

Beyond Hummus and Falafel

Social and Political Aspects of Palestinian Food in Israel

Liora Gvion

Publication Year: 2012

Beyond Hummus and Falafel is the story of how food has come to play a central role in how Palestinian citizens of Israel negotiate life and a shared cultural identity within a tense political context. At the household level, Palestinian women govern food culture in the home, replicating tradition and acting as agents of change and modernization, carefully adopting and adapting mainstream Jewish culinary practices and technologies in the kitchen. Food is at the center of how Arab culture minorities define and shape the boundaries and substance of their identity within Israel.

Published by: [University of California Press](#)

Series: [California Studies in Food and Culture](#)

Cover

p. 1-1

Title Page, About the Series, Copyright, Dedication

pp. ii-v

Contents

p. vii-vii



Preface to the American Edition

pp. xi-xiii

A couple of months after my book came out in Israel, I received a phone call from a Palestinian journalist who works for a major local television station. “We need to talk,” he said in a tone I could not interpret with certainty. Having done many interviews as part of my research, I tried to get a sense of what the conversation was going to be about. He was, ...



Preface to the Original Edition: As If We Were Eskimos—A Most Personal Opening

pp. xv-xx

I was sitting in the living room of Samira's spacious home in Galilee when I felt, for the first time during my fieldwork, like an oppressor.¹ The feeling inched up from my stomach past my chest, causing discomfort, if not embarrassment. "Eat, why aren't you eating my cake?" she pressed. She was about to serve me a second piece, although ...



Introduction: Food, Ethnicity, and Identity

pp. 1-24

Food is one of the means through which distinct national and ethnic identities are formed and practiced. This chapter illuminates the social processes through which food contributes to the national and ethnic identities of groups that share a single territory but perceive themselves as distant and different from one another politically, culturally, ...



PART ONE. WHAT PALESTINIAN WOMEN MUST KNOW: FOOD IN THE HOME

pp. 25-27

Souad seasons a mixture of rice and ground meat with salt, black pepper, cinnamon, and *baharat* (a spice blend). Using this mixture, she fills summer squash halfway up and packs them into a deep pot, layers two or three peeled tomatoes on top, splashes some olive oil over it all, and covers the mix with a stainless steel tray. She places the pot over a ...



1. Women's Ways of Knowing

pp. 29-71

Culinary knowledge is at the core of social identity for Palestinian women in Israel. Women acquire culinary knowledge and master certain food preparation skills as part of a normal process of gender socialization. First and foremost, women must learn to prepare, preserve, and store foods on a family budget. They must also master the accepted ...



2. The Social Sphere: The Culinary Scene as Constructing and Reinforcing Power Relations

pp. 72-95

This chapter addresses three aspects of culinary practice in the Palestinian kitchen in Israel. First, I look at the connection between culinary practice and familial stratification, examining how women carry out their domestic duties in ways that express the preferences of the person who wields authority in the family. Even though cooking enables ...



PART TWO. THE PUBLIC DIMENSION: THE ENCOUNTER WITH JEWISH SOCIETY

pp. 97-100

Laila lives in a seventy-two-square-meter apartment in a public housing project in a mixed city. She is forty-five years old, a mother of five and grandmother of two. Her husband, who is also her cousin, is a hired metalworker. Laila works for a Jewish family as a babysitter. Moving from an “Arab house” to an apartment in a long block of public ...



3. Labaneh with Light Bread and Knafeh from White Cheese: Tradition and Modernity Meet

pp. 101-127

Modernity is a key word for Palestinian citizens of Israel.¹ The modern lifestyle encourages mobility and gradual detachment from the past. For Palestinians, modernization entails a rise in educational level, greater professional opportunity, gradual entry into the middle class, recognition of their equal rights in Israel, consumption of new products, and ...



4. Encountering Israeli Jews: “When There Is No Pride, Cookbooks Are Not Written”

pp. 129-160

Every morning Fathi arrives at his restaurant, checks the fresh produce, gives instructions to the kitchen staff, and begins to prepare the day’s food. Fathi graduated from the Tadmor Culinary Institute, did his internship at a hotel in the center of Israel, and worked in Acre as a sous chef at a restaurant owned by a Mizrahi ...



Conclusion

pp. 161-168

At the opening of this book I described the uncomfortable feeling I had sitting in Samira's home. I realized she was under the impression that I had come to steal her recipes, and I felt like a colonialist intruder. The uncomfortable feeling brought on by that meeting did not disappear entirely when I was writing this book. Throughout my fieldwork ...

Notes

pp. 169-179

Glossary of Culinary Terms

pp. 181-186

Works Cited

pp. 187-197

pp. 199-207

Other Works in the Series

pp. 209-210