



Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

December 2024 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

During this winter season, the days get shorter, the sun sets earlier, and the weather gets colder. Our brothers and sisters continue to suffer in Israel with thousands displaced from their homes and 97 souls still held hostage in Gaza. Here in the US and the diaspora, we read about the ongoing wave of antisemitism that threatens Jews around the world. Despite all of these difficult challenges, the upcoming holiday of Hanukkah reminds us that we have the power to overcome this darkness. The Hanukkah Menorah reminds us that we each have the precious gift to bring more light into the world – to perform mitzvot, acts of kindness to our families and friends, and to serve as an example for others. In addition to the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days, this holiday also celebrates the return of Jewish sovereignty over the land of Israel 2,100 years ago. Today, the soldiers in Israel serve as Maccabees of our generation. We celebrate their bravery and are grateful to live in an era when Jewish sovereignty has once again returned to Israel. When you light your Menorah this month, keep in mind the miracles that occurred for our ancestors in that time, and pray for the Jewish people to remain safe and secure in our time, both in the land of Israel and throughout the world.



This newsletter, our 188th will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website www.kkjsm.org.

We now reach thousands of households worldwide. What an accomplishment for a little synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City. Our community of 'friends' continually grow with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at info@kkjsm.org

We are open for Shabbat every Saturday morning starting at 9:30am. Please email amarcus@kkjsm.org if you would like to attend, and enjoy a traditional Greek kiddush lunch after services. Our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm. If you wish to sponsor a newsletter, contact us at info@kkjsm.org

Passings

We mourn the passing of Mel Matsil, son of Isaac and Sarah Matsil. Isaac Matsil was the firstborn of 10 children of Rabbi Matsliach Yitzchak Matsil and Amelia Levy from Ioannina.



Visitors to Kehila Kedosha Janina & Past Events

We continue to welcome new and old faces to our beloved Kehila. In November we had a wonderful book presentation with Anthony Gad Bigio and hosted multiple tour groups from throughout the New York region.



Descendants of Aaron Cohen from Ioannina



Sutton Place Synagogue tour group

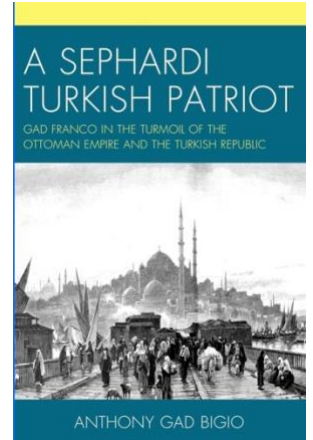


Visitors from South Africa



Myrna Nachman & Friends

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Anthony Gad Bigio's presentation of his new book "A Sephardi Turkish Patriot." We had a fascinating discussion about the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman polity and how Jews tried to navigate their place in society, and the transition to the Turkish Republic. Special thanks to Natalia Indrimi from Centro Primo Levi for facilitating the Q&A afterwards. Email info@kkjsm.org to order your copy of the book today. \$25 plus \$7 shipping.



Support KKJ on Giving Tuesday



#GIVINGTUESDAY™

**Help Us Continue Our Traditions and
Grow Our Community**

[DONATE HERE](#)

KKJ is grateful to participate in the annual Giving Tuesday Campaign this year. #GivingTuesday is a global giving movement that has been built by individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and communities in countries around the world. Millions of people have come together to support and champion the causes they believe in and the communities in which they live.

The past year has been extremely challenging for our Jewish community - for our brethren in Israel and for Jews here in the US. Despite threats to the Jewish community, we have persevered and we continue to bring our community together for services, educational programs, celebrations, and gatherings. Thankfully, with G-d's help, we have continued our regular operations with weekly Shabbat services and our traditional kiddush lunches. We have welcomed hundreds of visitors and community members through our museum tours. Earlier this year we embraced thousands who attended our Greek Jewish Festival with live music, Greek dancing, delicious food, and kids activities. Just recently we welcomed our newest team member, Theo Canter, who is leading new programs and outreach as our KKJ Community Engagement Fellow. We continue to welcome new and familiar faces as people join us to reconnect over our cherished traditions.

During this holiday season, we humbly ask for your support to help us continue our efforts to maintain our traditions and grow our community. We at KKJ are passionate and dedicated to serving our Greek Jewish community through Shabbat and Holiday Services, Museum Exhibits and Tours, Community Programs and Events, Education and Research on Greek Jewry, and so much more. All of this work depends on your support. On the

global day of giving, #GivingTuesday, please consider making a donation and aiding our efforts to preserve our Greek Jewish heritage. Our small but strong Kehila relies on you to help educate the next generation within our community and around the world. Your support can make all the difference.


Help make sure that the only Romaniote synagogue and museum in the Western Hemisphere remains a beacon for research, prayer, culture, and love of our Greek Jewish traditions in the United States. Donate today!

DONATE HERE

Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Hanukkah & Hellenism – Shabbat Class on December 14


RSVP to Amarcus@kkjism.org



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM

Hanukkah & Hellenism

**Rabbinical Responses to Classical
Philosophy, Art, & Ideas**



Greek values!
Jewish values!
Do they clash?
Do they mesh?
Come find out!

Saturday December 14
Shabbat Services - 9:30am
Kiddush Lunch - 12:30pm
Class - 1:00pm

280 Broome St. NYC
RSVP to Amarcus@kkjism.org

**Message from Theo Canter
KKJ Community Engagement Fellow**



Shalom uVeraha dear friends and community members,

It has been a packed and joyful autumn season starting off my time at KKJ. Coming off a year of growth and learning on Fulbright in Greece, I have relished the opportunity to get to know the full depth of our big Greek Jewish family in New York. Thank you to those of you who have reached out to me — whether with ideas on how we can grow and improve KKJ as a dynamic institution, or simply to warmly welcome me into the community — I remain always open to your suggestions, questions, and thoughts.

Having now spent serious time in Greek Jewish institutions on both sides of the sea, I have been grappling these days with the question of what it means to be a Romaniote or Sephardic Jew in 21st century America. How do we balance our connection to our homelands around the globe — language, melodies, traditions, food — and root ourselves in where we are, not only on a nostalgic past. (The word nostalgia itself comes from the Greek nostos, the desire to return home.)

On top of bringing back certain Romaniote melodies and prayers that I learned in Greece (such as reading the Haftara in Ancient Greek), I am especially keen to infuse our synagogue life in the spirit of the Torah of our ancestors — one of compassion, curiosity, and rich engagement of the world. A perspective of moderation whose necessity we feel today as strongly as ever.

With our KKJ team I have begun planning new programs for the coming months. We have invited scholars, artists, authors, and musicians to contribute to our new initiatives. Looking forward to Hannukah in particular — as we sing “Ocho Kandelikas” and eat our delicious Loukoumades/Bimuelos, let us also take note and pride in this holiday for its deeper meaning. Hanukkah is not a battle of “Jews” versus “Greeks” — our community is a proud testament to the fact that those two categories are not a contradiction, through our centuries of cultural flourishing in the Greek land, language, and culture.

The Jewish tradition has always been deeply linked to Greek thought and even ritual structure (to say nothing of the Hebrew language!) Our Rabbinic sages of the Talmud appreciated the beauty of Greek art and architecture — join me for a class on December 14 when I will delve into this topic in detail. What our ancestors the Maccabees fought for was what Rabbi Sacks called “the dignity of difference.” Let us not just remember, but take active pride in, being rooted in the uniqueness of our Jewish identity. What Aristotle in his Poetics called the “universal particular.” Let us hope that from our small Greek-Jewish candle can grow a great light of understanding and tolerance.

