THE JCC MOVEMENT CELEBRATES SHOW THE JC

YOM HAATZMAUT

Program Ideas and Resources





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About Yom HaAtzmaut

In addition to the "classic" Jewish holidays (Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, and Shavuot) that have been observed for millennia, several observances have been added to the Jewish calendar since 1948 to mark important milestones and commemorations in the modern State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, corresponding to the Hebrew date 5 Iyar 5708, the modern State of Israel was established and proclaimed from Tel Aviv. This year, on 5 Iyar 5783, corresponding to April 26, 2023, we will celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's independence day, marking the 75th anniversary of a country in which modern Hebrew is now the language Israelis use to talk, argue, dream, pray, and live.

Yom HaAtzmaut does not stand on its own. It is closely tied to Yom HaZikaron, Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism. The juxtaposition between these two holy days—one symbolizing mourning and loss, the other victory and resurrection—is the framework of the State of Israel: loss and resurrection intertwined with pain and pride. To move from abysmal disaster to extreme happiness profoundly symbolizes the strength of the country and its people.

Across the Jewish world, Yom HaAtzmaut is celebrated with festivals and activities that highlight the beauty and strength of the country and the Jewish people. Use these program ideas and resources, as well as consultation with JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement staff to plan Yom HaAtzmaut celebrations in your community.





Music

Songs and music are a great way to bring Israel's culture to Jews around the world. Consider these program ideas that focus on music:

- Are there Israelis living in your community? They love a sing-a-long! (a shira b'tzibur in Hebrew). Invite Israelis in your community to compile a playlist, and if feasible, arrange for a musician to lead the singing with lyrics displayed on a screen. Depending on local circumstances, you can hold a shira b'tzibur in person or online. Alternately, consider holding a sing-a-long that focuses on one specific songwriter—such as <u>Yoram Taharley</u>, one of Israel's most beloved poets, lyricists, and authors. Check out some of his poems and music. Svika Pik, another possibility, was one of Israel's most prolific and renowned songwriters and performers. Known for writing songs that won the Eurovision song contest, she died this year.
- Every day from Passover to Yom HaAtzmaut, post an Israeli song on your social media channels. Choose from the Makom playlist (which has English subtitles) or from one of the iCenter playlists.
- Invite your shlichim, if your J has one, or other Israelis in the community to help choose songs that offer a window into Israeli society and to lead a discussion—online or in person—about what the songs reveal about the country's society. Check out these other program ideas and resources from JCC Association.
- During the week of Yom HaAtzmaut, offer JCC staff and/or members a daily, 20-minute "Israel Culture Break" that features Israeli music videos from this Makom playlist. Reach out to local Israelis and invite them to "host" this break and share some personal reflections on life in Israel.
- Offer a learning session to examine the lyrics of "Hatikvah" ("The Hope"), Israel's national anthem. Share the text and this special rendition of the anthem from the 2020 Yom HaZikaron ceremony in Israel, which was held under lockdown because of the pandemic. To take the session to the next level, explore the lyrics using the Four Hatikvah Ouestions from the Makom Israel section of the Jewish Agency for Israel website.

Culinary Arts

Programs that focus on cooking and the culinary arts are other ways to infuse Israeli culture into North Americans' lives, so consider some of these activities for Yom HaAtzmaut:

- Plan an online JCC "Master Chef" event. Share this "Taste of Israel" recipe booklet with members, and invite them to prepare one of the recipes at home and photograph the preparation process as well as the final dish. Upload all photos under the heading "JCC Members Cook Israeli Recipes" and share the photos with the wider community. This activity can be done in person using the JCC kitchen (if you have!), and some recipes can be prepared outside, for example, a shakshuka competition can be done using gas burners usually used while camping.
- Post a recipe from the "Taste of Israel recipe booklet on social media each day and encourage members to prepare and photograph the dish to add to the "JCC Members Cook Israeli Recipes" photo collection.

