

Special Food Days to Enjoy Over the Summer in 2021

The calendar is filled with special days throughout the year. Put your own Jewish twist on these summer days while you relish special foods.

June 4 – National Doughnut Day

Doughnuts might be more associated with Hanukkah on the Jewish calendar, and there might be some debate about how to spell the name of this succulent delicacy. But that does not mean that you cannot eat a couple of them in their traditional round or stick form during the summer. Feeling ambitious? [Make](#) your own. Feeling dairy free? You can still [make](#) your own.

June 12 – [International Falafel Day](#)

Falafel is one of the national foods of Israel. Take the opportunity to connect with Israeli cuisine by [making your own](#) and enjoying it in a pita with hummus and tahini. Looking to add a little spice? Put some [s'chug](#) in too. You can even read up on the [dish's history](#) while your food is frying.

June 18 – International Sushi Day

The laws of *kashrut* dictate that only fish with fins and scales are permitted for eating (Leviticus 11:9 – 12, Deuteronomy 14:9 – 10). On International Sushi Day, celebrate raw fish (and/or vegetables) with vinegared rice. For added fun, make the classic [nigiri sushi](#) or make your own [sushi rolls](#). Don't have all the sushi-making tools? Deconstruct your sushi into a [sushi salad](#).

June 22 – National Onion Ring Day

The Hebrew word for “onion” is *batzal*. The Hebrew word for “in the shade” is *batzeil*. Written in Hebrew, בצל, they look the same. On this day dedicated to breaded alliums cooked in oil, try not to cry as you prepare [your own batch](#). Then sit in a ring around your favorite shade tree while consuming the fruits of your labor.

July 6 – National Fried Chicken Day

Shooing a wild bird away before taking its eggs is a *mitzvah* (Deuteronomy 22:6). Eating a chicken that has been breaded and fried in oil is delicious. Try making your own [fried chicken](#) and remember: It is OK to lick your fingers because it is good.

July 7 – World Chocolate Day

Israel's Elite chocolate company was founded by Eliyahu Fromenchenko in 1933. Channel his entrepreneurial spirit and [make your own](#) chocolate at home. Want to keep it simple? Look for Israeli chocolate in the store. Do a taste test and compare different kinds. You can even [sing a song](#) declaring your love for chocolate. While you are out shopping, remember the *mitzvah* not to oppress laborers (Deuteronomy 24:14 – 15) and try to find Fair Trade chocolate.

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July 18 – National Ice Cream Day

July is National Ice Cream Month, and the third Sunday of the month has been especially set aside as a day to enjoy this tasty treat. This year, National Ice Cream Day falls on *Tisha b'Av*, when it is traditional to fast to commemorate the destruction of the First and Second *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple), which the Talmud says occurred because the Jewish people were being unkind to one another. To commemorate the Three Weeks, buy ice cream and work together to sculpt a *Beit Hamikdash* replica. As you eat the sculpture after the fast, discuss how working as a team helped the success of the project.

July 21 – National Hot Dog Day

The hot dog might have its origins in Germany, but the all-beef hot dog that exists today originated with [Jewish-American butchers](#) who could not put pork into their sausages because of kosher restrictions. In honor of these butchers' contributions to this staple, throw a few all-beef dogs onto the grill and eat them with your favorite toppings. (National Mustard Day is August 7.)

July 26 – National Bagelfest Day

Bagels are a delicacy that were brought to North America by Polish Jews. While different places have their own recipe secrets, can anyone debate the deliciousness of this boiled-then-baked, hole-in-the-middle bread? While it might be a *patshke* (a time consuming, multi-step process), take the opportunity to cook your own with this [recipe](#). A gluten-free one is found [here](#). Whether you enjoy lox, cucumber, or avocado on top, make sure to include a good *schmear*.

August 3 – National Watermelon Day

In the Torah, watermelon is listed as one of the Egyptian foods that *B'nei Yisrael* (the Israelites) yearned for on the way to the Promised Land (Numbers 11:5). In fact, there is historical evidence that watermelon was cultivated in ancient Egypt as far back as the second millennium BCE. Celebrate the freedom of summer by eating some watermelon and remembering the Exodus from Egypt. Enjoy that we can eat watermelon as free people. Click [here](#) for some fun ways to present your watermelon.

August 19 – National Potato Day

Do potatoes appear in the Torah? No, they do not. However, they were a staple food for shtetl Jews and became the inspiration for a classic [Yiddish song](#). Enjoy some potatoes with meat and bread. For a special treat, make them into a kugel. While you are eating, discuss the song's [lyrics](#) and think about how you can help people who are hungry.