

SOUTHERN CT JEWISH FOOD FESTIVAL

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2:15 PM

KIDS TAKE ON THE BLINTZ

Join cook and author **Ronnie Fein** for a kid-friendly lesson on how to make these delectable dairy treats that have clearly stood the test of time! First, we mix all the ingredients we need to make delicious cheese finlling. Then, we mix the batter for the special blintz pancakes and learn how to make a pancake. Last, we spoon the filling onto the pancakes and roll them for a blintz feast!

BEYOND CHICKEN SOUP

Remedies from the Jewish kitchen for stress, trauma, and illness

"Some say laughter is the best medicine. I say a good meal is the best medicine."

The time between diagnosis and treatment can be overwhelming, depressing, and life-altering. Where do you start? How do you prepare? Join **Chef Jonathan Forgash** to discover how food with “emotional content” is the secret to recovery and wellness. Together, we’ll explore how mindfulness in the kitchen can lead to improved health. Learn how to cook for a changing palate and appetite and discover ingredients for mediating the trauma associated with diagnosis, treatment, recovery, and wellness.

A TASTE OF ISRAEL

A panel of three home cooks from our partnership region of Afula-Gilboa, Israel, present an authentic showcase of the wide-ranging cuisine of Israel. Ora, Meir, and Monica will cook their families’ favorite recipes, while sharing stories of how their respective ancestries have impacted the food they cook. Together, we will learn how to make Moroccan carrot salad, an Iraqi beet *kubbeh* soup, and a creamy Israeli *malabi* milk pudding.

3:15 PM

SHIRAH B'TZIBUR ISRAELI SING-ALONG & DANCE

Join Israelis-in-CT for a special treat: the popular *shirah b'tzibur*, an Israeli sing-along. Yuval Brill, a musician visiting from our partnership region of Afula-Gilboa, Israel, will lead the group in learning and singing popular and favorite Israeli tunes.

HOW I STARTED MY GOURMET FOOD BUSINESS

Turning inspiring Israeli products into American pantry staples

Amy Zitelman, co-founder and CEO of Soom Foods, shares her experience introducing premium tahini and silan date syrup to professional and at-home chefs across the U.S.

THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF JEWISH FOOD

From biblical times to the present day, Jews have always enjoyed a distinctive cuisine. Think rye bread, pastrami, bagels and a passion for eggplant dishes. It was so idiosyncratic that, during the time of the Inquisition (1470s-1830s), a family's culinary habits became a telltale way to reveal a secret Jew. Conversely, what was it about Jewish cooking that often became the envy of their non-Jewish neighbors? We will also explore the lesser-known but important role of the long-distance Jewish traders during the Middle Ages in introducing certain foods to a particular country.

FOOD FOR THE BODY AND SOUL:

JEWISH LIFE IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND BEYOND

Join community-member **Shari Levy** and **Yakov Pechersky**, representatives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee — a proud partner of Federation — for a conversation about how food plays a vital role in Jewish communities across the former Soviet Union. Hear about Yakov's personal journey from Saint Petersburg to the U.S. and beyond, and learn the ways that you make it possible to build Jewish life and provide comfort to those in need.

4:15 PM

KEYNOTE CONVERSATION

WHAT MAKES FOOD JEWISH ANYWAY?

A Discussion on Diaspora, Recipe Evolution, and Delicious Food

Borrowing is at the heart of Jewish cuisine. Throughout history and across the globe, Jewish communities have eaten the foods of their neighbors, adapting these dishes to accommodate the kosher rules and holiday rituals. So how, then, does one define what makes a particular dish “Jewish?” And what binds together Jewish foods from such far-flung places as, say, Lithuania, Morocco, and India?

In this lively discussion, cookbook author, **Leah Koenig** (*Modern Jewish Cooking*, *Little Book of Jewish Feasts*, *Little Book of Jewish Appetizers*), and food writer **Liz Rueven** (*Kosher Like Me*) will debate, and gently push, the boundaries of Jewish cuisine.