- Check out Adeena Sussman's website. She is the author of "Sababa: Fresh, Sunny Flavors From My Israeli Kitchen: A Cookbook, coauthor of 14 other cookbooks, and as presented to JCCs both in person and online.
- Partner with an Israeli Community Center (Email the team at JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement and they will gladly help facilitate such a partnership.) to plan an interactive cooking demonstration in an Israeli home that JCC members can attend online
- Rent a food truck and plan an Israeli food festival in your JCC parking lot or a local park or feature it as one of the stations for an outdoor Yom HaAtzmaut happening. Check out this <u>food truck</u> rental option; there are many others available online in your area.
- Use the <u>iCenter for Israel Education</u>'s video series, <u>Homemade</u> Jam, in which Israeli chef Hedai Offaim invites celebrities from different backgrounds into his kitchen to cook and sing together, as the focus of a cooking class, or just enjoy the shows with you members, perhaps inviting a member or colleague to share their own favorite song and dish.
- Plan an Israeli food box lunch (if feasible, in conjunction with a local store) by arranging for Israeli foods to be ordered and delivered to people's homes. Alternately, plan the event for the JCC parking lot or a local park as part of your community's Yom HaAtzmaut celebration.
- Hold a pita-bread—baking session. Baking pita bread is an easy, fun activity for all—ECE kids, Club J kids, and adults! Flour, water, an upside-down wok, and a heat source are all you need to create the trendy, gourmet food that isn't just for falafel anymore. In addition to a pita-making station, you can offer various fillings (meat, eggplant, salad, eggs, pickles, tahini, etc.) and invite people to "build their own."



- Screen the Somebody Feed Phil episode in which Phil visits Israel followed by a cooking workshop, even if it's just making vine leaves!
- Invite members to adopt an olive tree in the grove at My Tree, and in return, for each tree they adopt, they'll receive six bottles of kosher, extra virgin olive oil with personalized labels. In addition to supporting Israeli agriculture, the program offers a physical connection to the land. Participation can be done directly through the website or via a community partnership program, and the latter can be used to create an internal, yearround fundraiser.
- As the Psalmist taught, "Wine will make a human heart happy." In recent years, Israeli wineries have flourished, and their wines are gaining international acclaim. Such wines also are a fun way to appeal to local wine lovers. Plan a local wine tasting event and invite local wine experts or wine enthusiast to lead the tasting. When you send the invitation, attach this article and this one, so participants can read up on the latest info about Israeli wines. Here are a few wine-purchasing options:
 - o Many Israeli wineries are available in North America through <u>local distributors</u>.
 - o These sites offer kosher and non-kosher wines, as well as wines from the Kishor Vineyard and Winery, which is owned by Kishorit village, a community of people with special needs who live together and work in the village's production industries.
 - o Kosherwine.com offers a selection of wines in various price ranges and has arranged online wine tastings and tours around Israeli wineries.

- Check out the JCC Association Discover Catch+ Family Tip Sheet for Yom HaAtzmaut, which offers great activity and food ideas for families.
- JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement is preparing short videos on various culinary themes to reflect the diversity of Israeli culture. Each video will be accompanied by a program kit and, when completed, will be shared in the Program Brief and on the lsrael@75 page in the JCC Resource Center. Stay tuned!

Touring the Land

Israel travel is back so consider bringing your members to visit! Whether it's a family trip, for older adults, lovers of the arts, book and literature lovers, foodies, or those curious about innovation, traveling in Israel is a wonderful way to engage your members in new ways and enrich your community. Check out this brochure about various Boarding Pass trips to Israel you can organize for your community. If you are considering an Israel and Europe Boarding Pass trip this brochure provides lots of options. No matter what type of trip to Israel you're thinking about for your community, JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement will work with you to make it a reality.

