



Educator's Guide

Diversity – Unpacked Jr.

On a journey through Jerusalem's bustling Mahane Yehuda Market, a group of teens discovers Israel's rich cultural diversity. Led by Yoav, they explore the flavors, stories, and cultures that make up the country's vibrant mosaic. As they compete in a spirited food-making contest, the teens learn how each dish carries a unique history, and how recipes from Sephardic, Mizrahi, Ethiopian, Ashkenazi, and Arab traditions show the depth of Israel's multicultural fabric. By the end of the adventure, they see how the beauty of Israel lies not just in its history, but in its diverse future.

Link to video: [▶ Mahane Yehuda Market: The Beauty of Diversity](#)

Big Ideas

1. Jewish communities from around the world come together in Israel.
2. The blending of different traditions creates a unique and vibrant Israeli culture.
3. Being part of a larger community doesn't mean losing one's individual cultural identity.

Essential Questions

1. How do different groups in Israel maintain their unique identities while also being part of one country?
2. What can we learn about a culture through its food, and how does this apply to Israel?
3. What are the benefits and challenges of having a diverse society?

Review Questions

1. *Food Fight Israel* included foods from all of the following cultures except...
 - Albanian



- Ethiopian
 - Iraqi
 - Turkish
- 2.** What percentage of Israel's population is Jewish?
- 100%
 - **Over 70%**
 - 50%
 - Under 50%
- 3.** Israeli cuisine is made up of a mix of Jewish foods and foods from many cultures.
- **True**
 - False

Discussion Questions

1. Diversity through cuisine

Israel's population includes people from many religious, ethnic, and national backgrounds. When they came to Israel, they brought with them many of the foods that are unique to their cultures. The diversity of Israel's population can be seen through the many food options available in the marketplace.

Grades 2-3

- What Israeli foods can you name? What is your favorite Israeli food?
- Why do you think markets in Israel have so many different kinds of food from so many different places?
- Why is it important to share foods that tell the stories of where we come from?

Grades 4-5

- Have you ever had any of the foods shown in *Food Fight Israel*? If yes, share your experience. If not, which of these foods would you most like to try?



- Have you ever been to a place where there are multiple types of cuisine offered in the same area? Where was it? Why do you think they have so many different options?
- What might you learn about Israeli society by visiting the Mahane Yehuda market?

Grades 6+

- Have you ever been to the Mahane Yehuda *shuk* in Jerusalem or a market like it? From your experiences or what you saw in the video, what do you think it's like to shop there? How do you think it might be similar or different from shopping in the stores you go to?
- In what ways do you think life in the *shuk* is similar to life in everyday Israeli society?
- If Israeli cuisine is made up of food from other places, do you think there is such a thing as "Israeli" food?

2. "Jewish" and "Israeli" foods

Grades 2-3

- What is a Jewish or Israeli food that you like to eat? What do you think makes the food "Jewish" or "Israeli"?
- What new foods that you saw in the video would you like to try?

Grades 4-5

- Were you surprised to hear that Jews have lived in any of the countries mentioned in the video? What was something new that you learned about Jewish life in these places?
- Do you think there is a difference between "Israeli" food and "Jewish" food? If so, what do you think it is?

Grades 6+

- Do you think there is a difference between "Israeli" food and "Jewish" food? If so, what do you think it is?



- How do traditional foods help maintain cultural identity? How might a cook creatively change a recipe to preserve a tradition and update it with their own identity or circumstances?
- Watch this [two-minute clip](#) [7:06-9:06] from Unpacked's video about [Why Do Jews Keep Kosher?](#) The video quotes the famous line that sums up many Jewish holidays: *"They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat!"* Then review [this helpful chart](#).
 - What is the role of food in Jewish rituals? What is it used for?
 - How do Jewish foods reflect our shared history?
- Watch [this video](#) about some Jewish foods from around the world.
 - How did the experience of poverty and the need for resourcefulness contribute to many recipes that are now known as Jewish foods?
 - How did religious observances (practices of *kashrut*, or Shabbat and holidays) contribute to many recipes that Jewish communities from around the world recognize as Jewish?
- How do you think Jewish cuisine influences what foods might be considered Israeli? How do you think Israeli cuisine redefines what foods might be considered Jewish?

