



TUV HA'ARETZ CSA  
AT THE  
FOREST HILLS  
JEWISH CENTER

# TUV HASHAVUA: BEST OF THE WEEK

## Reflections on Eating and Not Eating

*Dr. David Kraemer, The Jew and the Carrot*

The Jewish New Year holidays are a time marked by eating (Rosh Hashanah), not eating (Tzom Gedaliah, the day after Rosh Hashanah), big-time not eating (Yom Kippur), and more big-time eating (Sukkot through Simhat Torah). How should we understand this series of ritual oppositions connected with food? What is the significance of eating and not eating, each in relation to and in contrast with the other?

Since all rituals are best understood — at least to begin with — by considering what makes them different from the ordinary (“Why is this night different from all other nights?”), to understand the meaning of eating and not-eating rituals, it is essential to begin by asking how, what and when people do or do not ordinarily eat. Since eating in the ancient world was very different from eating in our world, the meaning of eating or fasting will be very different in our world than it was for our ancestors in the past.

Eating was generally far more modest and infrequent for our ancestors than it is for us. To begin with, food was far harder to come by. Drought and famine were far more common than they are for us, and they had greater difficulty adapting to these conditions than we do. Since all of our ancestors were “locovores” — that is, they all ate what was available in their immediate environments — when the local environment failed them, they had to fall back on whatever might have been stored. When their stores ran out (as they quickly would have, as their storage capacities were technologically limited) they would have had to fall back upon alcohol (an excellent way to store calories long-term!) or hunger. And hunger was a regular part of the experience of common people.

It was also true, in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, at least, that some Jews (we cannot know what number or proportion) fasted with some regularity. Fasts were called for in response to drought or famine, for example. They were also prescribed in the aftermath of bad dreams. And some Jews took upon themselves the discipline of fasting every Monday and Thursday. All-in-all, hunger, and even fasting, was a much more common experience for them than it was for us, and it against this experience that we must interpret their fasting ritual during the New Year season.

So what did it mean to fast when hunger and even fasting were a more common experience? It meant, first of all, that a fast-day was not all that shocking, as the experience that defined it was not as different from the ordinary as we might imagine. Yes, strict, absolute fasting rendered Yom Kippur different, but not radically so. Ironically, it was the other restrictions of Yom Kippur — the

**“B” WEEK #18 9/30/2014**  
Thanks to Our Volunteers:

**9/30 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM**

**Esfir Kandinova**

**Yunno Simkhayev**

**Yelena Simkhayeva**

**Unclaimed Shares Delivery:**

**Alfred Rosenblatt**

**8/7 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM**

**David Strauss**

**Sarah Stout Miller**

**Irene Chung**

**Unclaimed Shares Delivery:**

**David Snyder**

**WINTER SHARE: Watch  
your email for information  
– coming soon!**

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the  
Forest Hills Jewish Center  
106-06 Queens Blvd.  
Forest Hills, NY 11375  
718-264-7000, ext 250 | [tuv@fhjc.org](mailto:tuv@fhjc.org)

- Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:  
[www.foresthillstuvcsa.com](http://www.foresthillstuvcsa.com)
- Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/tuvFHJC](http://www.facebook.com/tuvFHJC)
- Twitter: [@tuvFHJC](https://twitter.com/tuvFHJC)
- Golden Earthworm:  
[www.goldenearthworm.com](http://www.goldenearthworm.com)
- FHJC: [www.fhjc.org](http://www.fhjc.org)
- Hazon: [www.hazon.org](http://www.hazon.org)

prohibitions pertaining to washing, anointing, wearing shoes, and sex — that set it apart. If anything, the self-imposed hunger of Yom Kippur took a relatively common experience — hunger — and made it sacred. In other words, rather than being an experience of common deprivation, it became an experience of dedication to God. By experiencing what we often experienced, though now in response to divine command, we re-entered relationship with God, a God who, on account of our undertaking, was bound to forgive us our transgressions (or so the tradition promised).

