

CHAPTER 5

Urban Food Venues as Contact Zones between Arabs and Jews during the British Mandate Period

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The dominant paradigm in scholarship on the history of Mandate Palestine until the 1990s was that of a “dual society.” In the words of historian Zachary Lockman, this paradigm “has been premised on the implicit or explicit representation of the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine as primordial, self-contained, and largely monolithic entities . . . with distinct and disconnected historical trajectories.”¹ The last three decades have witnessed a shift away from this dual society model toward the idea of relational history, which is based on the assumption that neither Arab nor Jewish societies in Palestine can be understood separately from their encounter with one another and the constitutive effects of this encounter for both societies. While relational history need not necessarily focus on actual social encounters, this trend has given rise to many studies focusing on relationships and contacts between Arabs and Jews in various spheres of life.

One of the spheres where contact between Jews and Arabs took place on a regular basis was food and eating. Given the manifold activities involved in the process of producing, selling, preparing, and consuming food, contacts in this sphere took many forms. This chapter focuses on commercial food venues selling local foods during the British Mandate period as contact zones between Jews and Arabs, as well as between European Jews and Middle Eastern Jews.² The three “mixed cities” of Haifa, Jerusalem, and Jaffa and the Jewish city of Tel Aviv serve as the chapter’s case studies.

Defining food venues as contact zones does not mean that they were spaces of sociability and reconciliation—of “breaking bread.” Mary Louise Pratt defined “contact zones” as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”³ While some commercial food venues could function as sites of friendly contact and sociability and serve as channels for cultural trans-

mission, such venues could also be sites of suspicion, animosity, and conflict. Indeed, they were sites where some borders were crossed while others were erected.⁴

Yet Pratt's conceptualization of the contact zone is premised on the assumption of two distinct and clearly demarcated cultures that "meet, clash and grapple with each other," which is reminiscent of the dual-society thesis. Political divisions in Palestine (Jews versus Arabs) did not necessarily coincide with cultural divisions (European versus Middle Eastern or Arab). A central division within Palestine's Jewish society was between European (Ashkenazi) Jews and Middle Eastern (Mizrahi) Jews with ancestral roots in Arab and Muslim countries. For the latter, local Palestinian food, if not always familiar, was not foreign either. Often Mizrahi Jews mediated various local foods to Ashkenazi Jews through the restaurants and food stalls they operated, even when these foods were not part of the fare in the countries from which the sellers hailed.

Using food as a lens for studying intercommunal contact allows us to go beyond conflicting visions and political agendas to examine "the living experience of subjects," including the sensual and affective aspects of European Jewish settlers' encounters with the Levant and its inhabitants.⁵ For this purpose, food is a particularly potent lens, given its ability to elicit powerful sensations, ranging from pleasure and longing to a sense of danger and disgust.⁶ By this I do not mean to suggest that food in and of itself elicits specific affective reactions; rather, our "gut reactions" to various foods are mediated both by the practical training of our bodies and by more discursive forms of knowledge. One example was the discourse of hygiene, which contrasted salubrious Western modernity to the dirty and dangerous Orient and its foods.⁷

By exploring European Jews' early encounters with Palestinian food in this chapter, I seek to nuance the account of the Israeli adoption of various Palestinian Arab dishes and their presentation as "Israeli food" as "cultural food colonialism."⁸ First, this type of account is predicated on the binary division between local Arab and European Jewish settlers, leaving Middle Eastern Jews out of the equation. Second, this concept seems to imply that cultural food colonialism "naturally" follows land colonization. Yet studies on food consumption in colonial contexts show that European settlers' adoption of foods from the indigenous repertoire, if it occurred at all, was hardly a self-evident process.⁹ Reconstructing the history of Israeli adoption and appropriation of various dishes from the Palestinian-Arab menu as a sociocultural process requires that we go back to these early moments of (often ambivalent) culinary contact and try to decipher the affective reactions they elicited from European Jews.

In this chapter I draw on archival documents, newspaper and journal articles, autobiographies and memoirs, and interviews. Most materials are in Hebrew, but some are in Arabic and English.¹⁰ While most Arabic-language archival sources on life in pre-1948 Palestine were lost during the Nakba (literally “catastrophe,” the Palestinian exodus in 1948),¹¹ many Hebrew sources contain invaluable information on Palestinian society and ways of life, such as the materials collected by the Jewish paramilitary organization Haganah (Defense).¹²

This chapter opens with a description of the scene of commercial food venues in Palestine’s urban centers during the British Mandate period. It then discusses Mizrahi Jews as mediators of local foods to Ashkenazi consumers and finally Ashkenazi Jews’ reactions toward these venues and the foods they served, paying special attention to their sensual and affective aspects. As the chapter demonstrates, the most common reaction was rejection, on grounds that were both sanitary and aesthetic. At the same time, for specific groups of (mostly male) consumers, these venues—both “authentically local” and “exotic”—provided a sense of pleasure, adventure, and sometimes also danger.

Commercial Food Venues in Palestine’s “Mixed Cities”

After World War I, Palestine, which was formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, came under British Mandatory rule. According to the mandate system, the administered territories did not become imperial possessions but protected states and were to be governed by the colonial powers until their inhabitants would be “ready” for independence.¹³

In 1917 Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, supporting the establishment of a Jewish “national home” in Palestine. While small-scale immigration and settlement of nationally minded Jews had already begun by the late nineteenth century, the British Mandate period (1922–1948) saw the growth and consolidation of a Jewish national community and national institutions as well as Palestinian Arab resistance to Zionism. Immigration of Jews increased in the 1930s following the Nazi ascent to power, resulting in the Palestinian Revolt of 1936–1939. The Jewish population had reached approximately 600,000 by 1947—about 30 percent of the total population of Palestine.¹⁴ Following the United Nations partition plan of November 1947, violent clashes broke out between the two communities, which developed into a full-fledged war after the British withdrawal in May 1948. This war resulted in the Palestinian Nakba and the establishment of the Israeli state.

The mandate years were a period of accelerated urbanization, in both the Arab and the Jewish sectors. Among Palestinian Arabs, the share of urban dwellers increased from 21 percent in 1880 to 36 percent toward the end of the mandate, mostly due to labor migration from the countryside to towns, while the Jews (both Mizrahi and Ashkenazi) had been a predominantly urban population throughout the period.¹⁵ In both Arab and Jewish societies, a developing middle class exhibited a growing orientation toward consumption and leisure.¹⁶ As a result of these developments, the corpus of commercial food establishments grew and diversified, including street stalls, eateries, and restaurants, which catered to various clienteles—single men seeking to fill their stomachs, recreation-seeking members of the middle class, tourists, British officials and soldiers, and others.