3. Making foods our own

In [Jerusalem: A Cookbook](#), Israeli chef Yotam Ottolenghi and Palestinian chef Sami Tamimi explore the question of who "owns" certain foods in the Middle East. They use hummus as an example: it has been a staple food for Israeli, Palestinian, and Middle Eastern families for generations. The authors argue that while many claim ownership of hummus, no one truly owns a dish, as food cultures have mixed and influenced each other for centuries. As people have lived or passed through the Land of Israel for thousands of years, each brought their own recipes and cooking styles. As a result, many dishes that seem unique to one culture often have similar versions in other cultures, each with their own slight variations. Hummus is no exception.

Grades 2-3

- When different people make the same food (like [hummus](#), [chicken soup](#), [kugel](#), [hamin/cholent](#)), do they sometimes make it a little differently? How?
- If you learned how to make a special dish from a friend's family, would it become your special dish too?



- Why do you think so many people in Israel love to eat many of the same foods (like hummus), prepared in different ways?

Grades 4-5

- Many cultures in the Middle East claim hummus as their own. Why do you think so many different groups feel connected to the same food?
- How do foods change and adapt when people move to new places?
- If your family has a special recipe that came from another culture, is it now part of your culture too? Why or why not?

Grades 6+

- Many foods in Israel are claimed by multiple cultures. Hummus, for example, has been eaten by Palestinian Arab families, Jewish families in the Land of Israel, Syrian Jewish families, and many others for countless generations. How can we think about who "owns" a dish?
- How does the history of Jerusalem as a city of "countless immigrants, occupiers, visitors, and merchants" affect its food culture?
- When different cultures make similar dishes (like various types of filled pastries - bourekas, empanadas, samosas), what does this tell us about human connection and cultural exchange?

4. A land for all

Israel's founders believed that Israel should be both a safe place for Jews and a country in which anybody could live.

Grades 2-3

- What makes Israel special as a home for Jewish people?
- Why is it important for Jews to have a country where they can be safe?
- Do you think it's a good thing that all people can live in Israel? Why or why not?
- How might new immigrants to Israel today add to this "recipe" of Israeli culture?

Grades 4-5



- How do different Jewish communities maintain their traditions while living together? What challenges might arise when different communities live together?
- What are the benefits and challenges of having large populations of non-Jews living within a Jewish country?
- Do you agree with Israel's founders that non-Jews should be able to live in Israel? Why or why not?

Grades 6+

- What do you think were some challenges that Israelis from different cultures experienced when they came together as one big group?
- How do you think Jews from different cultures were able to come together to form a united Israeli identity?
- Watch [this video](#) from Schoolhouse Rock that aired on American television in 1977. The song uses the metaphor of a "melting pot" to describe how different cultures blend together in America—like ingredients melting together in a pot to create something new. However, some people prefer to describe diverse societies as a "salad bowl," where each culture keeps its unique flavor while existing together harmoniously - like different vegetables in a salad.

Think about Israeli food and culture: Do you think Israel is more like a "melting pot," where different cultures blend together to create something new, or more like a "salad bowl," sharing the same space? Give specific examples from what you learned about Israeli food to support your answer:

- Does everyone in Israel eat the same foods now, or do different communities maintain their traditional dishes?
- When new foods come to Israel (like Yemenite malawach or Argentinian empanadas), do they stay associated with their original community or become "Israeli food" that everyone eats?
- What happens when foods from different cultures mix together to create new dishes that could only exist in Israel?



