



Adeena Sussman on 'Easy, Breezy' Cooking for Complicated Times | Hadassah Magazine Presents

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Lisa: Hello, and welcome to Hadassah Magazine Presents, a program and podcast for those who love *Hadassah Magazine* and want more, and for those who have never heard of the magazine and are looking for stimulating conversations with acclaimed Jewish authors, thinkers, celebrities, and culinary stars. I'm your host, Lisa Hostein, the executive editor of *Hadassah Magazine*.

I'm so excited to welcome Adeena Sussman, our very own culinary star, to the program today. She may be wildly popular, and we are thrilled with her success as a food luminary in the wider world, but we still claim her as our own, for it's in the pages of *Hadassah Magazine* where she's been writing for some 20 years that we all have benefited from her expertise and insights and learned so much.

Wonderful stories from the Jewish and Israeli food world, her personal journey, and of course always some delectable recipes are included. In her latest column in the March/April issue, where she's the cover girl, she brings us up close and personal, writing about the evolution of her brand-new cookbook, *Zariz: Easy Breezy Tel Aviv Recipes*, which made the New York Times bestseller list in its first week of publication.

In addition to *Zariz*, Adeena is the author of two earlier cookbooks, *Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours*, also a *New York Times* bestseller, and *Sababa: Fresh, Sunny Flavors from My Israeli Kitchen*, which was named a

best fall cookbook by *The New York Times*, *Bon Appétit*, and *Food & Wine*. She also co-authored 15 cookbooks, including *Gazoz*, which is all about fizzy, fruity Israeli seltzer-based drinks, and three collaborations with Chrissy Teigen.

Through her books and her popular Instagram account, she's become an unofficial ambassador for Israeli food around the world, sharing the people, places, and dishes that make it special. And I'm delighted to reveal that in a few weeks, Adeena will be receiving her first Rockower Award for her writing for *Hadassah Magazine*.

These are the annual prizes bestowed by the American Jewish Press Association for excellence in Jewish journalism. So mazel tov, Adeena, on your book, your book tour, for making it to the cover of *Hadassah Magazine*, and for your Rockower. And welcome.

Adeena: Thank you, Lisa. It's so good to be here. I'm having a wonderful time on this tour, and it's extra sig- meaningful to be with the Hadassah community right now.

Lisa: That's great, and we're gonna get into all of that. In fact, I wanna start close to home. I know the magazine and your adoring readers hold a special place in your heart- Yeah ... even as you continue to grow and connect with fans all over the world through your books and social media. Your pieces always are beautifully written, and they highlight Israeli and Jewish food personalities and programs that most of us would never know about if we weren't reading them in your column.

So what does your writing for *Hadassah Magazine* mean to you?

Adeena: First of all, I'm a lifetime member of Hadassah. I signed up with my mom at my bat mitzvah, and my mother passed a long time ago, but her friends all read the magazine. And I could have a top of the page story in *The New York Times*, and I would get way more comments and love from my articles in Hadassah.

People read the magazine. People love the magazine. It keeps us connected to Israel, to our Jewish community. I just love that I have this forum to both share of myself and stay connected to this amazing tradition. And also, you know, as my career has evolved, as my life has evolved, the column is just kind of like a time capsule.

I used to be a single girl in New York City, and I wrote more about domestic things. And then as I moved my life to Israel, I started writing more about both my personal life, which I've shared in the pages, and my professional life and the amazing burgeoning food scene in Israel. And especially in the last few years, I think trying to connect American and Jewish communities has been more and more important than ever, and the column has been a really amazing through line between those two communities.

So that's just... It always feels so natural, and it's such a pleasure to write the column, and it makes me feel more connected to the American and the Israeli sides of my personality.

Lisa: And we love that we provide that connection and that we can boast about you.

Adeena: That's so

Lisa: kind. Do you have a couple favorite pieces that you recall that you've written in the last couple years?

Adeena: I always love writing about female Israeli chefs. Like, that's always really exciting. And a, a piece that I wrote a few years ago just highlighting young Israeli chefs, I-- they always write me and thank me because it got them attention. People who come to Israel and go to their restaurants. I would say my cover story was a really, really meaningful piece, and my natural instinct was that I thought someone else was gonna write about me.

But you guys suggested that I write a first-person essay, and when I had the chance to really sit down and do it, I think it made the piece really, really special. I also just love writing about connecting Jewish holidays to my column, and all manner of things connect to the Jewish calendar.

Lisa: Mm. I learned recently when I attended your event in Philadelphia with Michael Solomonov about your now deep friendship actually was born from a column that you wrote for the magazine when his iconic Zahav first opened almost 20 years ago.

What did you and he have in common that sparked this close friendship?

Adeena: Obviously, a deep love for Israel, a deep admiration and connection to Israeli food, and how it's an innate part of both of our personalities. But I think both of us saw early on, I mean, Michael obviously as a huge leader and pioneer

in sharing Israeli food through his restaurants, that food could be a great ambassador for Israel, and show a different side of Israeli culture that we often don't see on the news, whether it's a more political lens or religious lens, or just the lens that we're all served depending on what media we read individually.