Between the early 1930s and 1948, half of the Palestinian urban population lived in what the British government defined as mixed cities—cities and towns where significant Arab and Jewish populations cohabited. Among the Jewish urban population, the percentage living in mixed cities decreased from 78 percent to 48 percent between 1922 and 1946.¹⁷ Out of the seven mixed cities, it was mainly Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem that exhibited the characteristics of a modernizing, capitalist, and cosmopolitan urbanity. In these cities, trends toward spatial and social segregation, which were exacerbated in the wake of violent clashes, existed side by side with shared neighborhoods, intercommunal interactions, commercial partnerships, and other forms of cooperation.¹⁸ Yet, even in places and periods where trends of separation prevailed, cross-national relationships and encounters still took place.¹⁹ Indeed, food was a realm in which such encounters took place on a regular basis.

The earliest and most common channel for commercial encounters between Arabs and Jews involving food was street vending. Arab vendors sold foods and foodstuffs in commercial spaces populated by both Arabs and Jews, such as Hamra Square in Haifa or, starting in the early 1920s, the Carmel market area in Tel Aviv, located along the municipal border between the two cities. Many also sold their merchandise in Jewish neighborhoods, sometimes announcing it in three or even four languages (Arabic, English, Hebrew, and Yiddish).²⁰ In some periods, the number of Arab vendors on the streets of Tel Aviv seems to have reached several hundred. According to municipal sources, various unofficial “markets” were formed on the border zone between Jaffa and Tel Aviv.²¹

Vendors sold either raw products such as goat milk (sometimes milked on the spot), eggs, olive oil, tahini, fruits, and vegetables or prepared foods such as falafel, *ful* (fava beans), hummus, *mashāwī* (roasted meat), *hamleh malan* (roasted chickpea pods), *ka’k* (ring-shaped pastry) with sesame or za’atar, *būza* (ice cream made with resin of *Pistacia lentiscus*), and sweets, including a candy

made from thinly crushed chickpeas and sugar. Some sold drinks from big kettles or flasks, like *sahlab* (a sweet drink made from ground orchid tubers), *sūs* (a sweet drink made from licorice roots), tamarind juice, and lemonade.²² Most vendors sold products from Arab farms, both in Palestine and abroad, but I also came across cases of Arab vendors selling products produced in Jewish factories.²³

Restaurants were few and far between in the late Ottoman period and were found only in urban commercial centers. The early restaurants catered primarily to hungry men—bachelors or married men working away from home—as well as to travelers. The main culinary establishment for (male) recreation and socialization in Palestinian society, as in other countries in the Middle East, was the café, where men went to drink coffee or tea, smoke, play dice, read newspapers (or listen to them being read), and (after the mid-1920s) listen to the radio in some establishments.²⁴ Starting at the beginning of the British Mandate, and most notably in the 1930s and 1940s, the number of cafés and restaurants in major cities steadily increased.²⁵ In Haifa, alongside the “humble” cafés, which offered coffee, water-pipes, and table games, a fancier variety developed, with the capacity to serve up to several hundred people and space for dancing and artistic performances. The more upscale cafés were visited by women as well (a fact that did not go unnoticed by conservative critics), and there were even cases of women managing cafés.²⁶ Some of these cafés served alcoholic beverages and foods such as *mezze*.²⁷ The simpler cafés did not serve food, but people sometimes bought foods like hummus and *fūl* from other vendors and ate them in the café.

Restaurants of the period can also be categorized as simple eateries, some of which specialized in one or two items like hummus, *fūl*, or roasted meat, versus more elaborate establishments with fuller menus that included a variety of meat and vegetable dishes and stews. In both types, men were in charge of the cooking, in contrast to home cooking, which was the domain of women.²⁸ A 1927 article titled “Maṭā‘im” (Restaurants) in *Filastin*—the most widespread, nationalistically minded Palestinian newspaper of the time—mentioned the growing number of restaurants in Jaffa. Writing in a modernizing vein, the author reprimanded restaurant owners for their poor hygiene, lack of food safety, and exaggerated prices.²⁹ He wrote that if Jewish food had been palatable to Palestinians, those who wanted to indulge would undoubtedly have visited Jewish restaurants. This suggests that the notion of eating in restaurants as a form of recreation was already in effect, although it took longer to arrive in smaller towns.³⁰ Nevertheless, in the mid-1940s recreational restaurant dining was still much more common among Jews than among Arabs.³¹

Haifa became the major city in northern Palestine following the open-

ing of the Hijaz train line between Haifa and Deraa, Syria, in 1905. Many spaces of leisure there were visited by both Arabs and Jews.³² One of them was the drinks and *būza* shop of Mustafa al-Haj in the northern corner of Hamra Square, which served as a popular recreation spot for Jews on Friday evenings, when Jewish businesses were closed.³³ Sources mention different types of benign or friendly interactions between Jews and Arabs in cafés, including conducting business meetings and playing billiard and card games, as well as less benign ones, like fist-fighting.³⁴ The city grew in the 1930s and 1940s, following the establishment of refineries and the expansion of the port, and became a cultural center attracting visitors from throughout Palestine and abroad. The number of cafés and restaurants increased: in the early 1940s the Haganah listed seventy-eight cafés and fifty-eight restaurants owned by Arabs in Haifa, mostly downtown.³⁵ Many of these restaurants were patronized by Jews as well.³⁶ According to Mordechai Ron, the morning fare was *fūl* with olive oil—sometimes alongside hard-boiled eggs—served with pita bread, a plate of pickles, and a jug of cold water, while hummus reigned during the day. The cook prepared the hummus on the spot and scooped it onto a plate, wiping the edge with his thumb. The dish would be topped with fava beans and olive oil. J. M. (born 1937 in Haifa) noted in an interview how she and her friends used to laugh at Jews who came to eat hummus and *fūl* in the restaurants near the entrance to the port, quoting the Arabic saying “What do donkeys understand about ginger?”³⁷

Besides hummus and *fūl*, Ron mentions other dishes that Jewish customers ordered in Arab restaurants, including stuffed vegetables, grape leaves, and vegetables cooked in olive oil or tomato sauce. Some ordered meat, which was often hung on a hook in the entrance to the restaurant. The customers selected their cut, which the owner then chopped with a big knife before adding parsley, salt, and spices and placing the meat on a skewer to be roasted on the fire. Meat was also served in the form of shish kebab or *ṣiniyya* (meat and vegetables in either tahini or tomato sauce cooked on a brass tray). Some restaurants—especially those that functioned as a meeting place for Muslims, Christians, and Jews—served alcohol and mezze, which could contain a large selection of different dishes.³⁸

