



Seven Species Cook-Off

Topic

Seven Species Cooking Challenge

Grade Level(s)

All

Goals for the Lesson/Activity

Students will...

- Learn the importance of *Shivat Haminim* (the seven species that are mentioned in the Torah as being products of the Land of Israel)
- Work in teams to strengthen the community in your classroom
- Be creative using food
- Have a great time

Materials needed

- Kitchen
- 1 Set of Recipes for each group
- Kitchen tools and serving dishes (Check recipes for particular tools that you will need.)
- Aprons (optional)
- Tables where kids can cook
- Clock or timer

Food Needed

- **Shivat Haminim:**
 - Pomegranates, cut and seeded (be careful Pomegranate stains)
 - Pitted Olives (black and/or green)
 - Dates (You could also include date honey)
 - Grapes (You could also include raisins)
 - Wheat Flour
 - Barley (Prepare in advance if necessary)
 - Wheat and/or Barley Bread
- Additional ingredients mentioned in recipes



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Background for Teachers

The Torah (*Devarim* 8:8) refers to seven species (referred to as *Shivat Haminim*) that are native to the Land of Israel and that will be plentiful when the Israelites enter the land. These species are:

- חִטָּה (Wheat)
- שְׂעוֹרָה (Barley)
- גֶּפֶן (literally “vine” but understood to mean “grape”)
- תְּאֵנָה (Fig)
- רִימוֹן (Pomegranate)
- זֵית (Olive)
- דְּבַשׁ (literally “honey” but understood to mean “date” or “date honey”)

These seven species hold a special place in Jewish eating. There is even a special *beracaha* (blessing) that is traditionally said after consuming one or more of these species.

Today, these are not all the most prominent crops in Israel; but they still retain a special status with their connection to the land. They are often featured at Tu B'Shevat Seders.

Prepare in Advance

- ALLERGY ALERT: Make certain you choose recipes that everyone can eat.
- Invite parents to volunteer to help prepare ingredients and/or to help cook. You should have at least one volunteer for each group of students.
- Arrange to use the kitchen.
- Pick out a few recipes that students can follow. Make sure that students will have enough time to complete the recipes that you pick out.
- Prepare all the materials and ingredients. (This is a good place for parent volunteers to help with pre-cutting ingredients.)
- Get the tables ready and covered.
- Make sure you have a washing station for kids.
- Invite additional judges (optional).



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Description of Activities

1. Introduce the Seven Species and explain their importance in the Torah and to the Land of Israel. You might choose to read *Devarim* 8:7-9 and discuss the verses (included at the end of this lesson).
 - a. What is special about these particular foods?
 - b. Why would God promise these foods before *B'nei Yisrael* (the Israelites) enter the land?
 - c. How are these foods important to us today?
2. Explain to students that they will be engaging in a cooking competition. They will need to use elements of *Shivat Haminim* in their cooking.
 - a. Divide students into groups of three or four.
 - b. Pass out aprons.
 - c. Explain that, now that each person has an apron, students should refer to each other as Chef Sarah, Chef Avi, etc.
 - d. Pass out recipes. Ask each group to choose one recipe to prepare.
 - e. Explain that each group must use at least two of *Shivat Haminim*.
 - f. You might choose to include a challenge ingredient that each group must use in addition to the ingredients included in the recipe they have chosen. These ingredients could include:
 - i. Corn Flakes
 - ii. Strawberries
 - iii. Chocolate
 - iv. Candy
 - v. Guava
 - vi. Spinach
 - g. Depending on the level of your students and the amount of time that you have, students can cut their own ingredients, parents can help them cut ingredients, or ingredients can be cut ahead of time.
 - h. Explain to students that they will need to gather ingredients and prepare their recipes. They should be creative and have fun with their recipes. They may choose to change things in their recipes but they must decide to do so as a group. They will prepare three dishes of food, one for you to judge, one for them to enjoy themselves, and one to share with their classmates. You may choose to have more than one judge.
3. Students gather ingredients but do not begin cooking yet.
4. Emphasize to students that they will need to taste ingredients with which they are not familiar. You might choose to ask them why this step is necessary.



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5. Explain that students must ask an adult for help with stoves, ovens, etc.
6. Tell students how much time they have. Start a timer. Tell students to begin cooking.
7. Students prepare their dishes.
8. When students are finished (or when time is up) students present their dishes to the judges.
 - a. Students state what they prepared.
 - b. Students state how they prepared the dish.
9. Pretend you are a big judge and a famous chef; you could invite other staff members or teachers to play along.
10. Make a big deal of analyzing the dishes. Use all your senses to describe the way it looks feels, smells...
11. Judge dishes on taste, presentation, and appearance.
12. Compare the positive points of each different dish and declare one (or all) to be the winner.
13. After the judging, let everyone taste each of the entries and have fun comparing them.

Differentiation Options

For learners who need more assistance

- Offer simpler recipes.
- Pre-cut, measure, etc. the ingredients.
- Give more time to prepare their dishes.

For learners who need extension opportunities

- Provide more challenging ingredients, including one mandatory ingredient.
- Ask students to research each of *Shivat Haminim* and explain their nutritional values.

ז כִּי יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִבְּיַאֵד אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחֲלֵי מַיִם עֲצִינָה וְתֵהֱמֹת יִצְאִים בַּבִּקְעָה וּבְקֶרֶךְ:	
7 When 'ה your God brings you to a good land, a land of brooks of water, springs and depths, going out from the valley and the hill	
ח אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשַׁעֲרָהּ וְגֵפֶן וְתֵאנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ-זֵית שָׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ:	
8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vine, and fig, and pomegranate, a land of olive tree and [date] honey	
ט אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בִמְסַפְּנֹת תֵּאֱכָל-בָּהּ לֶחֶם לֹא-תַחֲסֹר כֹּל בָּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבִנֶיהָ בְּרִזָּל וַיִּמְהַרְרֶיהָ תַּחֲצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת:	
9 A land without poverty, you will eat bread in it; you will not lack anything in it, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you will dig brass.	



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