

August Storytellers: 8 Love Stories, 8 Recipes, 1 Month.



A 'leaf' designed by my sister, Heather, for my chuppah.

Around about two weeks ago, my sister-in-law, Caitlin, wrote a guest post for Jewhungry. The post told the story of her journey to Judaism through food. It also told the story of how she and her husband, my husband's brother, met and fell in love (they are too dang cute, by the by). It received a wonderful response; partly due to her ability to tell a great story but also because people loved the love story. I realized, also, that I had been posting a lot about love. I posted Zak the Baker's love story here. And then there was the guest post from my bestie, Jackie, who wrote about her love and appreciation of her friends here. There was a trend happening on Jewhungry and that trend was love.

The world needs a hug y'all. The world needs a nice long, hard cry and then a big giant bear hug. In the past several

months there have been deadly forest fires, train crashes, plane crashes, celebrity drug overdoses and a whole host of really sad and heartbreaking events that are draining to the soul. It's too much. Sometimes it's just too damn much. Ok, so maybe *I* need a nice long, hard cry and a big, giant bear hug. Regardless, that post and the response got me thinking about how much people love a good love story. I mean, think about it. Nicholas Sparks is not the modern-day Hemingway, but he's incredibly successful because the man knows how to tell a love story. After every heartbreak in my teens and 20s, I would be devastated for a bit but then I would pick myself up and believe once again in love. But I'm not just talking about romantic love. It's my love of adventure, travel and learning that pushed me to leave everything I knew and move to Israel for the year to study. It's my love of food that pushes me to continue experimenting in the kitchen and writing this blog even though I have an incredibly draining full time day job and my family to take care of. But love and passion are incredibly powerful emotions and they can push us to do amazing things (see examples above) but, also, admittedly, not-so-amazing things (oh my sweet, sweet 20s).



You try NOT thinking about love with this kind of scenery all around.



Just your average walk – don't mind the baby on your back.

It also just so happened to be that love was weighing heavily on my mind at that time Caitlin's post was published. When that particular post was out, I was in Big Sky, Montana with my husband and our baby and I have to tell you, even with all the chaos of the world around us, waking up every morning to the stillness of the mountains and sipping coffee while watching the sunrise, I mean, how could one NOT think about love? The warm fuzzies were alive and kicking in Montana. Plus, this vacation was kind of an anniversary gift to ourselves and a birthday gift to our baby, who will be turning 1 in August, just 8 days before our 3rd wedding anniversary.



The picture my husband drew of us from about 2 years ago. He draws like a 7 year old and yet, he's getting his PhD from University of Miami. Go figure.



He took me snorkeling when we were first falling in love (Gulf of Eilat in the Red Sea circa 2008)



And, 5 years after that snorkeling picture we are married, we have our little girl and we are surrounded by wildflowers. Not bad.

So you see, love was just all around me and I wanted to do something with it. The idea was thus: Contact some amazing story tellers and ask them if they wouldn't mind sharing their greatest love story. Oh, and don't forget to include a recipe that reminds you of your love story. All these posts will be posted through the month of August, since that's my month o' love and well, it's my blog, dang it! Your incredible storytellers are as follows:

1. Jeremy Owens: Co-founder of Jewhungry, contributor for Oy! Chicago and creator/director/storyteller for You're Being Ridiculous.
2. Misty Dawn Lacefield: Sister-in-law extraordinaire. I could listen to the story of how she and my brother fell in love over and over and over again. Ahhh, young Southern, hippie love.
3. Katie Bishop: Creator/blogger at iamthemilk.com. Katia is funny, honest, frikkin' talented and she actually said 'yes' when I asked her if she wouldn't mind contributing to

this little blog. I'm still in a state of shock and awe. Lucky us y'all, for serious.

4. Ali Brand Stern: Ali is funny. Ali is incredibly funny. Ali might be one of funniest people I know.

5. Ayelet Blumberg: My sweet cousin. Never have I ever met someone who went after a dream like Ayelet did and accepted nothing less than exactly what she wanted.

6. Laurel Snyder: Published poet and celebrated children's author. Homegirl knows her way around words.

7. Stef Jadd: My first impression of Stef, when I met her and had a real conversation with her, was, "this lady has passion for everything she does". Stef and her husband recently made aliyah and write about their aliyah experience [here](#).

To get things started, I wanted to start off with my own story, of which I will post in full tomorrow. But, in the meantime, let me set the scene for you so you have an idea of what you're about to get into.

This story starts in 2002. It starts with an extremely tall and extremely naive girl, fresh out of college and fresh out of her first relationship, which happened to be with her first love. As mentioned above, its 2002, which means that Sex and the City was taking over our culture and convinced us all (read: tall naive girls in their early 20s fresh from college and relationships) that it's totally realistic to go out several times a week and 'date' lots of guy without any emotional/financial consequences). So, we have 'Cosmos', we have girls nights and we have an unrealistic understanding of what dating is like in the real world. Trust, things get good. They get awkward, funny and good.

Until tomorrow . . .

Wait! I wanted to tell you that tomorrow's recipe is coconut milk-soaked fried chicken with 'Israeli' seasonings.

(and from the photo archives . . .)



Someone tell that big mouth girl down below that she better buckle up because the real world ain't nothing like college (The College of Wooster, circa 2002).



I spent the majority of my 20s have intense crushes on completely unavailable dudes – like this one, Season 2 Top Chef winner, Ilan Hall. (yes, that really is him and he cooked my bestie, Jackie, and I wild mushroom risotto. Heaven).