

The Schmooze Stories with a Yiddish Twist

THE HAZON JEWISH FOOD CONFERENCE*

*The Yiddish word for “conference” is “konferents”

by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe



Syosset, New York
News for Foodies:

- About 1/3 of U. S. children and teenagers (“tsenerlingn”) eat pizza or other fast food every day.
- Russ & Daughters is headed uptown with a new location at the Jewish Museum, set to open in Nov. 2015.
- Taco Bell will serve beer (“bir”), sangria and frozen (“farfroyrn”) mixed drinks in some of their stores.
- The 2nd Ave. Deli (NY) serves Pastrami Skirt Steak with Rumanian steak, marinated with their secret spices and topped with slices of Pastrami. Cost: \$45.95.
- Lenore Skenazy reports that kosher knishes were found on board the Titanic.
- According to Paul Rudnick (“Yummy,” The New Yorker, June 2, 2014), the Manischewitz Co. is planning to promote “kosher” as a quality-control designation, rather than simply a religious one. The company will introduce advertisements with a secular approach, with scant mention of religious themes:

Remember, mothers hold the purse strings. In heavy rotation on Life-time, we’d show a soccer mom packing her kids’ lunches, maybe in lunchboxes featuring images of Golda Meir and Chewbacca. Her twelve-year-old-son peers skeptically into his lunchbox. “Really, Mom?” he asks. “A juice box and Manischewitz Mediterranean-Flavored Gefilte Fish?” “Just try it,” his mom advises, and we cut to the boy at recess, where his buddies are begging him, “Yo, Ethan! Got gefilte?” :-)

The Hazon Jewish Food “Konferents” will be held from Dec. 20, 2015 to January 1, 2016. You can dance in the new year, raise a “glezel”(glass) and break (artisanel organic) bread with 200 of your

new friends: farmers and rabbis, nutritionists and chefs, vegans and omnivores. This year they'll explore how our choices--from the grocery ("shpayzkrom") aisle to the ballot box--help to build or destroy a healthy "klimet" (climate).

They'll connect the dots between cattle ("beheymes") pastures in Brazil, almond ("mandl") orchards in California, desertification in the Negev, and Jewish delis in Brooklyn.

So, head for the Isabella Friedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT.

What have Jewish comedians, actors, writers, and food bloggers said about food?

Woody Allen

[on the 3 things all Jewish people worship]: "God, Chinese food and wall-to-wall carpeting."

Mitch Hedberg

"A friend of mine is a vegan. A vegan is a person who won't eat anything made by or with flavour."

Peter Singer

"Only in America can you buy (a) certified kosher 'bacon bits' (actually processed soybean infused with the same hickory-smoked flavor...used on salads, and (b) kosher 'crab' (processed fin fish).

Billy Crystal

"Jews are not allowed to eat their own food. That's in the Talmud.

On the seventh day God rested and went to Twin Dragons for dinner because He loved the ribs." If you go to any Italian restaurant on a Sunday, there are only Jewish families. If you go to a Chinese restaurant, there are only Jewish families. Have you ever seen a Chinese family at a deli on a Sunday having a plate of pickled herring and chopped liver? It doesn't happen."

(Source: "700 Sundays")

Hennie Youngman

"Ma wouldn't allow us to eat the food sold on the boardwalk--not while she was around would a Youngman child be allowed to chase down the aroma that drifted to the beach of frying hot dogs, cotton candy, corn on the cob, or even the knishes. 'Dreck!' she muttered as she unloaded the thermos bottles and brown bags of food from the suitcase filled with bathing suits and spare clothing that she had lugged from home."

(Source: "Take My Life, Please" by Henny Youngan and Neal Karlen")

Sammy Levenson

"To a kid coming home from school there is no warmer reception than soup vapor spelling out 'Welcome home!' Frozen foods can only spell 'Come back later.'"

"When I was a kid we all overate. The only proof mama had that she was a good mother was the fact that her children were fat. To my mother, if you didn't bulge, you were skinny. I had 'baby fat' until I was 37 years old."

Jerry Stiller

"First we'd sip the soup. This was chicken soup like none I'd never tasted.

My grandmother cooked all day Friday in preparation. She made the noodles herself. If I arrived early I'd see her flattening the dough with a rolling pin. She would slice the dough into strips with a

lukshen knife and then drop the strips into boiling water....When the meal was finished and the evening ended, everyone took home cake. This was for the in-laws My grandmother's dinners went on for years."

Source: "Married To Laughter" by Jerry Stiller

Joan Rivers

"I hate it when the waitress reads the daily specials like he's Meryl Streep in Sophie's Choice...I hate when your food is charged by the weight. It's food, not jewelry. I don't need a three-carat rump roast."

[reminisced about Sunday gatherings at the snooty home of a rich Park Avenue aunt] "Apparently her family lived in Brooklyn, and en route to the weekly party they would get off the Manhattan Bridge and 'stop at Yonah Schimmel's on Houston Street for a knish,' Rivers wrote, because even though my aunt threw these extraordinary soirees, we knew the kind of finger foods she'd be serving didn't compare to a great knish. We'd show up on Park Avenue, smelling of onions and potatoes and hand her white-gloved doorman a greasy brown bag full of napkins and wrappings and say, 'Here, hide the evidence!'"

