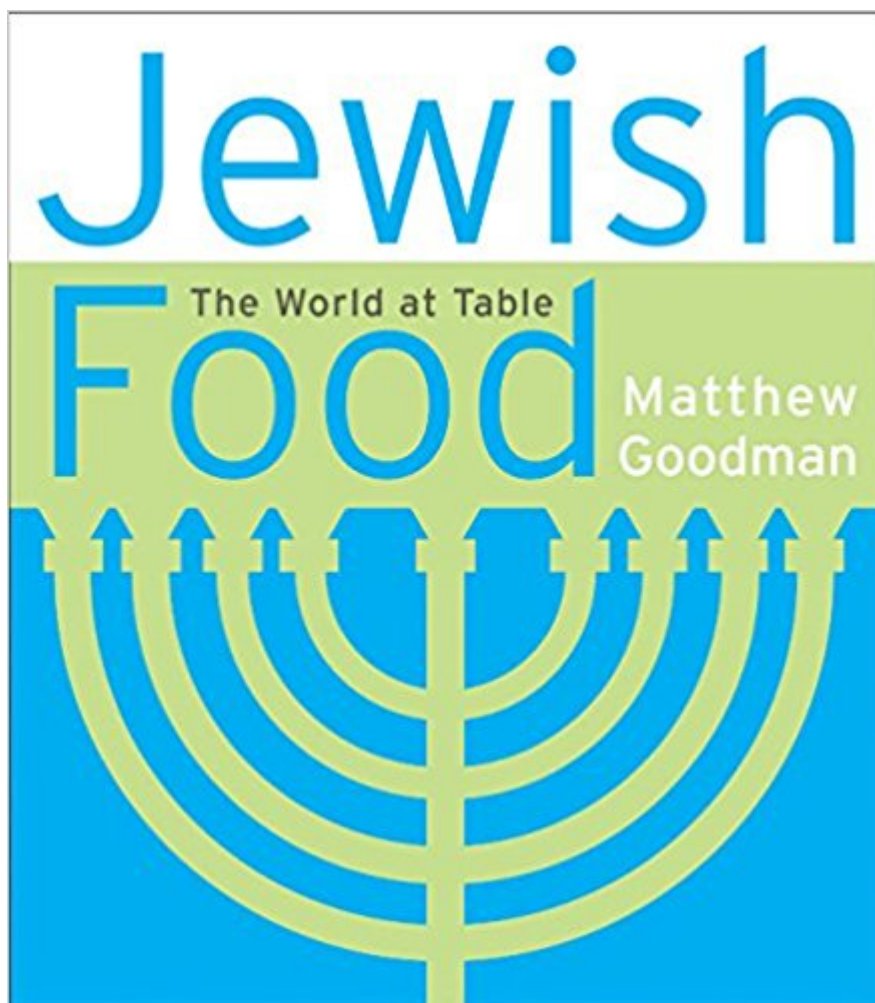


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# Jewish Food: The World At Table



