

brisket wedding pie for molly yeh



our girl, molly, is getting married. she's getting married and dang it, i'm coming out of my self-imposed (kind of not self-imposed but LIFE-imposed) blogging hiatus to make her a pie. but not just any pie, brisket pie with honey garlic mashed potatoes and topped with a little brocollini bouquet, you know, to class it up and stuff. and the super coolest part for me? molly and her mama will be recreating this pie for her

wedding day. pretty cool, right?

(you'll also notice, to further honor our *kallah*, bride, i've adapted her quirky little habit of only writing in lower case. it's killing me but you know, what we do for friendship).





the story of how little ol' me got asked by THE molly yeh to make a recipe for her wedding is an interesting one, to me at least. if the food blogging world were a high school, molly would be its queen bee, only she'd be everyone's ideal queen bee; the one that is nice and is inclusive of everyone. the thing is, the food blogging world is a little high school and a lot of the top bloggers who could really be amazing mentors to up-and-comers like me don't actually engage with outside their successful network of fellow bloggers. not miss molly. we became pen pals after she left a comment on my shakshuka recipe from almost a year ago. i was so frikkin' excited that a fellow food blogger, whose talent and skill inspire me so much, had read my blog and commented on it that i immediately emailed my kosher connection gang. one of them, melinda, suggested that i send molly an email thanking her for her comment and telling her how much i admire her work. so i did and, long story short, we've been writing to each other ever since. heck, she even made a cake for my kiddo's 2nd birthday. the least i could do is rep her jewish heritage by putting brisket in pie form.

let's break down this pie. because it's for a wedding (you should know that molly requested only savory pies) and out of the insanely amazing bloggers that she asked (talented folks such as renee shuman of will frolic for food, stephanie le of i am a food blog, izzy hossack of top with cinnamon, and emma galloway of my darling lemon thyme), i'm the only one repping the kosher/jewish crowd. knowing that, i wanted to make sure that the pie was dripping in kosher/jewish wedding, or 'smachot' (hebrew word meaning 'celebrations'), symbolism.

the world knows that jews love to eat, especially when it comes to any kind of jewish celebration of any kind. it's basically your usual, 'ain't no party like a jewish party cause a jewish part has tons of booze and food' situation. but, what the world might not know is that a lot jews believe that there MUST be meat at a celebration or ceremonial meal in order for it to be considered a 'true' celebration. as with a lot of immigrant communities, our history is steeped in poverty but no matter how little we had (and by 'we', i mean my great, great, great grandparents and so on and so forth), we would make sure that if there was a celebration to be had or a holiday to commemorate, there would be meat. meat came to symbolize celebration and happiness. the same can be said for wine. no holiday meal or celebration is complete without the blessing over the wine, otherwise known as 'kiddush'. in fact, tradition has it that if a single person were to drink from the kiddish cup at a sheva brachot, they would be the next to marry. so, let's just all agree that meat and wine are a big deal for jews.

and finally, the honey. there's yet another custom, this one involving challah and honey. tradition has it that newly weds should dip their challah in honey during the first shabbat meal they spend together so as to guarantee a sweet life together. my husband and i took it one step further and continued that tradition with every shabbat we've ever shared together as a married couple. i mean, also, it's honey and

honey is good.

ok, let me get serious for just one moment. it is an honor and a privilege to have been asked to create this post. blogging and having time for myself just doesn't happen these days. this temporary single parent/full-time director of school counseling gig has sucked all my energy/time. i can barely set up a seen for a photo, much less the energy it takes to keep up with it multiple times a month. my viewership has plummeted and my love of cooking has suffered because of it. that being said, this small request has reinvigorated my quest for creativity. whether through tweets, actually reading and commenting on my rare post or telling all of China to check out jewhungry, molly has been 100% supportive throughout my sojourn from blogging by not-so-silently encouraging me to get back out there and i am eternally grateful to her for it. molly is one of the greats. she is living our food blogging dream. but more than anything, she is living her dream and i wish her and her eggboy all the best for this very inspiring step in their lives. marrying my husband was the #1 best decision i ever made in my life and i am deeply touched by the *kavod*, honor, molly has given me to be a part of this beautiful decision in her life. mazal tov, molly.