With blessings for this new year,

Theo

New Monastir Music Project

Led by Zack Youcha and the Jewish Music Research Centre
at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem



Our dear friend and community member Zack Youcha has launched a new project to document music from the Sephardic community of Monastir (present day Bitola in North Macedonia).

"I am delighted to introduce the newly published Monastirli music archive at the Jewish Music Research Centre. We decided to make this an ongoing project, to be published in increments. This first round is a set of ten songs from the Joe Elias collection, as well as two biographies. There are many more recordings to come, as well as more historical context, music transcriptions, photos, articles, etc. It's a very exciting start to what I hope will be a tool for Monastirlis to learn their heritage music; and for others to learn about it."

Listen to the first set of songs and learn more here: <https://jewish-music.huji.ac.il/en/playlist/23926>

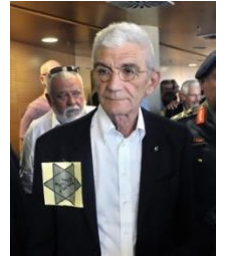
If you have family recordings of music, please contact Zack about free digitalization and audio restoration. Email Zack Youcha at zackyoucha@gmail.com

News from Jewish Greece

Thessaloniki

Ex-Thessaloniki mayor who fought to recognize city's Holocaust history dies at 82

Yiannis Boutaris, born to a famed Greek winemaking family, led efforts to capitalize on city's rich Jewish history and campaigned to establish Holocaust museum



Yiannis Boutaris, a Greek winemaking legend and political maverick who as mayor of Thessaloniki broke taboos to revive the city's rich history, has died aged 82, his family and officials said.

"He was the daring visionary who fought with all his might to bring the city back in touch with its rich multicultural, colorful and cosmopolitan past," said current Thessaloniki mayor Stelios Angeloudis. Boutaris, who sported an earring and numerous tattoos, long argued that Thessaloniki should capitalize on its [forgotten centuries-old heritage](#) as a Jewish and Turkish metropolis.

The city was the birthplace of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and was home to around 50,000 Jews before the Holocaust.

Elected in 2010 and again in 2014, Boutaris campaigned to bring tens of thousands of Turkish and Jewish tourists to the city's historic landmarks. "We are brothers with the Turks, and partners with the Jews," he said in 2015. "Our goal is to isolate hotheads and persuade them that history cannot be altered."

In 2017, he [helped create the city's](#) Holocaust Memorial Museum, which is still under construction. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attended the [dedication](#) of the site in 2017 and then-president Reuven Rivlin was [on hand in 2018](#) to lay the foundation stone. At the 2018 ceremony, Boutaris said the museum would tell the story of Jewish communities from all over Greece and the southwestern Balkans.

"It will symbolize our shame," he said. "For what happened, for what we did, and mostly for what we could not or did not wish to do... during and after the war."

Born into one of Greece's top winemaking families, Boutaris was also the founder of Arcturus, one of the country's leading wildlife protection groups.

"Until the final moment he did not cease fighting for nature, wildlife, freedom, diversity for all, the right to life for every creature," Arcturus said in a statement. He was also an early proponent of cremation, and introduced the city's annual Pride parade. His activities angered the Orthodox Church and the city's powerful nationalist faction, and he was [beaten by far-rightists](#) during a 2018 protest. In a 2021 interview, Boutaris said he was proud that Thessaloniki was no longer seen as a "conservative" city.

Statement from Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece on the Passing of Mayor Boutaris

The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, together with Hellenic Jewry participate in the mourning for the loss of Yiannis Boutaris, the man who left an indelible mark on the collective consciousness of the citizens of Thessaloniki and the citizens of our entire country.



For Greek Jews, Yannis Boutaris was **a brave man** who was not afraid and on August 29, 2014 he stood up against the followers of fascism and was sworn in for the second time as the mayor of Thessaloniki wearing the "Star of David" on his lapel publicly acknowledging that the Jews of the city are also genuine "Thessalonians".

For Greek Jews, Yannis Boutaris was **a fair man** who on November 10, 2014, at the unveiling of the monument at Aristotle University commemorating the destruction of the city's Jewish cemetery, in a monumental speech acknowledged that "The city of Thessaloniki took an unreasonably long time to break its silence, but today it can say that it is ashamed for those loyal Thessalonians who collaborated with the conquerors, for those neighbors who misused property, for those who betrayed those who tried to escape. Above all, he is ashamed of the authorities of the city: of the mayor and the general commander who agreed without complaint that the workers of the municipality in one night destroy 500 years of memory and turn the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe into a place of skulls.

For Greek Jews, Yannis Boutaris was **a man who honors memory** by declaring that the reconstruction of Freedom Square and the Holocaust Museum will be the new memorial axis of the city.

For the Greek Jews, Yannis Boutaris was **a man who fought against the oblivion of the Holocaust** when in 2018 in a historic speech he stated that "the Holocaust Museum will symbolize our shame. For what happened, for what we did, and above all for what we could not or did not want to do, natives and refugees, right and left during and after the war. The Museum is a debt of the city but also a personal bet for me. It is a debt to its Jews, as Thessalonians, Greeks and Sephardim. The Museum goes beyond the city and Greece and rewrites Thessaloniki as the metropolis of the Sephardic Jews of the Mediterranean. It aspires to tell the unknown story of the Holocaust of the Jews of the Mediterranean and the Balkans, of the Sephardi Jews of Thessaloniki and Corfu, Chania and Patras, but also of Belgrade, Skopje, Monastir, and Sarajevo, Trieste and Livorno. To highlight an aspect of the Holocaust that is often overlooked due to the emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe and in this way to make Thessaloniki a place of remembrance as well as a research and study center of international influence. And, finally, it is hoped to become a space where citizens of the whole earth, especially young people, will learn the results of the violation of human rights."

Finally, we Greek Jews mourn because we have lost a worthy fellow citizen, a loyal friend, a wonderful person. Athens, 10.11.2024 Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece

Eighty years after thousands of Greek Jews were murdered, Thessaloniki's Holocaust museum is finally set to open

Germany is among donors committing millions to the long-awaited project, to be completed in 2026, which will tell story of those who perished

Few places are more representative of the horrors that befell Greece during Nazi occupation than the old railway station of Thessaloniki.

It was here, in what is now a dusty building site on the outer edges of this northern city, that thousands of Greek Jews were loaded with brutal efficiency on to cattle trucks that took them to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. And it is here, on ground set aside for the construction of a long-awaited Holocaust museum, that Germany's head of state, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, last week launched an emotionally fraught three-day visit, declaring: "Anyone who stands and speaks here as German president is filled with shame."

The eight-story, octagonal-shaped Holocaust museum has been branded the most important behemoth to be erected in Thessaloniki since the second world war.

Construction workers have been laying its foundations since the year began, with the building due to be completed in 2026. Germany was the first to commit €10m in funds. "Finally it's happening," says David Saltiel, who heads Thessaloniki's now vastly diminished Jewish community. "We've waited for this for so many years."

More than 80 years have passed since the Third Reich's war machine orchestrated the death convoys that would see an estimated 50,000 of the city's men, women and children killed in Nazi concentration camps. It was a loss of life that destroyed one of the great centres of European Jewry – about 90% of Thessaloniki's population was eradicated – paralleled only by Poland, where similar mortality rates also occurred. Before the Nazi occupation, Salonika, as it was then called, had been known as the "Mother of Israel", a reflection of the community's ancient roots in a Balkan metropolis where Jews far outnumbered Christians well after its incorporation into the Kingdom of Greece in 1912.



Most were Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews who had settled in the trading port after their expulsion from Spain in the 15th century. Elsewhere, about 17,000 perished, ensuring that as much as 90% of Greece's total prewar Jewish population fell victim to the "final solution".