You know, and sitting down and seeing someone's love for the region, the country, and their food, and his food is really, it feels like an autobiographical story. I think I just really connected to that. And especially ever since I moved to Israel, we just spend a lot of time together when he's visiting and now here.

And we just... Yeah, you know, also having someone you can really trust in this industry in these complicated times being sort of out in the front is really invaluable and something that I really treasure, and I think we both do.

Lisa: Mm. It definitely showed while you were on stage together. Okay. So let's talk about Zariz, this gorgeous new cookbook that I encourage everyone to buy if you haven't already.

And buy extra copies for your friends and family. It's really just beautiful and filled with a lot of presumably easy recipes, so we're gonna talk about that. So Zariz means quick or speedy, and you begin the introduction with these words: "When the going gets tough, the cooking gets easy." So tell us how this book came about, what you were trying to achieve, and why.

Adeena: I was on book tour for Shabbat when October 7th happened. I was in New York, and I was about midway through an extensive book tour, similar to the one that I'm on now, when I heard about the tragedy that was unfolding in real time in Israel. And I thought my tour would end, but in fact, the crowds got bigger and the community got more connected.

But when I got back to Israel a month later, I had a contract to write a new cookbook, and my brain and my body were just completely depleted. I could not imagine how I was going to put one foot in front of the other and get myself together to write a cookbook. And what I realized was that I really needed to cook, but I really needed to change the way that I cooked to really strip everything down to the studs, to the essentials, to make it simple so that cooking both for myself and for my community would feel like muscle memory.

I just realized that if you can have unlimited time, ingredients, kitchen implements, cooking techniques, you're bound to come up with something good, but it might leave you exhausted in different ways. And I wanted

everything to feel as easy as possible. Like I say, like, I wanted my kitchen island to feel like an island of calm.

And so I tasked myself with coming up with all recipes that had less than 12 ingredients. I call it a bat mitzvah's worth of ingredients. I threw in olive oil, salt, pepper, and lemons as kind of bonus ingredients because, you know, those basically sort of run out of faucets in, in, in Israeli kitchens, so I felt like I could grant myself that hall pass.

But then I set about trying to find, like, really the essential flavors of everything that still connect my American and Israeli identities through the dishes. I have an instinctual feeling that what I need is what my readers and my cooks need, and so there's sort of a level of trust that I'm building, like offering you this collection of 100 recipes that you're gonna be able to open, take a deep breath, and then before you know it, you're gonna have a beautiful meal on the table.

That was the journey, and also it was really a, a therapeutic year of cooking for me as Israel was going through active trauma, not PTSD, T. You know, the hostages were still in Gaza. The borders were all in conflict and war, and cooking was my daily balm, and having this project to work on really helped get me through that really, really, really hard year.

Lisa: And I know you're known for bringing friends and family together at your table and bestowing that wonderful treasure of the food and conversation. Did you do that more during this difficult time or less?

Adeena: Actually a lot. You know, for me, nurturing and feeding other people, like, is a really big part of my personality, and it works out well because a lot of people like to be nurtured and fed.

You know, Jay and I, like, view our home as an open home. It's a very spontaneous eating and cooking culture, and also I was really blessed to get married and then gain two chil- stepchildren and now two grandchildren with a third on the way. And so my stepfamily, including my stepdaughter and family who were evacuated from the northern border of Lebanon where they live, they would come visit.

My stepson often is over, so just... And then my father has made aliyah in the last few years, and stepmom. So yes, I have really continued to share my cooking, and also cookbook making year is a great year to be a guinea pig in the Carmel Market area because you're gonna be over, coming over, testing multiple versions of every dish that I'm working on.

Lisa: So can you walk us through the process of developing a recipe for a book like this from start to finish? Like, how many trials does it take? What's involved? Is there anyone besides you who signs off and says, "Okay, this is perfect"?

Adeena: A sort of a contractual thing that a lot of people don't know is that you have to agree that your recipes are going to be cross-tested and tested well before a book comes out.

Not everybody follows through on that promise. I take that responsibility really seriously. So the way it typically works is, you know, something that I've eaten in a restaurant or some seasonal ingredient that I've seen in the shuk, or some harebrained idea that comes to me in the middle of the night, and I get up and write a little note in my phone or on a notepad.

Then I just set about cooking, shopping. I cook the recipe until I'm satisfied with it. It could be two or three times, or in the case of something that's a little more challenging, it could be six or seven times, and that's just in my test kitchen in my home. And then I send the recipes out to about two or three home cooks in the United States.

I have an entire questionnaire with rankings and feedback and ratings of flavor and visual beauty and ease. I've kind of fine-tuned the process, and that feedback is really important as well. If the home cooks don't find the recipe compelling, or if they found that there were ingredients that were hard to find or techniques that were extraneous, like, I take all that feedback into account.

