AT THE INTERSECTION OF
RACIAL AND FOOD JUSTICE:

Shabbat Dinner Host Guide

A Closer Look at the Impact of Racism on Food Systems

Deep gratitude to the following people who helped put together this discussion guide: Alexandra C., Lindsey Newman, Rachel Patterson, Rebekkah Scharf, Seth Goren, and Ya’arah Pinchas. Thank you for putting in your time, emotional and intellectual labor into this resource.

This dinner is part of Act Now for Racial Justice: Repair the World’s national campaign on racial justice.
DEAR HOST,

Repair the World is a national nonprofit that mobilizes Jews to give time and effort to the causes they're passionate about. On behalf of the whole team, we want to THANK YOU for joining us during the Jewish High Holidays by hosting a Turn the Tables Dinner. You will join thousands of people across the country in dining together and engaging in important dialogue about issues of racial injustice impacting communities in general and our food system specifically.

Racial injustice undermines hope, squanders potential, devastates communities, and costs lives. At Repair the World, we believe that service is a way to act for racial justice. We believe service can:

- Build relationships between communities with different identities and experiences;
- Identify the systems that reinforce inequity; and
- Address urgent short-term needs that are the consequences of racism.

We see service as building solidarity among neighbors, across religious, racial, and socioeconomic lines and identities, and among Jews and non-Jews. We serve in partnership, by listening to and taking the lead from others so that we honor a multitude of needs and lived experiences. Service, done right, can support forward momentum in striving for racial justice.

We also believe that structured yet organic dialogue about critical social issues is a key catalyst that leads us to action in solidarity with our neighbors. We hope that these conversations help ensure that our actions are thoughtful and intentional.

Food is a necessity for all human beings and a creator of shared memories that hold the history and culture of a community. In this guide, we will explore how racism manifests itself in US food systems--addressing how food insecurity and cultivation disproportionately impacts communities of color. In order to address hunger and other unjust facets of our food systems, we must discuss their roots in racial inequity. In working to eliminate structural, institutional, and social barriers that limit opportunities and choices based on a person’s skin color, we need to fight for access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate food and rights for people who work at every step in the food system.

This Host Guide contains several different discussion activities to help you facilitate constructive and meaningful conversations. Please use the activities that most resonate with you and your guests. While some activities are designed to be Shabbat-friendly, feel free to adapt the activities to best meet all customs and personal needs. We recommend opening with the appetizer, choosing one entree (or more, if you are ambitious), and closing with the dessert.

We hope that you and your guests leave your dinner with a heightened awareness about food and racial injustice, having had the opportunity to speak up about complex issues surrounding racism and access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food, and feel driven to take action by volunteering your time. The High Holidays are an opportunity to set your intentions for the year and take part in creating a more just world. You can join service learning opportunities by visiting weRepair.org.

It’s because of leaders like you that the world can change: table-by-table and city-by-city. Thanks again for all you do – and all you will do to make this dinner possible!

The Repair the World team
weRepair.org

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A Turn the Tables Shabbat Dinner has several ingredients: a tasty meal, some meaty (or vegetable-based) conversation about important issues, and an opportunity to get involved.

GETTING STARTED

1. Read through the Host Guide in its entirety before choosing which portions you wish to use for your dinner.
2. Collect and print the necessary materials and supplies as outlined throughout the Host Guide. 
3. Print a copy of the Respectful Conversations sheet to have on hand throughout your dinner and to review in advance. It offers guidelines for facilitating fair and meaningful discourse about sensitive subjects.
4. As you read through the guide, be mindful of the space and environment in which you will host your dinner. Think about how you want to set up the seating so it’s conducive to respectful conversation and dialogue.

SIMMER, DO NOT BOIL

PRODUCTIVE DISCOMFORT IN ENCOURAGED

Feeling slightly uncomfortable and stretching a bit out of your comfort zone can generate learning and growth. Before starting the program, take a few minutes for your guests to understand your intention in maintaining a safe space that allows each of you to experience some productive discomfort during the evening. You might consider sharing the Respectful Conversations sheet with everyone present.

WHET YOUR APPETITE

SERVING THE APPETIZER: OPENING ACTIVITY

We believe that setting intentions for our conversations about racial justice is critical to fostering a productive, respectful and inclusive experience. The “Rosh Hashanah Seder” activity asks you to begin your dinner by reflecting on the practice of eating symbolic foods on Rosh Hashanah to express our hopes for the next year. The symbolism is based on either specific qualities of the food, or a similar-sounding Aramaic word. The goal of this activity is to start the meal by holding both the dreams we have for a just world as well as the ways we are complicit in perpetuating injustice.

● Appetizer: Not Just Apples and Honey: A Rosh Hashanah Seder

We are going to identify up to four foods that are part of the Rosh Hashanah seder tradition, identify its historical use and practice in Mizrahi and Sephardi Jewish communities and then suggest a way to think about the foods in the context of racial justice and incorporate a moment of mindful eating.

\[1\] Jewish communities around the world developed different Jewish rituals, traditions, food, and prayer, “Ashkenazi,” “Mizrahi,” and “Sephardi,” designate the ethnic and cultural background of a Jewish person or community. “Mizrahi” Jews trace their roots to the Middle East and Global South, “Sephardi” Jews from Spain and the Spanish diaspora, and “Ashkenazi” Jews to Central and Eastern Europe. To delve deeper into the complex and rich discussion of racial and ethnic identity, a great introductory read is Sigal Samuel’s article, “I’m a Mizrahi Jew. Do I Count as a Person of Color?” (http://forward.com/opinion/318667/im-a-mizrahi-jew-do-i-count-as-a-person-of-color/) or Rabbi Rachel M. Solomin’s article, “Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Mizrahi Jews – Jewish Ethnic Diversity” (http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/sephardic-ashkenazic-mizrahi-jews-jewish-ethnic-diversity/).

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CHOOSING AND DIGESTING YOUR DISCUSSION ENTREE
Select the entrée below that you’d like to chew on. Each option takes a look at a different aspect of racial justice within food systems. Feel free to mix and match pieces from different entrées during your meal or use the sources in the final option to guide your own discussion.

- **Discussion Entrée Option 1: Productive Discomfort Foods**
  Exploring the different forms productive discomfort can take both within communities with shared identities and histories and between diverse communities. Heather McGhee addresses a white male caller who wants to address his own prejudices (and racism) against the Black community. Then in *chevrutah* (pairs) read a Hasidic proverb and about Nigerian chef Tunde Wey’s dinners to create space for Black communities to come together to eat and discuss racial justice and share their experiences facing racism in the United States. How do these two models of creating conversations about racial justice interact with this Jewish text about productive discomfort?

- **Discussion Entrée Option 2: Bitter Harvest: Poetry about Black Experiences with Violence and Loss**
  The following poems, “Strange Fruit” by Abel Meeropol and sung by Billie Holiday and “Small Needful Fact’ by Ross Gay, are powerful expressions of violence against Black people and Black bodies as told through the imagery of growth and plants. The use of plant imagery to express profound loss and violence is also found in Jonah, the prophetic reading during Yom Kippur. Read in pairs, ask people to pick a text to read and answer the discussion questions. Then come back together and share their thoughts about the poems.

- **Discussion Entrée Option 3: Food Gentrification and Culinary Appropriation**
  Listen to this selection from The Sporkful’s series, “Other People’s Food,” about the question of culinary appropriation. Then divide into pairs to discuss and read Joanna Blythman’s article, “Can vegans stomach the unpalatable truth about quinoa?” on how skyrocketing quinoa sales affect Bolivian and Peruvian farmers and Soliel Ho’s article, “#FOODGENTRIFICATION and the culinary rebranding of traditional foods” about Whole Food’s new campaign to make collard greens the new popular “super” food and the impact on communities of color whose culinary tradition is rooted in those ingredients. Let’s explore how communities approach food from different ethnic and cultural traditions, particularly white communities.

- **Discussion Entrée Option 4: Food and Race Intertwined**
  Read the definition of racism tied to food justice from dismantling racism. Discuss the following four examples of different communities of color in the US fighting against the racist food systems and building structures for equitable engagement: he consumer boycott of Driscoll’s Berries, urban farming in Detroit, alternative to detention program in the Bronx, and California’s Farmworker Overtime Bill.

- **Discussion Entrée Option 5: Create Your Own and Additional Resources**

CONCLUDING WITH DESSERT
After your entree discussion has concluded, we encourage you and your guests to reflect on this dinner experience and process the information presented in your discussion.

According to Jewish tradition, the time between Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the new year, and Yom Kippur, the day of repentance, is an auspicious time to ask for forgiveness. The process is called *teshuva*.

We have the opportunity for *teshuva* when we reflect and act on how do we individually and communally participate in food systems and work for racial justice. How we approach it will evolve as we explore our identities and histories and

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as we change through our experiences. But Jewish tradition, the sources we have read tonight, or a combination of the two push us to take the initiative in beginning that process.

- **Dessert: Teshuva and Next Steps**
  Just as we conclude our meal on a high note with dessert, we want to conclude our conversations with an opportunity for reflection

**TAKE ACTION!**

Repair the World focuses on inspiring the Jewish community to volunteer and to engage in conversation about issues of racial and food justice. We hope that after tonight’s conversation you and your guests feel inspired to **TAKE ACTION** and volunteer around issues of food and racial injustice. Visit weRepair.org, where you will find opportunities happening during the High Holidays in your area!

