

Israeli Salad with Grilled Peaches + Honey Lemon Vinaigrette



If you know me at all then you know that Israel lives in my heart. I met my husband there. I fell in love with cooking there. I named my children Siona (Zion) and Eden. Our home is filled with artifacts, knickknacks and Judaica all reminding us and calling us back to Israel. For my husband, he spent 2 years in Israel receiving his Master's Degree in Marine Ecology. My journey in Israel began in 2001 when I studied abroad during the second Intifada. I was one of 8 participants on a study abroad program that typically has 70 participants but when CNN is broadcasting bus explosions and protests 24/7, you get a few students dropping out. I had to sign a waiver stating that I would not sue my small liberal arts college should I blow up in a bus while studying in Israel via their program. But, thank Gd, nothing horrible happened and I ended

up having the time of my life. Since that study abroad opportunity all those years ago, I've been blessed to go to Israel on 3 Birthright Israel tours (as a chaperone), studied at Pardes for a summer and then for another year. All told, I've probably lived in Israel for a combined total of at least 2 years. But it's been ages since we've gone and we long to return.



Taking a page from the Zahav cookbook – classic Israeli salad on the left followed by my Southern flare on the right.



I'm waxing poetic about Israel because I'm here to talk a little about the first ever Maccabi International Culinary Competition taking place on July 4, 2017 in Israel. Working with Maccabi World Union, as part of the 20th World Maccabiah Games, this groundbreaking new program is designed to showcase food as a universal language, bringing more people to Israel to immerse them in the culture, heritage and beauty of the land.

Each team will prepare a five-course meal, showcasing the flavors of their country and utilizing the freshest locally grown Israeli produce, meat, and fish. Chefs will be judged on the creativity, originality, and of course, flavor and presentation. The winning teams will be announced at a Chef's Party that evening. The event will be open to the public following the medal ceremony, providing spectators the opportunity to meet members of the international and local professional chef teams. There will be Jewish professional chefs from all over the world taking part in this competition--Australia, France, Gibraltar, Israel, Italy,

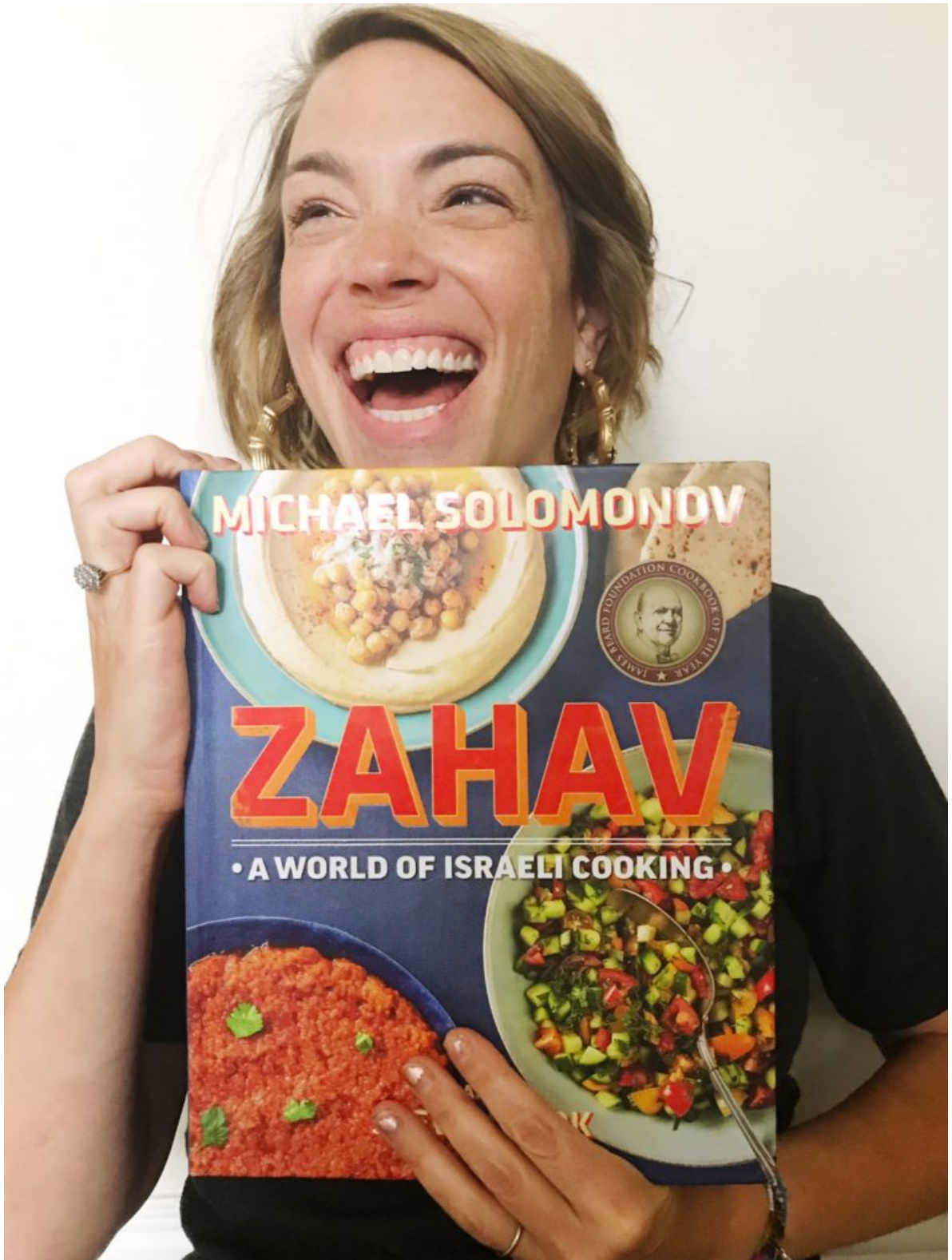
Spain and the USA.