## Synopsis

For centuries Jewish communities around the world forged dynamic cuisines from ancient traditions combined with the bounties -- and limitations -- of their adopted homelands. In this important new collection, Matthew Goodman has assembled more than 170 recipes from twenty-nine countries, handed down through the generations and now preserved in this historic volume. The heirloom offerings Goodman gathered range from such iconic specialties as bagels, kugel, and chopped liver to such favorites, mostly unknown in the United States, as Turkish borekas, flaky cheese-filled turnovers; chelou, an Iranian rice specialty; and shtritzlach, a sweet blueberry pastry unique to Toronto. Together the recipes celebrate the ingenuity of Jewish cooks around the world, in Mexican Baked Blintzes with Vegetables and Roasted Poblano Peppers, Syrian Bulgur Salad with Pomegranate Molasses, Moroccan Roast Chicken with Dried Fruit and Nuts, Iraqi Sweet-and-Sour Lamb with Eggplant and Peppers, Italian Baked Ricotta Pudding, and many other unexpected delights. These dishes have been shaped by the histories of the communities from which they come. This book also features dozens of lively, engaging essays that present the history of Jewish food in all its richness and variety. The essays focus on ingredients, prepared dishes, and cultures. Food is a repository of a community's history, and here, in its broad strokes, is the history of the Jews. The recipes and essays in this book provide a fascinating new perspective on Jewish food. More than a cookbook, Matthew Goodman's *Jewish Food: The World at Table* is a book to learn from, to cook with, and to pass on through the ages.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jewish food is almost too huge a topic to be covered exhaustively, but Goodman, the "Food Maven" columnist at the Forward, takes a decent stab at it by dividing his book into chapters on appetizers, soups, fish, eggs and dairy, poultry, meat, kugels, breads, and desserts and interspersing them with essays pertaining to peoples, ingredients and dishes. For example, in the chapter on fish, Goodman spotlights a Jewish community in Northern Morocco, where one woman saved the almost lost language Jaquetia (a combination of Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic and Berber). A recipe for Pescado en Colorado (fish in tomato sauce with peppers and paprika), popular in that region, follows. In the poultry chapter, a piece on pomegranates explores the contention that the fruit on the tree of knowledge was not an apple, but a pomegranate; readers then find a recipe for Chicken in Pomegranate Sauce with Walnuts and Figs. In the soup chapter, an essay on chicken soup looks at the dish's legendary healing properties and also at how variations developed in Greece, Turkey, Iraq, Italy and Yemen (instructions for making chicken soups from Eastern Europe, India and Iraq follow). Goodman deftly tackles his vast subject with these enlightening, engaging essays, which, coupled with the volume's 170 recipes, make for a fine tribute to Jewish cuisine. 2-color illus. throughout. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Goodman holds an ecumenical view of Jewish food that emphasizes the cuisine's worldwide nature. Goodman looks not only to the traditional Eastern European Jewish shtetl for recipes but he includes Jewish settlements as remote as India for inspiration. This broad vision yields a particularly wide-ranging and heterogeneous cookbook that demands a new and deeper definition of Jewish food. In addition to the expected Gefilte Fish, Goodman offers Peixe Bahiana, red snapper braised in coconut milk. Supplementing familiar Cheese Blintzes come decidedly modern Huitlacoche Blintzes, in which corn and mushrooms replace the Mexican fungus currently so popular with chefs. Chicken stew from Baghdad complements an even spicier one from the Jewish community of Bombay. A traditional overnight Hungarian Sabbath stew of barley and beans pairs with one from Morocco confected out of chickpeas, sweet potatoes, and dates. Latkes expand from plain potato first to a rendering with carrots and corn and then onward to a colorful version with beets and goat cheese. Goodman includes plenty of lively historical and cultural background for his recipes. Mark Knoblauch Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I could not believe this was a used book... I've purchased new books that have arrived more Beat

up than this one did.. Great reading.. good recipies and loads of History... Thank's Matt.... Great Job...

I liked this for the wide variety of regional recipies. My cousin reccomended it and it didnt disappoint.

A really good reliable cookbook with interesting and well written explanations. The recipes I tried were tasty this is one of the best Jewish cookbooks around.

I simply bought this book expecting some mouth watering knish and blintzes recepies, lox and herring and you name it... real jewish foods. Instead, the author collected whatever the Jewish people ate, whether it belongs to the Jewish cuisine or not.. I mean "TABBOULEH" ??? and since when was Hummus or Kibbe a Jewish cuisine??It will take a lot of time to go through all of this, but if it is "just Jewish cuisine" you are looking for, this book is not for you. I gave the author 3 stars though, based on the "literature and history" information in each chapter. But then it is a cook book not a history book that I wanted. At \$7 , used, it is fine... No more than that. And by the way, perhaps I missed it, but this book does not have ONE picture in it... Don't you love seeing what you are / will be eating ??