A café and restaurant culture was also developing in Jerusalem around the same time, particularly in the 1930s, when the presence of the British army led to a growth in the service sector. This attracted both Palestinian and Jewish labor migrants.³⁹ Many of these food and drink establishments—of both European and Middle Eastern type, either Arab- or Jewish-owned—became sites of intercommunal interaction.⁴⁰ According to Salim Tamari, the estab-

lishments located at the periphery of the new neighborhoods around the area of Musrara, Jaffa Gate, and the vicinity of the Russian compound provided a particularly cosmopolitan milieu.⁴¹ Yet Jews visited not just these types of establishments but sometimes also simple restaurants in or around the Old City.⁴² Journalist Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon described an “oriental” restaurant inside the Damascus Gate “that displays its wares most temptingly” and serves “humas salad” (prepared without tahini)—at the time unknown to many or most of her readers: “a symphony of color and taste, if it suits your taste. It is made of a bean which is grown in most parts of the country, the beans that vendors sometimes roast on the street. But after the beans are crushed and mixed with oil and lemon and properly garnished in the leisurely Oriental fashion, they are hardly recognizable.”⁴³

In Jerusalem the Haganah counted sixty-two Arab-owned cafés, restaurants, and canteens and at least nine “hummus kitchens.”⁴⁴ On the whole, however, eating out as a form of recreation was more prevalent in the coastline cities of Haifa and Jaffa than in more conservative Jerusalem.⁴⁵

A different situation prevailed in the Jewish city of Tel Aviv, which grew out of a neighborhood established by some of Jaffa’s Jewish residents who sought to distance themselves from the “Oriental” city and establish a modern and Western “garden suburb.”⁴⁶ Tel Aviv was home to a third of the county’s Jewish population by the late 1930s.⁴⁷ The arrival of bourgeois Jewish immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s and the presence of British security forces, which had been growing since the beginning of the Palestinian Revolt, accelerated the development of a vibrant dining scene in Tel Aviv, including restaurants, cafés, and bars—some more fashionable than others. Tel Aviv, with a population of 160,000, had more than four hundred cafés and restaurants by 1939.⁴⁸ However, Tel Aviv and Jaffa were never entirely separate: several Jewish neighborhoods, which were part of the Tel Aviv urban sequence, actually belonged to the municipality of Jaffa,⁴⁹ while much of the northern Jaffa neighborhood of Manshiyeh, where Arabs and Jews cohabited, was encircled by Tel Aviv’s municipal borders. Jaffa remained the urban center for Tel Aviv’s residents until the 1930s, but Jews continued to go to Jaffa for governmental, commercial, and recreational purposes even later.⁵⁰ In neighborhoods on the border zone between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, inhabited predominantly by Mizrahi Jews, Arab and Jewish stores, workshops, restaurants, and cafés could be found side by side. These were visited by members of the two national groups.⁵¹

With all due respect to the author of the cited *Filastin* article who implied that Arabs avoided Jewish restaurants, commercial culinary encounters actually went both ways. Arabs, typically those of higher social status, did visit Jewish

cafés and restaurants, but to a lesser extent—given Arabs' lower rates of restaurant attendance. Members of the new Palestinian middle class were often attracted to the European cafés and restaurants, with their foreign aura, although Arabs visited Jewish-owned restaurants serving Middle Eastern food as well.⁵² Some Jewish-owned establishments that sold alcohol and hosted entertainment shows like cabarets and belly dancing attracted Arabs from neighboring countries. *Filastin* itself published advertisements for Jewish-owned cafés and restaurants, suggesting that they were indeed patronized by Arabs.⁵³

Yet these culinary encounters were also impacted by intercommunal tensions, bursts of politically motivated violence, and economic bans from both sides. Starting in the 1920s, and intensifying after the outbreak of the revolt in 1936, an organized Zionist “buy local” campaign, which in effect meant “buy Jewish,” put increasing pressure on businesses and customers to boycott Arab produce.⁵⁴ Following the violent nationalist clashes of 1929, Arab merchants in Jewish neighborhoods were sometimes beaten and their merchandise damaged.⁵⁵ The Tel Aviv municipality played an important role in the campaign, actively encouraging consumers to buy Jewish produce and controlling the influx of products into the city.⁵⁶ Produce from Arab farms was usually cheaper than produce from Jewish farms, however, so many Jewish customers continued to buy it. Therefore, Tel Aviv remained an attractive destination for Arab vendors.

The violent nationalist clashes of 1921 and 1929 (followed by an Arab ban on Jewish businesses in Jaffa in 1929) and the Palestinian Revolt, which started with a six-month commerce and labor strike, slowed down intercommunal commerce and promoted greater spatial segregation.⁵⁷ Jews and Arabs continued to work side by side in the Carmel market, but any argument could easily turn into a feud.⁵⁸ According to the author of a 1946 article on an “Oriental” café near the Carmel market, Mizrahi Jews used to spend time in cafés in Jaffa before the Palestinian revolt, but after the revolt they “transferred the atmosphere [of Jaffa] to the heart of Tel Aviv” by opening establishments of similar style and ambiance.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, many Jews continued to patronize Jaffa in the years after the revolt, especially during the “quiet” years of World War II.⁶⁰ Heavy traffic of Tel Aviv residents to Jaffa was noted on days when Jewish cafés and restaurants were closed (such as Saturdays, Yom Kippur, or Passover, when people went to Jaffa to look for bread).⁶¹ Famous Israeli author Haim Gouri (1923–2018) mentions a row of Arab restaurants in the Jaffa neighborhood of Manshiyeh, where he would sometimes eat in the 1930s and 1940s.⁶² Future judge Gabriel Strassman (born 1931) wrote that Jews looking for “Levantine dishes” in the

1940s would occasionally go to Wadi Nisnas in Haifa, the Old City of Jerusalem, or Arab Jaffa.⁶³

Middle Eastern Jews Selling Local Food

As Sami Zubaida notes, Middle Eastern foodways, while far from homogeneous, are nevertheless describable in a vocabulary and set of idioms that are “often comprehensible, if not familiar, to the socially diverse parties,” within which “differences and boundaries are drawn and redrawn, negotiated and altered.”⁶⁴ Thus, for the Jews who arrived in Palestine from the Middle East, Palestinian Arab foods and foodways were “comprehensible, if not familiar,” even if some of the dishes were previously unknown to most of them. For example, *hummus bi-l-tahīna* (hummus with tahini) was consumed mainly in the Levant, a region from which only a minority came, mostly after the foundation of the state.⁶⁵ They found nothing extraordinary or exotic in the consumption, preparation, and selling of foods from the Palestinian Arab kitchen. Therefore, it was often Mizrahi Jews who mediated local foods to Ashkenazi consumers, as street food vendors and restaurant owners.

Jews from Arab and Muslim countries arrived in Palestine both before and during Zionist immigration waves from Europe. The local Sephardic community held political and economic dominance within Jewish society during most of Ottoman rule in Palestine, but their position began to weaken in the second half of the nineteenth century. It further declined with the increase in Zionist immigration from Eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially after the establishment of British Mandatory rule and the foundation of Jewish national institutions. Political power shifted to Eastern European Zionists, who sought to distance themselves from what they considered to be manifestations of the “old” unenlightened and unproductive Jewish culture and from the Orient in general and to shape the new “Hebrew” society and culture along modern and Western lines. Social and spatial segregation along ethnic lines increased during the mandate years. Most Mizrahi Jews were concentrated in the lower and lower-middle classes and were generally unassimilated into Zionist society and institutions, though there were exceptions, mainly among Sephardic groups.

