

## Cast Iron Chef

The purpose of the program is to teach the audience about bible customs and bible traditions. When we read our bibles we will have a greater appreciation of the life of the people and details of bible events and bible people. We will use a power point program to show pictures of the foods in the field and pictures of harvesting practice.

The Cast Iron Chef Bake Off program will be arranged in two parts.

Part one will be a bake off competition. Professional chefs will act as judges. Amateur chefs will be invited to prepare a dish which features a food item mentioned in the bible. Chicken and beef will not be accepted because they are too common. The bible food being featured must be approved when the chef registers prior to the program. Bakers can enter a dish into a category such as entre', dessert, starch, or vegetable.

Church members will be provided ten votes or marbles. If they like a dish, they put a marble in the jar to see who gets the most votes or marbles.

Judges will make up 50% of the vote and marbles will make up the other 50% of the vote.

The judges will have first review and tasting of each dish. Secondly, voting members will have the next review or tasting of the dishes. After the competition, everyone will have an opportunity to sample each dish.

Part two of the program will feature bible foods as a demonstration. We will talk about the foods, and show the audience what they looked like in the field, and on the plate. The audience will also be allowed to taste the foods.

## EXAMPLES:

### Almonds

**Genesis 43:11** *“And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds.”*

**Numbers 17:8** *“And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.”*

### Figs

**Numbers 13:23** *“And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.”*

**1 Samuel 25:18** *“Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.”*

### Grapes

**Genesis 40:10, 11** *“And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: And Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand.”*

**Nehemiah 13:15** *“In those days saw I in Judah some trading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.”*

### Olives

**Judges 15:5** *“And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.”*

**Deuteronomy 6:11** *“And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;”*

### Raisins

**1 Samuel 25:18** *“Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.”*

**1 Chronicles 12:40** *“Moreover they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal,*

*cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for there was joy in Israel."*

### **Bread**

There are more than 300 instances of the word bread in the Bible. Here are the first and last verses I found which mentioned bread.

**Genesis 3:19** *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*

**2 Thessalonians 3:12** *"Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."*

### **Flour**

**Exodus 29:2** *"And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them."*

**1 Chronicles 9:29** *"Some of them also were appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices."*

### **Wheat**

**Numbers 18:12** *"All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee."*

**Judges 6:11** *"And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites."*

### **Fish**

**Numbers 11:5** *"We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:"*

**Matthew 14:17, 19** *"And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."*

### **Calf**

**Genesis 18:7** *"And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it."*

**Luke 15:23** *"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:"*

### **Goat**

**Genesis 27:9** *"Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:"*

**Deuteronomy 14:4, 5** *“These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois.”*

### **Lamb**

**2 Samuel 12:3, 4** *“But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.”*

**Ezekiel 39:18** *“Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.”*

### **Sheep**

**Psalms 44:11** *“Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.”*

**Isaiah 22:13** *“And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.”*

### **Honey**

**Exodus 3:17** *“And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”*

**Judges 14:8, 9** *“And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.”*

### **Locust**

Yes, this is the gross one I mentioned earlier. Both these verses are talking about John the Baptist living on a diet of locusts and honey. When the Bible talks about locusts it is commonly referring to what we call grasshoppers today.

**Matthew 3:4** *“And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.”*

**Mark 1:6** *“And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;”*

Fruits and Nuts

- Apples (the translation should have referred to pomegranates, as there weren't apples growing in that area of the Middle East, but pomegranates were growing there abundantly. (Song of Solomon 2:5)
- Almonds (Genesis 43:11; Numbers 17:8)
- Dates (2 Samuel 6:19; 1 Chronicles 16:3)
- Figs (Nehemiah 13:15; Jeremiah 24:1-3)
- Grapes (Leviticus 19:10; Deuteronomy 23:24)
- Melons (Numbers 11:5; Isaiah 1:8)
- Olives (Isaiah 17:6; Micah 6:15)
- Pistachio Nuts (Genesis 43:11)
- Pomegranates (Numbers 20:5; Deuteronomy 8:8)
- Raisins (Numbers 6:3; 2 Samuel 6:19)
- Sycamore Fruit (Psalm 78:47; Amos 7:14)

#### Vegetables and Legumes

- Beans (2 Samuel 17:28; Ezekiel 4:9)
- Cucumbers (Numbers 11:5)
- Gourds (2 Kings 4:39)
- Leeks (Numbers 11:5)
- Lentils (Genesis 25:34; 2 Samuel 17:28; Ezekiel 4:9)
- Onions (Numbers 11:5)

