcadia.com

**Chabad of Pasadena
(CoP)**
www.chabadpasadena.com

**Chabad of the
Inland Empire (CIE)**
www.chabadinlandempire.com

**Congregation Hugat
Haverim (CHH)**
www.hugathaverim.com

Congregation Emanu El (CEE)
<https://emanuelsb.org/>

**Jewish Federation of the
Greater San Gabriel and
Pomona Valleys (JFGSGPV)**
www.jewishsgpv.org

**Pasadena Jewish
Academy (PJA)**
www.pasadenajewishacademy.com

**Pasadena Jewish
Temple & Center (PJTC)**
www.pjtc.net

**Temple Ami Shalom
(TAS)**
<https://templeamishalom.org/>

**Temple Beth Israel of
Pomona (TBI)**
www.tbipomona.org

**Temple Beth David of
the San Gabriel Valley
(TBD)**
www.templebethdavidsgv.org

**Temple Beth Israel of
Highland Park and Eagle
Rock (TBILA)**
www.tbila.org

Temple B'nai Emet (TBE)
<https://templebnaiemet.org>

**Temple Sinai of Glendale
(TSG)**
<http://temple-sinai.net>

**Temple Shalom of
Ontario (TSO)**
www.templeholomofontario.org

**Tree of Life Preschool
(formerly TBI Preschool)
(ToL)**
<https://tbipomona.org> ☆



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NEWS & JEWS

Survey: Jews in smaller communities feel less heard when raising concerns about antisemitism

Small town Jews are “lacking a sense of allyship in the communities around them,” according to the Jewish Federations of North America.

By Gracie Gilson, The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)

Jews living in smaller communities are less likely than those in large communities to feel their concerns about antisemitism are taken seriously by law enforcement and would-be allies, a new survey from the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) has found.

Jews in smaller communities were “lacking a sense of allyship in the communities around them,” said Mimi Kravetz, the chief impact and growth officer for JFNA.

“Jews in small communities tell us that they feel deeply concerned that they’re looking for support, that their leadership is looking for network and resources, because it can feel like they’re on their own,” Kravetz told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The JFNA survey, which was compiled from its March 2025 study of Jewish Life in North America, found that 22% of Jews live in small communities. Defined as Jewish communities with fewer than 5,000 Jews living within five miles of their zip code, small Jewish communities are also more likely to be found in the South or in rural or suburban areas.

Although the survey found no statistically significant difference in the antisemitism experienced by Jews in smaller and larger communities, it found that Jews in small communities are more likely to feel that antisemitism is invalidated or



Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson, Mississippi, on Jan. 16, 2025. (Jewish Telegraphic Agency)

dismissed.

Among respondents, 58% of Jews in small communities reported feeling more likely to be invalidated, compared with 48% of Jews overall.

Jews in small communities were also less likely to express confidence in local law enforcement’s responses to antisemitism. Just 39% of Jews in small communities say local law enforcement takes antisemitism seriously, compared with 47% of Jews in larger communities.

Leaders of small Jewish communities also feel less physically safe in Jewish spaces than their big city counterparts: 60% of those small-community leaders said they feel safe, compared to 86% of community leaders overall.

While the survey found that 50% of Jews in smaller communities report being unengaged in Jewish life, compared to 36% of Jewish respondents overall, they were just as likely to say they wanted greater connection to Jewish life.

The survey suggested that geographic constraints and limited availability of Jewish life likely caused the disparity in engagement, even as Jews sought out Jewish connections in the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel.

Kravetz said Jews in small communities were just as likely as Jews in big communities to crave those connections.

“What’s needed in small Jewish communities is more leadership infrastructure and support for Jewish life,” Kravetz said.

The survey was conducted before the January arson attack on Beth Israel Congregation, the only synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi, which drew renewed attention to the security challenges facing smaller Jewish communities.

Michele Schipper, the CEO of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, a nonprofit that supports Jewish communities across the South and was housed inside Beth Israel Congregation prior to the arson attack, said security remains a challenge for some smaller congregations.

“For some of those smaller communities, they may not be able to have personnel on site every time they’re open,” Schipper said. “It may be an older building. Not everyone is able to get one of the secure community grants,” she said, referring to federal and state government grants to nonprofits seen as vulnerable to attack.

Earlier this month leaders from Jewish communities across the South convened at the ISJL’s annual conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, where Schipper said they discussed strategies for keeping smaller communities safe.

“One of the things we really did share is how important it is not to isolate ourselves in these communities, but to continually build relationships with the local community, with local law enforcement, so that when, God forbid, something happens, you’re not starting to reach out or wait for somebody to contact you,” Schipper said.

Looking ahead, Schipper said her message to Jews in small communities was to “continue to build relationships in your own local community, and just continue to participate in the Jewish community and stay strong and positive.”

The study, which was conducted online by JFNA from March 5-25, 2025, surveyed 5,798 total U.S. adults, of which 1,877 identified as Jewish. The margin of error for Jewish adults was $\pm 2.26\%$, and samples were weighted to be representative of the U.S. population and Jewish community. ☆

LAST WORD

“All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware.”
— Martin Buber
(Prominent Jewish existentialist philosopher)



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