Many Mizrahi Jews made their living by selling local foods on the streets of major cities. Yehoshua Zalivansky, who was born in Tel Aviv in 1919 to an Ashkenazi family, tells in his memoirs about an elderly Mizrahi woman who used to sit on the sidewalk on Tel Aviv’s Shabazi Street next to a giant pot on a Primus stove and pre-

pare hummus sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s. When the chickpeas were soft, she would pound them to a paste in an earthenware dish, add olive oil, lemon, and spices (but no tahini!), and hand it to her customers, who ate standing up. After each customer finished eating, she would wipe the plate, refill it, and hand it to the next customer. Zalivansky first tried the hummus out of curiosity but later ate it whenever he had the chance because it was tasty and he liked the atmosphere in this “standing restaurant for beggars.”⁶⁶ Other Mizrahi Jewish vendors sold falafel, which by the late 1930s had become quite prevalent and popular on the streets of Tel Aviv. In an article from 1939 titled “Seaside Temptations,” nutritionist Lilian Cornfeld described “the filafel [*sic*] man” as the most popular in the “unending gastronomic procession” along the shore of Tel Aviv: “He seems to give you an almost unlimited amount of food for next to nothing. . . . Unhappy the person who does not know the delights of filafel.”⁶⁷ Tel Aviv had eight licensed Mizrahi falafel vendors by 1941 and others who sold falafel without a license.⁶⁸ Many of the vendors were of Yemenite origins, although falafel was unknown in Yemen.⁶⁹

Jewish immigrants from Arab countries and the Balkans also opened restaurants serving various local and Middle Eastern dishes. Several such restaurants published newspaper advertisements announcing the serving of specific “Oriental foods,” sometimes alongside “European foods.” The selections of dishes usually included standard restaurant fare such as hummus, *fiil*, falafel, shashlik, and kebab—some of these being dishes that restaurant owners learned to prepare in Palestine.⁷⁰ Some of the ads stressed that the food was not only kosher but also clean and fresh, attesting to the common perception of “Oriental restaurants” as dirty and to their desire to distinguish their restaurants from such stereotypes.

Some Ashkenazi consumers seeking to experiment with local food may have opted for Jewish-owned “Oriental” restaurants due to kashrut—the Jewish religious dietary laws. Kashrut is a complex set of rules that stipulate which foods are allowed to be consumed, how they should be prepared (and by whom), and how and when they can be consumed. According to the rules of kashrut, in order to qualify as kosher, meat must be slaughtered in a specific way. Strict observers of kashrut are also forbidden to eat food prepared by non-Jews. In fact, until the 1930s, many Jewish restaurants in Tel Aviv did not observe kashrut. Meat butchered by Arabs, including prohibited animals like camels, found its way into restaurants and homes in Tel Aviv. In the course of the 1930s, nationalist and religious interests coalesced, and serving kosher meat butchered in the Tel Aviv slaughterhouse became the norm in Tel Aviv’s restaurants and institutional kitchens.⁷¹ In any case, for the observant non-Orthodox section of the Jewish population, kashrut was a flexible norm centered mostly on meat, while vegetable dishes prepared by non-Jews were tolerated.

Tel Aviv's Mizrahi population had expanded by the late 1930s, due to both migration and Jews fleeing from Jaffa during the Palestinian Revolt. The number of Jewish-owned Middle Eastern restaurants increased.⁷² For the refugees, selling food was one of the most accessible options for creating income from small initial investments. Those who were granted permits to open food establishments received some primary financial help.⁷³ Most of these restaurants were clustered in the southern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv on the border zone between Tel Aviv and Jaffa, where contact between Jews (mostly Arabic-speaking Mizrahis) and Arabs was more prevalent than in other parts of the city.⁷⁴ Indeed, restaurants were one public space in which such contacts occurred on a regular basis.

European Jews' Experience of Arab and Mizrahi Restaurants and Food Stalls

How did European Jewish settlers experience local restaurants and street stalls? What were their attitudes toward the foods they served? While the various sectors of the Jewish population developed different relationships with local foods, including selective (and often temporary) adoption by rural settlers, the following section focuses on the experiences of urban dwellers.

Sources suggest that for the first generation of Ashkenazi settlers, local food sold in restaurants and in street stalls was unappealing. Kahn Bar-Adon reflected this sentiment when she wrote that "[t]he majority of the Oriental restaurants do not tend to stimulate one's appetite."⁷⁵ Expressions of repudiation of "Oriental" food and food establishments were usually couched in hygienic and sanitary terms. However, as shown earlier and as the sources make clear, the discourse of hygiene itself reflected nationalist, racial, and cultural assumptions.⁷⁶

Many letters to the Tel Aviv municipality from both residents and merchants complained about various nuisances created by the presence of Arab as well as Mizrahi Jewish street vendors, cafés, and restaurants: litter, shouting, foul odors, and suffocating smoke.⁷⁷ For example, in a 1945 letter to the Tel Aviv mayor, one of the city's residents complained that the stench of falafel vendors close to his apartment spread through the surrounding area and deprived neighbors and passersby of the possibility of breathing fresh air. He also mentioned the "many cases" of dysentery, hepatitis, and typhus that befell adults and children after eating the vendors' falafel. He ended with a call to take any measure necessary to preserve the environment of the city and its

fresh air as well as the health of residents, especially the younger generation.⁷⁸ As this letter suggests, in a city that sought to fashion itself as modern, Western, and Hebrew, the presence of “Oriental” vendors was perceived as out of place.

A popular spot for food vendors was outside schools, where they aroused the concern of teachers, managers, and school physicians. The journal *Hed HaMizrah* (Echo of the East) brought the story of twelve-year-old Rachel, a recent immigrant from Syria who lived in one of Haifa’s Arab neighborhoods. Due to her family’s dire financial situation, she found work in a restaurant where the owner let her take a hundred falafel balls and sell them on the street. Rachel would sell them to children at small schools. The author of the article, probably a teacher, writes that Rachel was afraid of him because she heard him tell the pupils that falafel was bad for the stomach and they should not eat it.⁷⁹ Israeli author David Shacham tells how he used to buy falafel from a Yemeni vendor next to his school in Tel Aviv in secret, because his mother was sure that it was full of germs.⁸⁰

In 1941 the Tel Aviv municipality resolved to eliminate falafel from the streets, revoking all but two permits, but the vendors did not disappear.⁸¹ In December 1944 Haim Halperin, the head of the newly established municipal Department of Supervision, declared a war against falafel vendors, in particular against the selling of falafel, cakes, and sweets outside of schools because they “caused severe stomach diseases like hepatitis, dysentery, and typhoid fever, as well as favism . . . especially among children of 7–8 years.” Halperin asked Dr. Eliyahu Rosenbaum, the head of the Education Department of the Tel Aviv Municipality, to see to it that school principals forbade children from buying from street vendors.⁸² Vendors who did not comply were fined and their property confiscated; if caught again, they could even be sent to jail.⁸³ Nevertheless, the vendors always came back. The campaigns targeting school children were unsuccessful too: the pupils continued to buy from falafel vendors.⁸⁴ At least part of schoolchildren’s attraction to Middle Eastern foods like falafel was probably derived precisely from authority figures’ admonitions to avoid it.