Author of *Cooking Jewish: 532 Great Recipes from the Rabinowitz Family* from the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles April 15, 2005 When the El-Ghriba synagogue in Tunisia was bombed by Al Qaeda in 2002, the fragile remnant of a once thriving Jewish community was even further shattered. "The Tunisian Jewish community is one of the oldest continuous Jewish communities in the world," said Matthew Goodman, author of "Jewish Food: The World at Table," from his home in Brooklyn, "and the site of El-Ghriba was one of the most ancient, going back, I believe, to the fifth century B.C.E. As of 1948 there were 100,000 Jews in Tunisia. Today there are fewer than 2,000." As the "Food Maven" columnist at The Forward, Goodman used his reporting skills to search out diverse cuisines of far-flung, once vital centers of Jewish life, some now on the brink of extinction. "What I tried to do with this book was to locate and preserve food traditions from communities around the world that are today endangered because the communities themselves are endangered," he said. "So many of them weren't able to survive the 20th century or survive only in the most attenuated form." More than 170 recipes, some of which have never before been written down, document the rich and varied Jewish culture of 29 countries, linked by law and ritual, yet distinguished by unique customs, traditions and celebrations, the history of a people told through its

food. But what is Jewish food? Can it even be defined? "There are very few dishes that are shared by all Jewish communities around the world," Goodman noted, "only two or three, and only one shared ingredient, matzah. You couldn't define a cuisine based entirely on matzah. Jewish food is food that has been made by Jewish communities through the centuries and sustained by them, wherever they happened to be." Both Ashkenazic and Sephardic cuisines and cultures are celebrated, so you see the Sabbath stew, one of the few dishes shared by all Jewish communities -- charoset is another -- in the Solet of Hungary and the Moroccan Dafina. "Jewish Food" is an exciting read, filled with fascinating history. Did you know the mother of King Ferdinand of Spain was a converso, that Yemenites were the only people on earth who used Hebrew for communication before it became the official language of Israel and that the earliest borscht was made not from beets but from parsnips? Nestled among the recipes are essays on selected ingredients, dishes and communities, deepening our understanding of their historical context. "Food is kind of a repository of a community's history," Goodman observed. "You can see the wanderings of people over time. You can see the influence of conquest, of poverty, of travel. Food becomes a history lesson on a plate." As an example, he cited the use of pine nuts and raisins in Roman Jewish cooking, as in the Italian Matzo Fritters with Honey Syrup. "These ingredients were brought to Sicily by the Arabs where the Jews learned how to use them. Then when they got kicked out of Sicily during the Spanish Inquisition, they brought them when they moved up to Rome. The cinnamon and honey sauce, giulebbe, you find in a lot of Roman Jewish desserts. You can see the history of these people in this dish." And what would Passover be without macaroons? But, if you've tasted only the store-bought variety, you're in for a treat. "The same way that gefilte fish has gotten a bad name because most people think it comes out of a jar, macaroons got a bad name because they think they come in those metal tins," noted Goodman. "Macaroons you make yourself are so much better and just phenomenally simple to make." The Pistachio Macaroons are made with rosewater, "a very common ingredient in Middle Eastern cooking, as are pistachios, and used a lot by Syrians," he said. "They're a nice alternative for people who want something a little different than the typical coconut macaroons." Sadly, some recipes are irretrievable, Goodman said. "There are so few of these dishes left," he said. "It's really like an extinct species. So many generous people shared their recipes with me. Some in the New York area would invite me to their home and let me cook with them in their kitchen. It was just an amazingly moving experience for me. But with each recipe they'd give me, they'd say, 'I wish you could have tried these other two that so-and-so used to do, but she died.' That dish is gone forever." Pizzarelle Con Giulebbe (Italian Matzah Fritters with Honey Syrup)

Syrup  
1 cup honey  
1/2 cup water  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
Fritters  
5 matzahs, broken into

small pieces  
1/4 cup sugar  
1/4 teaspoon kosher for Pesach vanilla  
Pinch of salt  
1/4 cup raisins  
1/4 cup pine nuts  
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten  
2 egg whites  
Vegetable oil for deep frying

1. Make the syrup: Combine the honey, water and cinnamon in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cover and bring to a boil, then uncover, lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring regularly. Remove from heat and let cool. Pour into a serving bowl.
2. Make the batter: Place the matzah pieces in a bowl of cold water and soak until soft but not falling apart, one to two minutes. Drain in a colander and squeeze out any excess water. In a large bowl, mix together the matzah pieces, sugar, vanilla, salt, raisins, pine nuts and egg yolks.
3. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gently fold the beaten egg whites into the matzo mixture.
4. Make the pizzarelle: In a Dutch oven or other large, heavy pot, heat at least 2 inches of oil to 375 F on a deep-fat thermometer. In small batches, drop heaping tablespoons of the matzah mixture into the oil. Fry in batches, turning as necessary, until they are a deep brown on all sides, about five minutes total. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Serve warm or at room temperature, accompanied by the honey syrup. Makes about 25.