One of the benefits of the COVID-19 pandemic was that we all learned there are many creative ways people can see and tour Israel online:

- Book a private <u>virtual tour</u> of Sde Boker, the home of David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, and his wife, Paula. An hour-long private tour will be a magical experience for JCC members of all ages. Check out other program ideas that focus on Ben Gurion. Contact Esther Suissa for more information or to book a virtual tour.
- Running Around Jerusalem offers 20- to 30-minute videos of a tour guide and his friend running through different neighborhoods of Jerusalem—a great opportunity to see Israel and learn some of the nuances of the country's history and contemporary stories. Share the videos with your members to use while they work out (at home or in the J's fitness center), or use them as part of your Yom HaAtzmaut celebrations. Alternately, erect a large screen, and invite people to book time to run through Jerusalem.
- Visit the Israel is Beautiful website and subscribe to receive a new 10-minute video (and a family activity kit) about a special site in Israel each Thursday. The following Sunday, the site hosts a live conversation in which a tour guide talks further about the site, with time for Q&A.
- Tour guide Beni Levine, who owns <u>LET Travel</u>, has created a series of virtual tours that can be purchased through his site. Choose some sites and tour places in Israel with your members.
- In this three-part series of bite-size videos, your members can take an online tour of Beit HaNasi, the home of Israel's president in Jerusalem. Consider using them as the kick-off or conclusion of your Yom HaAtzmaut program.
- If your JCC brought a group to Israel in the past, invite the tour educator to offer an online session to program alumni, giving everyone a chance to reconnect and get updates about changes since the trip. The <u>JCC Association</u> <u>Center for Israel Engagement</u> will be happy to assist in making the connection.
- Offer a virtual tour at your partnership region in Israel, including a look into people's home for a virtual coffee break and discussion. The JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement will be happy to assist in making the connection.

Consider connecting your members with Israel by using some of these other resources:

• Lior Mizrahi, a Jerusalem-based photographer, has shared a wonderful selection of his photographs exclusively for JCCs to use. These photos can be found on JCC Resource Center (Note: When using the photos in documents or online, a photo credit must be included: "© Lior Mizrahi").



- Stanley Hirsch also has shared his photographs exclusively for JCCs to use. These photos can be found on JCC Resource Center (Note: When using the photos in documents or online, a photo credit must be included: "© Stanley Hirsch").
- During the week of Yom HaAtzmaut this year, when Israel will celebrate 75 since its founding, encourage fitness participants to swim 75 laps, walk 75 laps, or strive for a 75-minute workout.
- Gadna is an Israeli military program or boot camp that prepares young people for IDF military service, including training them to do various exercises, such as pushups, squats, and crunches. At your J, shlichim or fitness instructors can organize a Gadna-like program for teens, If your JCC already has a bootcamp style class, it's a great way to incorporate Israel into your fitness offerings.
- Scaventures combines the best of scavenger hunts and adventures. Organize an online team game such as the Israel Trail (שביל ישראל) Amazing Race. Whether there are 15 or 150 participants racing across the country from top to bottom on the Shvil Yisrael, the Israel National Trail, these adventure games are a great way to bring families together in a safe, community-building, and fun program for Yom HaAtzmaut—and throughout the year. Special pricing is available for JCCs
- Visit this site (or a similar one; there are lots of them) to create a life-size scene from Israel to place in the JCC lobby and use as a backdrop for members to take selfies.

 Use the special Israel@75 logo developed by JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement in all your Israel related materials. The lsrael@75 logo files can be

downloaded from JCC Resource Center.

Fun With Hebrew

Every year on the 12th day of the Hebrew month of Sh'vat, Israel and the Jewish people celebrate Hebrew Language Day, the birthday of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, who nearly single-handedly revived Hebrew so it could develop into the modern language we know today. In Israel, it is the language in which great, innovative work in fields from arts and letters to medicine and from journalism to cutting-edge technology is discussed and deliberated.

Programming focused on modern Hebrew is one more way to bring part of Israel to North America's Jewish community:

• Check out this video in which Gal Gadot teaches viewers several idiomatic Hebrew slang terms. During the week of Yom HaAtzmaut, screen it in the JCC lobby or other location where people congregate.