Learning Activities

1. Lesson Plan

Use our ready made 45-minute [lesson plan on Diversity](#).

2. Family learning with podcasts

- Send home this accompanying podcast [Taste of Israel](#) for families to play in the car ride to and from school this week.
- After listening to the podcast, ask families to have a dinner table discussion, having everyone at the table take turns answering the following questions:
 - What is our family's history? Where has our family lived in the past?
 - How do we connect to Israel as a home for all Jewish people?
 - What are some fun ways we could learn more about Israeli food as a family?

3. Design your own *shuk* (20 minutes)

Objective: Students will explore the diversity of Israeli society by designing their own marketplace that represents different cultural communities.

Materials: Large paper or poster board, art supplies, reference images of different foods

Procedure:

- Ask students to design their own *shuk*! If you were going to design a brand new *shuk* in Israel...
 - What would you name your *shuk*?
 - What would the layout be?
 - What types of shops, restaurants and food stalls would you include?
 - Which foods would be sold?
 - Which countries would these foods represent?
 - How might your *shuk* capture some of the unique Israeli atmosphere?



- Ask students to draw a picture of some of the shops in their *shuk* and present it to the class.

Reflection:

- How did you decide which foods to include?
- How does your market represent Israeli diversity?
- What challenges did you face in designing a space for many different cultures?

4. Food tour of the *shuk* (30 minutes)

Objective: Students will explore the cultural diversity of Israeli society by creating a virtual food tour that highlights different cultural cuisines and their significance in Israeli society.

Materials: Computers or a projector, poster boards, art supplies, photos of different restaurants and stalls from the *shuk*

Procedure:

- Using the Mahane Yehuda [website](#) or [Google Earth](#), give your students a food tour of the *shuk*.
- Students will identify three different restaurants or food stands, each representing a different culture or cuisine.
- Students will create a poster to present their food tour to visitors to the *shuk*. Each presentation should include:
 - Names of restaurants/food stands
 - Cultures and cuisines represented
 - Sample items at each stop
 - Descriptions and cultural significance
 - Fun facts about foods and cultures
- Do a [gallery walk](#) or have each student briefly present their *shuk* as a tour to the class.

Reflection: How did you choose which cultures to represent on your tour? How does your tour demonstrate the diversity of Israeli society?



5. Create a hummus bar (15-45 minutes)

Objective: Students will experience how one of the most well known Israeli foods—hummus—can unite different cultures while maintaining their individuality.

Materials: Store-bought or [homemade](#) hummus, various toppings (olive oil, paprika, [zaatar](#), chickpeas, parsley), [pita](#) and foods to dip in hummus, serving bowls and utensils

Procedure:

- Use [this recipe from Miriam Kresh](#) or start with store-bought hummus.
- Set up a hummus toppings bar and allow students to sample from the many toppings that Israelis love (e.g., olive oil; paprika; zaatar; whole chickpeas; parsley; etc.).
- Put out warm pita, pita chips, vegetables or other foods to dip in the hummus!

Reflection:

- How might different toppings reflect different cultural traditions?
- How can one food bring different communities together?
- How can trying new foods help us learn about different cultures?

6. Eat through the classroom shuk (1+ hours)

Objective: Students will create an immersive market experience that celebrates their diverse Jewish heritage through food, presentation, and storytelling.

Materials: Tables for food stalls, art supplies for signs/decorations, serving plates and utensils, potluck food prepared by students/families

Procedure:

- Plan a day for students to sample foods at their own shuk.
- Ask students and families at home to prepare a Jewish food that represents their family traditions or heritage.
- Students should also create a name and sign for their “food stall” that will be on display in the classroom *shuk*.



- “Food stalls” can be set up around the room and students should give a 1-2 minute presentation on the name of their food stall, the food they prepared and its significance in their family.

Reflection:

- How did sharing your family's food help tell your cultural story?
- What similarities and differences did you notice among the different foods?
- What new things did you learn about your classmates' cultural backgrounds?
- How does this experience reflect the diversity of Jewish communities in Israel?