And then I pay a professional tester to test every recipe. And that's also before the writing. You know, every recipe has a head note, something that either tells a story that aligns with the recipe or enhances the technical aspects of the recipe by giving tips and tricks. It's a full 360 process, and what I realized in the writing of this book is that developing simple recipes is far more complicated and complex because every ingredient, every technique, every cooking implement has to have maximum impact and that needed to make the cut.

Otherwise, it just hit the cutting room floor on this book.

Lisa: I'm especially fascinated by this home tester. So is this, like, two or three people who do them all? Or you have a whole network of people? And how did, how did I find people on this call are like, "Let me be one of those."

Adeena: I have a network of people.

It's usually a self-selecting group, people who write me through social media, or usually with every book I'll put out a call for testers on Instagram, and then people will write me and usually I'll send, you know, a recipe their way maybe to test. It's a volunteer position. Um,

Lisa: I'm sure,

Adeena: you know, obviously try to be very transparent about that upfront.

I did it for other cookbook authors, and still do, by the way. And yeah. And then, you know, some people test one or two recipes, and then some people test 10 recipes if it's a good match and, you know, we have a, a click and they have the time, and it works out. So that's how that comes about. So I have a feeling I'll be getting some messages from people, and I'm sure some of them have come through people who first discovered me through Hadassah.

Lisa: So interesting. So is it possible to choose a favorite recipe from the book or maybe one you cook most often, or one that family loves best?

Adeena: Yeah. You know, even though it's a quick and easy book, there are also some long cooking stews in the book. There's a miso, silan, and baharat short ribs. Something I learned is you don't need to sear meat in order to make it taste delicious.

I've always gone through all the traditional classic steps of cooking things. I love that one. I love my new spice drawer schnitzel, where instead of a triple dip in flour, egg, and breadcrumbs, I whisk together a batter that's full of spices and whole grain Dijon mustard. And then the breading has whole seeds, like cumin seeds and coriander seeds and sesame, so you've got this really deep crunch and it evokes all the flavors of the shuk, and it's very simple.

There's a really wonderful no-bake tahini cheesecake in the book that these Lotus Biscoff crackers, the cookies, the ones you get on the Delta flights, and you make a no-bake crust and then fill it with a beautiful cream cheese and labneh, and tafia binds the whole thing together with the perfect amount of sweetness and it's just absolutely delicious.

So I'm just sort of getting into... When I get home, I think is when I'm gonna start using my own book because I've been on the road, and my joke about writing cookbooks is that Writing a cookbook is sort of like cooking a 100-course dinner party and then waiting a year and a half to serve it to your guests.

Because I submitted the manuscript in December of 2024, and the book came out in April of 2026. And during that time, you know, once the book is printed and shipped from China and stored, I don't even open the book, Lisa. It's... I don't wanna see if there's a mistake or something that I wish I had done differently or a turn of phrase that I, I wish I had adapted.

I just, I leave it to the gods, and I try as hard as I can to keep my eyes and my gaze off of the book. So it's been really fun also to see what people are cooking, what dishes kind of naturally, like, emerge as favorites. So I have some early favorites that I've seen, like people who got the book on April 28th and immediately started cooking and baking, which is just so much fun.

Lisa: That's amazing. And I imagine there are very few mistakes, but I also imagine if there are any, you would hear from these people. I remember when I was the editor of The Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia, and I was always amazed. The most we heard from readers and complaints were something with the food recipes.

So-

Adeena: Yeah. As of now, I have yet to hear of one. I knew before Shabbat came out that there was a mistake in the cover recipe. It was a printing mistake with a step, and it was still cookable, and it still came out delicious, but it really ate at me for such a long time. But, you know, the truth is, the longer you write cookbooks, and I'm pretty hard on myself, I'm my toughest critic, but you also just learn that there are far more grave things in this world than the temperature of finishing off the chicken and the broiler being off.

And it will get fixed in the next reprint, or you'll hear from people, and it's all gonna be okay. That's my general mantra of cooking is it's all gonna be okay. True wisdom coming with age, right? Hell yes. Absolutely.

Ad: If you care about saving lives and bringing healing to the people of Israel in this critical time, there's no better place to donate than Hadassah.

Our two hospitals in Israel are innovative and compassionate global leaders in medical care, treatments, and cutting-edge research, combating the most serious diseases, and serving more than one million people a year. We're proud that in the complex world of the Middle East, the multiethnic staff and patients at Hadassah hospitals are a model for peace.

Every dollar you give impacts lives, helping heal injured soldiers and civilians. Hadassah hospitals are also home to groundbreaking, cutting-edge research that combats the most serious of diseases and saves lives everywhere around the globe. Let's heal the world together. Go to www.hadassah.org/donate.

Lisa: So look, I imagine that many of your fans are people who love to cook and spend a lot of time doing it.