C Lior Mizrachi

- Add Hebrew ambiance around your J by hanging posters of Hebrew slang from the iCenter
- Share <u>Six Second Hebrew</u> videos on social media, to enhance your Hebrew vocabulary, and/or to begin meetings or Israel-themed events.
- Offer an Israeli book translated into English as part of the JCC ECE Center's PJ Library program.
- During the week of Yom HaAtzmaut, have all JCC staff greet JCC members with a few sentences in Hebrew— Boker tov (Good morning); Yom tov (Have a nice day); Tov lirot otcha (Nice to see you)—along with an explanation of why they are doing so. JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement will be happy to assist with Hebrew sentences.
- Play Israeli music throughout the JCC building and/or as part of the JCC phone system. (See the Music section of this document for playlists.)



The Arts

Art is an excellent tool to connect people and cultures. Because it uses experiential language, not necessarily spoken language, Israeli art may be easy to connect with, even without mastering the language.

There are many opportunities to incorporate Israeli art and culture into life at your JCC:

- Select a book by an Israeli author for your J's book club, choosing one from your book fair's offerings, the <u>Jewish</u> Book Council, or the Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature. Invite a local Israeli, your shlichim, or anyone comfortable leading the conversation to facilitate the meeting. If you are interested in inviting the author to speak, which generally includes a speaker's fee, JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement will be happy to assist with making connections.
- Plan a movie night featuring an Israeli film or documentary. Use the catalog from the Maaleh School of Film and Television to choose a short film or documentary prepared by the film school's students that can prompt a discussion. <u>DocuShuk</u> is another source for Israeli documentaries. Check out this document to explore program ideas around movies and documentaries.
- Use one of these ready-made, do-it-yourself exhibits—"The Guide to Hipster Israel," or "70 Years of Israeli Achievement"—available at no cost from Israel 21c. Share them online or print them to display in your JCC.
- Invite photographer <u>Erez Kaganowitz</u> to give a lecture or presentation about his work in <u>Humans of Tel Aviv</u> or Humans of Israel. Let him know you are from a JCC to benefit from a special JCC Movement discount.
- Invite a local or Israeli artist from the JCC Israeli Community Center partnership to lead an online or in-person art class with an Israeli flavor modeled after "Paint and Sip" classes. Participants should register in advance so they can receive from the J (or purchase themselves) the necessary supplies: a canvas and stencil (unless the canvas already is stenciled) and the paints. Some companies provide the entire package, including an instructor.
- Alternately, you might invite a local artist to teach the class and get the materials from a local art supply store. Your art specialist may create a stencil, but if not, consider contacting Israeli street artist <u>Judy Tal Kopelman</u> known for bringing text and art together, for an Israeli-themed stencil (a city scape, traditional scene, or something with Hebrew words), so members can create something they will want to display in their home.

- Use the iCenter's Piven Workshop materials to organize an art class inspired by Hanoch Piven, who uses everyday objects to create art and portraits. Alternately, contact Hanoch directly for an online or in person workshop for your JCC.
- Invite community members to share family photos taken as part of a past trip to Israel. Have them attach a short description to each photo and add them to an online photo exhibit you may wish to entitle "Israel Through the Eyes of Our JCC Community" or something similar.
- Plan an Israeli song contest and invite teens (or other groups) to sing Israeli songs as part of a community Yom HaAtzmaut Israeli Idol song contest.
- Invite local artists to share their Israeli-themed art and plan an Israel art show online or in person in honor of Yom HaAtzmaut. Host a festive exhibit opening, with Israeli wine and music on the eve of Yom HaAtzamut.
- If your community can gather outdoors for Yom HaAtzmaut and you have an outside wall you want to decorate, contact Judy Tal Kopelman to learn about graffiti inspired by Israel, Hebrew, and the Bible. Using Illustrator software, you can order a stencil to be screened onto the wall or printed locally and purchase recommended supplies for the project.
- The equipment for matkot, a popular Israeli paddle board beach game, can be the basis for an art project at your J. Purchase plain matkot paddles and invite members to an event to decorate them with paint, spray paint, etc. and then display them on the walls in the JCC or in your exhibition space. If the project needs to be done online, the paddles and other supplies can be delivered to participants' homes ahead of time.
- Invite Israeli comedian Benji Lovitt to perform in your community, either in person or online.
- Golden Lands is a great resource to bring Israeli and North American performers to your community.