#### Grains

- Barley (Deuteronomy 8:8; Ezekiel 4:9)
- Bread (Genesis 25:34; 2 Samuel 6:19; 16:1; Mark 8:14)
- Corn (Matthew 12:1; KJV - refers to "grain" such as wheat or barley)
- Flour (2 Samuel 17:28; 1 Kings 17:12)
- Millet (Ezekiel 4:9)
- Spelt (Ezekiel 4:9)
- Unleavened Bread (Genesis 19:3; Exodus 12:20)
- Wheat (Ezra 6:9; Deuteronomy 8:8)

#### Fish

- Matthew 15:36
- John 21:11-13



# FOOD

## The Biblical Period

Diet in Erez Israel during the biblical period was dependent mostly on the food supply of the closed agricultural economy. Most agricultural produce came from permanent settlements, and some wild plants were gathered, while meat was mainly supplied by cattle and sheep-raising nomads. Grain constituted the bulk of agricultural produce consumed and most meat was mutton. The Bible, in speaking of the produce of Erez Israel, mentions three types of food: *dagan*, *tirosh*, and *yizhar* (Deut. 7:13; II Kings 18:32). *Dagan* ("corn" or "grain") represents the various agricultural crops, *tirosh* ("new wine")-wine, and *yizhar*-oil.

Food was made fit for eating by baking, boiling, frying, or roasting (see [\\*Fire](#)), or by a combination of these. Grain was prepared in two ways: roasting the kernels in order to break down their starches and soften them (Heb. *kali*, *qali*; "parched corn"; I Sam. 25:18; II Sam. 17:28; Ruth 2:14), or grinding and baking the item (see also [\\*Bread](#)). Cooked food was a mixture of meat and vegetables which were combined while heating (Heb. *marak*; "broth"; Judg. 6:19, 20; Isa. 65:4). Stew (Heb. *nazid*; Gen. 25:29; II Kings 4:38; et al.) was apparently a food cooked for a long time in water, most of which was boiled off. Fried foods, especially meat, were cooked in large quantities of boiling oil. Meat was also roasted over an open flame, which seared and softened it.

## FORBIDDEN FOODS

The usual diet consisted of foods prepared from grain, wild and cultivated plants, and the meat of sheep, cattle, fowl, fish, and even certain insects. The Torah limited the meat a Jew could eat, both in terms of the animals permissible for eating, and the manner of their preparation (see also [\\*Dietary Laws](#)). Meat taken from a still living animal or from one found dead, and the drinking of blood were prohibited (see [\\*Blood](#)). Only animals specifically slaughtered for food or for use in the sacrificial service could be eaten. These animals had to have two characteristics: they chewed the cud and had cloven hoofs. An animal possessing neither or only one of these characteristics was forbidden. Some types of birds were permitted and the exceptions were specifically named (Lev. 11:13–19). The consumption of fish was limited to those possessing scales and fins. As to insects, only locusts (Heb. *'arbeh*) could be eaten.

## THE FORM OF THE MEAL

The Bible uses several terms to describe meals. *'Aruḥh* (from the root *'rḥ*, "to lodge") appears to refer to the usual daily meal, as in "a regular allowance [*'arukah*] was given him ..." (II Kings 25:30; Jer. 52:34). It may also indicate a more modest meal, as in "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted ox and hatred with it" (Prov. 15:17). *Zevah* (from the root *zbh*, "to sacrifice") generally indicates a meat meal connected with the religious worship, or with some other festive occasion (I Sam. 20:29). *Kerah* was a festive meal with many participants (II Kings

6:23). The verb *s' d* ("to support") is frequently used to indicate eating: "Come home with me, and refresh thyself" (I Kings 13:7). *Lehem* ("[\\*bread](#)") frequently refers to food or to a meal in general. Meat meals were not usual: the *kerah* or *zevah*, as noted above, was part of some festive occasion such as a general holiday or special tribal or family occasion. Many people participated in a meat meal, of which nothing would be left over in order to prevent spoilage. Such meat meals were consecrated in order to enlist God's aid in human ventures, as a sign of thanks, or as a propitiatory offering (see also [\\*Sacrifice](#)). The everyday meal was eaten by the family either in the house or in the field. It was generally prepared by the woman, while the *zevah* and *kerah* were prepared by both men and women, thus emphasizing the importance of these social events. A meal was an occasion for pleasure and enjoyment. It was eaten while seated and the established customs and manners were observed before and after the meal. The upper classes might sing and propose riddles during the mealtimes.

