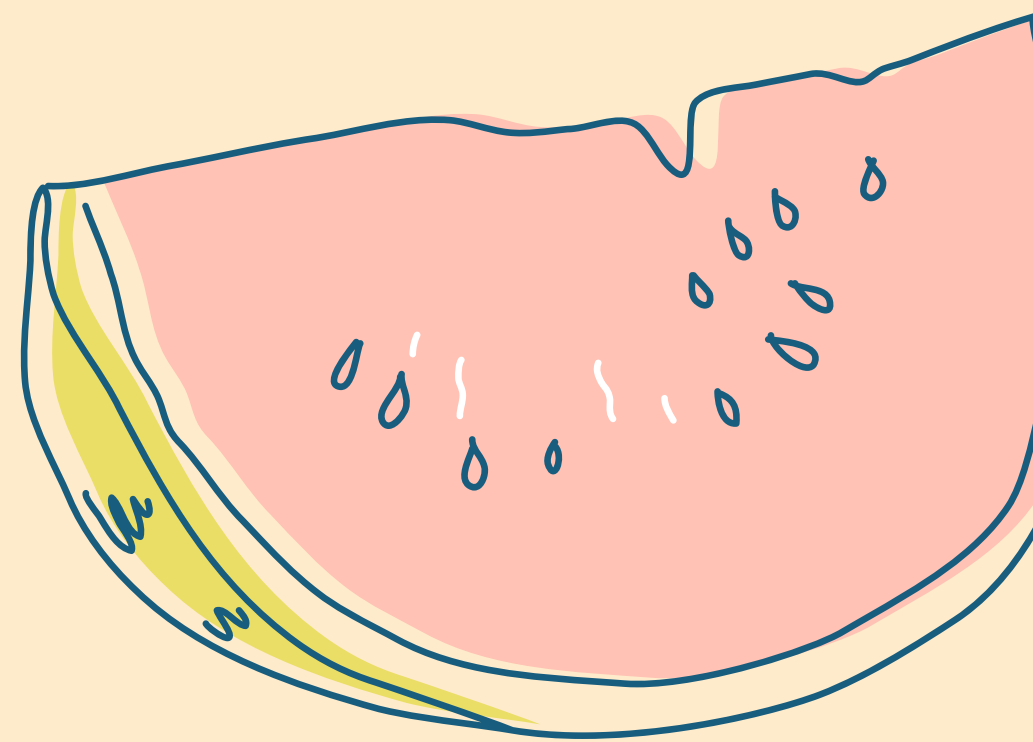
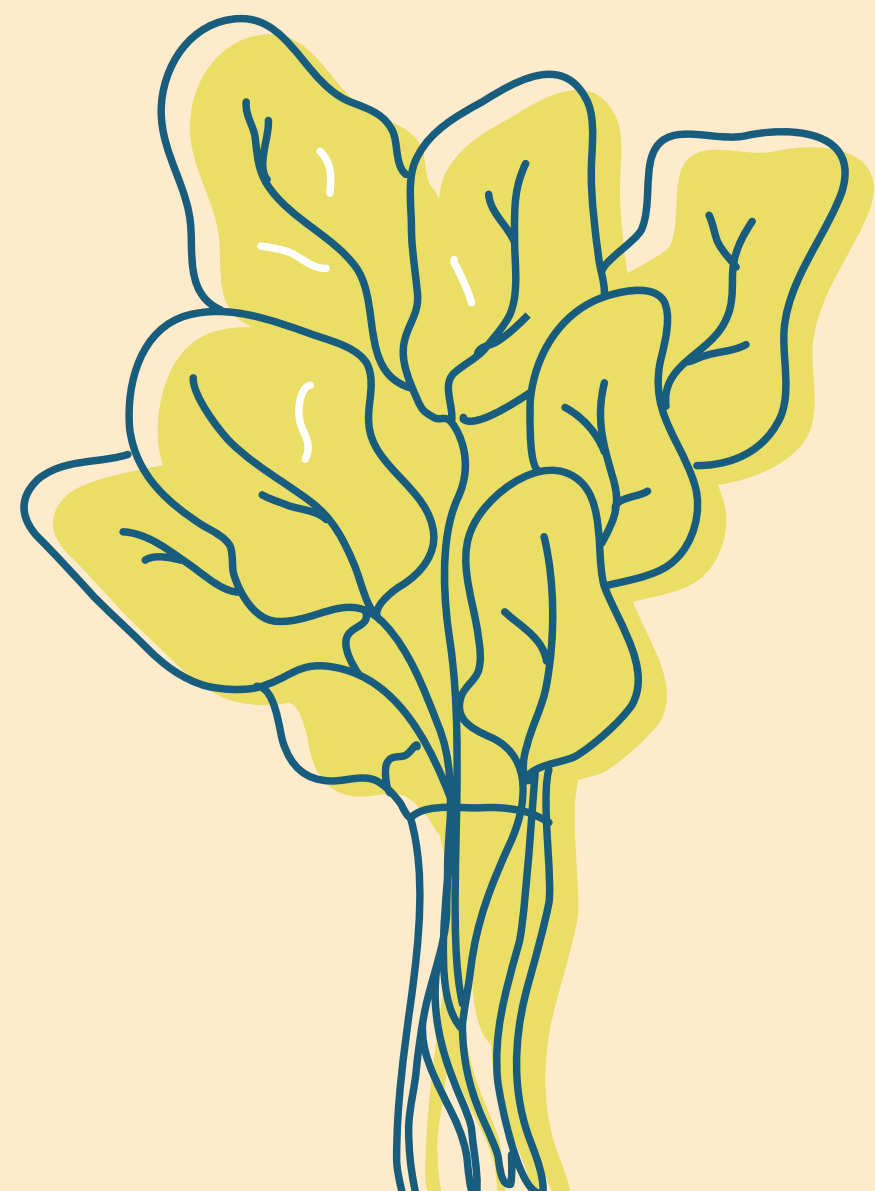