Adeena: Yeah.

Lisa: I'm a fan, but I'm not one of those people. I'm a pescatarian, and I don't like spicy food or olives. Oh, okay. What would you recommend from your book for me?

Adeena: There's a delicious crispy skinned fish filet that is so easy to pull off.

You know, a lot of my recipes, they're also sort of subtly teaching you technique. You know, and my, my goal always with cookbooks is you're not just learning a recipe, but you're learning a skill set that you're gonna be able to use for future things. I want my recipes to not just be hard and fast rules, but also sort of suggestions and sort of like a culinary school for you.

So you learn how to properly press the skin down and crisp up the beautiful fish, and then it's served over a lovely, very simple, Lisa, a very simple tomato, watermelon, and cucumber salad. I could see that being a perfect summer lunch. Comes together in 15 minutes tops really. That's a good one. I would say there's a beautiful salad that has halloumi cheese crouton and a sort of Greek-ish dressing with oregano and red wine vinegar, and you roast some vegetables along with cubes of halloumi cheese on a sheet pan, and then you just toss it all together with a, a really simple dressing.

I love salads for lunch, and also I think the soup chapter is a standout. There's something that's called any vegetable soup and, but there's kind of a formula for how many cups of cut vegetables and a can of the legume of your choice, whether it's white beans or chickpeas, and then, you know, a broth or water and a few spices and, like, you can really make a lovely and deep filling soup out of what you have in the fridge.

So I could see you making any of those, and I'm looking forward to seeing the photos.

Lisa: Okay. I, I will try very hard to follow through. So Adina, our regular readers know your story, but not everyone does, and it's a beautiful journey that you've been on. And one of the things that's so interesting to me is how you had this fascination with food from such a young age.

So how did that develop, and what role particularly did your mother play in nurturing that?

Adeena: Yeah. I grew up in Palo Alto, California, in a Sabbath-observant kosher home, in a place where there were not a lot of people like us. I've written a column in Hadassa about my family's kosher cheese business, that we sold kosher cheese out of our garage as a community service for many, many years.

We had three refrigerators from Sears, and every two months, a 14-wheeler truck would come down from New York and drop off the cheese. It was the most money-losing nonprofit in the history of Palo Alto. And also that meant that there wasn't a lot of kosher food around, so we were cooking and making everything ourselves, especially for Shabbat.

We were baking our own challah. We were making all the desserts. There was no takeaway in the supermarket. Everything was something that my mother made or made with us. And so we were immersed in kitchen life from a very early age. And my mom also worked, so she would enlist us to help with tasks that were age appropriate, whether it was taking meat out of the freezer, because we got our meat every couple of months from Chicago, and we had a whole freezer for our kosher meat.

My mother liked to save money, so instead of using parchment paper for baking, she would cut around a brown supermarket bag and it, realized that it fit perfectly on a sheet pan. And that's how I learned what parchment paper was. But that's what we used for parchment. And we would do all the... Or, or pluck the feathers from chicken wings.

There wasn't a real barrier between her and us in the kitchen. A lot of times you hear people who grew up and they never entered a kitchen because their mother did everything or their parents did everything. So we were brought in early. And the table, our family table, we had family dinner every night.

And I'm not saying we were some platonic Alice Waters ideal of cooking, like this was the 1970s in suburban California. We were a garlic powder and margarine kosher home, like a lot of other people. But there was homemade

food, and Shabbat was filled with love and hospitality and entertaining. And my mother also came from a not a very culinary background.

Her grandmother had been pulled out of school during the Depression to cook and clean for her family, and they weren't a very Jewishly connected home. So when she met my dad, she both kinda learned how to cook and to cook Jewish, and took to both and passed those along to us with a lot of ease, and sort of it felt very natural.

Yeah.

Lisa: So you made Aliyah about 10 years ago, less than 10 years ago, right? In 2015.

Adeena: I made Aliyah, technically made Aliyah in 2018, but I moved to Israel at the end of 2015. So I've been there for going on 11 years now.

Lisa: Okay. So for those who might not know kinda the romantic story that led to that final decision, do you wanna share that?

Adeena: Sure. Jessica Steinberg, who also writes for Hadassah Magazine, set me up with Jay, my handsome husband, on a blind date. He was in New York on a business trip, and he works for the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. He does fundraising for them. We hit it off, and within a year I was living in Israel, and within another year we were engaged and married.

Jay comes from the United States, but he's been living in Israel for decades. We share a love for the place and also a real connection to our American roots. I wasn't fortunate enough to have children of my own, so I acquired this beautiful family and we, we call it the single to savta plan. I got married at 45 and became a grandmother at 46.

A young grandma. I have an eight-year-old grandchild. Jay's always just so incredibly supportive of all of my professional pursuits, and I think having that base and that support really allowed me to immerse myself in Israeli food culture really fast. Listen, 10 years ago I was co-authoring cookbooks for Chrissy Teigen, and Sababa was a figment of my imagination and something that I could have never imagined would happen or would take hold and resonate with so many people.

