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# Introduction

Recognition of where our food comes from, whether in a metaphysical way and in a material way is important because it connects us to the experience of eating beyond simply filling ourselves up with food.

This bencher, a siddur for the stomach, was written by the PunkTorah community as part of our latest engagement campaign called NewKosher.org. Our goal is simple: to connect people with the spiritual, ethical, health and environmental eating practice called kashrut, the holy diet of the Jewish people. And it is our hope that this book will be a simple stepping stone toward this bigger goal.

As a community, we chose to re-envision the Birkat Hamazon to include the prayers, thoughts and stories that connect us to food, G-d, community and the Torah. Included in this Birkat Hamazon are:

Hebrew transliterated prayers

English poetic translations

Additional blessings on foods

Stories and spiritual insights into the meaning of eating

Kosher recipes and more

We have also referenced places in the Torah and other writings that have influenced how we structured each prayer, so that anyone can have sources to write their own food blessings.

On the back page, you will also find a collection of resources that will help you on your life's journey, including PunkTorah, our main website, OneShul, our community-led online synagogue, and 3xDaily, our collection of contemporary prayers.

Dig in!

PunkTorah

# GRACE AFTER MEALS

## (POETIC ENGLISH)

*By Michael Sabani*

### OPENING (FOR SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS)

A song of ascent:

The day when G-d brings us all together, that day will feel like a dream. With all of humanity united as one, our lives will be filled with joy and laughter, among all the nations.

Adonai (The Lord) has done great things for all the world, so we have rejoiced.

Bring us together, Lord, as you make the rivers flow, and let the tears of those who weep be as the rain that feeds the fields, turning sorrow into joy.

### INVITATION TO SAY BIRKAT HAMAZON

(Said when a group of three or more have eaten together)

Leader: Friends, let us give thanks to Hashem.

Group: Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorach mei-atah v'ad olam

Blessed is the name of G-d now and forever.

Leader: Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorach mei-atah v'ad olam

Blessed is the name of G-d now and forever.

Together let us thank G-d for the food we have eaten.

Group: Blessed is G-d, whose food we have eaten, and because of whom we live in goodness.

Leader: Blessed is G-d, whose food we have eaten, and because of whom we live in goodness.

All: Baruch hu u-varuch sh'mo.

Blessed is Hashem, and Blessed is G-d's name.

## BIRKAT HAMAZON

Blessed is Adonai, creator of the universe, who has filled the world with Her goodness. G-d's kindness provides food to all of Her creatures, and Her mercy lasts forever.

Blessed is Adonai, who provides for all.

May the G-d who shows us mercy create a world where we may live together in peace.

Blessed is Adonai who restores the world with mercy.

Amen.

May the G-d who shows us mercy reign over us forever.

May the kindness of the Lord be proclaimed on heaven and earth.

May all people at all times praise Adonai and may we honor the mercy and kindness we have been given forever.

May the G-d who shows us mercy care for our needs in an honorable way.

May the G-d who shows us mercy help us overcome what holds us back today, and lead us to a better tomorrow.

May the G-d who shows us mercy send blessings upon this table and house.

May the G-d who shows us mercy teach us to proclaim kindness and to show comfort.

May the G-d who shows us mercy bless our families, friends, and loved ones, be they near or far.

As our Mothers and Fathers, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were blessed in every way, may the G-d who shows us mercy bless us all.

Let us say: Amen.

## *ON SHABBAT:*

*May the G-d who shows us mercy share with all a world that is entirely at rest.*

May the G-d who gives us peace above and below give peace to all of us, and let us say: Amen.

May G-d give strength to all people; may G-d bless all people with peace.

Shalom. Amen.

# BIRKAT HAMAZON

## (TRANSLITERATED TRADITIONAL)

*Arranged By Patrick Aleph*

These blessings are the traditional blessings with transliteration. However, there is an added Egalitarian piece with the inclusion of Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca and Leah in Harachaman. Also, references to the rebuilding and peace of Jerusalem also have an optional "ha-olam" (the world) for people who seek to include world peace as a part of their praying experience.

### SHIR HAMA'ALOT שִׁיר הַמַּצְלוֹת (SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS)

Shir Hama-a-lot, b'shuv Adonai et shivat Tzion  
hayinu k'cholmim.

Az y'malei s'chok pinu ul-shoneinu rina,  
az yomru vagoyim: Higdil Adonai la-a-sot im eileh.  
Higdil Adonai la-a-sot imanu, hayinu s'meichim. Shuva Adonai  
et sh'viteinu ka-afikim banegav. Hazor'im b'dima  
b'rina yik-tzoru. Haloch yeileich uvacho, nosei meshech hazara.