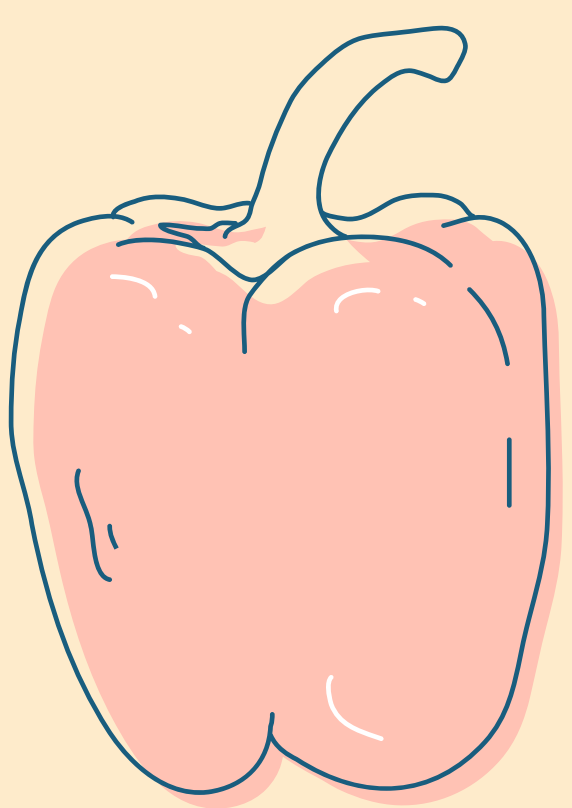
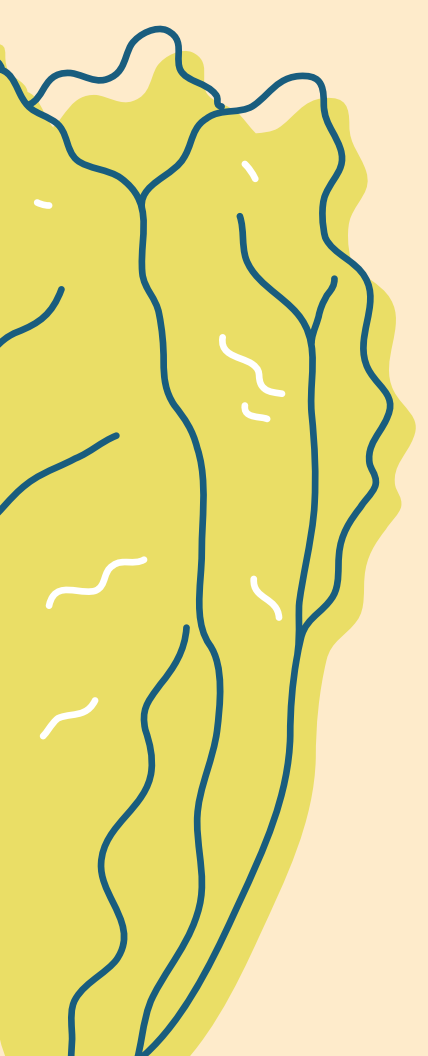
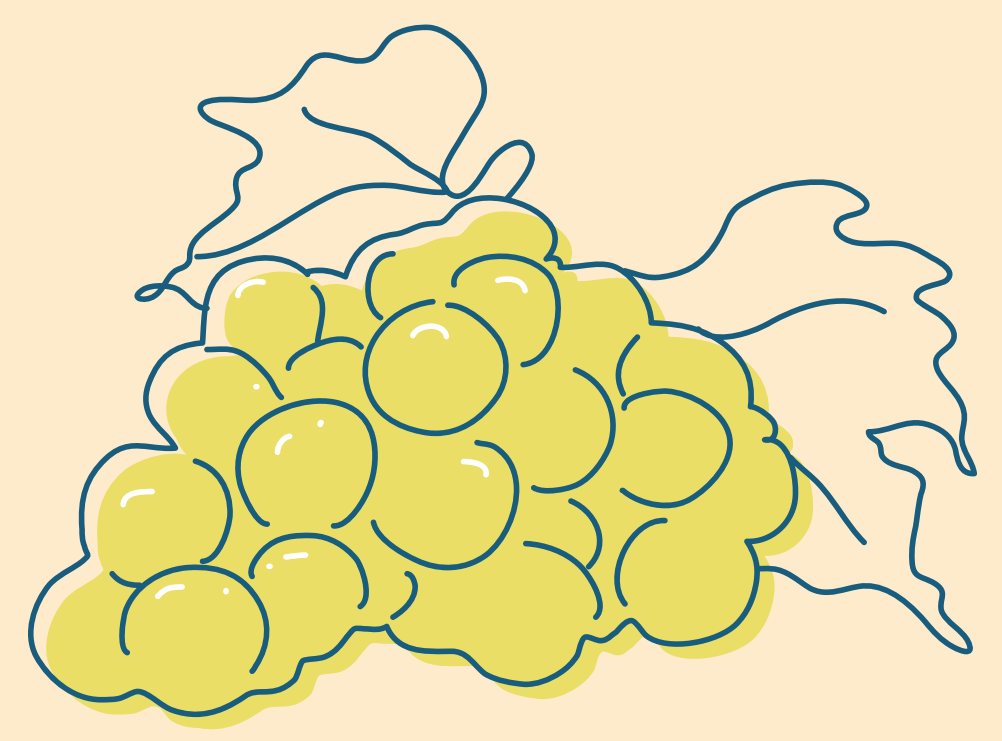
