

A Chef's Dreams Come True in Israel

by Josh Steele

You often hear people say that Israel is a challenging place to live, but few focus on how it's also a land where dreams come true. In the summer of 2013, I was a single 29-year-old yeshiva student in Israel. Unable to get the job I wanted as a rabbi, and missing my friends and family back in England, I started planning to move back home—until I received a phone call that changed my life.

My 14-year-old cousin had secretly submitted an application for me to be on Israel's *MasterChef* television program. She assumed that because I was the best cook she knew, I would definitely get invited to be on the show (and ultimately stay in Israel). I've always loved to cook, and I have fond memories of my grandmother teaching me how to make a pavlova, but I was unsure how high my chances were of getting an invite to the show.

What happened next is something no one could've predicted: Not only did I get invited to be on the show, but I also met my future wife, someone a friend had been trying to set me up with for years and who only wanted to live in Israel. After we got married and made Aliyah with the help of Nefesh B'Nefesh, I became the executive chef and owner of Soyo in Jerusalem.

Today, I run a restaurant and catering company, perform cooking demonstrations and workshops all over Israel and abroad, have a blog on *The Jerusalem Post* and, most importantly, am thrilled to be married to my beautiful wife. In just one year my world changed, and Israel is the reason why. My story is an example of how anyone can realize and reach their dreams in our Jewish homeland.

Josh Steele made Aliyah with the assistance of Nefesh B'Nefesh in April 2014 and currently resides in Jerusalem. For more information on making aliyah, visit nbn.org.il



Chocolate Lasagna

As we all need to eat, food has the ability to bring people together. This recipe takes the old—a *lokshen* [noodle] kugel—and transports it into the 21st century.



Crème Anglaise

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 8 eggs
- 1/5 cup sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla paste
- Pinch salt
- 1/4 cup chopped chocolate
- 1/2 tsp ground cardamom
- 1 tbsp port

Bring milk and cream to a simmer in a pan. Beat eggs, sugar, vanilla and salt in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the milk and cream slowly into the egg mixture until well combined. Add to a saucepan on the stove and whisk constantly until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Take half the mixture once ready and add the chocolate, cardamom and port to it and mix until all incorporated.

Chocolate Pasta Dough

- 1 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/8 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/8 cup icing sugar
- Pinch salt
- 3 eggs
- 1 tbsp chocolate syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla

Add flour, cocoa powder, sugar, and salt to a food processor and pulse until combined. Add eggs, chocolate syrup, and vanilla and mix until it starts to come together as a dough. Remove from mixer and knead for about 10 minutes, then wrap in cling wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Using a pasta maker dusted with icing sugar, roll dough, folding over a few times to make it

stronger, starting with level 1 until level 6, and cut it into lasagna leaves.

Cover the base of square glass dish with creme anglaise. Alternate layers of crème and pasta, ending with crème. Bake at 180 degrees for 30 minutes or until it starts to puff up and brown on top. Leave to cool and set. Serve with coulis.

Cherry and Port Coulis

- 1 cup maraschino cherries
- 1/4 cup caster sugar
- 1/4 cup port
- 1 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick

Place all ingredients in a pot, bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Let cool and remove the cinnamon and star anise, blend and push through a sieve with a ladle.