For Saltiel, a straight-talking businessman who has headed Greece's central board of Jewish communities for 25 years, the Holocaust museum is long overdue. Replacing a small if resplendent Jewish museum that opened its doors in 2001, it will, he believes, finally allow a "wound to be healed".

"I feel I am the voice of all those Jews who were put on trains, with no one stopping them and everyone looking," he says, visibly shaken as his own voice rises a little. "As the generation after the Holocaust, we have a responsibility to speak on behalf of those who could not say anything."

News of the museum has come not a moment too soon for Lola Hassid Angel, among the few survivors still alive in Greece. A feisty great-grandmother, the 88-year-old still vividly recalls being deported with her parents, both Spanish passport holders, on one of the last trains to leave Athens, where her family had fled earlier in the occupation from Thessaloniki.

It was April 1944 – three years after the Wehrmacht marched into the Greek capital – and their destination was the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen. It was mooted that there they, and other "foreign Jews", would be exchanged with German prisoners of war, a plan quashed by the D-day landings a month later.

"I remember the train journey very well. It was terrible, the smell, the stench, the people crying. And my father taking me, then barely six years old, in his arms and putting me up to an opening [in the freight car] and saying in French: 'Breathe Lola, take in the fresh air'," she tells the Observer.

They were things, she said, that were impossible to forgive or forget.

"They stole my childhood. There are memories that can never be erased. They took away my seven uncles and eight aunts, and all their children and, in the end, Thessaloniki, which we would never go back to.

"But I beat Hitler because I managed to have a big family, and I hope to live long enough to see this Holocaust museum, which, of course, should have happened long ago."

For Saltiel, the delay is testimony "to the silence" that has haunted Sephardic communities in Greece.

By the time the first death train left Thessaloniki on 15 March 1943, German bureaucrats had mastered the art of mass murder that underpinned the racial restructuring envisaged by the Nazi regime. But the silence of those who looked on as Thessaloniki's Jews were shunted into ghettos and then deported was also deafening.

In sharp contrast to Athens and other parts of Greece, where the Orthodox Church, resistance fighters and leftists rallied to hide Jews, in Thessaloniki the community was left to fend for itself.

Fewer than 2,000 survived. Those who returned invariably encountered a city whose inhabitants were not only overwhelmingly Christian but reluctant to face the horrors at all.

"In Thessaloniki silence prevailed," explains Saltiel, estimating the city's community today at around 1,000. "The majority did not want to talk about what happened, and certainly not about what did not happen."

The 9,000-sq ft museum is not only a belated tribute to those who suffered in Thessaloniki at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators. It will also celebrate the history of Greek Jewry, including the 39 other Jewish communities that, prewar, were dotted around Greece and, it is hoped, be an educational hub and human rights centre at a time when hard-right parties and Holocaust deniers are resurfacing and gaining momentum across Europe.



Greece's centre-right government, which has sought to improve ties with Israel despite mounting disquiet over its actions in the Middle East, has pledged to contribute €18m. A further €10m will come from the Stavros Niarchos philanthropic foundation while Albert Bourla, the CEO of Pfizer, will commit \$1m in prize money received for the discovery of an effective Covid vaccine. Bourla was born in Thessaloniki to Jewish parents who narrowly survived the Holocaust.

Yet all agree that had it not been for Yiannis Boutaris, the city's charismatic former mayor, the museum, even at this stage, might still not exist. A prominent wine-maker who went into local politics to "give back to the community", Boutaris was bent on opening up Thessaloniki and highlighting its Jewish and Ottoman Muslim heritage.

By reviving its once fabled multicultural past, the progressive businessman stated bluntly that he hoped to tackle the blatant antisemitism that, for years, had stalked socially conservative northern Greece. Central to that was a proper Holocaust museum. Under his stewardship, a site was found and permits signed.

"Boutaris was unique because he didn't care about the political cost, and that really helped break taboos in a place where so many pretended the Holocaust never happened," says Giorgos Antoniou, assistant professor of Jewish studies at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Now 82, the tattooed, chain-smoking Boutaris regards the venture as one of his greatest achievements. On being sworn into office for a second time in 2014, he donned a yellow star to show far-right municipal councillors from the now defunct neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party that he meant business.

"Wherever I went I'd be asked, 'why do you want this museum?'" he says. "There was push-back, for sure. With the Holocaust, Thessaloniki lost its future. All the good merchants, bankers and academics were Jewish. It was a huge loss."

Five years on, Boutaris shakes his head in disbelief that there is still so much to do. A memorial park he had planned to create in Eleftherias [Freedom] Square, the plaza where thousands of Jewish men were first rounded up in 1942, remains a car park because his successor refused to sign off on the project. As a result, the city's Holocaust memorial stands nearby on the corner of a busy intersection, half hidden by trees.

Even worse, he says, was the decision to build the University of Thessaloniki over an ancient Jewish cemetery. "For a long time, there was no sign or monument on the site, just as there are no signs to suggest that there were once 30 synagogues in this town before all but one was destroyed by the Nazis."

But Boutaris is optimistic. Plans to transform Freedom Square into a memorial park with the Holocaust memorial sculpture as its centrepiece have been resurrected. And the new museum itself, he says, will not fail to impress. "There are Holocaust museums all over the world but none have been dedicated solely to the history and culture of Sephardic Jews in this part of the world. And none will tell their story like this."

Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and Jewish Museum participate in International Exhibition

The Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki participated in the International Balkan Philatelic Exhibition "BALKANFILA XX" which took place from 13 to 16 November 2024 at TIF, as this year the main objective of the exhibition was to highlight the historical and multicultural journey of Thessaloniki. The depiction of the Jewish presence was made through pre-war postcards of Thessaloniki and stamps issued in Greece and Israel.



The chairman of the Board of Directors of E.L.T.A., Mr. Daniel Benardout, was guided on Friday 15.11.2024 to the periodical exhibition section of the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, where he was welcomed by the vice-president of I.K. Thessaloniki, Mr. Lazaros Sefiha.

On 15.11.2024 the presentation of the Jewish Museum took place during which the vice president of I.K. Thessaloniki, Lazaros Sefiha addressed a greeting followed by the lecture of Xenia Eleftheriou, Dr. Philosophical School of Athens, with the title: "The presentation of the depictions of the Jewish presence on pre-war postcards of Thessaloniki and on stamps".

Athens

On November 4, 2024, the book "Mathildi A8428" by Victoria Sabetai was presented at the Spiritual Center of Jewish Community of Athens.

The event opened with greetings from community President Albertou Taraboulos, who emphasized the importance of recording the experiences of the Holocaust to preserve collective memory. The event was sensitively coordinated by Rachel Baruch, while secretary of KISE Victor I. Eliezer highlighted the historical value of the book with a substantial reason while making references to contemporary events. Michael Sabetai, grandson of Mathilde and vice president of the Jewish Community of Volos, also spoke. Through his personal narratives, he shared experiences that highlight unknown aspects of his grandmother's life, honoring her legacy both in the family and in Volos.



The presentation of the book concluded with a speech by author Victoria Sabetai, who spoke about the difficulties of writing and her personal experiences during the creation of the work "Mathildi A8428". She spoke about the challenges she faced during the research and recording of the events, but also about her personal need to keep memory and humanity alive through literature. The author emphasized the importance of history as a tool for educating new generations. The emotion was palpable in the audience, who watched in awe as Mathilde's stories of strength and courage unfolded.

Mimis Cohen: "I've always loved art, beauty and elegance" Full article [Here](#)

The internationally renowned professor of plastic surgery with the great work in leading institutions abroad, talks about the challenges of his science and about the aesthetic operations that men prefer today.

Mimis Cohen has lived a life dedicated to knowledge and science. "I was born and raised in Athens, right after the Second World War, right after the Holocaust, in which my parents were



saved hiding in Christian houses, but too many relatives, acquaintances and friends were lost forever" remembers himself, a descendant of Romaniot families Jews with a centuries-long presence in Greece.