## VEGETABLES

Cereals, such as wheat (Heb. *hit̄tah*) and barley (Heb. *se'orah*), were cultivated crops. Stew made of lentils (Heb. *'adashim*) or beans (Heb. *polim*) was common and was eaten after being softened by cooking. Other vegetable dishes were uncommon, most vegetables being picked wild as needed and then cooked for the daily meal. Wild melons (Heb. *'avaṭṭi'ah*) and cucumbers (Heb. קשׁוּ, *qeshu*) were among the wild vegetables eaten in Erez Israel. In Egypt there were plots for the cultivation of melons and cucumbers. Sesame seeds (Heb. *shumshum*), also gathered wild, were used in the preparation of oil, or were eaten raw, in stews or in some other fashion. Garlic (Heb. *shum*) and onions (Heb. *bazal*) grew wild in Erez Israel and served as food, while in Egypt they were cultivated. They were cultivated in Erez Israel only in the postbiblical period.

## FRUITS

The seven types of produce mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:8 include most of the fruit eaten in Erez Israel. The vine (Heb. *gefen*) is mentioned after wheat and barley. Grapes (Heb. *'anavim*) were used mainly in the production of wine, although they were also eaten fresh. Grapes were dried in the sun to produce raisins (Heb. *zimmukim*, *zimmuqim*), which were preserved for substantial periods of time. Grapes were also used to produce a thick liquid like honey, called the grape honey (Heb. *devash 'anavim*). Even today, grape honey (Ar. *dibes*) is produced in parts of Israel. Grape honey was made by treading in special vats: the liquid produced was not left to ferment, but was boiled in order to evaporate the water content, leaving behind a thick liquid resembling honey. Figs (Heb. *te'edah*) were also common and were eaten either fresh when ripe, or dried, the dried figs (Heb. *develah*) being strung into a chain or made into a hard cake. This cake was made of figs stuck together and dried as a block. After sufficient drying, the fig block was sliced and eaten like bread. Pomegranates (Heb. *rimmonim*) were usually eaten fresh, although occasionally they were used in the preparation of wine for medicinal uses. Dates (Heb. *temarim*), too, were eaten fresh or were sundried. Like grapes, dates were made into a sweet, thick drink called date honey (Heb. *devash temarim*). This was prepared by soaking the fruit in water for some time during which it would disintegrate. The liquid was cooked down until thick and sweet. Olives (Heb. *zeitim*) were usually used to make oil (see below), although some were eaten after being preserved in tasty and fragrant spices, which removed their natural bitter flavor. The Bible also mentions nuts (Heb. *'egozim*), apples (Heb. *tappuhim*), pistachios (Heb. *botnim*),

and almonds (Heb. *shekedim*, *sheqedim*). Nuts were common in Erez Israel, particularly in the post-biblical period. Apples, pistachios, and almonds were not cultivated, but grew wild. They were picked for occasional home use when they were available, although most were imported as a delicacy.

## **SPICES**

The most common spice was salt (Heb. *melaḥ*; Job 6:6), there being hardly any food which was not seasoned with it. Salt served the additional function of symbolizing the making of a covenant (II Chron. 13:5), or the destruction of a city (Judg. 9:45). It was obtained in two ways: the most common method was mining, as at Sodom, although it was also produced by evaporating sea water and removing the salts from the sediment. The raw salt was rinsed in fresh water, purified, and then crushed until fine, in which form it was used for seasoning food and for other purposes. The flavor of food was also enhanced by spices derived from plants. Garlic and onions, as well as being eaten as vegetables, were used to season cooked foods. Other spices mentioned in the Bible are coriander (Heb. *gad*), cumin (Heb. *kammon*), and black cuminPage 117 | [Top of Article](#) (Heb. *kezah*, *qezah*). More delicate spices for special feasts were imported from Arabia and India, and were considered merchandise of the highest value. Among such spices were various types of pepper (Heb. *pilpel*), and ginger.

## **FOODS PRODUCED BY ANIMALS**

During the biblical period, wild bee honey and eggs, especially birds' eggs, were eaten.

## **DAIRY FOODS**

Most dairy items were produced from sheep or goat milk, since cattle were scarce in the country. The use of cow's milk is attested by Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources, such as the "Banner of Ur" and various Egyptian steles, as early as the fourth millennium B.C.E. In Ur, cows were milked from behind and in Egypt from in front of the udder, with their rear legs tied together. Milk, connected as it was with the miracle of reproduction, was used in pagan cults, in which a kid would be cooked in its mother's milk. This practice was forbidden for the Israelites (Ex. 23:19; et al.).