And don’t forget to tell us how it goes! Email Rebecca, Training and Education Manager, at rebecca.katz@werepair.org. Or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @RepairtheWorld and by using #TurntheTables

**IF YOU NEED SUPPORT**

Have a question, need clarification or want to get more involved with Repair the World’s campaigns? Reach out to us at rebecca.katz@werepair.org.

**HOST GUIDE**

**Respectful Conversations**

**OVERALL TIPS**

The first step to working towards a better society is to talk openly and honestly about the issues that affect our communities. Talking about racial justice is challenging, which is why this section about HOW to have the conversation is much longer than the actual discussion questions! As the host, you are responsible for creating a brave space in which guests can express their opinions thoughtfully and openly, ask difficult questions, and where the feelings of the group are valued and protected. Here are some tips to draw from. They are described in greater detail below:

- Acknowledge that racial injustice is complicated and far-reaching; we’re not going to cover all aspects of this issue.
- Appoint a facilitator.
- Acknowledge that you or your guests might have moments of discomfort – and that it’s okay.
- Establish group ground rules.
- Do not tokenize people – everyone should only speak from their personal experience.
- Ensure that everyone who wants to speak, gets a chance to speak.
- Be respectful of introverts – and of silence.
- Avoid the terms “right” and “wrong.”
- Take a deep breath (or two) before responding.
- Use Ouch/Oops

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If you’re offended, consider one of the options:
  ○ Remove yourself from the conversation
  ○ Call people “in” not “out”
  ○ Move back and listen

Use facts graciously - not to shut down a conversation.

INTRODUCTIONS

Ask your guest to start by saying their names, gender pronouns (ex. they/them/their, she/her/hers, he/him/his, ze/zir/zirs), and any identities they want to share that will be important in this conversation (race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, etc.)

DIGGING IN

APPOINT A FACILITATOR. Before your meal, decide among your guests who should lead the discussion. The best leader is likely you, but ask a friend if you’re not comfortable in that role. A facilitator opens and guides the discussion – they don’t dominate it. If things get out of hand, or if voices are being blocked out, the facilitator intervenes.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR GUESTS MIGHT HAVE MOMENTS OF DISCOMFORT. In many cases, it helps to say out loud what others might be feeling: “I know we don’t usually talk about racial justice at the dinner table, and it might make you or others feel uncomfortable, and that’s ok.”

ESTABLISH GROUP GROUND RULES. Before your dinner program begins, collectively establish a set of rules for your discussion. These could be formal, such as “whoever holds this spoon speaks,” or “if you agree, snap your fingers.” These rules could also be informal, including “whatever is said in this room, stays in this room.”

DO NOT TOKENIZE PEOPLE. Individuals can only speak to their own experiences. Do not look to others to speak on behalf of their race, gender, or ethnicity.

ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK, GETS A CHANCE TO SPEAK. Very frequently, individuals who are most comfortable expressing their opinions out loud can dominate conversations. The facilitator should respectfully ask for the opinions of others if a few voices begin to dominate the conversation.

BE RESPECTFUL OF INTROVERTS – AND OF SILENCE. Make sure the facilitator is noticing who is not speaking. Encourage those individuals to contribute, but do not force them. Similarly, if the conversation reaches a point of silence, do not push people to speak. Be respectful of reflection.

IF THE DISCUSSION BECOMES HEATED OR UNCOMFORTABLE

We name the fact that People of Color (PoC) are often called on to be educators of experiences with racism and humanity, regardless of they want to take on that role. At this table we will set a norm to further highlight the voices and feelings of PoC at the table and not hold expectations of PoC to educate. That a norm will be set to hold space and validate all the different types of feelings PoC may experience when choosing to engage in conversation about racial justice.

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Please choose to follow or put aside the following points based on your identities and relationship to the people in the conversation. All too often, the burden of educating white folks is placed on people of color. Be aware of this power dynamic and the emotional labor involved in sharing one’s experience with racism with someone who has not experienced it. We all have multiple identities (race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, etc.) that are given preference and/or “othered” in the US; we also don’t always know another person’s identities and experiences from their physical appearance. Be open and supportive to other people’s reactions and be RADICALLY open and RADICALLY sensitive to people of color’s reactions in this conversation about racial justice.

**AVOID “RIGHT” AND “WRONG.”** While some opinions are commonly accepted as “right,” it is unproductive for conversations like these to cast someone’s statements or beliefs as “wrong.”

**TAKE A DEEP BREATH (OR TWO) BEFORE RESPONDING.** It is critical to allow yourself time to process your reactions to a statement or a text and get to the root of what caused those reactions. Deep breaths release endorphins in the brain and can allow people to center themselves.

**BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE** Think about the language you are using, not just in terms of intent, but also in terms of impact. If someone says something offensive, consider that they simply do not realize that they have said something hurtful. If someone calls you out for saying something offensive, remember that your intent can be different than your impact on another person. A good default is to respond by saying, “I am sorry. If you are open to it, please share how my words impacted you.” Actively listen to any explanation without interrupting and be open to the other person choosing not to explain. Remember the power dynamic changes based on people’s different identities and whose voices and identities are given privilege and whose are discriminated against.

**CONSIDER USING OUCH/OOPS.** It bears repeating: you will make mistakes when speaking about racial justice. Part of entering into this conversation is working together to build a brave space where people can share their experiences, reactions, and vulnerabilities and have people listen to them. If you hear something that has offended you, say “ouch” to demonstrate its impact. Explain why a comment has offended you. Then the person who said the comment has the opportunity to say “oops,” sharing that they have made a mistake and are sorry. In speaking about racial justice, we will all make mistakes, particularly white folks. This framework is an opportunity to acknowledge that and continue on with the conversation.

**IF YOU’RE OFFENDED, CONSIDER SOME OPTIONS:**

1. **REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE CONVERSATION.** Do what you need to do to take care of yourself. If you do not feel like you can continue to engage in the conversation, step away. Support people who make this choice and see if they would like to discuss it later under different circumstances.

2. **MOVE BACK AND LISTEN.** If you are feeling emotionally drained from sharing your experience or if you are worried about saying something offensive in response, take on the role of an active listener. Challenge yourself to concentrate completely on what other people are saying instead of crafting your response. If asked to participate, communicate that you are taking on this role.

3. **CALL PEOPLE “IN”, NOT “OUT.”** You might be a part of this conversation with people you love and are

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connected to in many ways. When you are holding someone accountable for an offensive or ignorant statement, think about how to address the hurt they caused and still engage them in the conversation. This doesn’t mean a pass to say anything without consequences. Rather, if you have the emotional bandwidth, use it as a teachable moment.

a. What ways can they be more inclusive of a diversity of identities and experience?

b. Use the “I felt....when you...” format to discuss how you personally perceived someone’s statement. You could say, for example, “I felt offended when you said that your grandfather worked himself into the middle class, and therefore anyone could achieve the American dream if they tried hard enough. In my experience, some of the opportunities available to your grandfather weren’t available to a lot of people because of formal or informal restrictions and institutional racism.”

**USE FACTS GRACIOUSLY- NOT TO SHUT DOWN A CONVERSATION.** People often claim truth or fact to back up their opinions without considering other people’s perspectives or the limitations of their own knowledge. Remind people that this is a conversation. Everyone’s personal experience matters. Recommend that people share information to deepen the discussion, not to shut down the conversation.

> “Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on resistance. This second, we can sit down and do our work.” -Steven Pressfield

**HOST GUIDE**

**Glossary of Terms**

Here’s a list of terms and language that you might find useful as you discuss racial justice and food justice. This glossary is by no means complete. Rather, it should be used to make sure that everyone at the table is grounded in the same language and can fully participate in the conversation.

A huge shout out to Growing Food and Justice and Food First, from whom we have adapted most of these definitions. Links at the bottom of the page direct you to the more complete glossaries from these respective organizations.

If you only have a moment, please read the following definition by Dr. Eric Holt-Giménez and Dr. Breeze Harper in “Dismantling Racism in the Food System”³:

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DEFINITIONS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

- **Race**: A social and political construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification. Despite being a human construct, it still has incredibly powerful implications in our society and on people's lives.*

- **Racial justice**: The struggle for equitable outcomes for people of color; a wide range of ways in which groups and individuals struggle to change laws, policies, practices, and ideas that reinforce and perpetuate racial disparities.^

- **Privilege**: Unearned advantages that work to systematically empower certain groups in our society, over others. A right that only some people have access or availability to because of their social group memberships. Because hierarchies of privilege exist, people who are part of the group in power often deny they have privilege even when evidence of differential benefit is obvious.*

- **Institutional racism**: When prejudices around race, particularly the inferiority of people of color are structured into the social and economic institutions in society. Institutional racism occurs when organizations, businesses, or institutions like schools and police departments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly, against certain groups of people to limit their rights because of their race.