The notion that the selling of “Oriental” food in public spaces, especially by Arab vendors, did not fit the Hebrew city was expressed in a 1945 letter to the municipality by several owners of cafés on the Tel Aviv shore. This letter demonstrates particularly well how sanitary discourse could be wedded to nationalist sentiments and economic interests. The writers complained about a person who rented his café to four vendors: one selling salads, another falafel, another soda pop, “and the worst,” an Arab selling ice cream, “while none of the Jewish cafés sell ice cream.” They wrote:

Like the verse, you should purge the evil from your midst, and besides, they spoiled all the businesses. They have made it into something like a market. It's so cheap, so simple, instead of buying a sandwich at the café, people buy falafel and stuff. Such as kebab, shashlik, etc. It's a shame that we would remain silent about something like this. Both politically and hygienically. It is not nice for the Hebrew city that an Arab sells his merchandise and nobody stands in his way. At night he brings little dirty kids to help him with the business, and he himself has sick eyes, and the entire city comes by to buy his ice cream.⁸⁵

The writers complained further about the smells, the smoke, and the loud shouts and called on the municipality to take action. While the Tel Aviv municipality fought unlawful vending in general, it made a special effort to target Arab vendors, who were defined as “foreigners” in the official documents.⁸⁶ Those who were caught were evicted and their property confiscated.⁸⁷

Not only Arab but also Mizrahi Jewish venues were perceived as a piece of Jaffa in Tel Aviv. In May 1939, two months after the end of the revolt, a reporter of the sensational *Iton Meyuchad* (Special Journal) wrote about the restaurant of Yosef Batito, who moved from Jaffa to Tel Aviv after the revolt broke out:

Here the people of Nazareth and the descendants of Albion drink together with the daughters of Tel Aviv, without a hint of racial hatred. Here hatred and anger disappear with the appearance of arak on the tables and everyone drinks to the sounds of a gramophone, which sometimes mix with sounds of a very different kind: smashing of bottles, yelling, swearing, and the sounds of vocal fights.⁸⁸

It is hard to know how the author of this column viewed such interracial sociability. Both the Jewish and Palestinian national movements tried to exert control over various types of national border-crossings, which were perceived as challenging and threatening, and particularly opposed “our women” mingling with “their men.”⁸⁹ At the same time, this excerpt describes the situation in not entirely negative terms (“hatred and anger disappear”), although it may have been written with a pinch of irony, as the facilitator of this amicable interaction is the bottle. What is clear from this excerpt, though, is that such places were perceived as strongholds of uncivilized behavior (“smashing of bottles, yelling, swearing”), which middle-class Ashkenazim from “good homes” should stay away from.

However, some Ashkenazim, mostly men, were attracted to Arab restau-

rants specifically for the sense of exoticism, sensuality, and sometimes danger that visits to these restaurants evoked. Judge Gabriel Strassman described how “tahini-hummus-kebab-shashlik meals” at Arab restaurants, albeit cheap, were regarded as festive meals and as a kind of luxury. “Devouring them had something of Oriental charm,” he wrote, noting that he and his friends were willing to eat in these restaurants in spite of some of the preparation methods, such as spitting on the roasting meat to improve its taste.⁹⁰ As this excerpt shows, the “exotic” allure of Arab restaurants could act as an antidote for potential feelings of disgust. According to writer Menachem Talmi, the restaurant of Abu-Laban in the Carmel market became trendy among Tel Aviv’s bohemian circles in the second half of the 1940s.⁹¹ As noted by Pierre Bourdieu, exotic foods appeal to those sectors that are richer in cultural capital than in economic capital and therefore pursue originality at the lowest economic cost.⁹²

However, for some men, visiting Arab restaurants apparently involved more than distinction. Yehuda Litani, a journalist and coauthor of a guidebook to Israel’s hummus joints and olive oil producers, noted in an interview that in the early 1940s members of the Jewish paramilitary organization Palmach used to visit Arab restaurants as an act of heroism.⁹³ I end with two literary accounts of Palestinian Arab urban spaces involving food, written by a famous Palmach warrior: Israeli writer and poet Haim Gouri. The first is the poem “A Journey to Haifa’s Lower City,” which he likely wrote during the war of 1948, shortly before Arab Haifa was destroyed.⁹⁴ The second is an account of his visits to Arab Jaffa during the mandate period in *The Crazy Book*, published in 1971. In both of these texts Gouri describes the Arab city in similar terms: full of smoke, smells, noises, shouts, and teeming crowds. It is a space that is decaying, malicious, threatening (Gouri explicitly mentions in his poem a “knife in the back”—obviously intended for the Jewish visitor); but it is also alluring, with its aura of exoticism, historicity, and sensual abundance. At the end of the second stanza of his poem on Haifa, Gouri explicitly mentions an “Oriental” restaurant that “assaults his senses” with the smell of roasting meat. In *The Crazy Book* he provides lengthy descriptions of the food in Jaffa, including the “za’atar powder, which carries the smell of mountains at the end of the summer” and hummus and *ful* in a puddle of thick olive oil.⁹⁵ After the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza in the 1967 war, Gouri described the hummus of Abu Shukri in the Old City of Jerusalem as his “madeleine cookie,” which carried him back to the Jaffa and Haifa of his youth.⁹⁶

These descriptions convey particularly well the power of food in producing

a “sense of place” tied to specific geographical and human landscapes.⁹⁷ For Ashkenazi Jewish settlers, Palestinian Arab places were both threatening and (sometimes because of that) alluring; both “foreign/exotic” and “authentically local.” Even as many of these foods were later “Israelized,” the sense of locality and authenticity with which they were invested was never symbolically detached from their Arab source.

Conclusion

Commercial food venues of Ottoman and Mandate Palestine have not yet been studied in depth. I hope that this chapter contributes to the description of these venues—mainly street food stalls and restaurants—by considering their function as spaces of Arab-Jewish encounters. While most of the available sources do not provide in-depth descriptions of the actual interactions that took place in these spaces, they nevertheless offer a glimpse into the burgeoning scene of street food, cafés, and restaurants in Palestine’s mixed cities and in the Jewish city of Tel Aviv, where trends of separation and national segregation existed alongside social contacts and cultural exchange.