brisket ingredients:

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 large onions sliced into rounds

2 – 3 pounds beef brisket

coarse kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 cloves garlic, minced

3/4 cup whole baby carrots

1 cup beef/mushroom/vegetable broth

2 tablespoons worcestershire sauce

1/2 cup red cooking wine (or the real stuff if you're a baller)

1 tablespoon soy sauce

cooking the brisket:

heat a deep sauté pan over medium heat with the olive oil. add the onions and cook on medium-low to medium heat, stirring

frequently, for about 20 minutes or until the onions have caramelized lightly.

while the onions are cooking, take the brisket out of its packaging and pat it dry. season the meat generously with salt and pepper. heat a large skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat and turn on your vent or fan, if you have one. sear the brisket until a golden brown crust appears on both sides of the meat. Remove and place in a slow cooker insert, fatty side up.

sprinkle the minced garlic over the meat. when the onions are lightly browned, pile them on top and around the meat. Mix the broth, worcestershire sauce, and soy sauce, and pour into the slow cooker insert.

cover and cook in the slow cooker on low for 6 to 8 hours or until the brisket is very tender. let the brisket rest for at least 20. using two forks, shred the brisket until there are barely any large chunks. cut up the carrots while you're at it so that they are bite-sized. scoop the meat and carrots into a pie pan with some of the meat juice enough so that there is roughly half a cup or so of meat juice in the pan along with the meat but not so much that it's meat soup.

ingredients for honey garlic mashed potatoes:

3 pounds of yukon gold potatoes (roughly 5 – 6 potatoes)

2 tablespoons kosher salt plus more for seasoning

1 cup almond milk

4 cloves garlic, crushed

3 tbsp earth balance

3 – 4 tbsp honey

cooking the honey garlic mashed potatoes

place the potatoes and garlic in a large stock pot. cover with 1 to 2 inches cold water and season generously with salt. bring the pot of water to a boil and cook until the potatoes

are fork-tender, about 20 to 25 minutes. drain out the water from the pot. keep potatoes and garlic in the stock pot and using either a masher or large fork, mash up the potatoes. add the earth balance and almond milk. stir all together with mashed potatoes and garlic. add the honey. if potatoes are not fluffy enough, add a little more almond milk until you reach desired fluffy mashed potato consistency. taste as you go, adjusting seasoning as needed. i like my mashed potatoes a bit sweet to juxtapose the brisket but you should season and flavor yours to your liking.

using a spatula, scoop out mashed potatoes onto brisket in pie pan and smooth. you should have at least a 1/2 in. layer of mashed potato on there. broccolini bouquet is optional. enjoy! mazal tov, molly!

A Birthday Cake for Two – A Guest Post by Molly Yeh



Cake for Two

Hi dear readers! First and foremost, I'd like to start off this post by wishing my sweet Miss Siona Mae a very happy birthday. Yep, another year has gone by and the kiddo is 2.

I'm kind of shocked at what we've gone through together in the last 2 years. We've traveled to Montana, North Carolina, Kentucky, New Jersey, California, and a few other states I'm probably forgetting. We've had to say good-bye to her great grandmother while also meeting some of my oldest, dearest friends. She's learned how to walk, talk, swim, sing, feed herself, and ask for what she wants (while remembering her manners . . . most of the time). She's obsessed with Pharrel, sand and and the color purple (the actual color, not the book or movie. Give her time people). Forgive the extra layer of cheese with this paragraph, but I'm just so proud to be her mom.



WOW



My favorite picture of all time – in our custom-made Jewhungry aprons. The face she has is too much.