DEFINITIONS FOR FOOD JUSTICE

- **Food systems**: All processes involved in keeping us fed: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food and food packages. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each step.*

- **Food justice**: All areas of justice along the food system from before a single seed is planted until after your food waste is dumped in a landfill (or composted). It included all human and animal communities and habitats that might be impacted during this process. Food justice pursues the sustained health and viability of all of these communities and environments.

- **Food deserts**: The USDA defines a food desert as an urban area where the nearest supermarket with healthy food is more than a mile away (10 miles for rural areas). Some prefer to refer to food swamps, places where there is an abundance of food, but much of it is unhealthy,

"Racism—the systemic mistreatment of people based on their ethnicity or skin color—affects all aspects of our society, including our food system. While racism has no biological foundation, the socio-economic and political structures that dispossess and exploit people of color, coupled with widespread misinformation about race, cultures and ethnic groups, make racism one of the more intractable injustices causing poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Racism is not simply attitudinal prejudice or individual acts, but an historical legacy that privileges one group of people over others. Racism—individual, institutional and structural—also impedes good faith efforts to build a fair, sustainable food system."

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and the healthy food is less accessible. Still others argue that neither term is useful, and that both have problematic connotations. Deserts and swamps, as naturally occurring systems, imply that it is natural for communities, particularly communities of color, not to have access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods rather than the consequence of systemic racism.

● SNAP: Stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Federal program, formerly known as Food Stamps that provides additional income for those making less than 130% of the national poverty line ($2,628 for a family of four)

For more information about the critiques of the term “food desert”, read Christopher Cook’s “Covering Food Deserts,” Center for Health Journalism, [http://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/resources/lessons/covering-food-deserts](http://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/resources/lessons/covering-food-deserts)


^ = Adapted from [https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DR1Final.pdf](https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DR1Final.pdf)

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HOST GUIDE
Appetizer: Opening Activity

NOT JUST APPLES AND HONEY: A ROSH HASHANAH SEDER

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Source sheet with blessings
- One or more of the following foods:
  - Leeks
  - Beets
  - Gourd/squash
  - The “head” of something; traditionally a ram’s head, but a fish head, a head of garlic, or a head of cabbage make great alternatives

We encourage you to purchase these foods from local farmers of color or farms with an expressed racial justice mission. If you have any questions about connecting with local farms, please contact Rebecca.

FRAMING

As we embark on a conversation about the intersections between food and racial justice during the High Holidays, it is only appropriate to start with an evolving Jewish ritual around food and the new year. This introductory activity will give you the opportunity participate in a mindful eating exercise (interacting with food while we are talking about food!) and set intentions for the dinner.

HOST INSTRUCTIONS

Before the meal begins, please put one or all of the symbolic foods on the table and hand out the simanim (symbolic foods) blessings. At least one of the vegetable should be prepared so every person will be able to eat a piece for the mindful eating exercise.

The facilitator should then hand out the source sheets and reading the following text out loud:

Yes, Rosh HaShanah has a seder, too. The tradition comes from a verse in the Talmud, where Rabbi Abaye, a 4th century Babylonian sage, says that it is good luck to eat 5 symbolic foods on Rosh HaShanah (Talmud, Masechet Keritot, 6a). Sephardi and Mizrahi Jewish communities expanded on this text to create a Rosh Hashanah Seder--a collection of eight or more symbolic foods used to represent our desires for the upcoming year. The symbolism is based on either specific qualities of the food, or similar sounding Aramaic words.

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5 The Jewish New Year

6 A compendium of Jewish laws, debates, and stories compiled in Mesopotamia during the early sixth century

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The eight items, known as simanim, or symbols, are: dates, beans (black-eyed peas, green beans, or similarly: fenugreek), leeks, beets, gourds/squash, pomegranate, apples/honey, and a ram or fish head. We’d like to highlight four of the simanim, that we find in the US to be in season in the Fall, as we set our intentions for the meal.

As we read about each food, point to it or raise it in the air. Once you have read all of the simanim, each person can take one or more of the simanim to practice mindful eating (instructions below). We suggest that you let different people around the table read the Hebrew blessing and alternative interpretation, including or excluding the Hebrew based on comfort level.

*Note on alternative introduction: If you would like to start your evening by asking guests to share a personal experience, ask each of them to answer the following question: What is a food that has become a staple of your family or community’s Rosh Hashanah celebrations?

Ask your guests to go around the table and share (if they chose):
- How do these intentions match with your own wishes for the year?
- Which of these intentions that you would like to adopt for the coming year?

To conclude this activity, invite everyone to participate in the following mindful eating exercise.
Everyone should take one of the simanim (symbolic foods) in their hands. Choose one of the foods that can be eaten. Read the following instructions out loud, giving people time:

*Use your senses to examine the food. What does it look like, feel like, and smell like? Does it have a sound? Think about all of the people who worked to ensure that this food could reach your table today. Thank them. Take a bite of the food and savor it. What are the different flavors? How would you describe the texture? Think about the energy that the food is giving you, and how you can use that to help sustain you through the discussions tonight, and your pursuit of justice.*

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# The Simanim (Symbols)

## Leek -- карті

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic/linguistic connection</th>
<th>карті is related to the word кара́т, meaning to cut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>יִהְיֵֽו מְמַקְּשֵֽׁי וְכָל וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ שֶׁיִּכָּרְתוּ וּוֹתֵיִּנְוָוַֽו אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וֵאֲלֹֽהֵינוּ 'ה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ רָצוֹן יְהִי רָעָתֵנוּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transliteration</strong></td>
<td>Yehi ratzon milfanecha, adonai elokeinu ve’elhokei avoteinu veimoteinu, sheyi kartu oyveinu veson’enu vechol mevakshei ra’ateinu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation of Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>May it be Your will, Lord our God and the God of our fathers and mothers, that our enemies, haters, and those who wish evil upon us shall be cut down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Let us work to cut down the institutional barriers that enforce and reinforce systemic inequality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Beet -- салка

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic/linguistic connection</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>יִהְיֵֽו מְמַקְּשֵֽׁי וְכָל וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ שֶׁיִּסְתַּלְּקוּ וּוֹתֵיִּנְוָוַֽו אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וֵאֲלֹֽהֵינוּ 'ה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ רָצוֹן יְהִי רָעָתֵנוּ</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Let those who benefit from and uphold unjust systems leave them and join in conversation and solidarity with those who are oppressed by the same systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Gourd or squash -- קרה -- kara

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Symbolic/linguistic connection</strong></th>
<th>Related to the word קרה—to rip apart, and also קרה—to announce.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>יִהְיֶה בָּכִי מִלָּפְנֵיכֶנָּה לֵאָהוֹמִים אֲבָלוֹתֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבָלוֹתֵינוּ וְאֵמוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּקְרַע רוּאִים זֶכָּר הַזְּכָרִים לָנוּ בְּפָנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ רָצוֹן יְהִי זְכֻיוֹתֵינוּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transliteration</strong></td>
<td>Yehi ratzon milpanecha, adonai elokeinu ve’elopei avoteinu veimoteinu, shetikra ro’a gzar dinenu, veyikaru lepanecha zchuyoteinu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation of Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>May it be Your will, Lord our God and the God of our fathers and mothers, that the evil of our verdicts be ripped, and that our merits be announced before you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Let us tear apart unjust and racist laws and use any privilege we may have to announce new ones that will balance the scales of justice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ram’s head -- ראש כבש -- rosh keves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you don’t have a ram’s head handy:</th>
<th>Some traditions use the head of a fish—for a vegetarian friendly option, consider using a head of garlic or cabbage.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>יִהְיֶה בָּכִי מִלָּפְנֵיכֶנָּה לֵאָהוֹמִים אֲבָלוֹתֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבָלוֹתֵינוּ וְאֵמוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּקְרַע רוּאִים זֶכָּר הַזְּכָרִים לָנוּ בְּפָנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ רָצוֹן יְהִי זְכֻיוֹתֵינוּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transliteration</strong></td>
<td>Yehi ratzon milpanecha, adonai elokeinu ve’elopei avoteinu veimoteinu, sheniyhe lerosh velo lezanav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation of Hebrew Blessing</strong></td>
<td>May it be Your will, Lord our God and the God of our fathers and mothers, that we be a head and not a tail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Let us not be bystanders in the face of racism and other injustices and head the conversations in our communities confronting racial injustice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRODUCTIVE DISCOMFORT FOOD

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Internet and video capable device to show video clip
- Speakers
- Source sheets

FRAMING

Explore the different forms productive discomfort can take both within communities with shared identities and histories and between diverse communities. Start by listening to Heather McGhee address a white male caller who wants to address his own prejudices (and racism) against Black folk. Then, read the following Hasidic proverb and about Nigerian chef Tunde Wey’s dinners to create space for Black communities to come together to eat and discuss racial justice and share their experiences facing racism in the United States. How do these two models of creating conversations about racial justice interact with this Jewish text about productive discomfort?

HOST INSTRUCTIONS

Before your dinner, set up the video on an internet-capable device and print copies of the source sheet. Hand out the sources sheets and have guests gather around the screen to view the video.

Share the following context with your guests:

On Sunday, August 21, Heather McGhee, the president of Demos, was a guest on C-Span’s “Washington Journal.” Demos is a US progressive public policy think tank focused on economic and racial equity. During her appearance, a white man from North Carolina called into the program asking McGhee’s advice on facing his prejudices against Black people. The following clip shows the exchange.