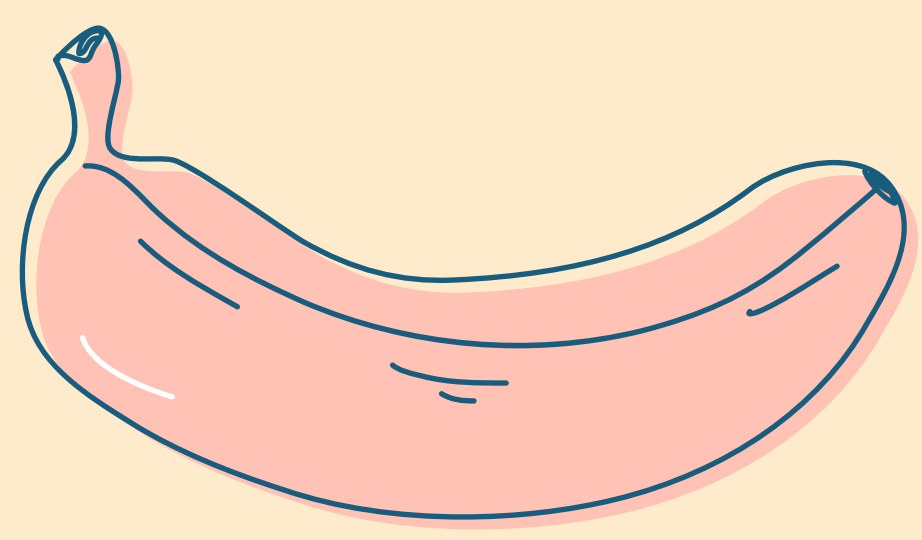
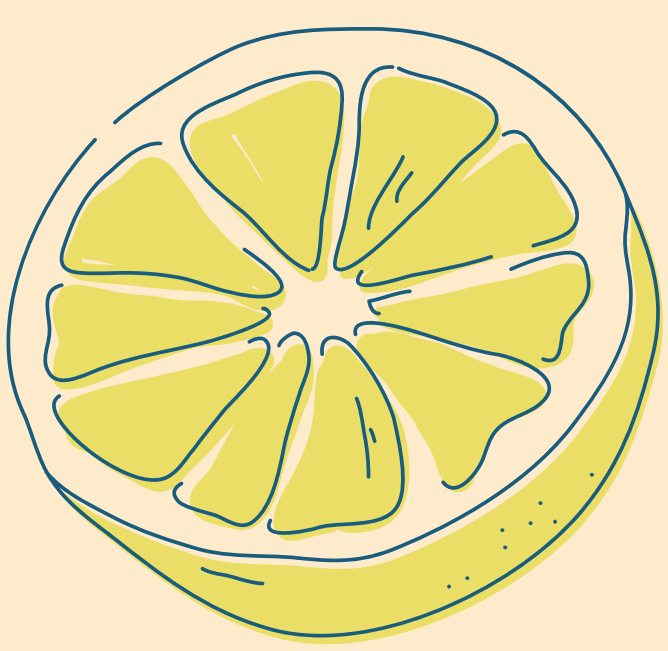