Bo yavo v'rina nosei alumotav.

### ZIMUN: INVITATION TO SAY BIRCHAT HAMAZON

#### RABOTAI NEVARECH רְבוֹתֵי נְבֻרָךְ

This prayer is said when a group of three or more have eaten together. One person, acting as prayer leader, will invite the others to join in the blessing after the meal. When a minyan (group of ten) is present, include the words in parentheses.

Leader: Rabotai n'vareich.

Group: Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorach mei-atah v'ad olam.

Leader Repeats: Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorach mei-atah v'ad olam.

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

Leader: Birshut rabotai n'vareich Eloheinu she-achalnu mishelo.

Group: Baruch (Eloheinu) she-achalnu mishelo uv-tuvo chayinu.

Leader Repeats: Baruch (Eloheinu) she-achalnu mishelo uv-tuvo chayinu.

All: Baruch hu u-varuch sh'mo.

### BIRKAT HAMAZON ברכת המזון

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
hazan et ha-olam kulo b'tuvo  
b'chein b'chesed uv-rachamim,  
hu notein lechem l'chol-basar, ki l'olam chasdo,  
Uv-tuvo hagadol tamid lo chasar lanu  
v'al yechsar lanu mazon l'olam va-ed.  
Ba-avur sh'mo hagadol, ki hu Eil zan um-farneis lakol,  
u-meitiv lakol u-meichin mazon l'chol-b'riyotav asher bara.  
Baruch atah Adonai, hazan et hakol.

### NODEH LECHA נודה לך

Nodeh l'cha Adonai Eloheinu al she-hinchalta la-avoteinu v'imoteinu. Eretz  
chemda tovah ur-chava, v'al she-hotzeitanu  
Adonai Eloheinu mei-eret mitzrayim uf-ditanu mibeit avadim,  
v'al brit'cha she-chatamta biv-sareinu, v'al torat-cha  
she-limad-tanu, v'al chukecha she-hodatanu, v'al chayim, chein  
va-chesed she-chonantanu, v'al achilat mazon she-ata zan  
um-farneis otanu tamid, b'chol-yom uv'chol-eit uv'chol-sha'ah.

### V'AL HAKOL ועל הכל

V'al hakol Adonai Eloheinu anachnu modim lach um-varchim  
otach yitbarach shimcha b'fi chol chai  
tamid l'olam va-ed,  
kakatuv: V'achalta v'savata uveirachta et Adonai Elohecha  
al ha-aretz hatova asher natan lach.

Baruch Atah Adonai, al ha-aretz v'al hamazon.

### RACHEM ADONAI רחם יי

Racheim na, Adonai Eloheinu al Yisrael amecha, v'al Y'rushalayim irecha,  
v'al Tzion mishkan k'vodecha, v'al malchut beit David m'shichecha,  
v'al habayit hagadol v'hakadosh shenikra shimcha alav.  
Eloheinu avinu, r'einu zuneinu, Parn'seinu v'chalk'lenu v'harvicheinu,  
v'harvach-lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, m'heira mikol-tzaroteinu.

V'na al tatz-richeinu, Adonai Eloheinu,  
lo lidei matnat basar vadam, v'lo lidei hal-va-atam,  
ki im l'yadcha ham'lei-a, hap'tucha hak-dosha v'harchava  
shelo neivosh v'lo nikaleim l'olam va-ed.

## RETZEI V'HACHALITZEINU רצה והחליצנו (ON SHABBAT)

R'tzei v'hachalitzeinu Adonai Eloheinu b'mitzvotcha,  
uv-mitzvat yom hash'vi'i haShabbat hagadol v'hakadosh hazeh  
Ki yom zeh gadol v'kadosh hu l'fanecha, lishbot-bo v'lanuach bo  
b'ahavah k'mitzvat r'tzonecha. Uvirtzon'cha haniach lanu  
Adonai Eloheinu shelo t'hei tzara v'yagon va-anacha b'yom m'nuchateinu  
V'har-einu Adonai Eloheinu b'nechamat Tzion irecha,  
uv'vinyan Y'rushalayim ir kodshecha,  
ki atah hu ba'al ha-y'shuot u-va'al hanechamot.