*Note: if you have time, we highly encourage you to read Heather McGhee’s interview with the Washington Post about her conversation with the caller. If you do not use electronics as part of your shabbat practice, the interview is an alternative text to the video clip.

*NOTE: Some more observant Jews refrain from engaging with technological devices on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. If either you or your guests are traditionally observant, feel free to omit the video clips and focus on the written sources. Feel free to adapt any of the other activities accordingly.

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Gather guests around a device and play and/or read:

Heather McGhee, the president of Demos, responds to C-Span caller on addressing prejudice

Use the Guiding Questions below to facilitate group conversation about the video clip.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

● How does the caller articulate his prejudices?
● What approach does Heather take to address the caller’s concerns?
● How does Heather champion a different approach than colorblindness? What is the foundational understanding of the way institutionalized racism operates in the US?
● What are the hurdles to admitting one’s prejudices and fears? What are the costs of not doing so?
● How would you go about following Heather’s advice?

Ask your guests to get into small groups of two or three and read Rabbi Jonathan Sacks’s description of a Hasidic proverb from “To Heal and Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility,” and Maura Judkis’s article, “Discomfort food: Using dinners to talk about race, violence and America.” Allow 15 min for the groups to discuss the texts. Come back together as a larger group.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

● What risks are you willing to take to act for racial justice and/or food justice? What feels easy for you, what feels too hard for you and what is right in the middle? Please share concrete examples.
● What are some encounters around food (dinners, meeting people over food) that have provided you with comfort or with discomfort?
● What roles can discomfort and anger play in building relationships between diverse communities and fighting for racial justice?


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TEXT ONE:

“In Jewish folklore, Noah became a tzaddik im peltz, ‘a righteous man in a fur coat’. There are two ways of keeping warm on a cold night: buying a fur coat or lighting a fire. Buy a coat and you keep yourself warm. Light a fire and you keep others warm also. Noah, the righteous man, fails to exercise collective responsibility.” Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, “To Heal and Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility,” pg. 144.

[Note: In Yiddish, the expression “ah tzaddik in peltz” refers to a hypocrite.]

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is the lesson of the proverb?
- What are the consequences of choosing the fur coat or the fire both personally and communally?
- Can you be a good person isolated from other people and the challenges that they face?

TEXT TWO:

Discomfort food: Using dinners to talk about race, violence and America


PITTSBURGH — When Nigerian chef Tunde Wey brings people together over a beautiful meal to talk about some of the ugliest problems facing our country — racism, sexism, police brutality — he can’t help but notice one recurring theme. After the people of color in the room have voiced their frustrations, fears and sorrows, someone — usually a white ally — would ask, “So what’s the solution?”


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“White folks or privileged folks are quick to try to find a solution, or ask for a solution, as opposed to sitting in the discomfort,” said Wey. “How do you answer what the solution is to racism or systemic injustices?”

Wey is traveling across the country in service of a provocative dinner series he calls Blackness in America. Over his meals, he and guest speakers moderate an exasperated and mournful conversation about what it's like to be a person of color in a year in which 152 black people have been shot and killed by police so far, and poverty rates for African Americans are more than twice as high as for white people.

There is catharsis among the black guests at the dinner, and understanding among the others. But there is no solution, other than for the guests to sit there with their plates of jollof rice and pepper soup, and stew in their discomfort.

Wey’s dinners are not exactly fun, as he warns at the outset: “This conversation is supposed to be impolite,” he said at a recent dinner in Pittsburgh. “It’s supposed to be uncomfortable.” If guests are having a good time, they’re missing the point.

No one would be so naive as to say that sitting down at a table over a nice meal is the answer to some of the country’s most pervasive social justice problems. But for Wey, the dinners serve a specific purpose: Creating a space for black discourse.

“What that means is we’re prioritizing the perspectives of black people,” Wey said. The diners predominantly are black, and the conversation is about all kinds of black experiences: black feminism, LGBT blackness, black hair, black education, black politics and — for this particular dinner, held the week after Alton Sterling and Philando Castile were killed by police and five Dallas police officers were killed by a lone gunman — policing and blackness.

The conversations serve as an emotional release. When he brings people together over dinner to vent, “I can feel the collective exhale from the folks in the room,” said Wey. “I’m reassured — yeah, this . . . is necessary.”

It’s necessary for Wey, too. The dinners are a way for him to grapple with his experience as an African immigrant, forced to confront America’s racial realities when he came here at 16.

When he was growing up in Lagos, Nigeria — he is Yoruba — “the doctors were black. The pilots were black. The president was black. Everybody was black. There is no part of me that attaches my social status or economic condition to the color of my skin. None,” he said. “It’s a privileged emotional reality that I live.”...

“There was some sort of obscenity to the whole thing, this foodie movement,” he said. “You eat at one of these new restaurants with small plates, and the food tastes good, but it’s not saying anything. What

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it’s saying is just, ‘Look at me.’ It’s self-referential. That’s where the obscenity comes from: when you can say nothing, surrounded by so much to say.”

He decided to become a chef. He has no formal training but cooks recipes from his family that have been part of West African cuisine for ages. (The concept of “Nigerian food” is a colonial construct, he is quick to point out, because the country encompasses many ethnic groups, and its borders were determined by British rule.) The motto on his website: “Nigeria. Independent since 1960. Making dope food since forever.”

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- How do Wey’s dinners flip the expectations of what we expect from and get out of a communal meal?
- When you came to this dinner conversation, what were your expectations?
- How does Wey’s approach to addressing racial injustice compare to Heather McGhee’s recommendations?

**CONCLUDING QUESTIONS**

- What risks are you willing to take to act for racial justice and/or food justice? What feels easy for you, what feels too hard for you and what is right in the middle? Please share concrete examples.
- What are some encounters around food (dinners, meeting people over food) that have provided you with comfort or with discomfort?
- What roles can discomfort and anger play in building relationships between diverse communities and fighting for racial justice?

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Bitter Harvest: Poetry about Black Experiences with Violence and Loss

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

● Source sheets

FRAMING

The following poems, “Strange Fruit” by Abel Meeropol and sung by Billie Holiday and “A Small Needful Fact’ by Ross Gay are powerful expressions of Black experience and violence against Black bodies through the imagery of growth and plants. The use of plant imagery to express profound loss and violence is also found in Jonah, the prophetic reading during Yom Kippur.

*Note: We encourage you, if it is in accordance with your shabbat practice, to watch Billie Holiday sing “Strange Fruit” instead of asking your guests to read the poem.]

HOST INSTRUCTIONS

Ask two guests to read out loud “Strange Fruit” and “Small Needful Fact.” Encourage guests to, if they feel comfortable, close their eyes in order to concentrate on the language and rhythm. Hold a moment or two of silence after the second poem is read. Use the guiding questions after each poem to facilitate a discussion.

A Note about Guiding Questions: The Guiding Questions listed at the end of the texts are a jump-off point for your conversation. They are not meant to constrain your conversation but to provide support for a deeper, more organic dialogue with a partner or partners.
Ask everyone to turn to the person next to them and discuss the following text from the Book of Jonah.

Bring everyone back together to consider the following questions. Allow an opportunity for people to answer or chew on the questions for later.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- Why is plant and produce imagery a powerful way to discuss loss and violence against communities?
- What is the relationship between lynching as a form of extrajudicial terror against the Black community and today’s policy brutality against people of color and particularly Black folks?
TEXT ONE:

In 1930, Abel Meeropol was teaching English at the Bronx’s Dewitt Clinton High School when he saw a haunting image of a man lynched in a tree. In response, Meeropol wrote a poem, originally titled “Bitter Fruit,” that was published in a teacher’s union newspaper. Meeropol stands at many different intersections in the American history of Judaism, racial justice, and communism; a Jewish communist, he and his wife adopted Julius and Ethel Rosenberg’s sons at the height of McCarthyism. Philadelphia native Billie Holiday first publicly performed the poem-turned-song in 1939 at Cafe Society, an integrated nightclub in New York City. Her rendition transformed it into a searing lament of the Black experience, a rallying cry to end domestic terror against Black people in the form of lynching. She performed it for the next twenty years, from 23 to her death at 44.

According to the Equal Justice Initiative, 4075 Black people were killed in racial terror lynchings in the United States from 1877 and 1950. For more information, please read EJI’s report, “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror.”

Strange Fruit written by Abel Meeropol and sung by Billie Holliday

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,

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13 http://eji.org/reports/lynching-in-america
14 http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/fruitholiday.html

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For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

TEXT TWO:

Ross Gay is a poet, professor, and founding board member of the the Bloomington Community Orchard. Gay is the author of three books: Against Which, Bringing the Shovel Down. and Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude. He won the 2015 National Book Critics Circle Award and the 2016 Kingsley Tufts Award. The following poem, “A Small Needful Fact” is reproduced from Split This Rock’s The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database.¹⁵

A Small Needful Fact by Ross Gay

Is that Eric Garner worked
for some time for the Parks and Rec.
Horticultural Department, which means,
perhaps, that with his very large hands,
perhaps, in all likelihood,
he put gently into the earth
some plants which, most likely,
some of them, in all likelihood,
continue to grow, continue
to do what such plants do, like house
and feed small and necessary creatures,
like being pleasant to touch and smell,
like converting sunlight
into food, like making it easier
for us to breathe.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

● What are your initial reactions to the poems?
● Does the knowledge that “Strange Fruit” was written by a white, Jewish Communist change how you approach the text?
● We often use "fruit" in metaphorical ways, as in the expression "fruits of our labor." What are some of the ways that this "fruit" is the result of communal and society "labors"?
● How does each poem present a counter narrative to the relationship between Black men and law enforcement or other institutions of law?
● How did you learn about Eric Garner’s murder? What was your response to learning about his last words?