Ok, quick update before getting into this delicious guest post by the incredibly talented Molly Yeh of, My Name is Yeh. When last we spoke, we were gearing up for husband to go back to Florida. Well, the band-aid has been ripped off and he is officially back in Miami. Saying good-bye was ROUGH. I did my very best to keep the tears from flowing so that I could appear somewhat strong for the kiddo, but once we were outside and waiting for the Super Shuttle to arrive, the tears just came. I wrestled with how I should present myself for the sake of the kiddo for so long. Should I hold back the tears

and stay 'strong' for her so that it wouldn't freak her out to see mommy upset or should I just let go and let flow? Ultimately, what I realized was that it didn't matter what I 'decided' was the best course of action for in that moment, I was going to feel what I was going to feel. I want Siona to know that it's OK to feel things, ALL things, whether good or bad. I want her to know that emotions are not something to be ashamed of but rather, it's what we do with our emotions that truly makes the moment. And so, some tears came down and I explained why I was sad and where the tears were coming from, and then we immediately marched ourselves right upstairs to our neighbors apartment so that Siona could play with her bestie and mama could have a big ol' glass of wine. We now fill our days with lots of phone calls and FaceTime (I love technology). I truly don't know how folks existed before FaceTime. I really don't (**this post was in no way sponsored by Apple. I just really, really appreciate technology).



A family portrait taken in the forests of Limekiln State Park

My mom is in town now to help and I've had to hire a

babysitter for a couple hours a day to take care of Siona during this time that I'm at work and her school is still not in session. I keep thinking about good ol' Hilary Clinton's message about how it takes a village to raise a child. One never really understands how true that statement is until you move, leave your established village behind and realize that the only way you're going to survive is to hire a village. We're in the beginning stages of this temporary single-parent situation and I'm balancing the emotions of panic and guilt. How fun! Guilt for every time I walk out the door to go to work and leave her with a babysitter and panic because I work at a school and there are back to school nights and parent luncheons and grade-level trips and how the @#*\$ am I supposed to do all that when it's just me? I miss my Miami village. I miss my hubby.







my heart.

But, enough of that. There's a cake to get to! An adorable cake made by Molly Yeh! If you're living in a cave (albeit

with amazing WiFi because you're reading this post) and you've never heard of Molly Yeh before, let me please introduce you to her. She's got more charm in her pinky finger than I could ever hope to dream for. She's a Juilliard-trained percussionist, recently engaged to her egg boy (MAZAL TOV!) and lives on his family's farm in North Dakota. She also happens to be incredibly talented in the art of baking/cooking and photography. We became modern-day pen pals when she wrote a comment on my shakshuka post and I couldn't breathe all day because Molly Yeh had read my blog! I decided I should write to say 'thank you for reading' and several months later I got the balls to ask her if she'd write a guest post for my beloved Siona's 2nd birthday. To no surprise at all, because she's that selfless, she said yes! Below is her birthday cake for Siona. It seems like such a yummy, user-friendly recipe I might actually attempt it myself. Happy birthday to my Siona and thank you Miss Molly.



[amd-zlrecipe-recipe:13]

A ***Giveaway*** because . . . **Surprise! It's My Kid's Hebrew Birthday!**



My sweet girl just one HOUR old.

Today is my daughter's first Hebrew birthday. I want to write something poetic about that fact. I'd like to connect the meaning of her Hebrew birthday with the meaning of her name, Siona, which happens to be the feminine form of Sion, Hebrew for Zion, but I can't. I can't do that because I have never celebrated a Hebrew birthday in my life; not even a little bit. In fact, I wouldn't have even known that today is my daughter's Hebrew birthday if it weren't for my very sweet and dear friend, Sharona, who told me that today is the day. I had texted her to see if she wanted to go out on a lady-date next Wednesday but she declined because that's HER daughter's first Hebrew birthday, "So", she texted me, "That means that Friday is Siona's Hebrew birthday!" (insert cricket chirps here and

blank staring at text message here).