## U'VNEI YERUSHALYIM (HA-OLAM) ובנה ירושלים

Uv-nei Y'rushalayim ir hakodesh bimheira v'yameinu.  
Baruch atah Adonai, boneh v'rachamav Y'rushalayim (Ha-Olam). Amen.

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-Eil avinu  
Malkeinu adireinu bor'einu go-aleinu yotz'reinu k'dosheinu  
k'dosh Ya'akov, ro-einu ro-ei Yisrael, hamelech hatov  
v'hameitiv lakol, sheb'chol-yom vayom hu heitiv,  
hu meitiv, hu yeitiv lanu. Hu g'malanu hu  
gomleinu hu yig-m'leinu la-ad l'chein ul-chesed ul-rachamim  
ul-revach, hatzala v'hatzlacha b'racha vi-shua nechama,  
parnasa v'chalkala v'rachamim v'chayim v'shalom v'chol-tov,  
u-mikol tuv l'olam al y'chasreinu.

## HARACHAMAN הרחמן

Ha rechaman hu yimloch aleinu l'olam va-ed.

Harachaman, hu yitbarach bashamayim u-va-aretz.

Harachaman, hu yishtabach l'dor dorim, v'yitpa-ar banu la-ad  
u-l'neitzach n'tzachim, v'yit-hadar banu la-ad ul-olmei olamim.

Harachaman, hu y'far-n'seinu b'chavod.

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

Harachaman, hu yishbor uleinu mei-al tzavareinu  
v'hu yolicheinu kom'miyut l'artzeinu.

Harachaman, hu yishlach b'racha m'ruba babayit hazeh v'al  
Shulchan zeh she-achalnu alav.

Harachaman, hu yishlach lanu et-Eliyahu Hanavi, zachur  
latov, vivaser-lanu b.sorot tovot y'shu-ot v'nechamot.

Harachaman hu y'vareich et-kol-ham'subim kan,  
otanu-v'et-kol asher lanu.

K'mo she-nitbarchu avoteinu: Avraham, Yitzchak,  
v'Ya-akov, v'imoteinu: Sarah, Rivkah, Leah, v'Rachel,  
bakol mikol kol, kein y'vareich otanu kulanu yachad  
bivracha sh'leima, v'nomar: Amein.

## BAMAROM YELAMDU במרום ילמדו

Bamarom y'lamdu, aleyhem v'aleyenu z'choot sh'tehay l'mishmeret shalom. V'nisah bracha  
m'et adonai, u'tzdakah m'elohey yish'ey'nu. V'nimtza chen v'sechel tov b'eyney elohim v'adam.

Recited on Shabbat: Harachaman, hu yan-chileinu yom shekulo Shabbat umnucha  
l'chayei haolamim.

## MAGDIL HA'OLAM מגדל

Harachaman hu yezakeinu limot hamashiach u'l'chayei olam habah. Magdil (ON SHABBAT  
AND ROSH CHODESH: Migdol) y'shu-ot malko v'oseh chesed limshicho, l'David ul'zar-o ad  
olam.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol-Yisroel v'ha-olam, v'imru: Amein.

## YIRU ET ADONAI יראו את יי

Y'ru et-Adonai k'doshav ki ein machsor lirei-av.  
K'firim rashu v'ra-eivu v'dorshei Adonai lo yach-s'ru chol-tov.  
Hodu Ladonai ki tov, ki l'olam chasdo.  
Potei-ach et-yadecha u-masbia l'chol-chai ratzon.  
Baruch hagever asher yivtach b'Adonai, v'haya Adonai mitvacho.  
Na-ar hayiti gam zakanti, v'lo ra'iti tzadik ne-ezav v'zar-o m'vakesh-lachem. Adonai oz l'amo  
yeetain, Adonai y'vareich et amo vashalom.

ADONAI OZ L'AMO YITAIN יי עז לעמו יתן

Adonai oz l'amo yectain, Adonai y'vareich et amo vashalom.

# BLESSINGS FOR SPECIFIC FOODS

*by Rivka Bowlin*

Before eating, say the following blessings depending on the food you are eating:

For bread: ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, המוציא לחם מן הארץ

Baruch ata Adonai, Ehloheinu melech haolam, hamotzi lehchem min haaretz.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign G-d of the universe, You caused bread to come from the earth.

For fruit of the vine: ברוך אתה ה' א-ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן

Baruch ata Adonai, Ehloheinu melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign G-d of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

For rice, wheat, oats, barley, etc. :

ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני מזונות.

Baruch ata Adonai Ehloheinu melech haolam, borei minei m'zonot.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign G-d of the universe, Creator of many kinds of food.