¹⁵ http://www.splitthisrock.org/poetry-database/poem/a-small-needful-fact

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How has “I can’t breathe” become a cry for the black lives matter movement? Why do you believe it resonated for communities of color?

TEXT THREE:

In Jewish tradition, the Book of Jonah is read as the haftorah (a selection from the Jewish prophetic texts that shares a common theme with the Torah portion traditionally read that week) on Yom Kippur. In the book, Jonah is a famously reticent prophet who tries to run away from God’s mission. He gets in trouble at sea, eaten by a whale, and finally comes to terms with his role in God’s plan. He warns the city of Ninevah about its imminent destruction. The city inhabitants repent for their wicked behavior and God forgives them. Jonah is furious with God’s leniency.

Jonah 4:5-11

(5) Now Jonah had left the city and found a place east of the city. He made a booth there and sat under it in the shade, until he would see what happened to the city. (6) The Lord, God provided a poisonous plant, which grew up over Jonah, to provide shade for his head and save him from discomfort. Jonah was very happy about the plant. (7) But the next morning God provided a worm, which attacked the plant so that it withered. (8) And when the sun rose, God provided a harsh east wind; the sun beat down on Jonah’s head, and he became faint. He begged for death, saying, “I would rather die than live.” (9) Then God said to Jonah, “Are you so deeply grieved about the plant?” “Yes,” he replied, “so deeply that I want to die.” (10) Then the LORD said: “You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and which you did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished overnight. (11) And should not I care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!”

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- In the text, why does God choose a poisonous plant to teach Jonah a lesson?
- Why does Jonah form such a deep emotional attachment to a plant?

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Why do you think we read the Book of Jonah as the haftorah (a selection from the Jewish prophetic texts that shares a common theme with the Torah portion traditionally read that week) on Yom Kippur, the day of repentance?

**CONCLUDING QUESTIONS**

- Why is plant and produce imagery a powerful way to discuss loss and violence against communities?
- What is the relationship between lynching as a form of extrajudicial terror against the Black community and today’s policy brutality against people of color and particularly Black folks?
Food Gentrification and Culinary Appropriation

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Internet and video capable device to show video clip
- Speakers
- Source sheets

FRAMING

Listen to this selection from The Sporkful's series, “Other People’s Food,” about the question of culinary appropriation. Then divide into pairs to discuss and read Blythman’s article, “Can vegans stomach the unpalatable truth about quinoa?” on how skyrocketing quinoa sales affect Bolivian and Peruvian farmers and Soliel Ho’s article, “#FOODGENTRIFICATION and the culinary rebranding of traditional foods” about Whole Food’s new campaign to make collard greens the new popular “super” food and the impact on communities of color whose culinary tradition is rooted in those ingredients. Let’s explore how communities approach food from different ethnic and cultural traditions, particularly white communities. What are the guidelines we can make for ourselves to explore foods and not supporting food gentrification? How does racism play out in the way we eat?

HOST INSTRUCTIONS

Before the conversation, load the podcast on your phone

Begin the conversation with the following question. Ask your guests to go around and share their answers.

Have you ever witnessed “columbusing or found yourself “columbusing”?

*Columbusing = when (particularly) white folks claim to discover something that has existed in different communities or cultures for quite some time.

Examples: “OMG, I just discovered this caribbean restaurant in Crown Heights that NO ONE knows about. Only locals go there!”

Collectively listen to the following excerpt from The Sporkful. Share the following background about the podcast. WNYC’s The Sporkful, hosted by Dan Pashman, is a podcast about the joyful exploration of food and eating. Pashman delved into the ways racism shapes food culture during a four part series called “Other People’s Food.” In the following excerpt, Pashman faces an accusation of culinary appropriation in one of his recipes; he invites Nick Cho on the show to explain why he was offended by Pashman’s Bim Bim Bap recipe.

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16 NOTE: Some more observant Jews refrain from engaging with technological devices on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. If either you or your guests are traditionally observant, feel free to omit the video clips and focus on the written sources. Feel free to adapt any of the other activities accordingly.

17 http://www.sporkful.com/tag/other-peoples-food/

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GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does Dan react to being “called in”?
- What was Dan’s intention in creating a new recipe for Bim Bim Bap?
- How does Dan’s racial identity play a role the way he approaches a different culture?
- How would you have reacted in this situation if you were the host? What about if you were the listener?
- What does this piece infer about the different between intent and impact in the context of racial justice?

Ask people to divide into chevrutah (pairs for learning), have half of them read one article and half read the other and then come together to discuss.

A NOTE ABOUT CHEVRUTAH LEARNING

Chevrutah literally means “friendship” or “companionship.” It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner’s reasoning, and questioning and sharpening each other’s ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text. Read each source out loud together. Spend some time wondering about it out loud together before referring to the guiding questions. Read the guiding questions together. Allow space for each partner have the opportunity to share a response. This is a dialogue and a conversation!

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the chevrutah learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CHEVRUTAH STUDY

- How do we walk the line of being inclusive, while not appropriating the culture of others?
- What are the guidelines we can make for ourselves to explore foods and not supporting food gentrification?
- How does racism play out in the way we eat?
- Has American Jewish food been adopted by or even appropriated by the broader American culture? (think about challah, matzah balls).
  - How do appropriation and gentrification occur differently with Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi, Ethiopian and other Jewish culinary traditions?

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TEXT ONE:

#FoodGentrification and Culinary Rebranding of Traditional Foods
By Soleil Ho, Bitch Magazine, January 23, 2014

Since the beginning of January, Whole Foods has been screaming it from their Facebook pages, corporate blog, news affiliates, and tastefully designed signage: “Collards are the new kale!” While at first glance this just seems like a flash-in-the-pan and downright lazy line of ad copy, its casual, trend-focused language raised red flags among some people. When Mikki Kendall, a Black feminist and writer who tweets as Karnythia, began riffing on the laughable idea of Whole Foods and their customers “discovering” a vegetable that had been a staple of working class Black and White Southern Americans’ meals for centuries, the hashtag #foodgentrification was born.

Before I get into the nitty-gritty of the idea of food gentrification, it’s important to take a close look at Whole Foods’ “Collards are the new kale” initiative to see why it struck such a chord with Kendall and other Twitter users.

As a symbol of a humble leafy green that’s become wildly popular, kale has no peer. A September 2013 Entrepreneur article on the vegetable’s trend power purports that 2013 was the “year of kale.” That is to say, everyone was buying it, blending it, wearing it, and Instagramming it. Thus, when Whole Foods, purportedly one of the main engines behind kale’s rocket to superstar status, declares that “_____ is the new kale,” there’s some serious financial and cultural weight to that statement...

What all of this adds up to is a massive PR campaign aimed at rebranding collard greens, divorcing the vegetable from its working class and indigenous affiliations to place it squarely within the culinary crosshairs of the same massive gourmet health food apparatus that turned acai berries, quinoa, tofu, and chia seeds into “superfoods.” Though the health benefits of such foods are well-documented, their trendiness within majority populations tends to result in a generally unhealthy outcomes for their cultures of origin. The tendency takes the form of a curious kind of reacharound logic wherein economic and racial minorities are castigated for eating “primitively” and “unhealthily” while their traditional foods

* Full article: https://bitchmedia.org/post/foodgentrification-and-culinary-rebranding-of-traditional-foods

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are cherry picked for use by the upper class as “exotic” delicacies. As a result, the price of that food item inflates to meet the surge in mainstream demand for it...

The central and sustaining drive behind the #foodgentrification conversation is an overwhelming sense of fear: fear of being unable to feed one’s family, of losing access to traditional foods, of being priced out of toxin-free produce, of one’s food being alternately shamed and fetishized depending on commercial whims, of having one’s history repackaged and sold. It comes down to a waiting game; many of the participants in this conversation voiced resignation over the possibility that their food would be next.

“Gentrification” is an apt term here, since it immediately brings to mind one of the major turf wars occurring in our urban centers today, one which working class people are unfortunately losing overall. The idea of gentrification is also one that is racialized, classed, and gendered, making it a very appropriate tagalong for the critiques being leveled within the hashtag.

So when Whole Foods reaches into our cultures and our souls and plucks out something they deem fit to sell, what course of action could we possibly take? The apparatus has already been put into full swing: customers are already pre-registering for collard cooking classes, cashiers are already wearing “Collards are the New Kale!” buttons on their aprons, derivative blog posts are already queued up for publication, and trend analysts are surely already mapping out the apex of the greens’ cultural trajectory.