As demonstrated, it was not only Arab vendors and restaurant owners who mediated local dishes for Ashkenazi consumers. Jews who hailed from various countries in the Middle East also opened restaurants and operated street stalls where they sold local foods, some of which they had learned to prepare from Palestinian vendors and cooks. Both Arabs and Middle Eastern Jews were deemed “Oriental” by Ashkenazi settlers, the majority of whom treated these foods and food establishments with suspicion and sometimes outright aversion. Municipal authorities in Tel Aviv sought to limit the activity of street food vendors and drive Arab vendors off the city streets, but often with little success.

While most Ashkenazi settlers avoided local foods during the mandate period, some did buy from Arab or Mizrahi vendors or visit “Oriental” restaurants. More often than not, they bought products from street vendors, but some also bought prepared foods, especially members of the younger generation. At least for some adults, these venues represented more than the unwelcome presence of the Orient amid Jewish modernity and progress. Both “exotic” and “local,” they offered an experience of sensual abundance, culinary pleasure, and sometimes danger. This sense of “exotic localism” or “local exoticism” still seems to accompany the visits of Israeli Jews to various Palestinian culinary spaces to this day.

Notes

1. Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 4.

2. There is no simple definition for the food repertoire that is discussed in this chapter. Defining it as “Palestinian,” “Levantine,” or even “local” seems to suggest a specificity that does not always apply to the foods under consideration, whereas the category of “Middle Eastern” is too broad to refer to a distinct repertoire. Therefore, throughout the chapter I use different designations according to context. Here “local food” is used in a rather descriptive manner, to refer to the food repertoire that is prepared, sold, and consumed by the country’s indigenous Arab population.

3. Mary Louise Pratt, *Under Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4.

4. Deborah S. Bernstein, “Contested Contact: Proximity and Social Control in Pre-1948 Jaffa and Tel Aviv,” in *Mixed Towns, Trapped Communities*, ed. Daniel Monterescu and Dan Rabinowitz (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 215–241.

5. Ben Highmore, “Alimentary Agents: Food, Cultural Theory and Multiculturalism,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2008): 392. See also Anat Helman, “European Jews in the Levant Heat: Climate and Culture in 1920s and 1930s Tel Aviv,” *Journal of Israeli History* 22, no. 1 (2003): 71–90.

6. Scholars have offered various explanations for why food is so potent in eliciting affect, including the centrality of food to negotiating self and other relationships starting in early childhood and the synesthetic qualities of food that lend it a special mnemonic power. See, for example, Michael Dietler, “Culinary Encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialism,” in *The Archaeology of Food and Identity*, ed. Kathryn C. Twiss (Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 2007), 218–242; Highmore, “Alimentary Agents”; David E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

7. Dafna Hirsch, “We Are Here to Bring the West, Not Only to Ourselves’: Zionist Occidentalism and the Discourse of Hygiene in Mandate Palestine,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 4 (2009): 577–594.

8. Lisa Heldke, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (London: Routledge, 2015); Liora Gvion, *Beyond Hummus and Falafel: Social and Political Aspects of Palestinian Food in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 130. See also Ahmad H. Sa’di, “Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a Component of Palestinian Identity,” *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 185; Ari Ariel, “The Hummus Wars,” *Gastronomica* 12, no. 1 (2012): 34–42.

9. For example, Richard Wilk, *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists* (Oxford: Berg, 2006); Cecilia Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* (London: Routledge, 2011); Blake Singley, “Hardly Anything Fit for Man to Eat’: Food and Colonialism in Australia,” *History Australia* 9, no. 3 (2012): 27–42.

10. My research assistant, Nisreen Mazzawi, collected Arabic sources and conducted interviews with elderly Palestinian men and women.

11. Manar Hasan, *The Invisibles: Women and the Palestinian Cities* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Van Leer Institute Press and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 2017), 11 (Hebrew).

12. In the second half of the 1940s the Haganah collected detailed information about Palestinian life, settlements, and businesses (including history, social relations, economy, demography, culture, agriculture, and so forth) for intelligence purposes.

13. D. K. Fieldhouse, *Colonialism 1870–1945: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 18.

14. Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (New York: SUNY Press, 2000), 21.

15. Jacob Metzger, *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8.

16. Deborah Bernstein and Badi Hasisi, “‘Buy and Promote the National Cause’: Consumption, Class Formation and Nationalism in Mandate Palestinian Society,” *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 1 (2008): 127–150; Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandatory Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); Amir Ben-Porat, *The Bourgeoisie: The History of the Israeli Bourgeoisies* (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 1999), 77–80 (Hebrew).

17. Metzger, *The Divided Economy*, 7–8; Anat Kidron, “The Influence of the Results of the 1929 Events on Haifa and on Jaffa/Tel Aviv: A Comparative Look,” *Israel* 22 (2014): 73 (Hebrew). Seven such cities existed: Jerusalem, Safad, Tiberius, Haifa, Hebron and Acre (both until 1929), and Jaffa (officially until 1946, but in effect until 1936).

18. Daniel Monterescu and Dan Rabinowitz, eds., *Mixed Towns, Trapped Communities* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 2.

19. Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Bernstein, “Contested Contact”; Tammy Razi, “‘Arab-Jewesses’? Ethnicity, Nationality and Gender in Mandatory Tel Aviv,” *Theory and Criticism* 38–39 (2011): 137–160 (Hebrew); Kidron, “The Influence,” 73–109.

20. Mordechai Ron, *Haifa of My Youth: Everyday Life in Haifa in the 1920s and 1930s* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1993), 79–80 (Hebrew); Tziona Rabau-Katinski, *In Tel Aviv on the Sands* (Ramat Gan: Masada, 1973), 93 (Hebrew); Anat Helman, *Young Tel Aviv: A Tale of Two Cities* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 78–89; Liora R. Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 72–82.

21. Tel Aviv Historical Archive (TAHA), Nissim Asulin to Rokach, 10 March 1942, 4/355a; shop owners on the Ba’al Shem Tov street to the municipality, 19 September 1943, 4/356a; A. Litayi, Nachmani 48, to the municipal department of sanitation, 10 July 1944, 4/357b (unless noted otherwise, all documents from TAHA are in Hebrew). See also Helman, *Young Tel Aviv*, 84–86.

22. Shlomo Tiv’oni, *My Friend Had a Vineyard: Musa Al Ful* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame’uchad, 1978), 53–54 (Hebrew); Rachel Seri, *A Tree and Its Branches: A History of a Yemenite Family* (Jerusalem: Private Edition, 1988), 59 (Hebrew); Aharon Chelouche, *From Jalabiya to Dummy Hat: The Story of a Family* (Tel Aviv: Private Edition, 1991), 81–84 (Hebrew); Ron, *Haifa of My Youth*, 48–52; Hannah Bezalel, *Lifetimes* (Jerusalem: Private Edition, 2004), 163–164 (Hebrew).