For fruits that grow on trees: ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, borei peri ha-etz.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign G-d of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

ברוך אתה ה' אלוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה  
האדמה

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam Borei peri ha-adama.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign G-d of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.

ברוך אתה ה' אלוהינו מלך העולם, שהכל נהיה בדברו

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, shehakol nih'ye bidvaro.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign G-d of the universe, by whose word all things come into being.

# STORIES, POEMS AND INSIGHTS

## SHRINK

*by matthue roth*

My grandmom  
keeps asking  
where the rest of me  
is

this can't be all  
you're too small  
where'd you put  
the rest?

Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

she's always threatening  
to lose me in a hug  
like seriously lose me  
we'll come out of it and i'll be

gone like a bad TV show in the fall,  
maybe squashed between her breasts  
or fallen into the hem of her dress,

it's just me, you see  
i'm too skinny

and if weight is a scale like numbers,  
going into the negatives and back  
then i hover dangerously close to zero

i even need a belt for tight jeans  
like leather pants  
or pleather pants

because i'm a vegetarian,  
which is another contributing  
factor in my downfall  
if you ask my grandmom  
she'll tell you that schmaltz is  
still healthy, chicken fat makes  
people plump

and plump people have layers to protect them

Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

and defend them  
but not me, i'm too exposed

i stand on stage  
and wear tight shirts  
and sometimes you can even see my belly button

my family speaks yiddish  
and when they wish you the best they say  
“a ghesunt dir ein pupik”

literally  
“your belly button should sprout and flourish”  
and somewhere people believe  
your belly button is the way to your soul

it must be a short trip for me  
i'm skinny  
the way god  
made me,  
without too much  
embellishment from me

that's the way i like it  
i'm the single-size version  
the low-cal serving  
the cliff notes me  
30% less fat than the leading brand  
with nothing to hide,

just  
a hundred  
twenty five  
pounds  
and shrinking.

## EKEV

*By Leon Adato (Edible Torah)*

Out of curiosity, do you know anyone who has eaten a whole pot roast in one sitting?

So here's the short story that explains why I ask: My Mom and Dad get married. Mom makes a pot roast. Dad eats the whole thing in one sitting.

How did this happen?

My Dad was the baby in a family of 3 strapping boys (4 if you count grandpa) living in an apartment in the Bronx in the 40's and 50's. Grandma had a simple technique for feeding her family, similar to what you might use if you were raising a small swarm of locusts: She would only put out the food she wanted to have eaten. If she bought a whole chicken but wanted some left for tomorrow, she'd put out half the chicken.

My Mom was raised here in Cleveland Heights with her one brother in a home that was remarkably free of food issues.

So my parents get married, and my Mom is doing her best Donna Reed impression. She's got the table set, the pearls are on, the whole shebang. And there is her beautiful pot roast, sitting fully dressed on the table like it was out of a "Better Homes" photo shoot.

The entire pot roast. Sitting there. On the table.

They sit down to dinner and Dad digs in. And keeps digging. And digging and digging.

At the end of the meal, the pot roast is gone, my Dad is unable to move and you could actually hear his arteries hardening, and my Mom is beside herself trying to figure out how she's going to feed a man who eats whole pot roasts for supper!

I want to make it clear that this is the only time he did that. After they got over the initial shock, it didn't take long to figure out what happened. Which is why they continue to tell the story today with amusement and love.

In this weeks portion we read "When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to God for the good land which He has given you." (8:10).

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

A lot of focus is spent on the “give thanks” part of that statement. We bracha, we eat, we bentsch our hearts out. But equally important is taking the time to recognize when we are, in fact, full. When we have had enough. Sure, some of what happened to my parents was because of cultural issues and childhood habits. But some of it rests on them. Why didn’t my Dad realize he was full? Why didn’t my Mom ask him?

Last week, Moses asks for a chance to enter Canaan, and God replies “Rav Lach!”. This is often interpreted as “Enough!” but many Rabbi’s extend it to mean “You have enough!”. – God was telling Moses that he didn’t need Canaan, he already had everything he could ever want.

In Ekev we have the chance to learn the habit of self-assessment, to ask ourselves whether we’re satisfied and then put down the pot roast. Conversely, if we are still hungry, we need to know that God’s bounty is out there, and we gain nothing by depriving ourselves. “When you have eaten your fill” the Torah tells us. We aren’t commanded to stop short of that. There will be enough, we are reassured. Like they say on the airplane, put the mask over your own face before helping someone else. Because if you pass out from lack of oxygen while trying to be a hero, you aren’t really helping anyone.