And if that weren't enough of a reason to register to attend and watch, this incredible event is co-chaired by James Beard Award-winning Chef Michael Solomonov of Zahav Restaurant (and Dizengoff and Abe Fisher and Federal Donuts and Rooster Soup Co. and Goldie Falafel). It is Chef Solomonov and his beautiful cookbook, *Zahav*, that inspired the recipe featured in this post. I am constantly reconciling my natural inclination to make Southern food with my near-constant desire for fresh Israeli food and this dish is the representation of the two. I'm SO excited to see what the chefs participating in the competition cook-up. I wonder how much of what the present will be representative of not only their home country but also their Jewish heritage.



I am so excited to see what these chefs bring together and am dually impressed with the fact that the organizers have brought in an as-yet-to-be-announced *tzedakah* project that the culinary teams will participate in. There are plans tape and 'live stream' the competition so check back in to the blog or

at the Maccabi Culinary Competition for more info. Oh, and if you don't have to spend this summer teaching summer school health to 9th graders, like I do, then you'll also want to check out the extreme culinary tour that the Maccabi Culinary Competition organizers have developed. It's an Israeli foodie dream come true! The Culinary Mission runs through the Maccabi games so now only will you be exploring the dynamic culinary movement coming out of Israel at full speed, you'll be doing it along side the chefs participating in the Maccabi Culinary Competition. More information can be found [here](#), at the Mission's website.



When you live in LA and have 2 small children and no extra income to throw at plane tickets to Philly, this is as close to actually dining at Zahav as one can get.



The view of Jordan from the husband's patio (mirpeset) in Eilat



Somewhere up North – my husband, Yonah, in the whale and me pretending to be eaten by said whale. No one told me we were going to do a serious pic!!



If you haven't been to Jerusalem during Purim, can I just recommend it now? Thanks.



This post is sponsored by The International Maccabi Culinary Competition

Israeli Salad with Grilled Peaches and Honey Lemon Vinaigrette

Salad Ingredients:

2 cups chopped Roma tomatoes, seeded and diced
2 cups chopped Persian cucumbers, peeled and diced
1 cup cooked pearl barley, cooled
2 peaches, grilled (instructions below)
3 Tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves
1/2 cup sheep's milk feta
Lemon honey vinaigrette (ingredients and recipe below)

Directions for Salad:

Combine all salad ingredients into a large bowl except for the mint and feta. Toss with cooked and cooled pearl barley. Add 3 tbsp of olive oil and stir. Next, add half of the chopped mint leaves and feta. Toss to combine. Top with salad dressing and rest of the mint leaves. Serve room temperature or cold.