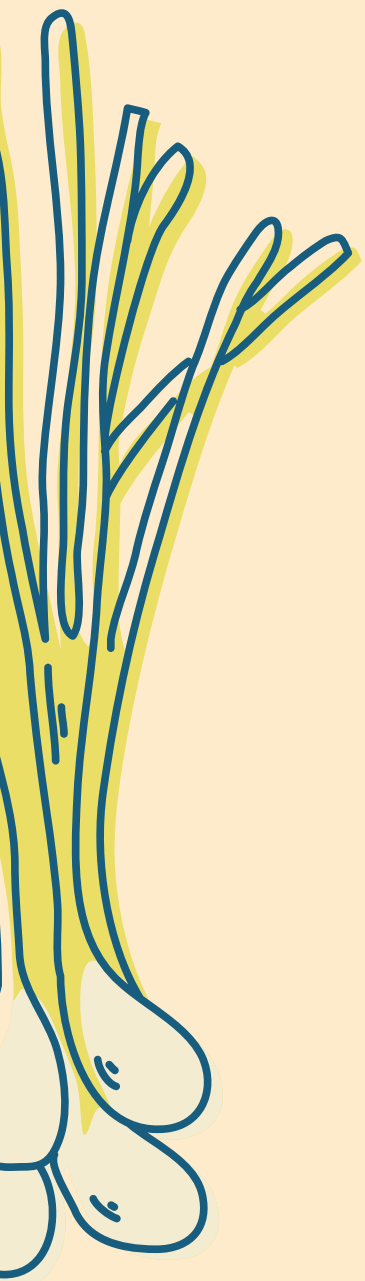
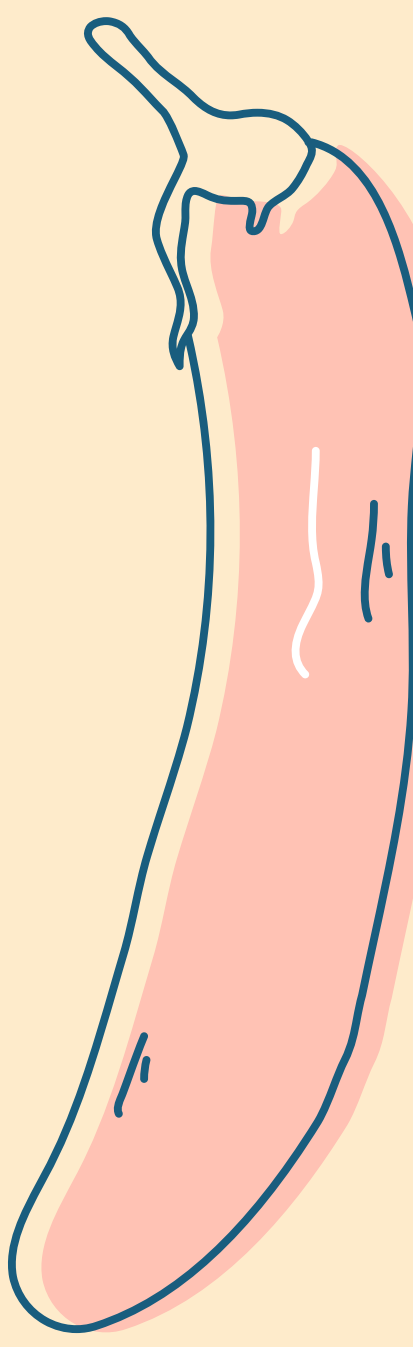