We are instructed to take the time to be thoughtful about our consumption of the bounty around us. Not just food, or even money. Or unlimited cell phone minutes for that matter. Extending this beyond the pshat, the literal text, we are given the chance to recognize the bounteous amounts of opportunities around us. Of choices. Of shoulders to lean against or cry on. Of Friendship. Support. Patience. We should have enough self esteem to feel OK about taking our fill of these things because, in fact, that’s the only real resource we as humans have to give, which is truly ours. The food and money and stuff really isn’t under our control. But our time, our hope, our love is.

Having been thoughtful about our consumption, and taken care to eat our fill but not more than that, we are then (and only then) commanded, to give thanks. To The One from whom all blessings flow, and (I would add) to the direct provider as well. It’s easy to see how it would be selfish to take someone’s time or friendship or help or pot roast and then not to thank them.

The word that gives name to this portion – Ekev is translated to mean “as a result of”. It shares the root with the word Yaakov, or “heel”. So another way of translating this is “on the heels of”.

When we are really being honest and thoughtful about the world around us, we know that nothing occurs by itself. Everything is ekev – on the heel of something else. Fredrick Douglass said it soberly, “properly speaking, there are in the world no such men as self-made men.” As we go through life, we are always dependent on someone or something. As we strive to achieve our goals, we are attached to one another and to God. We are constantly holding on to the heels of others. One of my favorite public expressions of this idea was when Fred Rogers – Mr. Rogers – was given a lifetime achievement award at the 1997 Emmys. By way of acceptance, he asked for 10 seconds of silence while the audience thought about the people who had helped them become who they were. Fred Rogers understood Ekev.

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

So this leads me to another major passage in this portion – the second paragraph of the Shema. It appears here in verses 11:13-21 and includes the following statement: “If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the God and serving Him with all your heart and soul, I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late.”

Not following God’s commandments, Torah continues to tell us, will cause “God’s anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the God is assigning to you.”

Such direct causality may give the modern reader pause. Certainly the Reform movement found this concept troubling, and removed it from their siddur. The younger Reconstructionist movement replaces it with other sections of Torah text. It’s easy to understand why. Drought and famine are equal opportunity tragedies, and to ascribe them to a direct action of ours is a challenging thought. Even moreso, the idea that rain is given and crops thrive solely by virtue of our following commandments smacks of a “gimme-God” mentality.

“Dear Hashem-a Claus: I was a good mitzvah menche this year. Don’t listen to what my sister tells you. Please leave good rains in my stocking this year.”

Trite surface readings and silly personifications of God aside, which minimize the validity of the pshat – the plain text meaning – I don’t think it’s so extreme an idea that our adherence to the mitzvot has an impact on the physical world around us. It just may take a little more thought. I believe that passage appears in the portion named “Ekev” for a reason. If I accept that everything happens as a result of what came before it; and if I accept that in the same portion we are told to be thoughtful and thankful about our consumption, then I find my key to understanding Shema paragraph two.

If we continue to shove resources into the gaping maw of our society without regard for whether we need it or not then we not only use what may be difficult to replace but we also pollute – spiritually and physically – whatever is left over. If we observe the commandments – the ones that deal with respect and love and fair use – when we consume stuff and interact with others then blessings will flow. And if we don’t, they won’t. It is we ourselves who are handing out the reward or punishment mentioned in the Shema.

I will leave you with this thought: Maybe this part of the Shema isn’t so challenging after all. It turns out that it is back in the Reform liturgy, at least in an English reading. Mishkan T’filah, the new Reform Siddur released in 2007, includes this thought from Rabbi Richard Levy:

If we can hear the words from Sinai  
then love will flow from us  
and we shall serve all that is holy  
with all our intellect and all our passion  
and all our life.  
If we can serve all that is holy  
we shall be doing all that humans can do

to help the rains to flow  
the grasses will be green,  
the grains golden like the sun,  
and the rivers filled with life once more.  
All the children of God shall eat  
and there will be enough.  
But if we turn from Sinai's words  
and serve only what is common and profane,  
making gods of our own comfort or power,  
then the holiness of life will contract for us,  
our world will grow inhospitable.

## TOP REASONS TO GO VEGETARIAN ARE JEWISH VALUES TOO

*By Michael Croland*

In secular circles, the top reasons cited for embracing a vegetarian diet are avoiding cruelty to animals, improving your health, and helping the environment. All three of these correspond to important Jewish values.