7. Class Cookbook (1+ hours)

Objective: Students will create a class cookbook that celebrates the diverse cultural backgrounds within their Jewish community, fostering an understanding of how various traditions contribute to a rich, shared heritage.

Materials: [Template](#) for two-page cookbook entry, writing materials and art supplies

Procedure:

- Introduce the project to the class, explaining that each student will contribute a family recipe that represents a family tradition.
- Distribute a [two-page template](#) to each student:
 - Page 1: Recipe (name, ingredients, directions, photo of the dish)
 - Page 2: Story behind the recipe (family tradition or history, the dish's significance, what makes it special)
- Assign homework: Students should work with their families to:
 - Choose a meaningful family recipe
 - Gather the recipe details (ingredients, steps)
 - Take or find a photo of the prepared dish
 - Collect information about the recipe's history and significance
 - If possible, find a family photo related to the recipe
- In class, guide students through creating their cookbook entries:
 - Write out the recipe clearly and neatly



- Illustrate or attach a photo of the dish
- Write 1-2 paragraphs about the recipe's story
- Add family photos or illustrations as desired
- As students work, encourage reflection on how their recipe represents their family's tradition and history.
- Once completed, collect all entries and create photocopies for each student.
- Compile the photocopies into individual cookbooks for each student to take home.

Reflection:

- How does your family recipe reflect your unique cultural background within the larger Jewish community?
- In what ways does our class cookbook demonstrate the diversity of Jewish experiences and traditions?

- 8.** Give your students our [Kahoot on Diversity!](#)

Reflection Questions

1. Expanding our tastes

In the *shuk*, Israelis can find foods that come from cultures other than their own. Do you like food from other cultures or countries? What is your favorite food from a culture that is not your own?

2. Sharing traditions

How can sharing food help bring different communities together while letting them keep their own traditions?

3. Exploring diverse markets

Have you ever walked through a market or other space where you interacted with people from many cultures at once? If not, what do you think it might be like? If

yes, describe the experience. What are the benefits of having people from different backgrounds interact with one another?

4. Telling stories through food

The Jewish story can be told through the many types of food that Jews brought with them to Israel from the Diaspora. Are there any foods that can help tell the story of your country? What are they and what stories do they tell?

5. Cuisines in your hometown

What types of cuisine do the restaurants in your town serve? Is there a lot of variety, or do all the restaurants serve the same types of food? Why do you think this is the case? How might it relate to the types of people who live in your town?

6. Making your own *shuk*

If you were to help establish a *shuk* in your town, what types of restaurants would you want in it? Why did you choose these styles of cuisine?

7. Bringing your culture to Israel

If you moved to Israel, what food would you want to bring with you to represent your culture? Why did you choose this food? How might it change as you learn to cook it in a new place?

Further Learning

1. Unpacked for Educators:

- [Jerusalem Shuk Food Tour](#) (video)
- [Israeli Food](#) (video)
- [Hummus! The Movie](#) (film)
- [Who Are Israelis?](#) (video)
- [Misconceptions About Israelis](#) (video)
- [Jewish Food](#) (video)
- [The Differences Between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews](#) (video)
- [What's the difference between Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews?](#) (video)
- [Why Do Jews Keep Kosher?](#) (video)

2. [Taste of Israel](#) (podcast)



- 3.** [5 Activities To Teach Israel Using Maps](#) (resource)
- 4.** Wondering Jews with Mijal and Noam, [Cultural crossroads: Exploring Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities](#) (podcast)
- 5.** Unpacked, [Food](#) (recipes and articles)
- 6.** BimBam, [What Are the Top 8 Jewish Foods?](#) (video)
- 7.** [Homeland: Ten Stories, One Israel](#) (podcast series)
- 8.** Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi, [Jerusalem: A Cookbook](#) (book)