Other Activities

These other activities may be appropriate for Yom HaAtzmaut festivities or other Israel-themed events and programs throughout the year:

- As part of the JCC online Israel week campaign, offer JCC members the iCenter quiz, "Are You Smarter Than DBG?" that's available on Kahoot at two different levels—beginner and intermediate. Here is another Israel guiz. Both can be fun for kids in Club J All Day and families or as an intergenerational program.
- Prepare Israel Activity Boxes filled with coloring pages, guizzes, an Israeli flag, recipes, etc. and send boxes to families in the community or have members register to pick them up curbside at the J. Use the link created by the JCC of Greater Rhode Island, learn more about a similar program, or edit the contents of the box to make it your own.
- A torch-lighting ceremony is held annually at the gravesite of Theodor Herzl in Jerusalem to mark the end of Yom HaZikaron and the beginning of Yom HaAtzmaut. Twelve torches, symbolizing the 12 tribes of Israel, lit by 12 individuals deemed to have made outstanding contributions to society is the highlight of the ceremony that also includes musical performances, dances, parades, and fireworks. Inspired by this tradition, you may wish to honor 12 individuals for their contributions as part of a community-wide Yom HaAtzmaut event. JCCs that have a partnership community in Israel may want to consider working jointly to invite six people from each community for the honor.
- Using information from the Israel21c website, feature a fun fact about Israel daily, either online or in person, offering members something to look for every day. You may want to make this activity interactive by inviting members to add their own fun facts.



Photo © Lior Mizrachi

- As part of an adult Yom HaAtzmaut event and inspired by an Australian program and "Sorry for Asking" in Israel, create a "You Can't Ask That" event to bring together Israelis and locals and provide a forum for each side to ask the others about things they never felt comfortable asking before. Participants should answer spontaneously, and the questions should focus on things people might be uncomfortable asking directly but have always wanted to have answered.
- Invite local Jewish organizations to join a community march in honor of Israel's independence. Work with local law enforcement to secure the event and/or close streets, and with local media outlets to ensure appropriate publicity. Play Israeli music along the march route and encourage all participants to wave Israeli flags, wear white shirts, and display banners that symbolize Israel's wonders and achievements. You may wish to have the march end at a park, where a communal Yom HaAtzmaut event or picnic could be held.



Photo © Lior Mizrachi

- Perfect for family engagement, professional learning, or adult discussion groups is "For the Sake of Argument," written by Robbie Gringras and Abi Dauber Sterne. The book features 24 short stories specially designed to be used by family and friends to argue some of the thorniest issues facing Israel and the Jewish world today. These short stories have been curated to enable readers to explore and grapple with other viewpoints and voices and deepen their understanding of themselves, others, and Israel.
- The Tali Fund of Israel has produced fun activities and resources suitable for families around the Hebrew month of <u>Ivar</u> (which includes Yom HaAtzmaut)
- Enrich the meaning of the holiday through one or more of the Gratitude Days activities developed by M2 or their Value Sparks initiative

Yom HaAtzmaut Programs From JCCs

Programs previously offered by other JCCs may be useful as you plan your own Yom HaAtzmaut celebration:

- Memphis JCC in Memphis, Tennessee: This JCC offered an online, week-long Israeli Escape Room in which participants play individually or in groups and adjust the level of difficulty. For information, contact Lauren <u>Luskey Taube</u>, director for the Center of Jewish Living & Learning.
- Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island in Providence, Rhode Island: This community offered virtual tours of their partnership community in Israel. The tour was planned with Running Around Jerusalem and augmented by other virtual tours focused on ethnic groups. The tours included interviews with Israeli community institutions and performances by local Israeli talent. For information, contact Lawrence M. Katz, director of Jewish life and learning.
- Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia presented an Israeli music festival that introduced different aspects of Israeli culture and society through the musical presentation.
- Tucson JCC in Tucson, Arizona: This community's graffiti art tour and workshop included time for participants to create their own graffiti artwork. For information, contact Jennifer Selco, director, Jewish life and learning.
- Tampa JCCs and Federation in Tampa, Florida: "Israel Through a Lens" was this community's day-long festival that featured multiple online events. For information, contact Pamela Garron, director of communication and development.
- David Posnack JCC in Davie, Florida: This community organized an Israeli song contest, with all songs presented in Hebrew. Between performances, the JCC played videos about Israel. For information, contact Lea Shani, assistant adult services/cultural arts director.

- The 14th Street Y in New York, New York: This community presented "The Creation of the State of Israel," an event that focused on historical letters reinterpreted by leading Israeli artists who created artistic compositions based on and inspired by the letters. For information, contact Ronit Muszkatblit, senior director of arts and culture and LABA: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture.
- <u>Prosserman JCC</u> in Toronto, Ontario: "Celebration the Beauty of Israel Through Film and TV" included a discussion about how international audiences are getting a glimpse into various aspects of Israel through the country's movie stars. For information, <u>contact Jennifer Appleby</u>, chief programs officer.
- <u>Hamilton JCC</u> in Hamilton, Ontario: This JCC community created "Rock Radio All Stars," a Yom HaAtzmaut celebration featuring renowned artists. For information, <u>contact Gustavo Rymberg</u>, CEO.

Additional Resources

Share these Israel-related resources with members or use them to develop Israel-themed programs and activities throughout the year:

- Check out <u>the Israel@75</u> page in the JCC Resource Center for new ideas, updated speaker lists, and other material suitable for Yom HaAtzmaut and year-round.
- Shalom Hartman Institute offers cutting-edge articles, podcasts and videos about Yom HaAtzmaut.
- <u>Israel's Ministry of Tourism</u> has a YouTube channel with short video clips of Israeli sites.
- <u>The Jewish Education Project</u> offers resources and program ideas for educators. Closer to Yom HaAtzmaut live online program information will be available. In the meantime, register for free to download the resources.
- The National Library of Israel offers mostly primary resources, including original posters of early celebrations of Yom HaAtzmaut, videos, and <u>family-based activities</u> such as board games, quizzes, and more.
- <u>PJ Library</u> offers wonderful Yom HaAtzmaut resources for children and families, including book recommendations, Shalom Sesame materials, and information to create an archaeological dig in your school's playground.
- <u>Israel Story</u> is a podcast/radio initiative that brings high quality, long-form, non-fiction content about everyday Israel and Israelis to listeners.
- No Camels is a newsletter and website that highlights Israeli innovation in the arts, technology, and agriculture.
- <u>Israel 21c</u> offers short articles that highlight Israel's accomplishments and achievements in all facets of society—the arts, hi-tech, health, environment, travel, culture and more. Check out the interactive <u>Israel-Aid</u> <u>Map</u> that details where in the world Israel has provided disaster, medical, environmental, and other relief to countries and regions in need.
- OpenDor Media (formerly Jerusalem U) provides a wide variety of Jewish and Israel content (podcasts, videos, articles, and educational resources) to a global audience and aims to open the door of Jewish education to the next *dor* (generation).
- <u>Vibe Israel</u>, according to its website, is "energizing and inspiring the next generation about Israel" by using social media and branding strategies. The site offers photos (at no cost) and videos, all developed especially for young adults.
- <u>Maaleh School of Film and Television</u> offers short films and documentaries about Judaism and Israel created by the school's film students.
- <u>Unholy:Two Jews on the News</u> is a weekly podcast you can share with your members that deals with contemporary topics facing Israel and the diaspora and features Yonit Levy and Jonathan Friedlander. In his podcasts, <u>Daniel Gordis</u> interviews and comments on contemporary issues in Israeli society.



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