Milk was one the characteristic products of Erez Israel (Ex. 3:8; 33:3; Joel 4:18). A nourishing food, it was frequently drunk cold or was cooked with other foods, as well as serving in other forms for medicinal purposes and ointments. Due to its importance, milk and its by-products served as offerings to gods and kings. The Bible mentions butter and various cheeses as milk-derived products. Butter was made by churning milk in vessels made especially for this purpose. Examples of these churns (Heb. *mahbezah*) have been found at Beersheba and elsewhere. The butterfat was separated as a result of the churning, and the excess liquid was evaporated in order to produce butter. In this concentrated form, it was used principally for cooking and frying. Cheese was made from soured milk. Milk was poured into special moulds in which it soured into hard lumps. These cheese lumps were dried in the sun or evaporated by cooking, producing curds (Job 10:10). A softer cheese was made in cloth bags filled with soured milk. The thin

liquid filtered through the cloth while the soft cheese remained in the bag. The Hittites used cheese as an offering in their cult.

## **WINE**

Most wine was produced from grapes. The vintage was brought to a winepress which was usually rock-cut. The grapes were spread on the broad upper surface of the press and tread upon by foot, in order to squeeze the liquid from them. This liquid (Heb. *tirosh*, "new wine") flowed down through a drainage channel into a vat in which the precipitates settled. From there it flowed to a second vat where it was collected. The drainage system was constructed so that the liquid flowed into the collecting vat only when the precipitation vat was filled. Thus, the heavier sediments such as waste matter, seeds, and skins had time to settle at the bottom of the vat, while the juice flowed into the collecting vat. The new wine was then transferred to vessels which were sealed and placed in a cool place to stand until the juice fermented by the action of the yeast in the fruit, becoming wine. There were several types of wine, some of which are mentioned in the Bible: a sparkling or foaming wine (Ps. 75:9); the wine of Helbon (Ezek. 27:18); spiced wine (Song 8:2); the wine of Lebanon (Hos. 14:8). The type of wine was determined by the grapes from which it was pressed, the time allowed for fermentation, and the age of the wine. Spices were added to improve the aroma and taste. The color was improved by steeping crushed grape skins in it. Sometimes wine was given an aroma by rubbing the winepress with wood resin. Wine was also made from raisins, dates, figs, and pomegranates.

Wine was considered the choicest of drinks. It was used in libations before gods, as payment of taxes to kings, and was highly regarded as an item of trade. It was measured by liquid measure: the *bat* (II Chron. 2:9) and the *hin* (Ex. 29:40; Samaria ostraca). Wine was hoarded in vessels of uniform size in the treasuries of the royal and the wealthy. Erez Israel was known for its fine wines and advanced methods of production. Some indication of this may be gained from the widespread occurrence of presses in archaeological excavations throughout the country. A good example of a rock-cut winepress from the biblical period found at Gibeon has a broad surface for treading the grapes and several collecting vats. Wine was an intoxicant with a stimulating effect upon the human disposition. One who had taken Nazirite vows was therefore not permitted to drink it or to make any use of vine-derived products. The Bible mentions houses which were visited for the purpose of drinking and becoming intoxicated (Song 2:4). Another vine product was vinegar, which was produced by extra fermentation of new wine. It was used for seasoning foods, pickling vegetables, and medicinal purposes.

## **OIL**

Oil was produced mainly from olives in olive presses designed for this purpose. There were three stages in its production. First, the hard olives were crushed into a soft paste. This was then squeezed, the crude oil flowing out as a result of the pressure. Finally, the crude oil was stored in vessels or vats for some time, in which the sediments and water from the olives settled and the pure oil rose to the surface. The oil was then collected in vessels for storage or use. Archaeological excavations have revealed numerous olive presses dating to the Hellenistic period. The earliest press excavated in the country was found at Tirat Yehudah near Lydda. This press has been reconstructed and transferred to the garden of the Israel Museum.

Oil was used as a condiment for various dishes, to fry foods, especially meats, and as a component in certain dishes. Specially purified oils mixed with spices were used as ointments or for medicinal purposes. Sesame oil, produced in a similar way, was particularly fine. Like wine, oil was used as an offering to the gods and for payment of taxes to kings. Oil production was advanced in Erez Israel, as is attested by much documentary evidence, and the discovery of many olive presses in various locations.