So I have so much to owe to my life in Israel and to my husband. And my first book came out at age 48, so for all of you who are looking to pursue your

passion, do not give up. Keep to it. Stick to it. Instant success is built over decades, and that's definitely the case with me. I continue to love, in spite of all of the challenges, Israel is home.

We have no plans to go anywhere, and I also feel now that I have a significant social media platform, I feel like I have a responsibility to share what's going on there and to support and to show that, and it's something that has become... I view it as part of my work

Lisa: Well, talk a little bit more about that.

How does that play out, and how did that evolve? I'll just quote something that you wrote about your experience on social media over the last few years. You included that in the cover story that you wrote for us. You wrote, "Navigating a tricky social media universe where algorithms and loud voices oftentimes target Israeli accounts became even more complex during the war.

Everything I posted felt loaded with expectation and prone to scrutiny, and it made me wanna hide. Instead, I doubled down on my Jewish and American Israeli identity." So how do those fears of scrutiny and backlash play out, and what impact did your decision to proudly embrace and broadcast your identity have on you and perhaps your followers?

Adeena: I have been on social media for about five, six years, which is not that long, but I've received a lot of negative comments, accusations of cultural appropriation and colonization, and personal threats to my safety. And earlier on in my career, it definitely scared me more and disturbed me more, and I have developed a thicker skin about a lot of it.

I think, in a way, October 7th was a real clarifying moment because you were able to see where people stood and how they arrived at their viewpoints, and I just became less apologetic about my identity and more out front with it. And I just, you know, with the way that antisemitism is expanding, as my husband Jay says, you know, "Antisemitism is a light sleeper," I just decided, you know, anyone who wants to root me out as a, a Jewish person or as Israeli is gonna find me no matter what, so I'm just gonna...

I put that Israeli flag in my Instagram profile and I have never looked back since. And if people approach me with reasoned questions and interest in engaging in a dialogue about the situation in Israel, I'm happy to do so. But I can tell more readily now, like, when someone is coming more with a final opinion as opposed to a desire to engage in a dialogue.

And if anyone is abusive towards me, I just don't engage with them. Conversely, I've also had a lot of really productive and beautiful conversations with people where Ashine isn't just showing my humanity and the humanity of Israeli people through the lens of food, and I feel like it's hard to argue with...

If someone's gonna contest my right to exist, then they can just leave the room. But beyond that, like, you can't argue with someone who's making a beautiful cheese from goat's milk that they milk themselves on a farm that their great-grandparent founded from Russia, you know, in the late 1800s. Like, that's a person with story rooted in the place.

And you know, my work is about weaving all of those stories together, and also I have a story now about that place, and I just try to keep people engaged with me in that story and carry them along, and I've been really delighted with how many people have stuck around who I might have thought had left because they weren't necessarily part of my expected audience.

Lisa: Well, we had a fan write a letter to the editor after your cover story came out. And she wrote, "Your book brimmed with her trademark honesty, charm, courage, and resilience. Following her on Instagram, I feel like she's sharing not only recipes, but the reality of life in Israel during these very difficult days.

To my great delight, she has often responded to the comments of support I've sent her via direct message on her posted Instagram stories. A mensch, talented chef, and icon wrapped up in one extraordinary woman." So

Adeena: I cried when I saw that, that letter, and I do try to show, you know, running down to the safe room, and I show the junk food that we've accumulated in our junk food basket in the safe room.

And I try... I've showed the *shuk* in its ups and downs through COVID and the wars, and how local people have struggled to stay afloat during really complicated times. And I try to do it with humor and humanity and just, like, unvarnished, but still without an agenda. You know, I'm doing it just through my own personal lens and just showing.

And I did have the opportunity to support local businesses that were impacted by October 7th in really profound ways. And you know, that I view as an incredible honor and privilege to go to a factory where they make my favorite juicer, the Zaksenberg juicer, on Kibbutz Holit, right down on the Gaza envelope, where dozens of people from the kibbutz were either killed or kidnapped.

This juicer is a tale of resilience, like, in a glass of orange juice. And, you know, to be able to show those stories and also the fact that I have this juicer on my counter, it's a part of my life. It all feels very organic and natural to me, and I think that that comes through in the way that I share my life and my cooking.

There was a beautiful cafe, Cafe Otef Re'im, where Kibbutz Re'im was one of the hardest hit kibbutzim, and two high-tech entrepreneurs underwrote the housing of the entire kibbutz who survived in two buildings in Tel Aviv for a couple of years until they can get resettled. And Reut Karp, whose husband was a chocolatier, a well-known chocolatier on the kibbutz, opened a cafe in Tel Aviv, uh, that employed mostly teenagers who were displaced from the war, and it became this gathering place for people.