Method for Grilling Peaches:

Cut peaches along the seam all the way around and twist halves off the pit. Discard of entire pit (be thorough – accidental pit-eating would be a bummer). Brush cut sides with olive oil. Cook, cut side down, on a hot grill until fruit has grill marks, 3 to 4 minutes.

Rotate 90 degrees to continue to cook for another 3-4 minutes or until total grill marks appear and the fruit starts to caramelize. Remove from the grill with a pair of tongs and sprinkle with a dash of flaky sea salt.

Set aside to cool.

Lemon Honey Vinaigrette Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 2 small lemons or 1 large)
- 1/4 cup white-wine vinegar

- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 cup olive oil

Method:

In a medium bowl or jar, combine lemon juice, vinegar, honey, coarse salt, and ground pepper. Whisk until salt has thoroughly dissolved. Gradually add the oil and whisk until thoroughly combined.

Za'atar White Bean Salad on Malawach

Za'atar White Bean Salad on Malawach



How do you know when you're done? Not done with eating, mind you, but done having kids? I thought I knew. I participated in a week-long Positive Psychology workshop last summer and spent the majority of my time digging deep and reflecting on the fact that I thought I was done. Gd had blessed me with two incredible children and that's it. Leave the party while it's not only good but great. I spent the many months since that workshop giving away all of our baby gear to various friends and colleagues who were not done and needed the support. "Put it to good use", I thought, "cause I don't need it anymore". But then something happened (as it always does). My father-in-law died and I turned 37. Suddenly I found myself wrestling with my own mortality and with that, the questioning of whether or not I was really ready to close this chapter in my life.



My arguments for not having a third have always been the same: With the life we lead (the expenses of daycare costs, being a

working-parent household, wanting to live an observant/kosher Jewish life), we can give two kids a great life but three kids? Three kids would be tough. Plus, I don't know what you do for a living but I spend a lot of my day talking with adolescents with mental and developmental health struggles so that coupled with the statistics of giving birth after 35 (i.e. the rise of potential of certain developmental delays), I'm frikkin' freaked. Again, Gd has blessed us with two healthy, developmentally-abled children. LEAVE THE PARTY WHILE IT'S GREAT. But what if it could be greater?

I still have no answer. We are in conversations, clearly. With baby one and two, we were closed up about our family planning but with the potential of baby three I've basically been polling everyone I know (and don't know) on what their thoughts are on how many kids I should have. Yes, that means I sometimes accost strangers in the grocery store with awkward, inappropriate questions like, "Excuse me, hi, you don't know me but, you have lots of kids. How's that working out?"

That's totally normal . . . right? HELP!



So since motherhood and parenting has been constantly on my mind, I made y'all a Mother's Day breakfast/brunch/lunch/dinner recipe using some of my favorite ingredients. If you don't know what malawach is you can read about it and get the recipe for this quick yet super fancy meal over at Interfaithfamily.com. Happy Mother's Day!



Would not be able to parent without my besties!



Supporting our friends, Bear and Bud Bookclub, at the

Babyccino event in LA last weekend.

