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Welcome to ic.news – pages written by, for, and about Cleveland's Jewish teens!

In the section titled "ic.news" israel.cleveland.next (icnext) participants reflect on their 10-day Mission to Israel in June, 2016, and comment on current issues of interest to Cleveland's teens. They are creating an ongoing source of news about the community, Jewish teens and Israel, inspired by knowledge gained from the icnext program. They will talk about Jewish identity, changing political, social, and

cultural perspectives of Jews and Israelis, the realities of the Israeli conflict, and more. There will be photos that document their 10-day Mission during the summer of 2016, and those that document current events, whether in Jewish Cleveland or Israel. icnext is a two-year program that educates Cleveland's Jewish high school students from all denominations in the core issues of Israeli society and the geopolitical situation in Israel today. icnext is a project of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, administered through @akiva. For information about or to apply for icnext, contact Tina Keller at tkeller@

akivacleveland.org.

In "more.teen.news" @akiva presents different teen programs in the community. From preparing students for the challenges that will face them on their future college campus, to learning Hebrew and how to advocate for Israel; from theater (testimony.theater.cleveland) to music (HaZamir Cleveland), there are so many opportunities for our teens to form a special community. Most importantly, this programming fosters an incredibly strong connection to Israel, and trains teens to be Jewish leaders.



icnext Food Issue

A Foodie's Tour of Machane Yehuda

Here in America, we buy our food at the grocery store. We walk through the conveniently organized aisles, pick out our food, and stand in line at check-out where an employee bags our groceries and hands us a receipt. In Israel, there are many outdoor markets, with sporadically placed stands selling spices, fresh produce, cold smoothies to offer refuge from the hot dry air, halva, and every other possible delicacy imaginable. On our last day together, we took a tour of Machane Yehuda, a market in Jerusalem.

— Roz Madorsky, Cleveland 2017

Food – what is traditionally eaten and how it's prepared – is a way we can commonly group people together. Today however, during a food tour of Machane Yehuda market, I experienced the distinctive ways people from all different backgrounds sell their food. There was an indescribable energy as you entered this shuk with all of the vendors loudly bragging about their products. Our group began by heading to the "best falafel in the world" where apparently the Canadian prime minister had been the week before! Next was a little bakery where I was one of the lucky individuals who got to go behind the counter and learn to make incredibly thin pitas. I was honored that I got to help but a little thrown off by the fact that I wasn't asked to wash my hands. In another interesting encounter that day, I was pressured to snort something that looked like lotion from a guy who let us taste his

incredible fresh fruit juices. Apparently, this homemade lotion opens up your sinuses, and boy, it definitely did. We then got to try an assortment of spiced nuts, dry fruits, and teas. The vendor was a tad pushy but I have to admit his spices were fabulous! Being able to see such a variety in the types of food, methods of cooking, and enthusiasm for connecting with customers opened my eyes to the dynamic culture of Israel and the shuk! Of course (like many things do) my experience at the market left me with even more questions than it answered.

— Lilly Rothschild, Israel 2016

Our last day in Israel had its perks. While visiting the highly touristy Machane Yehuda Market, we were guided by Asaf, a Jerusalem native who promised us the best tasting experience we would get on our trip. Starting at Asaf's favorite, we were greeted by the co-owners of the stand who insisted that the 25 of us would all squeeze in to their kitchen where they make the "best falafel in Israel"! After tasting the falafel right out of the burning oil, I would definitely have to agree that the falafel really did exceed my expectations. Our next stop was a pita place that had a very special technique to make their fluffy pita bread. They rolled out a big round piece of dough and stuck it right at the top of the oven. When it bubbled up and got crispy, it was ready to serve with a sprinkle of olive oil, zaatar and sesame seeds. Our next stops included a spice stand, halva shop with over one hundred different flavors, a Georgian restaurant where we tasted a dish called khachapuri, and a gelato stand. We concluded our taste tour with a juice place that made healthy (non-alcoholic) shots in



different flavors which boosted our energy for the rest of the long day. We finished by getting about twenty minutes of free time to walk around and explore the sides of the market that we didn't get to see. Touring Machane Yehuda in this way made the experience so fun and different and made for an incredible last day.