Jews should not inflict unnecessary pain and suffering on animals (*tza'ar ba'alei chayim*). According to the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law), “It is forbidden, according to the law of the Torah, to inflict pain upon any living creature. On the contrary, it is our duty to relieve the pain of any creature ....”

According to the principle of *pikuach nefesh*, it's important to stay healthy. Says Maimonides, “Since maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of G-d—for one cannot understand or have any knowledge of the Creator if he is ill—therefore one must avoid that which harms the body and accustom oneself to that which is helpful and helps the body become stronger.”

According to the principle of *bal tashchit*, we should be good stewards of the environment and not waste resources.

## RECIPES

### KENTUCKY FRIED “CHICKEN” (VEGAN/PARVE)

*By Rivka Bowlin*

Use either well drained Tofu or Seitan cutlets. I find 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick slices work best.

Breading:

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

½ C. Flour (for extra spice use Kentucky Kernel Seasoned Flour)

½ C. Cornmeal

¼ C. Nutritional Yeast

¼ tsp. Cayenne Pepper

1 tsp. Kosher Salt

1 tsp. Cajun or other spicy seasoning

¼ tsp. Garlic Powder

¼ tsp. Pepper

Note: These spices are to taste and it is encouraged to spice things up.

Batter:

¼ C. Soy or Almond milk

½ C. Flour (for extra spice use Kentucky Kernel Seasoned Flour)

4 T. Brown or Spicy Mustard

Salt and Pepper to taste

First add flour and cornmeal, then yeast and spices. In separate bowl, combine batter. Take “Chicken” pices dip in batter then lay both sides in breading. Fry in canola oil until brown on both sides. Serve with gravy for best effect.

## BUTTERNUT SQUASH POTATO PANCAKES (PARVE)

*By Jessica Blast*

2 cups butternut squash — peeled and grated (1 lb. squash) shopping list  
2 cups grated potato — (about 2 medium)  
1 medium red onion — grated ( 1/2 cup)  
2 tsp. salt  
2 cloves garlic — minced  
1/4 tsp. grated nutmeg  
1/4 tsp.cinnamon  
1Tbs. Brown Sugar  
1 large egg — beaten

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

3 Tbs. unbleached white flour  
salt and ground black pepper  
vegetable oil for frying

Place squash, potatoes and onion into a colander. Add 2 teaspoons salt, mix and let drain over sink, about 15 minutes. Press vegetables several times to extract water.

Transfer vegetables to a medium bowl. Add garlic, sage, nutmeg and egg and mix thoroughly. Add flour and season with salt and pepper and mix thoroughly.

Heat about 1/8-inch oil in heavy-bottomed large skillet. Using a heaping tablespoon, drop pancakes into oil; press down with a spatula to flatten and ensure even cooking. Cook 1 to 3 minutes on each side, until golden brown. Remove to platter and keep warm. Cook remaining batter adding more oil to pan when necessary.

## FOOLPROOF OVEN BAKED BROWN RICE (VEGAN/PARVE)

*By Stacy Atkinson and Sara Beaulier*

Serves 4-6 People

1 1/2 CP Brown Rice (any grain size is fine)  
3 CP Vegetable Stock  
1/2 tsp Salt  
2 tsp unsalted butter or vegetable oil (if you want to make the recipe vegan/pareve)  
1 Can Artichoke Hearts (rinsed), 1 CP Shitake Mushrooms and 1 Onion chopped

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Spread rice and vegetables in 8 inch square baking dish.

Bring stock to boil, covered, in a medium saucepan over high heat. Once boiling, immediately stir in salt and pour stock over rice. Cover baking dish tightly with doubled layer of foil. Bake rice 1 1/2 hours or until tender.

Remove baking dish from oven and uncover. Fluff rice with dinner fork, then cover dish with clean kitchen towel. Let rice stand 5 minutes. Uncover and let rice stand another 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

## PUMPKIN CHALLAH (VEGAN/PARVE)

*By Anne Vavrik*

2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast  
3 1/2 cups flour  
2/3 cup warm water (not too hot to to  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 1/2 tsp salt  
1/4 cup olive or other vegetable oil  
1/2 cup pumpkin puree (can be canned but not pumpkin pie filling)  
1/2 cup silken or soft tofu  
soymilk for wash

Mix the yeast, sugar and and warm water. Let the mixture stand for 10-20 minutes.