But what about fasting today? We, in the developed Western world, live in a world of caloric abundance. Even the poor among us are often overweight because cheap calories are so readily available — this is why thin is beautiful in our culture. In the world of the Talmudic rabbis, fat was beautiful because the poor were thin by virtue of near starvation. Most people in our societies never deny themselves all food and drink for more than twenty-four hours. So when we do this, we do something radically different. To begin with, when we fast, we are radically different from our neighbors, most of who never fast (in the pre-modern world, virtually everyone experienced hunger, so Jews fasting on Yom Kippur were not all that different from their neighbors). We are also radically different from our normal, well-fed and sated selves. On Yom Kippur, many of us genuinely suffer — in ways that are different from our normal experience. As a consequence, Yom Kippur is, for us, set apart by that hunger, by that suffering. Yom Kippur is a day of affliction in a way different from what it was for our ancestors.

What difference does this difference make? The rabbis of old designated Yom Kippur as one of the most joyous days of the year. But, we say to ourselves, how could that be? How could a day of hunger and self-affliction be a day of joy? When hunger and affliction are unique to a day, then it will be difficult to make it a day of joy. But when hunger is a more common experience, transforming that hunger into a fulfillment of God's command will be, for the religious person, a source of joy. Taking the common and making it holy — now that's a reason to rejoice.

The same considerations pertain to our eating during the holidays. When meals were small and hunger a known experience, abundant eating distinguished an occasion as truly special. But today, when even over-eating is common, abundant eating is par for the course. We, therefore, have to work hard to make our festival meals special, to find foods or preparations that mark this day off as being different from any normal day. When our ancestors ate like kings and queens, they quickly knew that the day was set apart. We eat like royalty all the time. The challenge for us, therefore, will be to create meals that are fit for these days and no others.

*Dr. David Kraemer is particularly interested in literary analysis of rabbinic literature, ritual, and the social and religious history of Jews in late antiquity. His most recent work, Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages, researches the evolution of Jewish eating practices through the centuries.*

9/30 What's in the Box:

**Acorn Squash, Baby Spinach,  
Shallots, Hakurei Turnips, Baby  
Bok Choy, Baby Pink Radishes,  
Zucchini, Red & Plum Tomatoes**  
**FRUIT: Bosc Pears, Empire Apples**  
**HERBS: Rosemary, Parsley**

**CSA  
HARVEST  
FESTIVAL  
— 10/19,  
11am - 3pm**  
*This is a private event open to all current CSA Members and their guests only. Please wear sturdy walking shoes for touring the farm. No dogs allowed on farm property.*

**COOKING  
DEMOS/  
WORKSHOP**  
11:30 Kids' Cooking Class with Allergic to Salad with Stacy Ornstein  
12:30 - **Cooking Demo with Alexa Weitzman of Sustainable Pantry**  
2:00 - Cooking Demo with Sonya Gropman of EatArtWord

**FOOD!**  
*Yummy food for sale including our handmade tamales, soups, organic baked goods! Limited supply, so PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC!*

### ROASTED SQUASHES SOUP

*Jada, betterwithbutter.com | Serves 4*

1 acorn squash  
1 large butternut squash  
1 zucchini, chopped  
3-4 shallots, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, unpeeled  
1/2 tsp curry  
1/2 tsp cinnamon  
1/4 tsp nutmeg  
1 tsp white pepper  
salt to taste  
olive oil and butter for roasting  
1-2 cups vegetable stock

Pre-heat the oven to 375F. Cut unpeeled squash in slices and remove seeds. Drizzle olive oil and scatter butter over a roasting pan and arrange squash pieces over the fat, flesh-side down. Add unpeeled garlic cloves. Roast for 30 - 40 min, till it looks shriveled and feels soft.

Chop zucchini and shallots; simmer in a pot with stock until tender. Scoop flesh out of the squash and add it to the pot, along with the spices. Mix, then puree in batches in a blender or food processor. Serve hot.

### GLAZED HAKUREI TURNIPS

*Anita Lo, epicurious.com | Serves 10*

2 lb hakurei turnips, baby turnips, or radishes, trimmed; retain greens  
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter  
3 tbsp sugar  
Kosher salt

Place turnips in a large skillet; add water to cover turnips halfway. Add butter, sugar, and a large pinch of salt; bring to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is syrupy and turnips are tender, about 15 min.

Add turnip greens to skillet and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until just wilted, 2-3 minutes. Season with salt. Serve hot or at room temperature.