His father was the eminent surgeon Nissim Cohen, and the young boy who grew up in his clinic never wanted anything more than to follow in his footsteps. In 1970, he graduated from the School of Medicine of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, completed his residency as a general surgeon at the University Clinic of Aretaio Hospital in 1976 and received his doctorate in 1977.

In the meantime he had served as an assistant/reserve ensign doctor in the Navy and had done his rural (field service obligation we would call it more formally) at Skylitsios Hospital in Chios.

That year he moved to the United States, where he completed his mandatory training in General Surgery at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Dr. Cohen went to America with the prospect of returning to Greece shortly, but in his case the phrase "nothing is more permanent than temporary" was verified.

After all, his interest had already turned to plastic surgery: "Although I loved surgery as a career, I always liked art, beauty and aesthetics. Plastic surgery combines all of these." Predictably, then, he was then selected as a trainee in the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery program at the same university, under Professor Richard Schultz.

In 1982, he trained in Head and Neck Surgery at the renowned Roswell Park Memorial Institute cancer center in Buffalo, New York. He returned to the University of Illinois Department of Plastic Surgery in 1983, where he successively rose through all academic ranks.

From 1989 until 2019 he was professor and director of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery. At the same time, he reorganized the Craniofacial Surgery center of the University of Illinois, which is one of the largest in the world, and served as its director from 2010 to 2019.

However, he would like to make a distinction: "As we know, plastic surgery emerged as a branch of science as a result of the First World War, when it was necessary to treat the amputations and disfigurements of soldiers.

Cosmetic surgery is something very interesting, which I have been very involved with, but the subject of plastic surgery has a much wider scope: it includes the repair of all kinds of injuries and burns, and it also includes my own field of action - the children who are born with congenital craniofacial anomalies. And here, of course, we have functional as well as aesthetic restoration."

Dr. Cohen has received multiple awards and distinctions, in Greece he has been recognized as an honorary doctorate at the University of Ioannina (2016) and at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2019), where he is also a visiting professor. He is also noted for his extensive humanitarian work (such as – among others – creating the Face the Future Foundation in Chicago for the long-term treatment of the needy).

With his extensive experience he described pioneering surgical protocols that were presented in many publications and books, making them universally accepted. Along with his clinical, educational and administrative work, Dr. Cohen has demonstrated a rich research and writing work, which he has presented in more than 170 publications, as well as in important books, such as the three-volume "Mastery of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery" (1994) and the two-volume "Unfavorable results in Plastic Surgery: Avoidance and treatment" (2018). A few months ago, "A Comprehensive Guide to Male Aesthetic and Reconstructive Plastic Surgery" was published in collaboration with Seth R. Thaler.

We may have the impression that until a few years ago cosmetic surgery on men was a taboo subject. "It wasn't exactly taboo. It was happening, but somewhat secretly. Men didn't talk about it publicly like women did.

Several years ago I had noticed something that had piqued my interest. Middle-aged men would come and not necessarily from high society, and they would ask me to fix their eyes a little, to make their face more youthful.

The reason? They were trying to find work and they didn't hire them when they looked a bit old. Even though they were very experienced, employers were looking for someone who looked younger. Our society is built like this, it favors the young.

And not only does it favor the young, it draws attention to the one who is somehow more beautiful. You know, men - especially young men - now look a lot in the mirror, and social media has played a big role in all this, and even if they have some fat, they want to get rid of it and get abs, the so-called six-pack . I'm fine with everything, as long as what someone asks for I understand that I can give it.

Because the problem of body dysmorphic disorder is huge. There are people who might come in every week like they're shopping for clothes, and they usually end up going from one plastic surgeon to another.

They will never be happy with anything. It needs attention and control. I tell young and young surgeons that there is no excuse, even if the phone hasn't rang for a month, you have to learn to say no to clients like that."

Dr. Cohen – whom the Athens Academy recently elected as its corresponding member, from among Greek scientists abroad, in "Medicine-Surgery", in the First Class of the Positive Sciences – obviously knows what he is talking about.

Sukkot celebrations in Athens



On Friday, October 18th, the students of the Athens Lauder Elementary School visited the Sukkah and Synagogue of the Community. They played, ate, ran, sang, celebrated, and learned about the holiday of Sukkot in the colorful and beautiful Sukkah.

Volos

Day in Volos on Literature in Schools

On November 1, 2024, the Directorate of Secondary Education in collaboration with the Primary Education of Magnesia, the Education Advisors Areti Tzanetopoulou and Paschalis Dimos, as well as the Association of Philologists of the Prefecture of Magnesia, organized a conference entitled: "For the Mathildas of the world: Teaching humanity and history through literature work of Mathilde A8428". The aim of the conference was to promote the inclusion of independent literary works in the educational program of Primary and Secondary Education.



The central theme of the event was the project "Mathildi A8428" by the author Victoria G. Sabetai.

The Deputy Minister of Education, Religion and Sports, Zetta Makri, welcomed the event and emphasized the importance of education in raising awareness against hate speech and violence, as well as defending fundamental values such as respect for diversity and solidarity. He mentioned that the Ministry aims to teach three literary works per year and that the book "Mathilde A8428" could be included in this program.

The presentation of the book was made by Vasiliki Mantzorou, philologist and President of the Association of Philologists of Magnesia, while an experiential approach to the work was presented by Mathilde's grandson Michael Sabetai. The students of the 1st Primary School of Agria and the Special School of Agria, under the guidance of the director Zoe Gerostathis, as well as students of the GEL Agria, with the philologist and teacher in charge Alexa Mourtzis, they presented theatrical events, using excerpts from the book. The performances deeply moved the audience.

The Education consultants presented teaching proposals for the integration of the project "Mathilde A8428" in Primary and Secondary Education, while the author of the book, Victoria Sabetai, closed the event with her speech. The day was an important meeting for the cultivation of humanitarian values and the integration of literature in the educational process.

Rhodes

Impact of the Holocaust in Rhodes

The Center for Jewish Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life of the University of Connecticut organized on 11/6/2024 a talk on "The Impact of the Holocaust on the Jews of Greece" with the director of the Jewish Community of Rhodes Ms. Carmen Cohen. Ms. Cohen's speech was also streamed online and there were many questions from those who watched her via zoom.



The Center for Greek Studies "Paideia" and the University of Connecticut, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos, presented at the Center "Paideia" an exhibition of the Jewish Museum of Rhodes which will remain open to the public until early March 2025.

During the event, students of the "Paideia" Study Center presented the history of the most important Jewish Communities of Greece and lit candles in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Ms. Cohen gave a speech on the history of the Jewish Community of Rhodes and the creation of the Museum.

The event was accompanied by Ladino songs by Sarah Aroeste, singer, composer and author of children's books in Ladino. The event was attended by the Most Reverend Bishop Athenagoras, representing the Most Reverend Archbishop of America Elpidophoros, Mr. George Toppos, Deputy Mayor of Rhodes, members of the Pan-Rhodian Association of America "Apollo", professors and students of the University.

Cohen started by saying that "history is full of tragedies and the history of Greece is no exception." The Italian and Nazi occupation of Greece from 1941 to 1944 still hovers over Greek society to this day and the occupation left it in ruins afterwards. 5% of the Greek population died in combat, starvation, massacre and execution and 88 percent of the Greek Jewish population died in the Holocaust. The reasons for this large expulsion of the Greek Jewish population remain unclear; people argue that complicity from the government, inadequate Jewish leadership, Greek antisemitism or the conservative mindset of the Jewish community at the time may be to blame.