— Shai Paz, Israel 2016

Shabbat Feast in Beit Shean

For three days, icnext Cohort 4 stayed with host families in Beit Shean, exploring life in Israel with their host brothers and sisters. Dalia Socher wrote about the feast her host family presented to her for Shabbat, and how welcome it made her feel in their home.

— David Gold, Cleveland 2017

I'm no foreigner to having a lot of food on Shabbat, but the amount of food that my Israeli host family made during my Shabbat visit in Beit Shean was surreal. I've never seen so many main dishes in one place that

— Dalia Socher, Israel 2016

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Reconnecting with Vadim Blumin in Cleveland!

More recently, Vadim Blumin came to visit @akiva in February, 2017. As part of Hagigat Ivrit, the annual communal celebration of Hebrew language and culture, we were able to connect with him again as he shared more stories and snacks with icnext Cohort 4 and 5. Getting the experience to hear from him again was incredibly interesting, and I hope I am lucky enough to see him in the future.

Vadim Blumin and Israel's Culinary Diversity

Half a year ago and half a world away, icnext's Cohort 4 were treated to an insightful lecture accompanied by some tasty treats with the quirky and hilarious Vadim Blumin. He offered us his favorite Russian delicacies and taught us about his dual cultural identity while we noshed. Adam Marcus described the experience in his blog from the trip below.

— David Gold, Cleveland 2017

As I walked into the room, I smelled a tasty aroma from the Russian food sitting on the table. There were a few different types of Russian food including some rolls filled with egg salad and a Russian pancake rolled up and filled with cottage cheese, which almost tasted like a blintz. Both of these were delicious. After having a little nosh, Vadim jumped right into the lecture. He then began talking about the '1.5 Generation', and told us his personal example: he was born in Russia and moved to Israel at age 11. The reason that Vadim considers himself part of the 1.5 generation is because he has one leg in the Russian culture of his parents, but is now living in Israel and also part of the Israeli culture. A great example of this is how, now that he is a parent, he teaches his four year old daughter both Hebrew and Russian. Inside Vadim's house his family speaks Russian and outside of the house they speak Hebrew.

Back to Vadim at age 11 - upon moving to Israel, Vadim's parents enrolled him in a Jewish day school. Two weeks went by in the Jewish school when one of his teachers suggested that he be given the bible test which is much like a spelling bee and he did very well. On the day of the test he came to school wearing a suit, bow tie and unusual looking glasses – as he would have in Russia. Many of the students thought that what he was wearing was weird and one of the kids came up to him and said "Israelis don't dress like that". Vadim's response was, "now I am an Israeli and this is how I dress". Although Vadim lived in Israel and had become an Israeli, he still followed Russian culture in the way that he dressed. And today he still dresses much the same as he did at age 11.

— Adam Marcus, Israel 2016



"What does it mean 'to be'?" A pretty philosophical question, no? This isn't the kind of question you'd expect from anyone not close to you, yet it was no surprise when Vadim approached me with it. We were working on an activity relating Israel and the USA in various areas (including security, identity, peoplehood and more) when he came up to me to ask how I would define this concept of being. I thought about it for a while, and eventually decided that being is defined by the culture, and how we use it to bridge gaps between different cultures. This idea came back later in his talk, when he talked about our role in the Jewish communities. We are to be like goats, leading boys to the promised land, as Shmuel Yosef Agnon wrote years ago. We

are to be like portkeys, he said, taking people from one place to another with stories and experiences. But most importantly, we must be leaders. Our role in the Jewish community is to lead, to bridge gaps, to share culture, and, most simply, to be.

— David Gold, Cleveland 2017

From Israel advocacy, leadership training and college prep for Jewish students to HaZamir Cleveland Choir and original Jewish theatre, @akiva offers Hebrew and so much more!

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