A NEW FLAVOUR OF GIVING

A Guide to Culturally and Religiously
Appropriate Food Donations



OBJECTIVE

THE CHALLENGE

Food insecurity has impeded upon the health, stability, and general wellbeing of over 17% of households in the UK. Whilst food banks are seeking to alleviate this, many are struggling to reflect the diversity which exists within these groups, unable to provide a varied supply of foods that can cater to the distinctive preferences and requirements of these groups. Crucially, food can be a source of comfort and a channel through which identity can be preserved and celebrated. Food banks must therefore be facilitated in providing access to the other elements of food beyond sustenance through a conscious and active effort.

THE RIGHTS

The aim of this "recipe" book is to promote and guide donations of culturally appropriate food items to food banks. The book is designed to preserve both Article 2 and Article 25 of the 1945 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

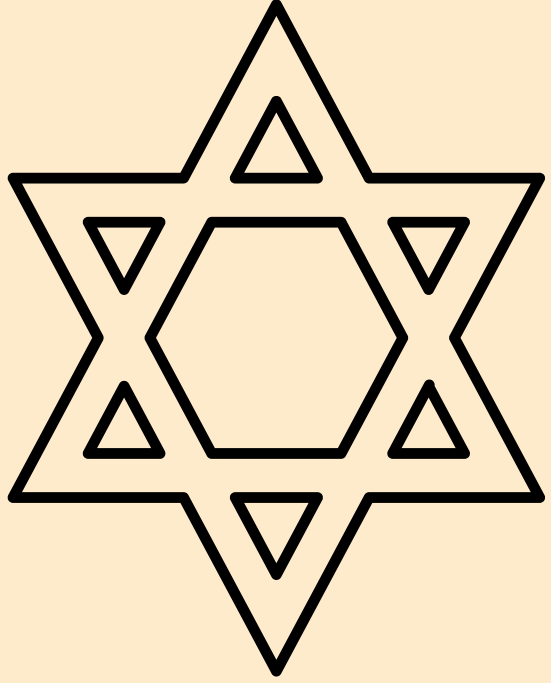
Article 2: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion"