Cohen explained how there were two types of Jews who lived in Greece during World War II. The Romaniotes, who spoke Greek and descended from the Roman Empire, and the Sephardim, who spoke Spanish and descended from the Spanish Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. The city of Thessaloniki had the largest population of Sephardic Jews.

In 1941, there were 78,400 Jews in Greece. During the beginning of Italian occupation, relations between Greek Jews and Italian officers were friendly, even helping some Greek Jews move into the Italian occupation zone in order to escape hardships. Once Italian occupation ended in 1943 though, the Nazis started to implement the "final solution," the plan to commit genocide of all the Jews in Europe. They started rounding

up all the Jews into the former Italian occupation zone and sent them on trains to Auschwitz. Some died before they reached Poland, and top Greek government officials did little to stop it.

Some minor officials and priests did try their best to save some Jews from genocide. The Chief of Police in Athens gave fake IDs to some Athenian Jews, an archbishop gave some Jews baptism certificates and also denounced the Nazi's intention of deporting the Jews of Greece. Around eight to 10 thousand Jews lived, thanks to these efforts and Greek citizens being unwilling to cooperate with Nazi officers. A Turkish consul in Rhodes saved the lives of a few Jews by giving them Turkish citizenship or by telling Nazi officers that they had ties to family in Turkey.

Cohen next moved onto the story of the deportation of Jews in Rhodes, Greece. A fairly unknown part of the Holocaust and the overall deportation of Jews in Greece.

Before 1944, the Germans got along well with the Jewish population in Rhodes, they didn't interfere in their lives and some Rhodian survivors had "friendly" relations with them. Some Jews dared to escape the occupation but most stayed.

But in 1944 the Nazis ordered the Jews in Rhodes to either move into the city or three nearby villages for deportation. Men over 60 were asked to give their identity cards and work permits to Nazi officers, which most believed was a ploy to put them into forced labor. Women whose husbands had been taken by the Nazis were forced to either join their husbands or be shot. Given the choices, these women rounded up little personal belongings and joined their husbands for deportation to a concentration camp. The property and assets of Jewish families would be seized by the Nazis.

On July 20, 1944, the 2,500 Rhodian Jews were rounded up and sent on ships to mainland Greece, before changing transportation to go to Auschwitz. Some government officials and priests protested, but it was in vain.

The trip would start on July 23 and take eight days. It was a horrible affair for the Rhodian Jews, packed like sardines into cargo bays in hot, humid weather. Five people died on the journey and their bodies would be thrown overboard.

They eventually arrived at the Haidari concentration camp, a transit center to other concentration camps around Poland and Austria. Cohen shared a headline about Haidari, that read "Haidari Prison Outside Athens Ranks High Among Nazi Horrors Inmates had to Run, Never Walk, Were Beaten with or Without Cause, Taken Away in Truckloads for Secret Manslaughter."



The journey to Auschwitz started on Aug. 3, 1944, and took 13 days by train. Few survived the trip to Auschwitz, and fewer survived the camp, those who survived both died soon after from exhaustion due to the poor conditions they suffered.

Their train was the last shipment of Greek Jews to Auschwitz. The first mayor of Free Rhodes, Gabriel Haritos, renamed the town square to "Square of Jewish Martyrs," in remembrance of the Rhodian Jewish community, and was the official recognition of the Holocaust on behalf of a Greek authority. In 2002, a monument was erected in the square to remember the victims of the Holocaust. Recently, Greek president Katerina Sakellariopoulou, had this to say on Holocaust Remembrance Day: "it reveals the naked face of evil and puts our moral conscience to the test."

Israel, Greece negotiating on 2 billion-euro deal for Iron Dome-like system

Athens seeking to accelerate modernization of armed forces amid frictions with long-time rival Turkey

Greece is in talks with Israel to develop a 2 billion-euro (\$2.11 billion) anti-aircraft and missile defense dome, part of a wider push to modernize its armed forces as it recovers from a protracted debt crisis, Greek officials said on Thursday.

The defenses would likely mimic Israel's Iron Dome and other systems that intercept short-range and long-range missiles launched during strikes from its neighbors amid the ongoing conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon.

Greece is keen to invest in its defenses to keep up with its NATO ally and historic rival Turkey, which is also developing its own air defenses, despite some improvement in relations.

"The plan is to create a multi-layer anti-aircraft and anti-drone system," one source with knowledge of the issue told Reuters after a closed-door briefing with Greek Defense Minister Nikos Dendias. "We are in discussions with Israel," the source said.

A second official confirmed the scale of the potential deal, adding that Greece needs to spend 12.8 billion euros by 2035 to modernize its armed forces.

The air defenses are part of Athens's 10-year military purchasing plan that includes acquiring up to 40 new F-35 fighter jets and drones from the US and four Belharra frigates and Rafale jets from France.

"Our effort is for a quick transition of our armed forces to the 21st century," Dendias said before the Thursday briefing.

Greece currently uses US Patriot and old Russian S-300 systems to protect its airspace. Despite some thaw in Greece's long-troubled relations with Turkey, its much larger eastern neighbor, the two countries remain at odds on a range of issues including sea boundaries, energy resources and the airspace over the eastern Mediterranean.

Conference in Austria on Preserving Cultural Heritage and New Technology

The Greek participation in the 29th International Conference on Cultural Heritage and New Technologies held from November 4 to 6, 2024 in Vienna was dynamic.

The theme of the Round Table was "How can we make the invisible visible using new technologies? Reflection on Europe's Lost Jewish Communities and Their Lost Cultural Heritage" in the context of which excellent presentations were made.

The following topics on Greek Jewry were also presented during the conference: "**Digital Preservation of Synagogues in Greece**" by Ilias Messina ([HERE](#) the paper) that won the Best Paper Award, "Looking for traces of the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki" by Xenia Eleftheriou ([HERE](#) the introduction) and "Thrace, Northern Greece: Architectural traces of Jewish worship and memory" by D. Polychronopoulou, M. Grigoriadou, A. Kapandritis, I. Aspioti, and E. Cetinje ([HERE](#) the proposal).

The presidency of the Round Table was held by: Sultana Zorpidou, Elisabeth Monamy, Bert Brouwenstijn, Daniel Stiller. You can see the conference program [HERE](#)

Greece's Defense Revamp: 137 Bases to Close, New Focus on Drones [Full article Here](#)

Greece announced a major revamp of its defense forces and the deployment of drone systems (UAVs) in all military bases in the country. Minister of National Defense Nikos Dendias presenting the new structure of the Armed Forces at the meeting of the Standing Committee on National Defense and Foreign Affairs of the Parliament, said that 137 military bases and installations will close.



"We should move quickly to close 137 military installations. The concept of every city and a stadium, every village and a gym cannot apply to military installations. "We must also enter the age of drones. Every unit of the Greek Army will have an anti-drone capability," Dendias pledged.

In Greece, hundreds of military bases and installations have been created that have little defensive value. They were established to offer a sense of security to towns and villages across the country and help the local economies. Dendias said that perhaps up to 250 military installations should close but admitted he was short of funds to invest in larger units. "A phased closure program has been drawn up and this is its first phase."

Greece Defense Revamp: Reorganizing the Army

The Greek Minister also told lawmakers that he plans to reduce army formations. "We will eliminate more than 30 formations, and we will consolidate them so we can save manpower and increase firepower."

He noted that currently there are units at Evros, on the Greece-Turkey border whose strength is short by more than 70 percent. At the same time, there is a unit in the Peloponnese with 30 percent more personnel. "This doesn't make sense," he stressed. "It makes no sense to have 800 bases and installations, more than the United States."

A key highlight of the proposed reforms is the establishment of a comprehensive air defense system. This initiative aims to protect both the Aegean islands and the mainland against a variety of aerial threats, including drones.