23. TAHA, Head of the Department of Municipal Supervision, Haim Halperin to Mayor Rokach, 9 May 1947, 4/360c. Helperin complained that in recent weeks Tel Aviv was filled with “foreign” lollipop vendors who were hired by “local” (namely, Jewish) factories.

24. Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 103–106; Bernstein and Hasisi, “Buy and Promote,” 131; Maayan Hilel, “Cultural Changes in Palestinian Arab Society, 1918–1948: Haifa as a Case-Study” (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 2018), 83, 166–167 (in Hebrew); interview with S. H., Nazareth, 19 April 2012 (interviewer: Nisreen Mazzawi). Some cafés hosted illicit activities such as prostitution and drug dealing, and some functioned as centers for political organization. Haim Fireberg, “Tel Aviv: Change, Continuity and the Many Faces of Urban Culture and Society during War (1936–1948)” (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 2003), 275; Hilel, “Cultural Changes,” 87–89, 219.

25. According to Hilel, in the second half of the 1940s villagers, too, began appealing to the Haifa municipality to request a license to open cafés and restaurants in their villages. Hilel, “Cultural Changes,” 298.

26. Manar Hasan and Ami Ayalon, “Arabs and Jews, Leisure and Gender, in Haifa’s Public Spaces,” in *Haifa before and after 1948: Narratives of a Mixed City*, ed. Mahmoud Yazbak and Yfaat, Series 6 (The Hague: Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, 2011), 73, 87; Hasan, *The Invisibles*, 97–98; Hilel, “Cultural Changes,” 218–219, 232, 248–256.

27. Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 181. Mezze is a selection of small vegetable and dairy dishes that are served as appetizers or accompanying alcohol.

28. Liora Gvion, “Cooking, Food, and Masculinity: Palestinian Men in Israeli Society,” *Men and Masculinities* 14, no. 4 (2011): 408–429.

29. On the place of hygiene and sanitation in the making of the culture of the middle class, see Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 53–76. On hygiene and culture building in Jewish society, see Hirsch, “We Are Here to Bring the West.”

30. Anonymous, “Mata’im,” *Filastin*, 28 October 1927 (Arabic). See also Hasan and Ayalon, “Arabs and Jews,” 69–98; Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 66; Israeli State Archive (ISA): 5220/13-m, Price Control Office, Galilee District Nazareth, 27 April 1946, Statement of the accused, Sami Haj Said H. Sheikh of Safed. See also interview with S. H.

31. Anonymous, “Palestine Restaurants Are Popular,” *Palestine Post*, 5 July 1944.

32. Hasan and Ayalon, “Arabs and Jews”; Hilel, “Cultural Changes,” 333–335.

33. Ron, *Haifa of My Youth*, 80; Yaacov Davidon, *Once Upon a Time Haifa . . .* (Tel Aviv: Bitan, 1983), 57–60 (Hebrew).

34. Hilel, “Cultural Changes,” 333–334.

35. Hilel, “Cultural Changes,” 89.

36. Ron, *Haifa of My Youth*, 92; interview with J. M., Haifa, 26.1.2012 (interviewer: Nisreen Mazzawi).

37. Interview with J. M., meaning “x knows/understands nothing about y.”

38. Ron, *Haifa of My Youth*, 92–93.

39. Martina Rieker, “Modern Histories of Jerusalem’s Old City: Culinary Practices and Popular Mapping(s) of Palestinian Social Spaces,” in *Pilgrims, Lepers and Stuffed Cabbage: Essays on Jerusalem’s Cultural History*, ed. Issam Nassar and Salim Tamari (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem History, 2005), 87.

40. Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, 176–189; Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 130–135.

41. Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, 182.

42. Gabriel Strassman, "Oriental Restaurants," *Ma'ariv*, 21 July 1955.
43. Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon, "Oriental Gourmet: Lamb, Techina, Humas," *Palestine Post*, 10 February 1941.
44. Haganah Archive, "Cafés, Restaurants and Canteens," 1947 (exact date unreadable), 105/24.
45. Hilel, "Cultural Changes," 287. Food shops and restaurants represented a larger share of the businesses (49 percent and 15.4 percent, respectively) in Tel Aviv than in the rest of the Yishuv (47.1 percent and 14.1 percent, respectively). Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 85.
46. LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*; Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 30–31. Tel Aviv gained the status of a township in 1921 and an independent city in 1934.
47. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 6.
48. TAHA, "A list of cafés and restaurants in Tel Aviv," 2 July 1939, 1087/2314; Yaacov Shavit and Gideon Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 2007), 270 (Hebrew). Shavit and Biger note 254 cafés, bars, and restaurants in 1941 (far short of the number of names listed in the municipal archive dated to 1939) and 422 in 1946. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 272. Fireberg notes 254 cafés, bars, and restaurants at the end of 1941 and 422 at the second half of 1946.
49. A disproportionately large percentage of their population consisted of Mizrahi Jews. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 26.
50. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 2.
51. Bernstein, "Contested Contact"; Klein, *Lives in Common*, 68–70.
52. Hasan and Ayalon, "Arabs and Jews," 75; Tikva Weinstock, "The East Conquers the Stomachs of the West . . .," *Ma'ariv*, 2 August 1951; TAHA, Shlomo Ajami, letter to Tel Aviv mayor Israel Rokach, 30 November 1942, 2315/4. See also Klein, *Lives in Common*, 82; Hilel, "Cultural Changes," 176, 334.
53. Bernstein and Hasisi, "Buy and Promote," 45; Bernstein, "Contested Contact," 224.
54. Helman, "European Jews in the Levant Heat," 79; Bat-Sheva Margalit Stern, "Mothers at the Front': The Struggle for 'Buying Local' and the Confrontation between Gender and National Interests," *Israel* 11 (2007): 91–120 (Hebrew); Bernstein and Hasisi, "Buy and Promote"; Hizky Shoham, "'Buy Local' or 'Buy Jewish'? Separatist Consumption in Interwar Palestine," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 3 (2013): 469–489; Yael Raviv, *Falafel Nation: Cuisine and the Making of National Identity in Israel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 52–59.
55. Kidron, "The Influence," 97. See also Haim Gouri, *The Crazy Book* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1971), 89–92 (Hebrew).
56. Shoham, "Buy Local," 479.
57. For example, Ron, *Haifa of My Youth*, 89; Kidron, "The Influence," 73–109; Yaacov Shavit and Gideon Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 2001), 99 (Hebrew).
58. Anat Helman, *Urban Culture in 1920s and 1930s Tel Aviv* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 2007), 112 (Hebrew).
59. "A Short While with the Eaters of Kubbeh and Players of Backgammon: Atmosphere Photographs from an Oriental Café in the Heart of Tel Aviv," *Special Journal* 10, no. 482 (26 July 1946): 5. See also Helman, *Young Tel Aviv*, 127–128; Bernstein, "Contested Contact."

60. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 43; Klein, *Lives in Common*, 74. For Haifa, see Hasan and Ayalon, "Arabs and Jews"; Hilel, "Cultural Changes," 334.