You would see people from Re'im coming in for hugs and crying together, and the community around them and all over Israel, and groups from all over the world coming in to buy the chocolates and support the business. And she was selling all products from the Gaza Envelope area. And just watching Reut and her harrowing story of October 7th and being able to tell it was really meaningful.

Also, Yaki Sagi, who had an amazing, has an amazing bakery on Kibbutz Be'eri. This is a man who has more energy in his pinky finger than most of us ha- will, will have in a lifetime. And, you know, he literally had to leave the dough rising on October 7th. And Uri Scheft, a baker who many of you might know, who was the co-founder of Breads Bakery in New York, and also Le Hamin bakery in Israel, which is his crown jewel.

He gave Yaki a space in Tel Aviv to continue baking, and Yaki baked his signature spanakopitas and sold thousands of them over the year and a half that he worked there, and also apple strudels and other baked goods, and all of the proceeds went to the kibbutz during that time. And just that was a beautiful story of a friendship that was rekindled.

They had known each other when they were younger, and Yaki showed up at the bakery a week after October 7th just looking lost and said, "I'll do anything." Like, can I, can I... You know, this was a bakery owner. He just said, "I'll wash dishes. I'll sweep the floor." And Uri said, "I'll give you your own bakery." So those are the just the kind of stories that still give me the chills almost three years later.

Lisa: And the kind of stories we hear and heard so much about in the immediate aftermath as well.

Ad: Hadassah, as you probably know, is a women-led organization. But did you know there are thirty thousand men who are valued allies and supporters? These are the Hadassah Associates, important partners of Hadassah committed to Hadassah's mission of healing, who make a vital impact.

Open to everyone who identifies as a man, Hadassah Associates work together to educate and engage communities around the country, fundraising and developing events that support Hadassah's work in Israel and around the world. Learn more about the Associates at the Associates page at www.hadassah.org.

And we encourage you to become an Associate or make someone you love an Associate by signing up at hadassah.org/join.

Lisa: You've been in the States now for what? About a month or so, maybe halfway through your book tour. And, you know, I don't know how you do it. You must be exhausted, but you said that you're not.

I'm not. I guess it's energizing. And I'm sure that most of your audiences are filled with, you know, fans or people who love you, love Israel. I'm curious whether you've come across any negativity, either kind of out and about or questions perhaps from audience members who might be a little difficult for you.

Adeena: They're not difficult for me. I mean, just to be completely frank, you know, I think in Jewish spaces, just saying the word Palestinian, for me, Pal- the word Palestinian has a cultural context as far as food. You know, there are foods like knafeh and things, and maqluba, and dishes, and I use that word because it helps discharge the arguments about where the dish came from.

I just talk about where I first discovered it. There was an audience where someone asked me why I use that word and, you know, I tried to explain that for me, I wanna discharge that word and make sure that it's a word that we can use to have dialogue and to talk about food in a local culture where I live, where there are a lot of local influences, you know?

So that's, that was one complicated conversation. I would say what I have felt more is a chilling effect from the publishing world and legacy media as far as who is covering me and my work, and I've definitely seen a marked decline in coverage outside of the Jewish world of my books and my work. And there are a couple of culinary bookstores that I've noticed aren't carrying my books anymore.

And it stings, um, but it's a sign of the times, and it's made me actually just more determined than ever to succeed. And, you know, when I was able to see the word *zariz*, the Hebrew word *Zariz* on *The New York Times* bestseller list, it really felt like a win for the community, and I did it as much for that as I did for myself.

I'm not saying I w- I wasn't, didn't want it, but it felt important and I worked really, really hard this time, you know, to get all the, to organize all these big events beforehand and pre-sell a lot of books and make sure that we were gonna have a real presence, and it paid off and I'm happy about it. So I would say that the dissent that I feel is less aggressive and in my face, and more something that's subtle that I'm feeling potentially in legacy media spaces.

Lisa: Mm-hmm. And I know when we spoke earlier, you weren't even sure you were gonna make that bestseller list. Oh, yeah. So I think it was a wonderful surprise. But that's one thing, but in terms of the coverage and the stories that you used to get, you're just not seeing that.

Adeena: Yeah, and it's hard to make those lists and achieve those milestones without the aid of, you know, making *Sababa* best fall cookbook on every list that there was.

And, you know, and I don't think that my work has diminished in quality, but I wasn't mentioned on any list. There has to be some connection there. It's just easier to avoid talking about Israel-based work than to incur the wrath of those who would not want to see that, that highlight or celebrated. So I think that's definitely something that's going on.

I will say on the other hand, my publisher, Avery Books, which is an imprint of Penguin Random House, has never wavered in their support of me or my work, and they also publish a lot of other Israeli and Jewish authors, Eden Greenspan and Ben Simantov, otherwise known as Ben Jimji, and Jamie Milne, known as Everything Delish.

Their steadfast support of me and my work has been extra meaningful in this time, like really extra meaningful, and I'm so grateful to them and really admiring of their-- sad that you have to say bravery in this time, but of their fortitude in this time.