If anything, the crucial importance of #foodgentrification lies in the way it enables participants to expose a particular piece of economic inequality that operates with a glossy, do-gooder façade. It’s difficult to avoid feeling like you’re not complicit in systems of food insecurity after reading through the hashtag, and the questions that it raises are ones that we should have been asking ourselves a long time ago, well before it got to tofu, then acai, then kale, then collards.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is the trend of food gentrification and how does it relate to urban gentrification?
- How does marketing a vegetable as a new trend impact communities where it is part of their cultural tradition?

TEXT TWO:

Can Vegans Stomach the Unpalatable Truth about Quinoa?

Not long ago, quinoa was just an obscure Peruvian grain you could only buy in wholefood shops. We struggled to pronounce it (it's keen-wa, not qui-no-a), yet it was feted by food lovers as a novel addition to the familiar ranks of couscous and rice. Dieticians clucked over quinoa approvingly because it ticked the low-fat box and fitted in with government healthy eating advice to "base your meals on starchy foods".

20 Full article: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/16/vegans-stomach-unpalatable-truth-quinoa

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Adventurous eaters liked its slightly bitter taste and the little white curls that formed around the grains. Vegans embraced quinoa as a credibly nutritious substitute for meat. Unusual among grains, quinoa has a high protein content (between 14%-18%), and it contains all those pesky, yet essential, amino acids needed for good health that can prove so elusive to vegetarians who prefer not to pop food supplements.

Sales took off. Quinoa was, in marketing speak, the "miracle grain of the Andes", a healthy, right-on, ethical addition to the meat avoider's larder (no dead animals, just a crop that doesn't feel pain). Consequently, the price shot up – it has tripled since 2006 – with more rarified black, red and "royal" types commanding particularly handsome premiums.

But there is an unpalatable truth to face for those of us with a bag of quinoa in the larder. The appetite of countries such as ours for this grain has pushed up prices to such an extent that poorer people in Peru and Bolivia, for whom it was once a nourishing staple food, can no longer afford to eat it. Imported junk food is cheaper. In Lima, quinoa now costs more than chicken. Outside the cities, and fuelled by overseas demand, the pressure is on to turn land that once produced a portfolio of diverse crops into quinoa monoculture.

In fact, the quinoa trade is yet another troubling example of a damaging north-south exchange, with well-intentioned health and ethics-led consumers here unwittingly driving poverty there.

... There's a ghastly irony when the Andean peasant's staple grain becomes too expensive at home because it has acquired hero product status among affluent foreigners preoccupied with personal health, animal welfare and reducing their carbon "foodprint". Viewed through a lens of food security, our current enthusiasm for quinoa looks increasingly misplaced.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CHEVRUTAH STUDY

- How do we walk the line of being inclusive, while not appropriating the culture of others?
- What are the guidelines we can make for ourselves to explore foods and not supporting food gentrification?
- How does racism play out in the way we eat?
- Has American Jewish food been adopted by or even appropriated by the broader American culture? (think about challah, matzah balls).
  - How do appropriation and gentrification occur differently with Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi, Ethiopian and other Jewish culinary traditions?

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Food and Race Intertwined

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

● Source sheets

FRAMING

The way we tell our stories has power. As Audre Lorde says, “There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.” Institutionalized racism impacts food systems in a diversity of ways and has different consequences on communities of color at different stages of food production and consumption. The following are four examples of different communities of color in the US fighting against the racist food systems and building structures for equitable engagement. The consumer boycott of Driscoll’s Berries, urban farming in Detroit, alternative to detention program in the Bronx, and California’s Farmworker Overtime Bill are models and inspirations of how to dismantle racism in food systems or create alternative systems for and led by people of color.

HOST INSTRUCTIONS

Food First, the institute for Food & Development Policy, published a backgrounder, Dismantling Racism in the Food System, on racism in food systems. In the first part of this series, “Food-Systems-Racism: From Mistreatment to Transformation,” authors Dr. Eric Holt-Giménez and Dr. Breeze Harper explain how systems of agriculture have grown intertwined and codependent on systems of racism in the United States.

Start by reading the following excerpt out loud:

“Racism—the systemic mistreatment of people based on their ethnicity or skin color—affects all aspects of our society, including our food system. While racism has no biological foundation, the socio-economic and political structures that dispossess and exploit people of color, coupled with widespread misinformation about race, cultures and ethnic groups, make racism one of the more intractable injustices causing poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Racism is not simply attitudinal prejudice or individual acts, but an historical legacy that privileges one group of people over others. Racism—individual, institutional and structural—also impedes good faith efforts to build a fair, sustainable food system.”21


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After simulating or reading the first exercise, ask guests to find a chevrutah (a partner) and discuss two of the following four examples of ways communities are addressing racism in food systems. They should discuss the guiding questions and share any takeaways with the larger group.

**A NOTE ABOUT CHEVRUTAH LEARNING**

Chevrutah literally means “friendship” or “companionship.” It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner’s reasoning, and questioning and sharpening each other’s ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text. Read each source out loud together. Spend some time wondering about it out loud together before referring to the guiding questions. Read the guiding questions together. Allow space for each partner have the opportunity to share a response. This is a dialogue and a conversation!

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the chevrutah learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

Suggest the chevrutahs use the following questions to guide their discussions.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- Using Dr. Holt-Giménez and Dr. Harper’s definition as a foundation, how do the articles illustrate ways to address racism in food systems?
- How are these programs identifying and addressing root causes of food injustice?
- What are the challenges and assets in the communities these programs are organized by or based in?
- How could you, as an individual, or as part of your different communities, support the work?

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TEXT ONE:

Farming for Their Lives

*Detroit’s urban growers are cultivating the land to pick up where they feel the city has let them down.*

By Jessica Leigh Hester, City Lab, August 29, 2016

...Mark Covington rests his hands on his belly as he thinks, leaning back on a white folding chair in the community space he runs with his mother. Behind him, a neighbor has set up little deep fryers for a fish dinner: $2 for fried tilapia on toast.

His farm, Georgia Street Community Collective, is a community hub first, garden second. In March 2008, Covington, his mother, nephew, and neighbor began cleaning up vacant lots near their homes. They planted flowers and a couple of rows of collards as a way to deter people from tossing garbage on the lots they’d just tidied. (Bulk garbage pickup didn’t stop at vacant lots.) It didn’t work right away—Covington would find overflowing garbage bags with addresses from Royal Oak, a suburb 15 miles north. But by that summer, the farm had begun to expand, fueled by Covington’s vision to engage local kids from the community. Now, the farm encompasses 13 lots.

GSCC sells eggs and honey, but gives away almost all of the other produce that it grows. “Programming is the main focus—the gardening part just brings the kids in,” Covington says of his nonprofit model. The goats, chickens, pigs, and ducks are a means to an end. Kids are fascinated by them; in turn, “that gets them around mentors—people who want to live right,” he says. The farm is a social enterprise, housing a lending library and hosting coat drives, school supply giveaways, movie nights, and brunch with the Easter Bunny. “If it was about money, I wouldn’t be doing it,” Covington says.

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In the mid-1970s, Detroit’s then-mayor, Coleman Young, introduced the Farm-A-Lot program, a city-subsidized initiative to put pockets of vacant land to agricultural use. Residents could call City Hall to request a parcel. The program is now defunct, but the idea of growing self-reliance through tending land continues to resonate with some residents, particularly as affordable grocery stores have shuttered throughout the city. At the same time, nutrition-related diseases have reached crisis levels. More than 90 percent of the black Metro Detroiters surveyed in a 2014 study were either overweight or obese. Many struggle to manage chronic conditions such as asthma and Type 2 diabetes.

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In the midst of all this, “simply growing is an act of resilience,” says Devita Davison, the marketing and communication director of FoodLab Detroit, an incubator program for local food entrepreneurs. When it comes to the city’s food system, Davison says, “the cavalry ain’t coming to save us.” But, she argues, farming could help.

On a Saturday afternoon, Romondo Woods II is leading a seed workshop at the Lafayette Greens garden, a few blocks from Comerica Park. A plastic owl figurine stands sentry over the cabbage and broccoli, whose florets are just beginning to emerge. The owl, Woods says, is to discourage the pigeons and seagulls that flock to the site because they smell the fries and hotdogs from the two Coney Island restaurants down the street.

Woods, 24, is rummaging through a box of shriveled sunflowers the size of fists, plucking seeds and discarding the moldy ones. As a senior farm coordinator, Woods supervises transplant production, crop scheduling, and a team of agricultural apprentices across three sites, totaling 4 acres. He’s a former apprentice himself, and also runs a farm on a single lot next to his grandmother’s house near Chalmers and Wilshire, where four generations of his family have lived. He describes the neighborhood as plagued by drugs and prostitution. Woods—who graduated with a degree in biomedical engineering—says he feels rooted in the community. “They know me already,” he says. “I grew up on the block.”...

Woods acknowledges that, for some residents, the idea of farming dredges up the painful legacies of slavery and sharecropping. Davison says that for her family, who fled Jim Crow-era Alabama, it was hard to disentangle farming from the exploitation of black bodies. “My parents told me, ‘I don’t want you anywhere near the field,’” she says. Woods respects that trauma, but he also finds in the soil the possibility of freedom. Being self-sufficient, he thinks, is liberating. “Showing people how to provide for themselves... you can go do it wherever you want,” he says. “Not for someone else.”