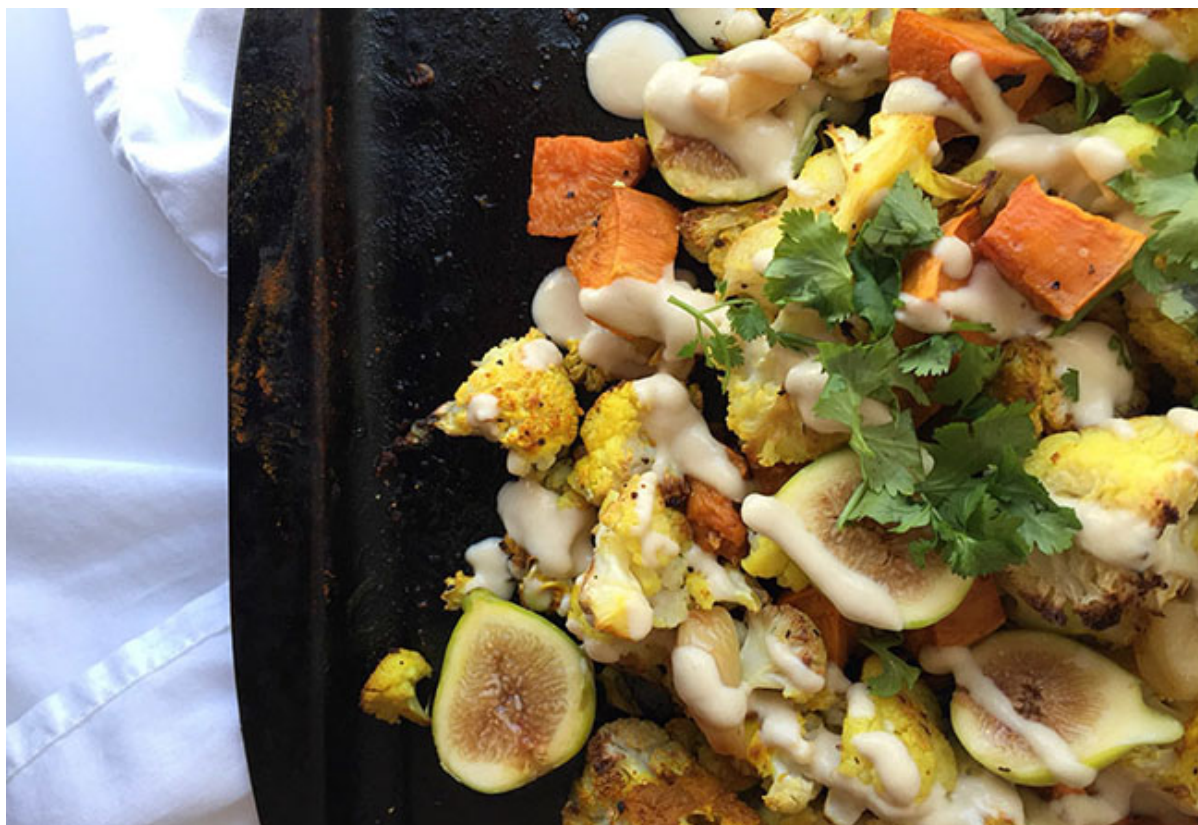


Jewhungry InterfaithFamily.com: Recipe Round-up!

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Well, the holidays are officially upon us. Even though I am steeped in food on the regular, I am still waaaaaaay behind in my holiday preparations. I haven't even menu planned. Blargh!! I do this to myself every. single. year. I invite a ton of people over because I LOVE LOVE LOVE hosting but then I end up all stressed out the day of first night dinner because I'm running around trying to get sh*t done. It also doesn't help that I have a strict 8:30pm bedtime (I work full time and have 2 kids. I'm in survival mode here, people) so there's no staying up super late and doing tons of baking for me. Nope, I'd rather just woman up and deal with it come the day of the holiday. The good news, however, is that I know a few people in food with some amazing food blogs so inspiration is but a click and an hour of web-surfing away. The other bit of good news is that I've been writing for a lovely website called, InterfaithFamily.com, an organization whose mission is to support interfaith families exploring Jewish life. I've written several posts for them over the couple months so I thought I'd get organized and give you a look-see. I also had the IMMENSE pleasure of writing a guest post for Chanie at Busy in Brooklyn. All links will be posted below! I hope you get some inspiration for your holidays or your daily meal-planning. Shanah Tovah!



Roast Cauliflower and Sweet Potato wit Figs + Tahini



Cilantro, Lime + (Coconut Milk) Yogurt Grilled Chicken Wings



Buffalo Quinoa Burgers



Fall Farmer's Market Salad



Semolina Cara Cara Orange Cake



Shanah Tovah, from the littlest little queen and me!