Lisa: Well, we've devoted a lot of attention, articles, and programs to this issue of, you know, Jews in the publishing world, and we've definitely found it, I would expect, there are clearly some publishers who are brave and smart

because they're producing and publishing good works, and then a lot of, you know, Jewish authors who don't even have any Israel content- Yeah

but are still finding a lot of obstacles. So it is a very complicated world. Very complicated.

Adeena: It is. But, you know, Hadassah readers are book buyers and book readers, and it's something that I think all of us who write for the magazine and who work in publishing pursuits are aware of, and we're so grateful also for the magazine that celebrates writing and books and literature this time.

So thank you to you, Ever, you know, keep continuing to shine a spotlight on us and what we do. And thank you to all of you for supporting, sharing, buying. You know, in this day and age, buying a book of any kind, it's, is a real a- act of love.

Lisa: It is an act of love. So speaking of love, we have a question from somebody you know, Libby Barnea, who's in fact your travel editor at Hadassah Magazine.

Wow. Libby, I'm calling you out here. Her question is, "Zaris features a super helpful shopping resource. For instance, brands of amba, harissa, olive oil, et cetera. Can you share some of those brands that are Israeli and that people in the United States can easily purchase?" Sure.

Adeena: Yes. People always ask, "How can we support Israel right now?"

Because it's been a little more challenging to go to Israel. So, you know, obviously tahina, I would say is... My friend Mike Solomonov calls it the mother sauce of Israeli cuisine, and it rhymes with Adeena, so it, it flows easily off of my tongue. There are several Israeli brands of tahina. Two are American companies that, where the tahina is made in Israel.

One is Soom Tahini, which we've talked about in the past, and also Seeden Mill, which is a wonderful company based in New York, and both of their tahinas are made in Israel and imported to the United States. And then Al Arz and Har Brefat are two Israeli brands. And I think what's interesting about tahina is that it's one of those examples of cultural and culinary and commercial coexistence that happen every day in Israel.

You know, almost all of the best tahina in Israel is made by Arabs and bought by Jews, and it just happens daily, tens of thousands of times. It's not a big deal,

not a charged conversation. Everyone knows their favorite brands, and they have Arab writing on the labels, and you know, this one has the dove and this one has the pine tree, and this one has the cedar of Lebanon, and this one has the boat, and you know, everyone has their favorites.

That's a great one. I would say Lior Sarkarz from La Boite Spices, who I've also featured, he's an Israeli-born boutique spice manufacturer and purveyor, but he also sells... It's hard to find Israeli olive oil in the United States, and he sells really good Israeli olive oils on, on his website, Labuat. And there's also another wonderful Israeli brand of olive oil called Rish Lakith, named after a figure who appears in the Talmud.

And a female olive oil maker who is considered the best in Israel, Ayala Noy Meir, manufactures it in Zippori, which some of you might know from its ancient mosaics and relics in northern Israel, and that's available through a website called Kaiten, K-A-I-T-E-N. So if you can support buying those olive oils and buying Ayala's amazing olive oil through Kaiten, that's another great one.

I have a Substack newsletter now, and I'll make a little post of all of these resources. You know, you can subscribe to my Substack newsletter for free, and a lot of these sort of service-oriented posts are right there as well.

Lisa: What was the most surprising, unexpected, yet beloved Tel Aviv street food or popular food that you came across during your hands-on research for Zaris?

Adeena: That's a good question. Smash burgers are really popular everywhere right now, and I made a, like, a shawarma-spiced turkey pita smash burger where you make a really simply make a mix of highly seasoned ground turkey or chicken and sort of adhe- spread it all over a pita half, and then you just press it right into a skillet, and it gets all caramelized and crusty on the bottom.

And it's just so delicious with techina and amba, which is, you know, an Iraqi Indian mango condiment, and schug, the Yemenite hot sauce. In the shuk, there's an amazing fish sandwich at a place called HaCarmel 40, which is its address in the shuk, the Carmel Market. The owner of the stall is a former fine dining chef in Israel, Elad, and the person who sells him the fish is an Arab named Rustu who has one of the best fishmongers in the shuk.

And they have this friendship and relationship, and Rustu sells him all the fish filets and other fish for his stand, and Elad prepares it and makes it. And I

created a version of the fish sandwich for my book. So, and I, and I got to tell their story, and for anyone who has the book or is getting the book, if you flip to the back, there are eight photos of actual real people in my shuk life who I interact with multiple times a week, including Elad and Rustu and Mickey from Cafe Tomati, where a lot of you have seen me drink coffee, and he has a delicious date cake that I absolutely love.

And he shared the recipe with me, and I put my own Adeena twists on it with a clementine glaze and added some coffee to the batter. So you'll see all those people, like, come alive in the pages of my book, which is really important to me as well.

Lisa: Absolutely. What's one of your favorite cooking or baking tools?