**TEXT TWO:**

_The workers who pick your summer berries are asking you not to buy them_

By Natasha Varner, PRI’s The World, July, 18, 2016

Go into any grocery store this time of year and you’re sure to find an abundance of neatly packed cartons of blackberries, blueberries and strawberries. For many it’s a hallmark of summer.

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Beneath the sweetness of these berries, though, lies a bitter labor dispute that has been roiling for years at Driscoll’s, the world’s largest distributor of berries — the ones you find at Costco, Target, Whole Foods and host of other grocery stories.

The conflict came to a head last week in Washington state, when farmworkers and their families marched alongside hundreds of supporters on a usually sleepy country road about an hour north of Seattle. With bullhorns, musical instruments, honking cars and chanting — “Wage theft is not OK, Sakuma has to pay” — the loud procession made its way to the family-owned Sakuma Brothers berry farm and packaging plant.

The workers, many of whom are undocumented indigenous Mixteco or Triqui from the Mexican state of Oaxaca, were marching to commemorate the third anniversary of their dispute. Organized by the independent Familias Unidas por la Justicia (Families United for Justice), protesters rallied for a continued consumer boycott of Driscoll’s berries and to put pressure on Sakuma Brothers to sign a contract allowing union representation for seasonal farmworkers.

“Farmworkers are the people who are most oppressed in the social and labor ladder,” the group's president, Ramon Torres, wrote in an email, translated from Spanish. He and a growing number of farm worker unions across the nation are hoping to change the way workers are treated.

In a statement on their website, the union alleges that Sakuma Brothers is guilty of “systematic wage theft, poverty wages, hostile working conditions, and unattainable production standards.” They’ve organized protests, strikes, legal actions and boycotts of both Sakuma Brothers and Driscoll’s, their largest client for fresh berries...

The allegations that brought supporters out in protest on Monday stem from a conflict that has been brewing since 2013. That’s the year the Sakuma Brothers started bringing in temporary workers from Mexico as part of the H-2A Guestworker Program. The program mandates that you “pay certain wages and provide certain housing,” CEO Weeden explains on a recent afternoon at the farm. As a result, guest workers were paid an hourly wage rather than by the weight of their harvest and had access to better housing than the laborers who’d been working there seasonally for decades.

At the peak of the 2013 summer harvest, seasonal workers not participating in the H2-A guest worker program began organizing protests and work stoppages, and demanding equal treatment. In response to the unrest, Sakuma Brothers suspended its use of the H2-A program after just one year, but workers’ demands for better treatment have continued.

In 2015, the Washington Supreme Court ruled in a lawsuit that workers at Sakuma and across the state are entitled to paid rest breaks. Beyond that, the workers’ group says that they have seen some improvements to housing conditions and wages have been increased. Still, the they say, it’s not enough.
Sí, se puede! is the cry of empowerment that has been pushed from the fields and the picket lines into the mainstream political discourse in the last two decades. Fifty-one years ago this week, on September 8, 1965, Filipino pickers walked off the fields in Delano in Kern County.

Two weeks later, Mexican workers joined them. The strike would go on for five years, until table-grape growers were forced to sign labor contracts in 1970. The strike in Delano brought to prominence, among others, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

An article in the Chronicle last year noted, “The 1965 Delano strike was a product of decades of worker organizing and earlier farmworker strikes. It took place the year after civil rights and labor activists forced Congress to repeal Public Law 78 and end the bracero contract labor program. Farmworker leaders then acted because growers could no longer bring braceros into the United States to break strikes.”

Moreover, the strike did not begin in Delano, the paper reports. Earlier Filipino workers went on strike in Coachella in Riverside County. There they won a 40 cent an hour wage increase, while forcing authorities to drop criminal charges against arrested strikers.

Six months later, Cesar Chavez and his group, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), later to be called UFW (United Farm Workers), would lead a strike of grape pickers on a march from Delano to the State Capitol in Sacramento.

While the struggle began 50 years ago, the struggle continues to this day. One week ago, legislation by California State Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez (San Diego), which would establish equitable overtime standards for farmworkers in line with other Californians, was approved on a bipartisan 44-32 vote by the Assembly. The bill now sits on the governor’s desk.

Beginning in 2019, Assembly Bill 1066 would gradually phase in standards for farmworker overtime, lowering the current 10-hour day level to the standard 8-hour day, and establishing for the first time a 40-hour standard work week, over a four-year period.

Beginning in 2019, the phase-in would be by annual half-hour-per-day increments until reaching eight hours, and annual five-hour-per-week increments until reaching 40 hours. Both final standards would be achieved in 2022.


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AB 1066 additionally authorizes the governor to temporarily suspend a scheduled phase-in of overtime at any time until full implementation of phase-in overtime requirements or January 1, 2022, whichever comes first, if the governor suspends minimum wage increases based on economic conditions.

“The whole world eats the food provided by California farmworkers, yet we don’t guarantee fair overtime pay for the backbreaking manual labor they put in to keep us fed,” said Assemblymember Gonzalez. “We know this is the right thing to do, and thanks to the hard work of an incredible coalition throughout the state and across the country, we’re now one step closer to finally providing our hard-working farmworkers the dignity they deserve.”...

TEXT FOUR:

A Community Garden Became an Alternative to Juvenile Detention
By Eillie Anzilotti, CityLab, Aug. 25, 2016

The first time Tatiana visited the Curtis “50 Cent” Community Garden in Jamaica, Queens, she didn’t want to touch the dirt.

“It was scary,” she says. “I just had to stick my hand in real quick and get it over with.”

That was around two years ago. Tatiana, then in 10th grade, had racked up around 200 absences at her nearby high school. She was failing all of her classes, and a handful of petty crimes had landed her in juvenile court. Through the Queens Youth Justice Center, an alternative-to-detention program, Tatiana was placed in an all-girls group. Every Thursday, Shernette Pink, who runs the program, led the teenagers in conversations about self-esteem and motivation—discussions they rarely had at home or school.

But it wasn’t all talk. Pink had recently been contacted by Heather Butts, a coordinator with H.E.A.L.T.H. For Youths, a leadership and development nonprofit that established a presence in the 50 Cent Garden, one of the few green spaces in a neighborhood where public parks make up only 3 percent of the total acreage. Butts suggested bringing some of the teens from the Queens Youth Justice Center to volunteer at the garden.

Tatiana was one of the first from the program to work in the garden, a 10,983 square-foot, well-manicured corner lot at the edge of a sleepy residential neighborhood. Just overhead, the Long Island Railroad occasionally rumbles by. The New York Restoration Project (NYRP), a nonprofit dedicated to cleaning up public spaces across the five boroughs, bought up the land along with 51 other

25 Full article: http://www.citylab.com/navigator/2016/08/gardening-as-an-alternative-to-juvenile-detention/497465/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheAtlanticCities+%28CityLab%29

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plots in the late '90s. In 2008, a donation from the rapper 50 Cent (who grew up in the area) funded a rainwater harvesting system and overhauled planting areas.

Elderly neighborhood residents oversee most of the beds, where they tend to rotating crops of runner beans, kale, tomatoes, and the occasional pumpkin. Before Tatiana started working alongside them, she’d never gardened before. “I am not a nature person,” she says. “I won’t even go camping.” But something about the garden kept her coming back. With the help of the elderly locals, many of whom came to Queens from the West Indies, Tatiana planted a bed of marigolds and tomatoes; this year, she’s growing eggplant. “I feel like I’ve helped to make something,” Tatiana says.

After she started coming to the garden every week, Tatiana, now 17, transferred schools. She started attending classes; her average jumped from a 55 percent to a 94. From her new school, it takes her an hour and a half and two bus transfers to reach the garden, but every Tuesday afternoon, she’s there...

A community garden connects people to one another, says Deborah Marton, the executive director of NYRP. “There are not many activities in our culture where young people, old people, people of different races will all agree and find it easy to work together,” she says. “There’s a transfer of knowledge here, about gardening specifically, but also a transfer of wisdom and values: of what’s important in life in general.”

For the kids who come to the garden from the alternative-to-detention programs, it’s an introduction to a different speed of life. “You wouldn’t know from seeing them here,” says Butts, gesturing to the teens tending their tomatoes behind her, “but in the past they’ve had some impulse control issues: thought goes to action very quickly. With gardening, you can’t do that. You have to think very carefully about where to plant things, and when to water them.”

Tatiana and the boys from the Queens Youth Justice Center wax poetic about how much better the tomatoes they’ve grown in the garden taste than the ones from the supermarket; when they harvest the crops in September, they’ll bring whatever they’ve grown home with them. But other takeaways are less tangible.

“What does gardening do?” Butts says. “It gets you active, it teaches you about responsibility, it teaches you about caring for something outside of yourself. If you become a good gardener, you’ve learned all of that.”

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- Using Dr. Holt-Giménez and Dr. Harper’s definition as a foundation, how do the articles illustrate ways to address racism in food systems?
- How are these programs identifying and addressing root causes of food injustice?
- What are the challenges and assets in the communities these programs are organized by or based in?
- How could you, as an individual, or as part of your different communities, support the work
Create Your Own! (And Additional Resources)

Have you come across an engaging video, article or piece that you want to use as a prompt for discussion with your guests? Interested in facilitating a conversation without a source? Want to ask your guests to each bring interesting sources that they’ve come across with them to the dinner and use those to prompt discussion? Go for it!