To be honest, I didn't text her back after receiving text. In fact, I let it sit for a day or so before responding because I felt like such a farce for not even knowing my kid's Hebrew birthday. Hell, I don't even know my own Hebrew birthday!



Siona's Simchat Bat – her Jewish life is beginning.

It takes a lot for me to feel self-conscious about something; I consider myself pretty confident in most of the important areas (i.e. competency as a wife, in my job, healthy sense of self) but my confidence levels in my Judaism have always yo-yoed. I mean, I've worked in Jewish organizations for the majority of my professional life. I've been to Israel more times than I can count. I sent myself to Yeshiva for a year when I was 28. I named my kid Siona, for crying out loud! But I didn't learn the full Birkat Hamazon until I was 29. I'm pretty sure it's been 5771 for like, 5 years now and I often get our forefathers, Joseph and Isaac confused (thank Gd for the musical, 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolored Dream Coat' because seriously, that's what I use to remember who is whom when I'm occasionally sitting with a student and walking them through Judaics homework; "Give Mrs. Fisch a moment, honey. I'm trying to recall which one had the fabulous coat."). All those gaps in my Jewish knowledge coupled with an expectation that, as a Jewish professional who keeps Shabbat and kosher and has a daughter named Siona, sometimes accumulates to me feeling "less than". "Less than" whom? I'm not sure (p.s. Gang, are you picking up how many times I used 'whom' in this post?! I'm hoping all the English majors in my life will be proud). But when I was standing there on the other end of that text, receiving the information of the fact that my daughter's Hebrew birthday is upon me from another mom, I felt like an idiot. And let me just state that later that night, when I told my husband that Siona's Hebrew birthday was 2 days away he responded, "Cool", and went about his business. Ahhh, how much simpler life might occasionally be if I were man.



What? Me worry? (2 weeks old)