**Pistachio Macaroons**  
3 cups (about 1 pound) shelled pistachios  
1 cup sugar  
3 egg whites  
1 1/2 teaspoons rosewater

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease two baking sheets or line them with parchment paper.
2. Grind the pistachios with the sugar in the bowl of a food processor, leaving some chunks for texture; transfer the mixture to a large bowl.
3. Beat the egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gently fold them, with the rosewater, into the pistachio mixture.
4. Drop the batter by heaping tablespoonfuls in balls onto the prepared baking sheets, leaving at least 1 inch between. Bake until lightly browned, 17 to 20 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheets for a few minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature. Makes about 30.

Okay, I know this author and I'm crazy about him. I am not what you'd call an accomplished cook, and further, I live smack in the middle of white bread country in an area where mainly Jewish people eat Jewish food and mostly in the privacy of their homes. I might not know about kreplach, kugels, and knishes, except from the Jewish folks I went to college with, and subsequently, from the few Jewish restaurants here in St. Louis, where shiksas like me go to eat exotically. On the other hand, I own a lot of cookbooks and really do use some of them on a regular basis. I watch Food TV on a fairly regular basis and pull recipes off food.com. I like to discover new (Okay, they're usually only new to me!) dishes and test them on my family and friends. Most important, I eat-a lot. While these facts hardly make me a food critic, they do make me feel completely qualified and objective in my decision to award this book all five stars.

1st star: For recipes that are easy to follow and that include

vivid descriptions of the finished products. Further, a trip to my local chain grocery store confirmed that the ingredients are not difficult to find. 2nd star. For recipes that deliver, use fresh ingredients, and offer tips for simplifying preparation and also for amplifying flavors and textures. I made Petti di Pollo alle Erbe on the first night I owned this book. It was a good training dish for a Jewish food novice like me--very easy, and the recipe encourages herbs of your choice. I chose thyme and oregano and my family of five proclaimed it truly sumptuous. So encouraged, I made Potato Kugel--my first kugel ever--on the very next day, and it was another hit. The caramelized onions really rock! Next weekend I have to entertain a houseful of friends and relatives and guess what we're having? Probably one of the featured briskets, but I'm dying to try one of the meatball recipes.

Conclusion: Even a tentative cook like myself can turn out a great dish using this book. I can't wait to try more. 3rd star. There is a wide selection of recipes; in fact, all the great Jewish dishes you might expect are here, along with many treasures. Recipes are presented from different countries--29 to be exact--and often offer more than one variety of a specific dish. 4th star. This book has been designed with use in mind--lots of clean, white space and good-sized, readable typefaces, making it a great choice for folks who like to write in their books (God forbid!), and those who are visually challenged. There are sections devoted to Poultry, Meat, Appetizers, etc., making it a cinch to find recipes and plan meals around the foods in your pantry--not the case with too many other cookbooks. Also, the ingredients are smartly listed like sidebars alongside the step-by-step instructions, a layout that makes a lot more sense than the usual manner of listing them above the instructions and forcing impatient readers like me to look up and down, up and down... 5th star.

What's really special about this book is its lovely collection of essays, which are truly every bit as delicious as the food. They appear in the front of each section and before every recipe and they provide insights and anecdotes that touch on the geography, history, and culture of the people who originated the dishes. They also offer how-tos on cooking and tasting, and even a few savory tidbits from Goodman's own life and experiences. They make this book a treasure to own, and in contrast with most cookbooks, a pleasure for even a culinary proletarian to read, cover to cover. As entertaining as it is practical, *Jewish Food: The World at Table* would make a lovely gift for Jew or Gentile--for anyone who enjoys cooking, eating, and a very nice story. I intend to give several to friends and family this year. I pre-ordered my own copy months ago and I'm thrilled to be among the first to own it. I'm already looking forward to Matthew Goodman's next book, and also hold onto the hope that he'll come to St. Louis soon and sign my copy of this one!

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