Adeena: I love my microplane grater. I love a cast iron skillet, and I love my Zaxenberg juicer, which I talked about. What else? I mean, lately something I've been really into is really big spatulas that are wider than the ones that most of us use. 'Cause I do a lot of cooking in a skillet and I like flipping things easily.

So I found these extra wide silicone skillets that make it easy to flip things and keep it a little more simple. And I would say also my grill, like in the summertime we do, or in this season specifically before it's too hot, we do a lot of grilling, outdoor cooking. I love my, my Weber grill.

Lisa: So we're just two nights away from Shavuot.

Yeah. You already talked about your tahina cheesecake. Tahina. Is there anything else in your book or outside your book that you would recommend for those looking for meal planning?

Adeena: Two really good salmon dishes. One is sort of crusted in, in like a layer of Medjool dates and almonds and mint and spices spreaded on.

It keeps the salmon really moist and it adds like real flavor, intrigue, and texture. And then there's another fish with a really simple silan and grainy mustard glaze, like on the top of the salmon. There's a really simple marinated feta recipe where you just take cubes of feta and toss it with za'atar olive oil, fresh jalapeno, mint and olive oil, and it makes this beautiful...

You can just serve it as a little side salad or you can serve it with crackers. It's really, really delicious. And then there's some really nice pasta dishes too.

There's like a broccoli feta pasta in the book that I think would be great for Shavuot as well.

Lisa: A lot of options for sure.

Adeena: Oh, yum.

Lisa: So Hadassah is going to be hosting its national conference in Israel in late October under the banner of The Dream is Real.

I encourage everyone to register for the conference. I'm going. I'm sure it's gonna be wonderful.

Adeena: Great.

Lisa: And so for the hundreds of Hadassah members who are gonna be there, and they may have the opportunity to explore the Machane Yehuda in Jerusalem or the Carmel Market in Tel Aviv, where do you take them?

What are some of the specialties that they should be looking for? What are some of the fall delicacies?

Adeena: In the Shuk?

Lisa: Yeah.

Adeena: October, I mean, pomegranates are in peak season, and one of the things I love about Israel is when you ask when fruits are in peak season, they're always connected to holidays. Sukkot and Rosh Hashanah are really connected to pomegranates, so you'll see a lot of those when you come.

I would say figs, there's a fig season right there at the end of, in the middle of... October, there are two fig seasons in Israel. There's nothing better than grabbing a fresh fig in the Shuk that's warmed by the sun and just splitting it open and eating it, or buying a little log of goat cheese and then just standing there and stuffing goat cheese right into the fig and, like, eating it on the spot.

So those are two produce things. I would always encourage everyone to go have a bowl of Yemenite soup in the Yemenite Quarter, or to visit my friend Irit from her little Yemenite bread shop where she makes these delicious breakfast sandwiches. You know, the Yemenite Quarter and the Shuk are one and the

same, and they're in the same area, and the, the Yemenite traditions are slowly dying out as people move out and the neighborhood gentrifies, so it's really, you still have a chance to catch that culture.

And then one more plug is for my friend Fanta from Bali Injera, a wonderful Ethiopian restaurant with some of the freshest, most delicious food in the Shuk. It's inexpensive, it's kosher certified, and she's a really inspiring woman who, a former lawyer and top model in Israel, who has dedicated her life to the preservation and celebration of her Ethiopian Israeli culture

Lisa: I think you're gonna have to add those to your Substack as well.

My pleasure. And you talk about all of these foods, these elements, these places with such love. I wonder, are you a little homesick?

Adeena: For sure. Oh my gosh, the first thing I'm gonna do when I get home is have a falafel at 10:00 in the morning, 100%. I am homesick. I'm not gonna lie. It's been an intense few months in Israel, so having a break from, you know, I love the intensity of day-to-day life, but it's nice to come.

Not that things are so calm in the United States all the time either, but I think you know what I mean. And also having my husband here with me and seeing friends in different cities. Every city I go, I either know I'm gonna see friends or people come out of the woodwork and surprise me. When I was in LA on Sunday with Sivan of Sivan's Kitchen, a high school friend who I hadn't seen since high school showed up at the event, and, like, those kind of meetings are just so wonderful and connecting, and it makes me so happy that my work and that I have found my way into so many, like, even parts of my old life.

It's really

Lisa: nice. That's a beautiful note to end on. Continued safe journeys. Chag Sameach, and we look forward to more of your wonderful stories in *Hadassah Magazine*.

Adeena: Thank you. Bye everyone. Thank you, Lisa. It was a treat.

Lisa: I wanna thank Arielle, the magazine's digital editor, who both produced and promoted this program and also produces the podcast.

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Check out the show notes for further resources. And if you'd like to watch a video recording of this interview, you can find that at hadassahmagazine.org. I'll be back soon with another enlightening and engaging episode. Thanks again for joining us. Until next time, goodbye