The plan includes deploying anti-drone technology alongside air defense missile systems capable of neutralizing short-, medium- and long-range threats. Dendias said that the Greek Army must enter the age of drones. "Every unit of the Greek Army will have an anti-drone capability, and 3 out of 4 battalions we are creating will also have the ability to launch drones."

Strengthening the Greek Navy

The Navy will acquire strategic strike capabilities that it has never had and will be able to project power. "Not just to defend the Aegean." The Minister of National Defense that the key defense projects include the modernization of frigates, the modernization of submarines, and missiles, the new Constellation frigate being designed with the United States, and the new corvette being designed with the European Union.

"All these programs will bring about 6 or 7 billion euros to the Greek shipbuilding industry in the next ten years," Dendias stressed. "The approach that exists in the ministry is to create an ecosystem of defense industries that can support the Armed Forces of the country. Let's get away as much as possible from the mentality that 'buy off the shelf,'" he explained.

Greece Airforce

For the Air Force, he said that the ministry is preparing a program to harmonize the various aircraft types that are still operational. "We need to reach a ceiling of 200 fourth and fifth-generation fighter aircraft that would include the upgraded F-16 Vipers, the Rafales, and the F-35s when we get them. This will allow us enormous economies of scale, freeing up human resources so that we can maintain the strongest Air Force we've ever had," Dendias stressed.

Seattle

Bivas – the Ladino High School Club of America, held its second National High School Shabbaton from November 7-11 in Seattle, WA. More than three dozen Sephardic high school students gathered for an incredible three-day weekend led by Sephardic Brotherhood Managing Director Ethan Marcus (New York), Bivas Coordinator Miriam Raphael Klein (Boca Raton, FL), high school educator Avi Garson (New York), and Head of School of the Seattle Hebrew Academy Rabbi Benjy Owen (Seattle).



Students joined from Sephardic communities in Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, Seattle, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and South Florida, meeting one another for the first time in-person and getting the chance to experience a unique Ladino-speaking weekend. We learned how to bake Sephardic Borekas and stuffed grape leaves, led our own morning Shabbarit services, had incredible Torah learning sessions, explored the Seattle Space Needle and Pike’s Place Market, and learned tons of Ladino words and phrases! A special thank you to all our sponsors and supports, especially our affiliate synagogues Congregation Ezra Bessaroth and Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation for hosting the Shabbaton!



Ladino Day in Seattle

Details [Here](#)

The UW Sephardic Studies Program & Stroum Center for Jewish Studies present

THE 12TH ANNUAL
LADINO DAY

The
familiar
a novel



12/8 LADINO DAY | “The Familiar” with Author Leigh Bardugo
Sunday, December 8, 10:00 am PST - 11:30 am PST

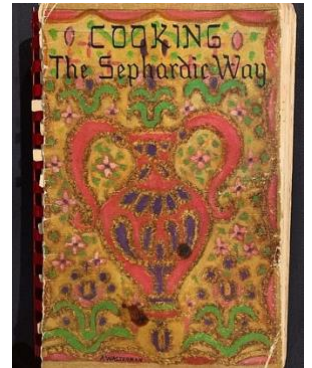
The graphic features a dark background with decorative elements including silver chalices, green leaves, and oranges. The text is centered and uses a mix of serif and sans-serif fonts. A portrait of the author, Leigh Bardugo, is positioned on the right side of the graphic.

Cooking the Sephardic Way – Full article by Patricia Ezratty [Here](#)

Cooking the Sephardic Way from the Temple Tifereth Israel Sisterhood, was one of the first Sephardic specific cookbooks, now in its 3rd edition

Note: KKJ is proud to sell this cherished cookbook. Email info@kkjism.org to order your copy today. \$25 plus \$7 shipping.

In 1932, the first Temple of the Sephardic Community of Los Angeles, otherwise known as *La Comunidad*, opened its doors. The community was largely made up of Jews who had emigrated from the then Ottoman Empire—Salonica (Thessaloniki), Turkey, Egypt—Ladino speaking Sephardic Jews who traced their lineage back to the pre-Inquisition Iberian Peninsula. The community continued to grow, changing their name to Temple Tifereth Israel, and today the congregation is comprised of well over 1000 families—largely Persian—a congregation second only to New York’s Spanish and Portuguese, Shearith Israel.



Tifereth Israel’s Sisterhood’s cookbook, *Cooking the Sephardic Way*, first published in the 1970s, was one of only three Sephardic specific cookbooks available at the time. The book looks fairly plain, the front of the book illustrated with a vase surrounded by flowers. Bound with a red plastic binding spine, the book contains no pictures to speak of; it is a collection of dishes, menus, and instructions for the Sephardic Jewish housewife who was quickly finding herself assimilating to a new landscape. The book stood the test of time as a resource and is now on its third edition.

Elaine Lindheim, whose family has been associated with Tifereth Israel since the 1930s, and whose grandfather was one of its earliest presidents, says that the Sisterhood was always a strong presence in the Temple and put on events, that they catered, to great renown. Her mother and aunt both contributed to the original cookbook, a way to fundraise and expose the larger community to Sephardic culture and cuisine, and to preserve the recipes that the community saw rapidly disappearing. The call for recipes was put out in the mid-60s and the rest is history, though she is not sure how much testing went into the recipes to make sure they actually worked.

Lindheim says that the recipes her mother contributed were her specialties such as *rosca*, a ring shaped sweet bread often made for holidays. She still has her grandmother’s wooden mixing bowl for making dough; the bowl that she uses and will pass onto her granddaughter. In Sephardic culture, recipes were often passed down from mother to daughter through practice and Lindheim says that her mother possessed a rare talent for teaching. Her aunt, Suzanne Amado, contributed her *bourekas* and *boyos* recipes. Lindheim recalled the stories the women told of the *Banyo di novio*, when the close female relatives of a bride-to-be would accompany the bride to the mikvah, after which the trousseau was displayed, and the *rosca di novio* would be broken over her head for good luck.



Mireille Mathalon, whose family emigrated to America in 1956 during Nasser’s expulsion of the Egyptian Jewish community, and now handles the reprint and sales of *Cooking the Sephardic Way*, says she sends copies of the book all over the United States. She says that the Sisterhood’s legendary *bourekas*, *boyos*, and *biscochos* were made and sold from the Temple until the congregation became more Persian in makeup around the early 1990s.

The Sisterhood put on a Food Festival three years in a row in the early aughts in which they invited members of the Cuban, Egyptian, Greek, Iraqi, Iranian, Israeli, Moroccan, and Turkish communities to participate. And their Cookbook Club, formed over 10 years ago as an effort to continue Sisterhood activities and integrate new members, invited members to go to each other’s homes and share a dish they had cooked. From this activity

the new Or Chadash Sisterhood cookbook, *Sephardic Heritage Cookbook*, came about in 2019 featuring some oldies but goodies, but mostly new recipes from the congregation.

It's a true story of evolution and change, and a lesson to us all that there is no time like the present to preserve our culture's cuisine and customs. Amongst the recipes you can find known favorites like *biscochos*, *avgolemono*, *mazapan*, and *bolos*, or lesser known items like *fijones* (beans), *lahne be sahem* (an Arabic-Sephardic Potato Casserole), and *pollo con keftes de espinaca* (chicken with spinach patties). There are even holiday specific sections for Tu B'shvat, Rosh Hashanah, and Purim.



The Forgotten Foods of Hanukkah

Latkes weren't always the quintessential Hannukah food. Get the real story of some of the forgotten dishes from the festival of lights. By [Patricia Ezratty](#)

There is a common misconception that Jews celebrate Hanukkah with potato latkes, and in America that assumption is not far off since local custom has a way of trumping family tradition. I grew up just outside New York City, the city which boasts the largest Jewish community outside of Israel, where my grandmother's Greek Sephardic culinary tradition was exclusively present at every holiday except for Hanukkah where [Keftes de Prassa](#)— or as we called them "Leek Bombs"— were served alongside the Ashkenazi potato latkes. And until I moved to Israel in my early 20s I didn't realize those latkes represented a small subsection of the fried foods that different communities prepared to celebrate the Festival of Lights.