5 PM

EVERYTHING BUT THE CHALLAH: THE JEWISH MEZZE TABLE

Show-stopping main dishes like brisket and roast chicken typically get all the glory at the Jewish table, but both Ashkenazi and Sephardi cuisine are filled with appetizers, dips, salads, and delicious nibbles traditionally served alongside challah on Shabbat and holidays. This session will explore the *forshpeis* ("before foods" in Yiddish) of Ashkenazi cuisine and the glorious mezze table of Sephardi cuisine. Participants will also learn how to make smoked-trout crostini and *muhammara* (red pepper, pomegranate, and walnut dip).

ON THE HALF-HOUR IN THE EXHIBITION HALL

WAT'S FOR SHABBAT

Ethiopian Jewish Food Culture

Sip Ethiopian-style coffee in the classic *buna* ceremony while learning about the Ethiopian Jewish community's food customs. Explore the traditional and unique foods that are part of Ethiopian Jewish life. What role does the *buna* coffee ceremony play in Ethiopian social and cultural life? What are *dabo*, *tej*, and *wat*, and how are they part of the Ethiopian Shabbat celebration?

Ronnie Fein is a food writer, blogger, and author of four cook-books including *The Modern Kosher Kitchen* and *Hip Kosher*. Her food blog, *Kitchen Vignettes*, focuses on modern, mostly healthy kosher food. She also teaches specialized classes at The Ronnie Fein School of Creative Cooking, gives cooking demonstrations, and has written for many print and online publications, including *The Nosh*, *The Forward*, *The Jewish Week*, and *JoyofKosher*.



Seek Servana founder and chef **Jonathan Forgash** lectures on "food with emotional content," mediating trauma associated with cancer diagnosis and treatment, and issues that arise for patient and caregiver during illness. For over two decades, his previous company, Star Struck Catering, provided nourishing and pampered catering for fashion, TV, and film clients in New York City including Victoria's Secret, *All My Children*, *White Collar*, *The Americans*, and Food Network shows featuring Emeril Lagasse, Bobby Flay, Rachael Ray, and Wolfgang Puck. Jonathan gives phone consultations, lectures, webinars, retreats, and cooking demos across the U.S.



Join the visiting **Hafla Delegation** from our Afula-Gilboa partnership region for an authentic taste of Israeli cuisine, music, and dance!

Selected as a member of the Forbes 30 Under 30 class of 2018, **Amy Zitelman** oversees Soom's sales, marketing, and business-development strategies.



For 18 years, award-winning journalist, author, and lecturer **Andrée Aelion Brooks** was a contributing columnist and news writer for *The New York Times*, where she covered personal finance, the women's movement, and real-estate investment issues, among other topics. She also regularly contributes to *Hadassah Magazine*, among other publications, winning First Place in 2012 in the magazine division of the American Jewish Press Association annual awards. In September 2014, she was appointed to the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger* advisory board.



St. Petersburg (Russia) native **Yakov Pechersky** has been performing and speaking at events from a young age; at 5, he was invited to perform Yiddish songs in the U.S. Since moving to New York City in 1998, Yakov has continued a lifelong passion of engaging and fostering Jewish culture using literary, visual, and performing arts. He has facilitated cross-generational cultural encounters in North America and Europe by leading trips, working as an interpreter, and publishing his own and translated works. A former fragrance-maker, Yakov is currently working on the cutting edge of computer-driven drug design.



Leah Koenig's writing and recipes have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Magazine's* Grub Street blog, *Saveur*, *Epicurious*, *Food52*, *Departures*, *More*, *Hemispheres*, and *Tablet*, among other print and online publications. Leah's most recent cookbook, *Little Book of Jewish Feasts* (Chronicle Books, 2018), was praised by *The Forward's* Liza Schoenfein as “a tiny book with a big, broad reach across the Jewish holiday table.” In addition to writing, Leah also leads cooking demonstrations and workshops around the country and throughout the world.



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SESSION SPOT!**