

# Kahlo's Green Shakshuka



(as seen on my Instagram feed like 3 weeks ago – I finally decided to post).

It was 2007 and I was living in Jerusalem. I had moved there for the year so that I could better my Jewish education as well as kinda reassess where my life was going. I landed in Jerusalem in May of 2007. As of June that same year, I had met the man I would eventually marry. I won't bore you with the story of our meeting again, but I thought I'd share the story of meeting his parents . . . The Fisches.

I met the Fisches about 7 months after I started dating their

youngest son. They only knew the following about me:

1. 6 years older than their son
2. Non-Jewish dad
3. Born and raised in the Reform movement in Atlanta, GA
4. Currently attending yeshiva
5. Name is Whitney (what kind of Jewish name is 'Whitney'?!).

Oy. Vey. For a traditional family from Modern Orthodox Teaneck, New Jersey, my stats weren't super promising. My only saving grace was that I was in Israel and I was currently enrolled in a yeshiva (Jewish educational institution). I'm positive they had mental images of this giant, Southern girl coming to steal their sweet Jersey boy away. I'm positive because that's what my soon-to-be-husband told me after he finally told his parents about me. To be fair, it was really his Jewish mama who had the biggest concerns. And I get it.

As a Jewish mama myself, I get the expectations and envisioning your future for your child. I've already envisioned my daughter as a powerful (yet kind) Executive Director of some sort of human rights NGO so yes, I get it. It's just harder on the other side, knowing that you are not the person your future spouses' parents envisioned for their beloved son.



Some of your players



That being said, the time eventually came for me to meet the parents. I ended up suggesting one of my favorite cafes in the neighborhood of Talpiot where I was living. I didn't have a lot of money to throw around when I was living in Israel so

there wasn't a lot eating out. However, when I did, I always tried to go to Kahlo. Kahlo, named for Frida Kahlo, was small, busy, and delicious. The coffee was strong and the food was traditional Israeli but with a modern twist. Every time I went I ordered the same thing—the green shakshuka. I have enjoyed traditional shakshuka all over Israel but this was the first time (and only time) I saw green shakshuka on the menu. Once I tried it, I was hooked.

But I digress. Let's get back to the story. The day had come for my meeting of the parents. I made sure to leave my apartment early enough so that I could walk there and still have 20 minutes to spare. Parents hate waiting, right? Sadly, they were already there when I arrived (I say 'sadly' because my idea of winning them over with my punctuality was subsequently squelched). This only exacerbated my nervousness about meeting them. I then hugged them. BIG. MISTAKE. I have since learned that you NEVER hug Modern Orthodox Jewish men. NEVER. But I couldn't help it! I'm Southern. I hug! I'm a hugger! Damnit! OK, so there was mistake number 2. I was really doing a great job (insert eye-roll here). After an awkward exchange of names and introductions, we were then led to our tiny table in the corner. I remember making eye-contact with my man on the way to the table and attempting to have a mental conversation. "They hate me, don't they?", I tried to say with my eyes. "No, no, you're doing great!", is what I was hoping to read from his eyes but instead all I got was, well, nothing. We had to work on our mental conversations. So there we were, just four peas in a pod.

Well, three peas and me. And then something awesome happened. My future father-in-law made a joke. I can't remember how the subject came up but we were talking about their last name and how to spell it—Fisch—when my future father-in-law looked at me and said, "It's like I always tell people, you can't have 'Fisch' without the 'C'. Get it? Fish. Sea. Genius. I laughed. Out loud. A real laugh. It wasn't a 'pleaselikemepleaselikemepleaselikeme' laugh but a real



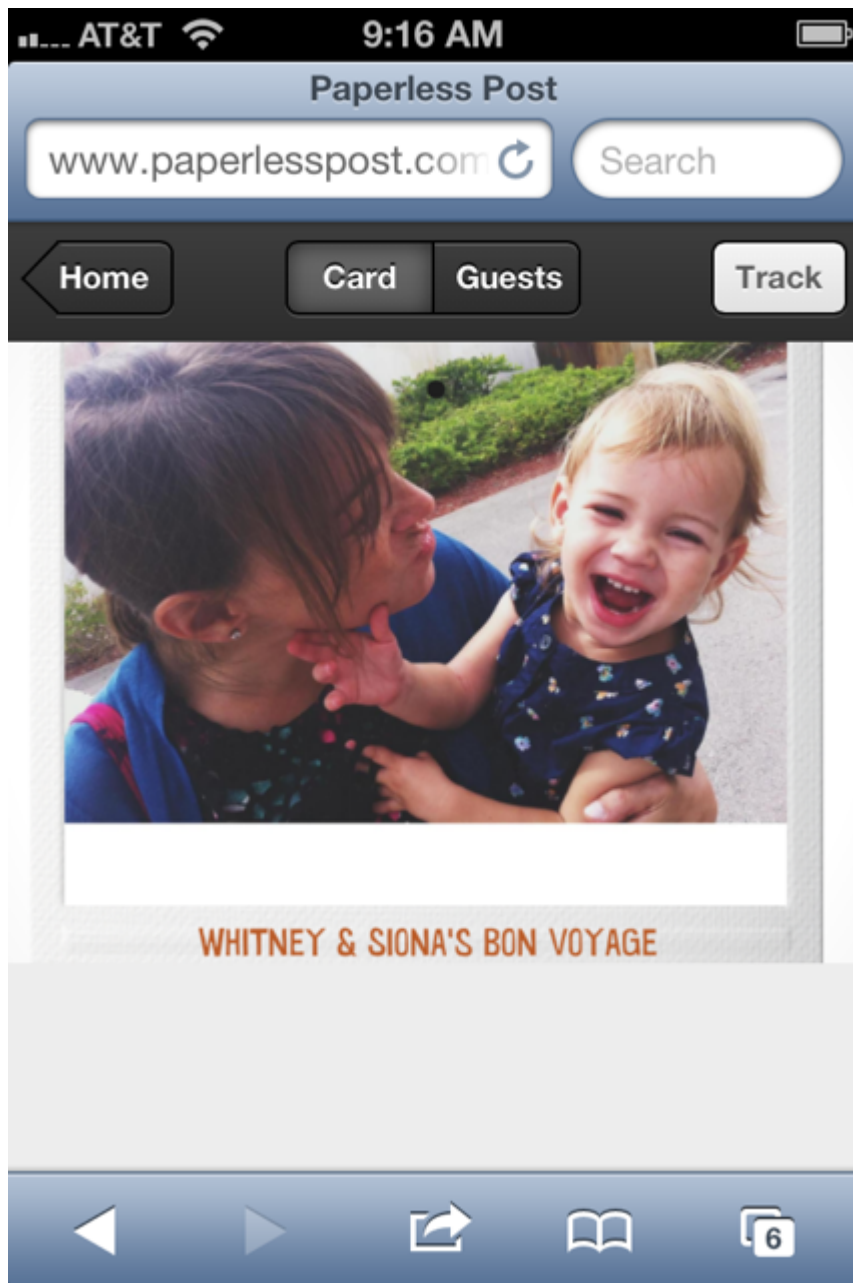
belly laugh. And with that silly joke, deep breaths were had, green shakshuka was ordered and 2 years later, I married their son.



Decisions, decisions. Future-husband and I at the Israeli/Syrian border in 2007.



By the way, this is happening (see below). I signed a lease. I booked the movers. We are officially 6 weeks from moving to LA. Oh. Sh\*t.



The recipe below is my interpretation of the Kahlo recipe.

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