

# The Schmooze

## Stories with a Yiddish Twist

### HUMMUS.....OR PROZAC? PUTTING THE “U” IN HUMMUS

by  
*Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe*



*Syosset, New York*

“nahit” is the Yiddish word for chickpeas  
“arbes” or “arbiss” also means chickpeas

In my grandparents’ home on East 98th Street and Rutland Road, Brooklyn, chickpeas was one of their pantry staples. Way back in the 40’s, they knew that chickpeas were packed with nutrition, protein, iron, fiber and potassium. They were also inexpensive (“bilik”). They knew that it was a much better snack (“nash”) than pretzels.

A recent article in the New York Post (May 4, 2016) had the title,  
SPREADING THE LOVE, by David Kaufman.

The piece is about an Israeli immigrant, Ohad Fisherman, 30. He’s a hummus maker for the city’s elite (“feinshmeker,” meyuches,” “choshever” “mentsh”). Three years ago he moved from Israel to New York and launched Hummus Joonam. His family owns the Tel Aviv, Israel, restaurant Mifgash Hasteak. His father came over from the Holy Land to help him launch Hummus Joonam.

Fisherman won’t disclose his family’s secret recipe (“retsept”). He does say that sesame seeds--imported from Israel--is used to make fresh tahini, and to make his spread superior. Note: The Yiddish word “mecheiehdik” means “superb in taste.”

He delivers more than 500 tubs a week--at \$10 apiece--to high-profile customers in the tri-state region. His fans include Joe Nakash (Jordache jeans) and celebrity (“barimtkayt”) star Jonathan Cheban.

A few stats:”

The Hummus Blog says, “Eat hummus. Give chickpeas a chance.”

1971 “The Molly Goldberg Jewish Cookbook” by Gertrude Berg and Myra Waldo contains a recipe for “nahit”--chick-peas: (The Yiddish words have been added.)

1 pound chick-peas	1/2 teaspoon freshly ground
2 teaspoons salt (“zalts”)	black pepper (“fefer”)

Wash the chick-peas. Cover with water and soak overnight. Drain. Add fresh water to cover. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat for 1 1/2 hours, or until tender. Drain. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook over low heat for 3 minutes, shaking the pan constantly. Let cool (“kil”), but do not chill.

2007 Shooky Galill reported that recent research conducted by Israeli scientists leads to a conclusion that the chickpea was cultivated because of its special effect on mood (“shtimmung”). In a way, chickpeas are the ancestors of Prozac.

Chickpeas are rich in Tryptophan, an amino acid which is a precursor of serotonin. Anxiety and depression are known to correlate with serotonin deficiency.

2008 Adam Sandler brought his slapstick love of hummus to the film, “You Don’t Mess With the Zohan.” Remember the Israeli hairstylist who used hummus to put out a fire and to brush his teeth?

The 54th Summer Fancy Food Show at New York’s Javits Center offered an unusual exhibit at the Sabra booth. A crowd gathered to watch Kirk Rademaker sculpt busts of John McCain, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton OUT OF HUMMUS.

2010 Erin Zimmer (seriouseats.com) rated the different brands of store-bought hummus. He said, “The perfect hummus is the kind that ruins your intentions of having dinner after.”

2012 OMG! There's a new Israeli sweet treat: Hummus Ice-Cream. Legends Ice-Cream in Tel Aviv sells the frozen delicacy. It's made with chickpeas, Tahiti, Vanilla and sugar--plus some stabilizers.

Louis Fellman, Abraham National Foods founder and owner, said, "In the 1980s, when I would mention that I sold hummus, people thought it was something for gardening, something to help with roses. Nobody knew what it was."

(Source: "TheGreat Hummus Explosion," by Hannah Rubin, Forward, August 17, 2012.)

2013 Spencer Althouse, BuzzFeed, wrote a piece titled, "18 Ways To Eat Hummus All Day Long." He said, "Yes, hummus-flavored ice cream is a real thing. Yes, you have to travel to Israel to get it."

2014 Sabra filed a citizen's petition with the FDA to establish a standard of identity for hummus in order to assure the quality and nutritional value of hummus products. Sabra claims the market is flooded with hummus imitations, which has little to do with the original paste. The company asked the FDA to make sure that foods will be allowed

to be called "hummus" ONLY if they're made from chickpeas and have at least 5% raw Tahini in them

2015 Matt Stonie, an American competitive eater, consumed 5.5 lbs. of packaged hummus in 6 minutes.

Stephen Colbert endorsed Sabra-brand hummus during his "Late Show."

Sabra issued a nationwide recall of 30,000 cases of its "Classic Hummus" due to possible contamination of Listeria.

2016 This headline appeared: ISRAELI HUMMIS RESTAURANT WANTS TO BUS ARABS AND JEWS TOGETHER FOR DINNER. Kobi Tzafir, a 33-year-old owner of Hummis Bar in Kfar Vitkin, Israel, attracted worldwide media attention when he issued a 50% discount ("hanokhe") on hummis TO TABLES SEATING BOTH ARAB AND JEWISH DINERS. For Tzafir, food is the solution to what seems an intractable divide between the country's Arab and Jewish

population.

Einat Mazor published “Chickpeas: Sweet and Savory Recipes from Hummus to Dessert.” With more than 70 recipes included, Chickpeas offers everything from spreads to dips to entrees.

---

MARJORIE WOLFE’S grandmother NEVER told this joke:

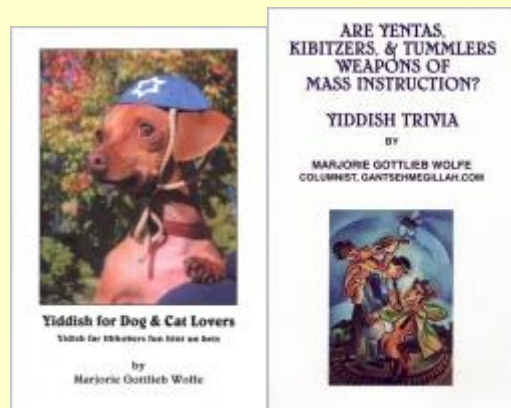
“Hear about the chickpea farmer who died at dinner? The coroner’s ruling it a HUMMUS SIDE.”

### Search for Stories Beginning with the Letter

<a href="#">A</a>	<a href="#">B</a>	<a href="#">C</a>	<a href="#">D</a>	<a href="#">E</a>	<a href="#">F</a>	<a href="#">G</a>	<a href="#">H</a>	<a href="#">I</a>	<a href="#">J</a>	<a href="#">K</a>	<a href="#">L</a>	<a href="#">M</a>
<a href="#">N</a>	<a href="#">O</a>	<a href="#">P</a>	<a href="#">Q</a>	<a href="#">R</a>	<a href="#">S</a>	<a href="#">T</a>	<a href="#">U</a>	<a href="#">V</a>	<a href="#">W</a>		<a href="#">Y</a>	<a href="#">Z</a>

---

**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](http://MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com)**

**NU, what are you waiting for? Order the book!**



[Yiddish Stuff](#)  
[Jewish Humor](#)  
[Schmooze News](#)  
[More Majorie Wolfe](#)

[Principle](#)  
[Jewish Stories](#)  
[All Things Jewish](#)  
[Jewish Communities of the World](#)

**Site Designed and Maintained by  
Haruth Communications**