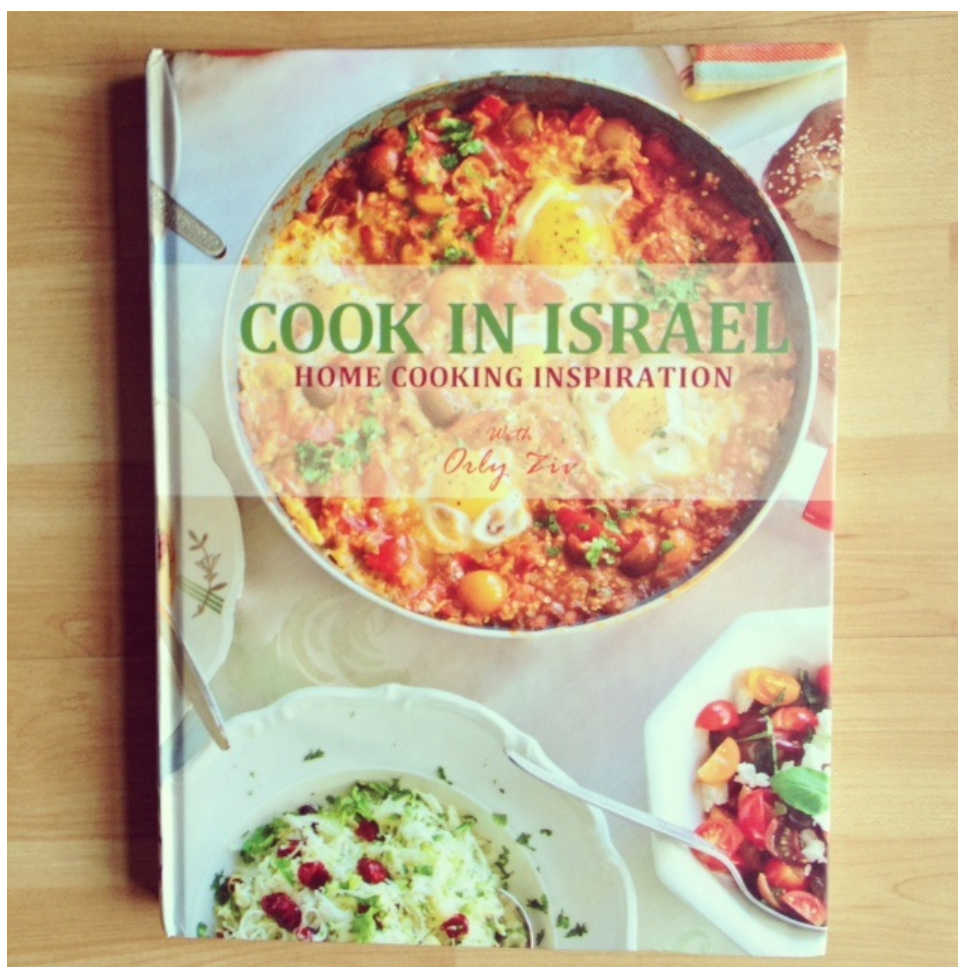


Playing in the sand in Montanan- 11 1/2 months old. Where does the time go!?

I'm not sure what we'll do to celebrate our daughter's day, if anything. I've been eyes-deep in Pinterest, doing menu - planning and decoration-planning for her 1st English birthday. But I've come up with nothing to celebrate today or to make it something special for her or for us as a family. But, she'll be one so she will have the same memories of this birthday as she will have of her English birthday, which is to say she'll have no memories. Yet, I'm huge into positive family traditions of all kinds so I'd like to do something. I'm very curious as to what you have done to celebrate your or your child's Hebrew birthday? What are some traditions you've incorporated into your family to celebrate this day? *I'd really love to hear from you so if you don't mind taking the time and jotting down a few ideas/traditions in the comments portion of this post, I'd be very grateful.*

I'm not sure if our child will attend Jewish Day School but I do know that whatever we can do in the home to build positive associations/feelings/connection to our children's Judaism will do more for them than anything else done Jewishly outside of the home. Plus, I mean, I ~~am deeply obsessed with~~ like birthdays so any excuse to celebrate a loved one's birthday

more than once is always a good thing in my book.



A free trip to Israel via the pages of this gorgeous book.



Orly's traditional shakshuka – my idea of Sunday morning brunch heaven.

So, because it's my daughter's surprise Hebrew birthday, I'd thought I'd give YOU, my dear readers, a chance at receiving a beautiful gift. I was blessed to have Orly Ziv's stunning new Israeli cookbook, *Cook in Israel: Home Cooking Inspiration*, sent to me by the cookbook's talented photographer, Katherine Martinelli. Orly is a talented nutritionist, cooking instructor, and culinary tour guide in Israel. *Cook in Israel*, her first cookbook, is filled with 100 kosher, mostly vegetarian recipes accompanied by beautiful color photographs (including many step-by-step illustrations). The cookbook shows that healthy and delicious home cooking doesn't need to be time-consuming or complicated. Flipping through the pages of this cookbook is like being transported to Jerusalem's famous shuk (market). I swear, all it needs is a scratch-and-sniff za'atar sticker and you are IN Israel. The book is available for \$35 plus shipping OR you could simply click on

the Rafflecopter link below for up to 6 ways to up your chances of winning your own copy. The giveaway will run until, Friday, August 9th, at midnight and the winner will be announced on Monday, August 12th.

a Rafflecopter giveaway

Go to Cook In Israel to find out more about Orly, her culinary tours, cooking classes and how to purchase this book, which you can do here. BUT, if you want to SAVE yourself \$35 plus shipping, enter into the giveaway via the link above and remember, **some options you can do daily so come back often**. Also, note that **this giveaway is open to those living in Israel too!!!**

Good luck and . . . Yom Huledet Sameach, Siona!