Whisk the salt, oil, tofu, and pumpkin in a large mixing bowl or in a blender. Add the yeast mixture.

Slowly stir in 2 cups of the flour then add the rest with your hands as you knead the dough. You might need slightly more less flour than is called for. The dough should come out smooth and stretchy without being too sticky to touch.

Place the dough in a clean, oiled or floured bowl. Let it rise for 2-3 hours covered. I was told that the secret to good challah is letting it rise three times. Since I usually start my challah on Thursdays, I let the dough rise overnight and during the day Friday in the fridge. Let it rise somewhere warmer if doing it over a shorter period of time.

Punch the dough down on it has risen. Roll the challah into 6 or 3 equal sized ropes and braid.

There are a lot of resources online for 6 and 3 strand challah braiding. I am still working on the 6 strand and suggest starting with 3 strand for first-timers or for the less-coordinated (me).

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Brush the loaves with soymilk and bake for 40-45 minutes. You can brush with soymilk again halfway through baking if desired. The challah should be golden brown when done.

## BAKED SALMON WITH MUSHROOM RISOTTO (FISH/DAIRY)

*By Anna Sgarlato*

I made this dish when I first became a pescatarian. I cooked it for my friend as a way to show off “See, I can cook like a normal person!” The salmon is baked with lemon, herbs, and an obscene amount of butter. The mushroom risotto recipe is from my old friend Jon and is nothing short of amazing – I take no credit for it!

### Mushroom Risotto

Several pads of butter  
1/4 bottle of dry white wine  
1 white onion  
3 cloves garlic  
1 cup Risotto rice (Arborio, Vialone Nano, or Carnoroli)  
Vegetable broth (can substitute water)  
1 carton Baby portobella mushrooms  
Parmesan Cheese  
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream (more or less depending on your taste)  
Kosher salt  
Pepper

Mince the garlic and set aside. In a deep pan, saute the onion with a couple pads of butter over medium-high heat until soft. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon, leaving the butter and onion juice behind. Add the cup of risotto rice, coating the rice with the butter. Cook until the rice becomes clear and glassy.

Pour in 1/4 bottle of wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until totally evaporated. Make sure it is hot enough for steam to rise, but not so hot that it is boiling.

Around this time you can start lightly sauteing the mushrooms in butter in a separate pan. Remember that the mushrooms will cook once again when added to the risotto, so don't allow them to become too soft.

Now back to the rice! After the wine is evaporated, slowly add the vegetable broth, 1/4 – 1/2 cup at a time, letting it completely cook away each time before adding more. Once the last of the broth has cooked away, add the garlic, onions, grated parmesan, and 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream and sautéed mushrooms and stir occasionally for a few minutes. Remove from heat, add salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately with your salmon.

### Baked Salmon

2 salmon fillets  
salt & pepper  
1 lemon  
sprigs of fresh rosemary  
diced garlic  
butter  
aluminum foil

Pre-heat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking dish with a large piece of foil. Dot with butter. Salt and pepper the salmon on both sides and place on the foil. Top with sliced lemon, rosemary, diced garlic, and pads of butter. Seal with aluminum foil. Bake until salmon is flakey, around 10 to 12 minutes. Discard lemons and rosemary. Serve immediately with risotto.

### NORTH AFRICAN ORANGE CARROT SALAD (VEGAN/PARVE)

*By Patrick Aleph*

This salad is a cross between two recipes, Turkish Havuc Salatasi and Moroccan Shlata Chizo. Either way, this carrot salad is great served cold as a side, or combined with greens for a bigger, dinner salad.

4 large carrots, coarsely chopped  
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro and red onion  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon chili powder  
3 tablespoons yogurt  
pinch of salt  
1 1/2 teaspoons orange blossom water  
1 tablespoon sugar or honey

Peel and chop carrots. Mix in spices and wet ingredients. Marinade in the refrigerator for at least two hours. Stir again before serving. You can also add raisins, dried currants, or dried apricots for additional flavor and texture.

### FAST "REFRIED" BEANS FOR BURRITOS (VEGAN/PARVE)

*By Hezakah Levinson*

- 2 cans pinto beans
- 3 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1/2 cup medium chopped onion or 2 tbsp onion powder
- 2 tbsp dried cilantro ( optional)

Dump one can beans drained and one can with liquid into a 2 quart sauce pan with a lid and add the rest of the ingredients.

Cook on low heat to simmer about 20 minutes. Stir every so often to avoid burning.