Source: Introduction to "Eating Delancey - A Celebration of Jewish Food"
by Aaron Rezny and Jordan Schnaps.

Alan King

"Another health-food delicacy is called mandrake roots. If you eat it, you're a magician. You never knew such a smell. My wife says Indians eat this. Maybe that's why they ship them out to reservations.

And you know how they fool you with names. 'Zeus Smoked Zip!' Do you know what that is? Epsom salts. Or, how about 'Elijah manna'? Sounds like a hotel in the mountains. Give up? It's cornflakes.

Here's my favorite--Helianthus--\$1.60 a pound. You'll never guess, but ask your kid. It's polly seeds. You go into a candy store, put a penny in a machine, you get enough for a month. With them, it's \$1.60 a pound."

Source: ("Help! I'm A Prisoner In A Chinese Bakery" by Alan King. Copyright 1964)

Gertrude Berg (sitcom, "The Goldbergs")

"Better a crust of bread and enjoy it than a cake that gives you indigestion."

(Note: The Yiddish word for "indigestion" is "nit-fardayung").

Elayne Boosler

"When you're eating tongue, how do you know when you're finished?"

Ann Landers

"As for the food, if you can't pronounce it you can't afford it."

Bill Maher

[after dinner hint] "Waiters must stop saying, 'Did you save room for dessert?' This is America. We don't save room for dessert, we make room for dessert. Dessert isn't a delightful way to cap off a meal; it's a challenge. In Russia they swim in subzero temperatures. In Spain they run with the bulls, and here we eat forty pounds of good from a place called 'The Chocolate Factory.'"

Ray Sokolov

“Grandma-cuisine” refers to the nostalgic return to the food of the ‘40s and ‘50s: standing rib roasts, legs of lamb with mint jelly, meat loaf.”

William Homisak

Homisak calls a “vegetarian” someone who gives peas a chance.

Helene Davis

Davis calls “Tant” the orange juice as good as your aunt used to make.

Jack Denton Scott

Scott says that bagels have been called “Brooklyn Jawbreakers,” “Crocodile teething rings,” and “doughnuts with rigor mortis.”

Gerry Blumenfeld

[saw a restaurant in Mexico City whose menu, under “Sandwiches,” read]:

Pastrami por Fressers.....10 pesos
Pastrami (Double Decker) por Grandes Fressers.....15 pesos
Pastrami (Triple Decker) por Grandisimo Fressers....20 pesos
Source: “The New Joys of Yiddish” by Leo Rosten”

Paul Reiser (“Couplehood”)

“And somewhere in your belly lie pathetically odd combinations of foods:

A quarter pound of hummus and some Cracker Jacks

Fifteen pieces of bread and a sour ball

Foods that have no business being together

Chicken salad, blueberries, and a Mounds Bar

Roseanne Barr

“I do the Passover thing, with the lamb and all that stuff.”

Jason Alexander

“I always looked forward to lively Seders. There was just an overabundance of food when I was a child. You had to have brisket in case someone didn’t like chicken.”

Ruth & Bob Grossman

“LA DOLCE VITA”: a hot pastrami, a sour pickle and thou beside me in the Catskills.

ANTIPASTO: What the Italians serve in place of chopped liver.

Source: “The Italian-Kosher Cookbook”

BLINTZ: A crepe with a superiority complex.

HERB: in French, it’s the touch that puts the haute in Haute Cuisine; in Jewish it’s a nice name for a fine Jewish boy.

KNISH: a New York politician could never be elected without eating one.

Source: "The French-Kosher Cookbook" by Ruth & Bob Grossman

One of Marjorie Wolfe's favorite food words: "egotarian" adj. relating to a dish or cuisine created only to show off the chef's culinary skills or creativity. (coined by GQ critic, Alan Richman)

And her favorite recipe:

DUCK A L'ORANGE

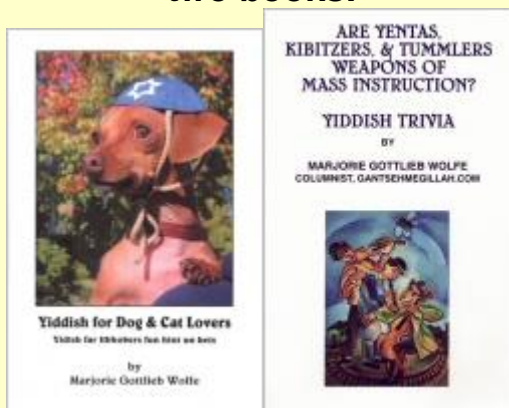
1. Place pouch in a microwave oven. Cook on full power 8 min.
2. Open oven to remove.
3. Duck.

Suggested by Larry Laiken, N.Y.C.

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Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:



"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com

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