Before Hanukkah became associated with oil, it was associated with dairy. The origin of that custom is the story of Judith, daughter of a famous Rabbinical family who saved Jerusalem from occupation by the Babylonian army. Judith seduced Holofernes – the minister of the Assyrian army who wanted to conquer Jerusalem – and fed him salty and thirst inducing cheese, causing him to drink a good deal of wine and consequently fall asleep. While he slept she cut off his head and thus prevented the city from falling. In some communities, the dairy influence remains and [cheese pancakes from Italy](#) and Eastern Europe are made for the holiday.

However, once the connection between Hanukkah and fried foods had been firmly established, by Rambam's father, Rabbi Maimon ben Yosef Chaim in the 12th century, most communities abandoned the dairy observance. In fact, it was only in the 16th century, when sugar became a cheap commodity in Europe that donuts even resembled what we know today (prior to this they were savory). The Eastern European sufganiyot became ubiquitous in Israel during the 8 nights of Hanukkah, in the early 20th century. Food researcher Gil Marks linked their popularity to the workers' union and the influx of Jewish settlers into Israel who were in need of an income. The Labor Union encouraged bakeries and entrepreneurs to fry thousands of donuts for the holiday (recognizing the difficulty of making sufganiyot at home as well as their potentially addictive nature) and pushed them as a mandatory treat at gatherings and public events, and thus sufganiyot reached center stage. In recent decades their mass appeal has spread to the diaspora, but communities outside of Israel long had their own fried sweet treats to bring to the table with [Sfenj](#) from Northern Africa, [Loukoumades](#) from Greece, and [bimuelos](#) from Sephardic cuisine (with a kosher for Passover version made with matzah flour attributed to Turkey).



Yet, there are a slew of completely unknown Hanukkah treats that once reigned throughout Mediterranean communities. Perhaps the least well known donut-like delicacy is [Fritella di Hanukkah](#) from the Jewish community in Pitigliano – one of the oldest Jewish communities in Italy: small rhombuses of raisin studded, anise flavored yeasted dough are deep fried and drizzled with a honey-lemon syrup. Churros are associated

with Mexican cuisine, but Genie Milgrom found a recipe (in a hidden suitcase with generations worth of family records and recipes) for a very simple [Sephardic version of churros](#) that her family prepared on Hanukkah. Meanwhile, nearly extinct [Shamelias](#), which were prepared across Sephardic communities in Greece and Turkey, are crunchy, delicious, and not overly sweet bows of orange and brandy flavored fried dough dusted with powdered sugar. When FOODISH posted the recipe for Shamelias on social media, we had dozens of followers who mentioned that they had their own version on this delightful treat from Hungary, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania all in different forms with different names from tzarisena hoyzen – “torn pants” in Yiddish- to the Romanian Minciunele, which literally translates to “little liars.”

Of course there are still other fried treats that were prepared for other holidays entirely. [Puri](#), a treat traditionally eaten to break fast on Yom Kippur and also with a number of different filling options, for instance, could be an amazing stand in for donuts. [Halva del Ajin](#), or “fake halva”, is made with tiny balls of almond flavored fried dough that is then covered in a caramel syrup and very closely resembles a brittle or toffee. So for this Hanukkah, take a page from the playbook of the past and check out the vast culinary tradition of our global Jewish community- there’s at least one new recipe for every candle- and make sure to add any of your own family traditions to the growing collection of Jewish recipes so you can celebrate the miracle of the oil in more ways than one.

Shamelias – fried dough strips

Probably the only recipe that can't be found online (until now)- a beautiful dish from the Jews of Spain: ribbons of fried dough, flavored with orange

20 minutes

16-20 shemalias



The shamelia, or shamelias in the plural, are one of the most refreshing fried foods we’ve come across – and it’s not clear how they haven’t been integrated into the holiday’s collective oil-dripping repertoire so far – they’re beautiful, delicious and excessively crunchy and also very easy to prepare. Their design can be a bit of a challenge, so if you are not given to intricate handwork, you can scrap the butterfly ribbon design and simply curl or tie the strips of dough and fry them that way.

Shamelias were originally prepared by Jews of Spanish descent, mainly from Turkey and Greece, but over the years the item gradually disappeared. When searching for Shamelias online, the search results (very poor) lead to a few unanswered requests for the recipe in expat Facebook groups and a single mention of Shamelias as part of a manot misloach of ‘Sephardic’ dishes for Purim.

It is not easy to find the recipe, even in culinary books: food researcher Gil Marks mentions shamelias as a Purim dish in “The world of Jewish cooking” from 1999 and then again in his encyclopedia of Jewish food published in 2009, in which he associates them with Hanukkah.

A recipe in Hebrew and in Ladino can be found in Matilda Cohen Serrano’s book “Cooking with Ladino Taste” alongside a picture reminiscent of [fazuelos cookies](#) (which raises the suspicion that shemalias and fazuelos are the same fried treat, the only difference is the oil used). In the book “EL GIZADO SEFARADI” – the collection of about 150 recipes of expatriates from Spain that were published for about four decades in the magazine for Ladino culture “Aki Jerusalem” the authors – Zeldia Ovadia, Moshe Shaul (founder and editor of the magazine) and Dr. Aldina Quintana – there is a recipe in Ladino.

The recipe below is based on the Greek version that appears in the book “Las Comedicas de Rodis” by Menashe Salomon, which includes dozens of recipes (in English and Ladino) from the Jewish community of Rhodes. The Greek version uses plenty of juice and orange peels (the other recipes usually only use flour, sugar, water and eggs) and is particularly fun.

The design of shemalias likely varies from region to region, and in any case, most of the cookbooks do not have a picture and the preparation section talks about creating dough ribbons, tying dough ribbons or spirals – so you have creative freedom to go with any design you feel like.

When we uploaded the recipe to our Facebook page, we received a flood of responses from our followers telling us about similar fried foods with different names from around the world. The particularly common version is the Hungarian Csoroge, also called “scraps”. Even those who live on the Romanian side of the border have their own version – Minciunele, or literally translated “little liars”. The expatriates of Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania fondly remembered Khrustyky (also known as Hrostachiks, Hrustule, Friedlach, Schleiplach, or Motkalch), which were fried in honor of Sukkot, Hanukkah, or Purim – depending on the family – and also starred on dessert tables at weddings in the kibbutz’s. And there were also followers who told about an Italian version of the recipe, called Harborest or “Italian doughnuts”.

Each version of the recipe also has a slightly different shape – small rhombuses, rectangles with a hole in the center or a long ribbon of dough with a knot in the center. One follower wrote that the shape of the ribbons in the picture is called ladino fiongos, and another surfer wrote that her German grandmother used to make dough ribbons like these called strobli.

In some Polish families, they prepared these fried foods in the shape of pants and called them in Yiddish tzarisena hoyzen – “torn pants”, and a similar report was also received from Chile, where they called them calzones rotos – “torn underpants”.