Use a hand held potato masher or electric mixer to mash everything up into a paste or leave a bit chunky,depending on preference

Serve with flour or corn torts,lettuce,salsa,shredded cheddar, and whatever else you like on your burrito.

Note: You can make it in bigger batches and freeze leftover for later use. Being parve,you can also use it for beef and bean burritos. Just hold the cheese.

## ZELDA ALTMAN'S NOODLE KUGEL

*By Mandi Brodsky*

Let me start by telling you why I chose to submit this recipe. I grew up in a small town in northeast Ohio called Ashtabula. My dad would always joke and say that we doubled the Jewish population when we moved there! He wasn't too far from the truth! We have a small synagogue in Ashtabula, but there are only services for the High Holidays. We used to 'rent-a-rabbi' but now my dad or someone else from the congregation leads the services. We used to drive 45 minutes to Erie, PA to go to a synagogue on a regular basis. My Bat Mitzvah was actually the first one that had ever taken place in Ashtabula!! I feel that because I didn't have a strong Jewish community growing up, I failed to appreciate this awesome gift bestowed upon me. I am starting to see Judaism as the true honor it is more and more everyday! One thing I did always look forward to was the noodle kugel one member brought every year!! A few years ago, she finally broke down and gave me the recipe. I will now share it with you!!

- 8 oz fine egg noodles, cooked
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

12 oz margarine, melted

2 cups sour cream

4 eggs

6 Tbsp. sugar

### Topping

2 Tbsp sugar

1/2 tsp cinnamon

4 oz sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix the noodles, cream cheese, margarine, sour cream, eggs and 6 Tbsp sugar until well blended. Pour into a greased 9x13 inch baking dish. Mix the remaining sugar, cinnamon, and almonds. Sprinkle on top of kugel. Bake for one hour. Enjoy!!

Some slight variations I have tried to make it my own are:

Try Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. The plain tastes very similar to sour cream and the vanilla adds a little more sweetness.

Try Mascarpone cheese instead of cream cheese.

# RESOURCES

Here's a list of resources for you to check out. If you ever have any questions or comments, please, PLEASE(!) email us at [punktorah@punktorah.org](mailto:punktorah@punktorah.org). We are happy to hear from you!  
*Baruch HaShem!*

[www.newkosher.org](http://www.newkosher.org) - a new approach to the ancient teaching of kashrut.

[www.oneshul.org](http://www.oneshul.org) - the world's first lay led online synagogue

[www.punktorah.org](http://www.punktorah.org) - independent Jewish spirituality, culture, learning and debate

[www.3xdaily.org](http://www.3xdaily.org) - learn how to pray, your own way, three times a day

[www.twitter.com/punktorah](https://www.twitter.com/punktorah)

[www.bit.ly/punktorahshop](http://www.bit.ly/punktorahshop)

Also, find us of Facebook!

[www.tinyurl.com/punktorahfb](http://www.tinyurl.com/punktorahfb)

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Marietta, GA 30064

Donations can also be send via paypal to [punktorah@gmail.com](mailto:punktorah@gmail.com)

Want to honor someone? Sponsor a page on NewKosher, PunkTorah, 3xDaily or OneShul. We will also include their memory on our OneShul Prayer List.

# CONTRIBUTORS

Patrick Aleph is the executive director and co-founder of PunkTorah as well as the singer for Can!!Can, an art/punk/grunge band on JDub Records.

Leon Adato blogs at edibletorah.com, a site devoted to helping people set up their own Torah-based potluck Shabbat experience with family and friends.

Stacy Atkinson is a Jill of all trades: web design, massage therapy, pottery, art, spirituality, candle making and cooking.

Rivka Bowlin is an ambassador for OneShul and prayer leader at OneShul's Shacharit and Mincha service.

Michael Croland ran heebnvegan (<http://heebnvegan.blogspot.com>), a Jewish blog about animal protection issues, for five years and taught an animal rights course at Carnegie Mellon University.

## Birkat HaMazon (A Community Siddur)

Matthue Roth wrote the memoir *Yom Kippur a Go-Go* and the novel *Losers* and a bunch of other stuff. Find him at [matthue.com](http://matthue.com).

Michael Sabani is the creative director and co-founder of PunkTorah as well as an accomplished artist, writer and consumer of various foods.

Anna Sgarlato is a culinary writer for [NewKosher.org](http://NewKosher.org) and Patrick Aleph's wife.

Our bencher also includes contributions from Anne Vavrik, Jessica Blast and Sara Beaulier.