We recommend creating Guiding Questions beforehand, or asking guests to bring Guiding Questions with them, and then wrapping up your discussion with the Closing Reflections.

Still looking for more inspiration? Check out these additional resources:

Video:

- “Is This Food Racist?” Dan Pashman and Ashok Kondabolu, *The Sporkful.*
  - “Sporkful podcast host Dan Pashman and Dap (aka Ashok Kondabolu) of Chillin’ Island, formerly of Das Racist, take to the streets of New York to find out whether some foods are offensive. This is part of The Sporkful’s series of podcasts on food, race and culture entitled Other People’s Food.”
  - “At Paul Quinn College, where once there was a football field, now there’s an organic farm. It’s not just a symbol of renewal for this once-struggling historically black college in Dallas; it’s where students work to pay tuition. As part of our Rethinking College series, Hari Sreenivasan explores how students learn to understand the expectations of a career while gaining a liberal arts education.”

Articles:

  - “While the Black Lives Matters movement works to put a stop to police violence, another less-visible form of structural violence is taking place all across America.”
  - “What can the food movement learn from Black Lives Matter in this tumultuous moment?”

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- “These Black farmers don’t stop at healthy food. They’re healing trauma, instilling collective values, and changing the way their communities think about the land.”

Poetry:

- “Set the Garden on Fire,” Chen Chen, Split this Rock Poetry Database

If you do choose this route, please share your resources and customized activities with us - post using @RepairtheWorld #TurntheTables or email us at rebecca.katz@werepair.org.
Teshuva: Repentance and Resolutions

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Source sheets
- Writing implement

CLOSING THE DISCUSSION

After your entree discussion has concluded, we encourage you and your guests to reflect on this dinner experience and process the information presented in your discussion.

FRAMING:

We started our dinner with a tradition from Rosh Hashanah and are ending it with a tradition from Yom Kippur. The goal is to encourage guests to leave the dinner with tangible next steps to engage with racial and food justice. We are framing that process through the practice of teshuva or atonement.

HOST INSTRUCTIONS:

Hand out the source sheets with next steps and the writing implements.

According to Jewish tradition, the time between Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the new year, and Yom Kippur, the day of repentance, is an auspicious time to ask for forgiveness. Maimonides (Rambam), a preeminent medieval Sephardic rabbi and philosopher, wrote in his foundational text on Jewish ethics and law that there is a distinct process to repentance. It is not enough to give restitution to the person you have wronged; you must also ask for their forgiveness. Action must accompany communication, and communication must accompany action. This process, called teshuvah, is one that each person must continue to engage in year after year.

However, Yom Kippur is not only about individual and interpersonal actions. We speak about communal sins during Yom Kippur; whether or not we personally committed those shared sins, we all must confess and atone.

We have spent this evening speaking about the intersections between food and racial justice. When food arrives at our tables, it has been through many systems, and its production has impacted many lives, for good and for bad. Depending on where we bought the food, what we are eating and who we are eating with, people of color have a critical part of growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing - and have faced displacement, wage theft, oppressive conditions, appropriation, and many other injustices throughout the process. Consciously or...
unconsciously, we are taking part in these systemic “sins,” and Jewish tradition imposes on us to atone for what we all have had a part in.

We have the opportunity for teshuvah when we reflect and act on how do we individually and communally participate in food systems. Food and the events that surround its production and consumption can also be a form of liberation from racist systems, keeping cultural traditions vibrant and building relationships.

**Explain to your guests the context of the following excerpts.**

*In the first text, the preeminent 12th century Sephardic rabbi and philosopher, Rambam (Maimonides) describes the process of asking for forgiveness according to Jewish law. In the following text, modern culinary historian and chef, Michael Twitty, an African American-Jew, wrote an open letter to Paula Deen, a white celebrity chef and restaurateur, in the wake of the public scandals over her use of racial slurs, the treatment of Black employees, and erasure of the African American roots of southern recipes.*

“Teshuva and Yom Kippur only atone for transgression between people and God, such as one who eats a forbidden food, or has a forbidden sexual relationship, etc. But transgressions between people and their fellows, such as hurting, or cursing, or stealing from others. Those are never forgiven until they give their fellow what they are owed, and they are appeased. Even if the transgressor returned the money they owed, they must appease them and ask for forgiveness. Even if they only mocked their fellow verbally, they must make amends and meet with them until they forgiving them.” - *Mishnah Torah, Repentance 2:9, edited for gender neutrality*

“A fellow Georgian of yours once said that one day the “sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners would sit down at the table of brotherhood.” Well no better time than now. Paula, I don’t have to tell you redemption is yours to choose, to have and to embrace. As a Jew, I extend the invitation to do teshuvah—which means to repent—but better—to return to a better state, a state of shalem—wholeness and shalom—peace. You used food to rescue your life, your family and your destiny. I admire that. I know that I have not always made good choices and to be honest none of us are perfect. This is an opportunity to grow and renew.” - Michael Twitty, “An Open Letter to Paula Deen”, June 25, 2013

**Ask two guests to read outloud the following two excerpts calling for teshuvha.**

*To conclude the dinner, the facilitator should read the following paragraph and ask your guests to choose one of the following next steps. There is no pressure for them to share it with anyone else, but they are welcome to if they would like to be held accountable.*

*Just as teshuva is a process we engage in every year, pursuing racial justice is a process. How we approach it will evolve as we explore our identities and histories and as we change through our*

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experiences. But Jewish tradition, the sources we have read tonight, or a combination of the two push us to take the initiative in beginning that process.

We ask you to read the following list and chose one or more next steps. Think about your time and capacity in this new year and chose an action you will follow through on.
In the first text, the preeminent 12th century Sephardic rabbi and philosopher, Rambam (Maimonides) describes the process of asking for forgiveness according to Jewish law. In the following text, modern culinary historian and chef, Michael Twitty, an African American-Jew, wrote an open letter to Paula Deen, a white celebrity chef and restaurateur, in the wake of the public scandals over her use of racial slurs, the treatment of black employees, and erasure of the African American roots of southern recipes.

“Teshuva and Yom Kippur only atone for transgression between people and God, such as one who eats a forbidden food, or has a forbidden sexual relationship, etc. But transgressions between people and their fellows, such as hurting, or cursing, or stealing from others. Those are never forgiven until they give their fellow what they are owed, and they are appeased. Even if the transgressor returned the money they owed, they must appease them and ask for forgiveness. Even if they only mocked their fellow verbally, they must make amends and meet with them until they forgives them.” - Mishnah Torah, Repentance 2:9, edited for gender neutrality

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Just as teshuva is a process we engage in every year, pursuing racial justice is a process. How we approach it will evolve as we explore our identities and histories and as we change through our experiences. But Jewish tradition, the sources we have read tonight, or a combination of the two push us to take the initiative in beginning that process.

We ask you to read the following list and chose one or more next steps. Think about your time and capacity in this new year and chose an action you will follow through on.

NEXT STEPS
I commit to:
- Buying my produce from local urban farms, particularly those with farmers of color.
- Frequenting restaurants and other local businesses owned and operated by people of color.

27 Full letter: https://afroculinaria.com/2013/06/25/an-open-letter-to-paula-deen/

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Reading books by authors of color.

Reading one or all of the following books:
- Ta Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*
- Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*
- bell hooks, * Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*
- Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*
- Baratunde Thurston, *How to Be Black*
- Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*
- Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*

Organizing a book club to read books by authors of color, particularly queer, trans, and female authors of color.

Attending two actions with your local Black Lives Matter chapter

Volunteer once a month at a local urban garden that addresses racial justice in the following ways:
- Runs a youth program for children of color
- Makes their produce accessible to local communities of color (via price, location, and cultural appropriateness)
- Intentionally makes itself a safe space for people of color
- Employees people of color from the neighborhood

Volunteer with Repair the World’s community partners in Baltimore, Brooklyn, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, both as part of the High Holiday service opportunities and year round. Click here to learn about service opportunities near you.

Get my news from “The Root” and “Colorlines”

Regularly read the blogs “Black Girl Dangerous,” and “Very Smart Brothas” and seek out blogs written by people of color

Regularly read blogs by Jews of Color, like Michael Twitty’s “Afroculinaria,” and Erika Davis’s “Black, Gay and Jewish.”

(if you live in a city and particularly in a gentrified neighborhood) make an effort to meet your neighbors and walk down the street without wearing headphones

Get involved in local or national advocacy campaigns to:
- End mass incarceration
- Support fair wages and benefits for farm workers by farm workers
- Restore voting rights
- End punitive policing policies that disproportionately impact communities of color

Only watching a movie or television show if the writer, director, or lead actor is a person of color

Read and discuss the Movement For Black Lives’ platform

Put Podcasts about race in your regular rotation
- Our National Conversation About Conversations About Race
- Code Switch
- Or a host of others

Share your experience with us!
Tag and post your photos, stories, or videos with @RepairtheWorld #TurntheTables
Thank you for your participation!

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