Ingredients for Shamelias - fried dough strips

- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon brandy
- 1 orange zested and juiced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon (16 grams) vanilla sugar (or two packets)
- 2 tablespoons Sugar
- about 2 cups flour you might not need it all
- confectioner's sugar for dusting
- oil for deep frying



Instructions

1. Beat the egg with the brandy, orange juice and olive oil.
2. Add flour gradually and while kneading only until a soft and sticky dough is obtained. Stop adding the flour and knead until a soft, flexible, uniform and non-sticky dough is formed. If necessary, add a little more flour.
3. Flour a work surface and transfer the dough onto it. Roll out into a sheet a little less than .4 of an inch (1 cm) thick and cut into rectangular strips of about ¾" x 4" (2x10 cm).
4. Heat frying oil in a large, wide pot: if you have a thermometer, heat the oil to 350F (180C) degrees. If you do not have a thermometer, place a small piece of dough in the oil; the oil should gently bubble around it.
5. Shape the strips into ribbons. You can also roll them into spirals or form them into any shape you like.
6. Fry for 2-3 minutes on each side, until the strips of dough are golden-brown. **Important note:** the longer the shamelias are fried, the crispier they get and retain that crispness for a long time. Therefore, if you aren't eating the shamelias immediately after frying, leave them in the oil for another minute or two (so that they won't get soggy).

Check out more delicious recipes online [Here](#)

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



The central message of Hanukkah is the miraculous Maccabean victory by God's hand over Antiochus and the Seleucid Greeks in their declared and determined goal to completely eliminate Judaism and Jewish spiritual life in the Land of Israel. All the rites and rituals of Hanukkah reflect both aspects of this triumph: the military victory over the Seleucid forces, and the spiritual victory of the rededication of the desecrated and defiled Temple and the restoration of Jewish spiritual life in the Holy Land.

But beyond this classic message, the Hanukah story provides an even broader message that is particularly pertinent today.

Archeological digs throughout the years have proven the indigenous and continuous presence of Jews and Jewish life in the Land of Israel. Countless artifacts, buildings, coins and even remnants of entire settlements provide unequivocally testimony to this presence. This is especially true regarding the Hasmonean and Second Temple era, but over recent years more and more finds from the First Temple and even earlier have been discovered. The value of this archeological evidence cannot be understated, and is crucial for proving the physical presence of Jews in Israel from time immemorial, but a closer look at the entire Hanukkah story provides us with an even broader and significant connection between the Jewish people and our ancient homeland.

In fact, the Hanukkah story constitutes a veritable travel map of the entire Land of Israel and its Jewish history. Mattathias and his sons began the revolt against the Seleucids and their Hellenist allies in the town of Modi'in, located in what is currently known as "central Israel", including the modern city of Modi'in and the entire Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

The Maccabees then fled to an area called the Gofna hills, near the modern-day Jewish community of Beit El, in the ancient Biblical territory of "Benyamin", where they set up a paramilitary camp as the base for their further attacks against the Seleucids. Several victorious battles were then fought at "Ma'aleh Levona", near the modern-day city of Ariel in the Biblical "Shomron" [Samaria] region, the Biblical heartland of Israel. Other battles were fought in "Beit Horon", between Modi'in and Jerusalem, and "Beit Tzur" in the Hebron hills. Finally, the Maccabees liberated Jerusalem in the Biblical region of Yehuda [Judea], and re-sanctified the Holy Temple.

The Maccabees did not engage the Seleucid enemy for the sake of territorial conquest, but rather to liberate the indigenous Jewish population from Seleucid spiritual persecution.

The Hanukkah story therefore goes much deeper than liberation from religious tyranny and the restoration of Jewish life, and clearly proves the eternal presence of the Jewish people throughout the entire Land of Israel. This aspect and message of the Hanukkah story is especially important today. While Israel continues to fight an existential war against its enemies on the battlefield, the entire Jewish world continues to battle for Israel's very legitimacy and historical connection to the Jewish people, as more and more nefarious and totally fallacious United Nations and other international resolutions are passed unconditionally accepted by even many of Israel's so-called friends and allies. Jewish institutions the world over have created a plethora of tools to fight this despicable and criminal phenomenon, and the Hanukkah story itself can and should be included as one of these tools.

So when we celebrate Hanukkah this year, it is more important than ever to not only commemorate the miracle of the cruise of oil and a remarkable military victory, but also affirm and proclaim the Hanukkah story as irrefutable evidence of our inalienable right to the Land of Israel as the God-given eternal and indigenous Jewish homeland. Happy Hanukkah to one and all!



Rabbi Marc D. Angel
Thoughts on Hanukkah
JewishIdeas.org

The Shabbat of Hanukkah was observed among Sephardim of the Ottoman Empire as "Shabbat Halbashah", the Shabbat of providing clothing for the needy. Traditionally, the rabbi would deliver a sermon that day on the mitzvah of charity and lovingkindness. Beginning the following day, members of the community would bring clothing to the synagogue and it would be distributed among the poor on Rosh Hodesh Tebet, the sixth day of Hanukkah.

A practical reason for this custom is that Hanukkah occurs just as winter approaches. It is imperative that the community provide clothes for members who lack adequate clothing to keep them warm during the cold season. Moreover, Hanukkah celebrates the sense of unity that prevailed among those Jews of antiquity who fought against the Syrian-Greek oppressors, and who re-dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem. Just as our ancestors recognized their responsibility to each other and to God, so must Jews of each generation recognize our commitment to each other and to God.

A Judeo-Spanish proverb states: "el harto no cree al hambriento"--one who is full does not believe one who is hungry. When one lives in relative prosperity, it is not always easy to feel empathy for those who lack basic necessities. People become complacent. Or they say: I worked for what I have, let the others work for what they lack. Why should I give my hard-earned money to help others? The one who is satisfied might not feel the genuine hunger pangs of the poor, and might not respond eagerly or compassionately enough.

In his story, "Gooseberries", Anton Chekhov writes: "There ought to be behind the door of every happy, contented man some one standing with a hammer continually reminding him with a tap that there are unhappy people; that however happy he may be, life will show him her laws sooner or later, trouble will come for him--disease, poverty, losses, and no one will see or hear, just as now he neither sees nor hears others. But there is no man with a hammer...."

Shabbat Halbashah serves as a "hammer", as a reminder that we are all responsible for each other, that we need to provide for others just as they will need to provide for us if we should be in distress.

The lesson surely applies to providing material support for those in need. But I believe it can be extended to spiritual, intellectual, cultural, communal life as well. The Jewish community sponsors a host of institutions dedicated to promoting Jewish life--synagogues, schools, cultural organizations, communal agencies etc. These institutions attempt to look after our spiritual lives, and to provide services and comfort to all of us. Just as we must be sensitive to the physical needs of the poor, so we must be sensitive to the spiritual

needs of our entire community. It is so easy to say: let others support these institutions, let others pay for these needed services, let others take responsibility for a flourishing Jewish communal life.

Shabbat Halbashah serves as a "hammer", gently tapping on the wall, reminding us to become empathetic, involved, and sharing members of our community. There are so many challenges facing the Jewish community: each of us needs to play an active role in strengthening and advancing our goals.

As we observe Hanukkah, let us remember to provide sustenance to those in physical need, and to provide sustenance for the spiritual needs of our entire community--since all of us need and benefit from the institutions which foster Jewish life at its best.

Sephardic Stories Initiative from PJ Library

The Sephardic Stories Initiative is part of PJ Library's mission to represent the diversity of North American Jewish communities through the books we send to families. Year two of the Initiative aims to lift the voices of Sephardic emerging writers, with generous support and guidance from the Seattle-based Samis Foundation. This year-long, all-expenses paid fellowship (January – December, 2025) includes monthly virtual workshops with Sephardic experts, established authors, and publishing professionals; individual mentorship; a special in-person writing retreat; and regular editorial feedback.



Fellows will delve into the craft of writing children's books and work with PJ Library publishing experts to develop their own stories, informed by Sephardic/Mizrahi traditions, tales, and/or experiences. Participants will also build a strong support base of authors with similar goals. Read about the Sephardic Stories Initiative Emerging Writers below.

Learn more about this program and the fellows [Here](#)

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So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to *Kehila Kedosha Janina*, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

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