61. "A Quick Tour on the Streets of Jaffa on Saturday," *Special Journal* 5, no. 160 (8 March 1940) (Hebrew); "The Joy of Yom Kippur Turned This Year into Mourning for Restaurant Owners in Jaffa," *Special Journal* 6, no. 241 (3 October 1941), 6 (Hebrew); Israel Goldschmid-Paz, "Jaffa As It Is: People among the Ruins," *Al Hamishmar*, 2 January 1953 (Hebrew). Leavened bread is prohibited on Passover and therefore most stores do not sell it.

62. Hagar (Haim Gouri), "Thirty Years," *Davar*, 2 December 1977.

63. Strassman, "Oriental Restaurants."

64. Sami Zubaida, "National, Communal, and Global Dimensions in Middle Eastern Food Cultures," in *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* (1994), ed. Sami Zubaida and Richard Tapper (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 33.

65. The number of Jewish immigrants from the Levant that arrived in the country during the mandate period was 10,000. Yaron Tzur, "The Immigration from Islamic Countries," in *The First Decade, 1948–1958*, ed. Zvi Zamaret and Hanna Yablonka (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 1997), 61 (Hebrew).

66. Yehoshua Zalivansky, *Tel Avi, Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv: Y. Golan, 1994), 88 (Hebrew). All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted. I am grateful to Asaf David for referring me to this text.

67. Lilian Cornfeld, "Seaside Temptations: Juveniles' Fare at Tel Aviv," *Palestine Post*, 19 October 1939.

68. TAHA, 4/355a. The Tel Aviv municipality granted vending license to people who could not make their living in any other way as a form of welfare.

69. Many of the immigrants from Yemen arrived in Palestine via Egypt, so it is possible that they learned to prepare it there and then adjusted the recipe to the Palestinian version, which was made from chickpeas and not from fava beans (*ta'miya*). Shmuel Yefet, an Israeli falafel maker, tells about his father, Yosef Ben Aharon Yefet, who arrived in Palestine from Aden in the early 1920s and then traveled to Port Said in 1939. There he became acquainted with *ta'miya*, learned to prepare it, and then went back to Palestine and opened a falafel shop in Tel Aviv: [youtube.com/watch?v=nzihYVjFQM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzihYVjFQM) (29 January 2017).

70. I have gathered several testimonies from the early 1950s (though no earlier) about Mizrahi Jewish restaurant owners who learned to prepare hummus from Arab neighbors, acquaintances, or restaurant owners.

71. Helman, *Young Tel Aviv*, 121; Alma Igra, "Meatropolis: Tel Aviv's Slaughterhouse and Demarcation of Urban-National Boundaries in Palestine, 1927–1938" (M.A. thesis, Central European University, 2012), 48–50.

72. Weinstock, "The East Conquers the Stomachs"; Kidron, "The Influence," 73–109. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 78. According to Fireberg, the Jewish businesses in Jaffa that were harmed during the revolt included twenty-five "drink dealers and restaurant owners."

73. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 89, 194. The help was received from a local Zionist fund that was established in the wake of the revolt for social and security purposes. Fireberg, "Tel Aviv," 144–145.

74. Bernstein, "Contested Contact"; Razi, "Arab Jewesses?" See also Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, vol. 2, 238.

75. Kahn Bar-Adon, "Oriental Gourmet."

76. Hirsch, "We Are Here to Bring the West."

77. For example, TAHA, tenants of the Levine House to mayor Rokach, 30 May 1945, 4/357c; a longtime resident of Tel Aviv to the mayor, 10 December 1945, 4/359a.

78. TAHA, a longtime resident of Tel Aviv to the mayor, 10 December 1945, 4/359a.

79. Moshe Rabi, "The Falafel Seller (Everyday Life in Haifa)," *Hed HaMizrah*, 28 January 1944 (Hebrew). When the author asks Rachel what the falafel balls are made of, she answers: chickpeas and dry bread, to which pepper is added in order to make them spicy and tasty.

80. David Shacham, *Requiem to Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Hapo'alim, 2010), 55 (Hebrew).

81. TAHA, the Tel Aviv mayor to the Department of Social Work, 9 November 1941, 4/355a.

82. TAHA, Halperin to Dr. Rosenbaum, 5 December 1944, 4/357b.

83. TAHA, Gabriel G. Ya'acov, in the name of the Organization of falafel vendors to the Tel Aviv mayor, 18 December 1944, 4/357b (vending permits, August 1944–December 1944); Halperin, internal memo to the municipal secretary, 29 January 1945, 4/357c; "Strong Accusations by Falafel Vendors," *Special Journal* 9, no. 401, (22 December 1944): 3 (Hebrew).

84. TAHA, A. Rosenbaum, director of the Department of Education to Haim Halperin, director of the Department of Municipal Supervision, no date, 4/357b.

85. TAHA, several café owners to the municipal department of sanitation, 9 July 1945, 2315/4.

86. TAHA, manager of the license department to the municipal secretary, 29 July 1941, 4/355a. Lacking a centralized welfare system, the Tel Aviv municipality used vending permits as a form of social welfare and granted such permits to people who were unable to make their living in any other way. In 1944, for instance, about 500 licensed vendors were on the streets of Tel Aviv (of whom 386 sold food). Arabs were barred from obtaining such permits.

87. Supervisors were authorized to evict the vendors and issue either a warning or an invitation to court (in the case of vendors who either refused to leave or were caught more than once). In effect, the supervisors often confiscated the property of vendors (both equipment such as carts, trays, and scales and merchandise). While Jewish vendors usually received their property back after reporting to court, Arab vendors were much less frequently sent to court, so their property was not returned.

88. "An Expensive Cheap Love," *Special Journal* 3, no. 126 (21 May 1939), 4 (Hebrew).

89. Bernstein, "Contested Contact"; Boaz Levtoy, "'The Same Sea': Jews and Palestinians at the Beach in the Late Ottoman and Mandate Periods," in *Encounters: History and Anthropology of the Israeli-Palestinian Space*, ed. Dafna Hirsch (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Van Leer Institute Press and Hakibbutz Hame'uchad, 2019), 76–114 (quotation on 78).

90. Strassman, "Oriental Restaurants."

91. Phone interview with Menachem Talmi, 20 December 2009.

92. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 185.

93. Interview with Yehuda Litani, Jerusalem, 16 March 2010.

94. This poem was published in a 1998 collection of Gouri's poems without an exact date, only noting that the poem was written before his 1949 book *Fire Flowers*.

The last two lines of the poem allude to the possibility of destruction, so it seems likely that it was written during the war. Haim Gouri, *The Poems*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1998), 20 (Hebrew).

95. Gouri, *The Crazy Book*, 99 (Hebrew).

96. Hagor (Haim Gouri), "Near Herod's Gate," *Davar* 4 June 1971 (Hebrew).

97. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).