Article 25: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family"

THE BOOK

Within the book are "ingredient" lists which provide examples of food donations that would be culturally relevant for three religious groups: the Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu communities. Context is also supplied to explain the significance of food within these cultures. Note that this is not an exhaustive list of all the cultural groups that would benefit deeply from culturally appropriate donations. The hope here is that the core issue is understood and that donations are pushed in the right direction to reflect not only the necessity for nourishment but also a feeling of familiarity, cultural pride, and a vital sense of dignity.

"To know a community is to know its food" - Gil Marks
(Jewish Rabbi and chef)



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY



Food in Judaism represents a way to connect with Jewish heritage, observe religious commandments, and strengthen the sense of community and tradition. Each year consists of numerous festivals and events in which food plays a key part. For those in the community pushed into food poverty and trapped in the food poverty cycle, the limited access to culturally relevant food in turn inhibits individuals from participating fully in the richness and diversity of Jewish ritual.



KASHRUT

Some amongst the Jewish community observe a particular set of dietary restrictions called 'Kashrut'. These laws were derived from the Torah and are a key part of the Jewish identity of those who keep to them. It is therefore of crucial importance that the people in the community who receive support from food banks have sufficient access to kosher food.



Certified Kosher food items have a symbol which typically looks like this

Alternatively, the site below can be used to determine whether a certain item is kosher:
<https://isitkosher.uk/>



Click on the video here for an explanation of the Kashrut laws

ROSH HASHANA

Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, holds a position of great importance on the Jewish calendar. It marks the onset of the 'High Holy Days' and is a day filled with celebration and joy. Simultaneously, it offers a precious occasion for introspection and an opportunity to pray for a sweet new year to come.



This hope for a 'sweet new year' is one of the key themes which are symbolised in various foods that are traditionally eaten. For those currently grappling with food insecurity, greater access to such foods would grant the opportunity to embrace and celebrate what could be the beginning of a more promising year.



INGREDIENTS

Honey

Dates

The sweetness of the items above marks the hope for a sweet new year

Apples

As well as being sweet, the roundness of apples represents eternal life

Pomegranates

Pomegranates are said to have 613 seeds which represent the 613 commandments laid out in the Torah

KEY DETAILS

Rosh Hashanah falls between September and October each year. The website below can be used to determine the exact date it falls each year:

<https://www.hebcal.com/>

PASSOVER

Passover commemorates the liberation of the Jews from slavery, as recounted in the Torah. The festival therefore serves as an opportunity to explore the historical narrative that has shaped the Jewish people, emphasising the themes of faith and gratitude.



The approach to food holds a central place within the festival. It is customary to not eat leavened foods made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt. This practice is a commemoration of the hasty departure of the Jews from Egypt, symbolising how they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise. It is this narrative which all Jews should be able to connect to through their food.

INGREDIENTS

Matza (e.g Rakusens)

Matza meal (e.g Rakusens)

In the Passover story, Matza was formed instead of bread as the Jews rushed out of Egypt

Quinoa

Potatoes

The items above are Kosher for Passover alternatives for pasta and rice

Potato starch

Ground nuts

The items above are Kosher for Passover alternatives for flour

Any food-bank friendly goods with the Kosher for Passover symbol*

The website linked below can be used to find out whether a food item is

Kosher for Passover:

<https://passover.isitkosher.uk/#tuna>

KEY DETAILS

Passover falls in Spring every year.

On the Hebrew calendar this is the 15th Nissan but the exact date varies year to year on the Gregorian calendar.

The website below can be used to determine the date it falls each year:

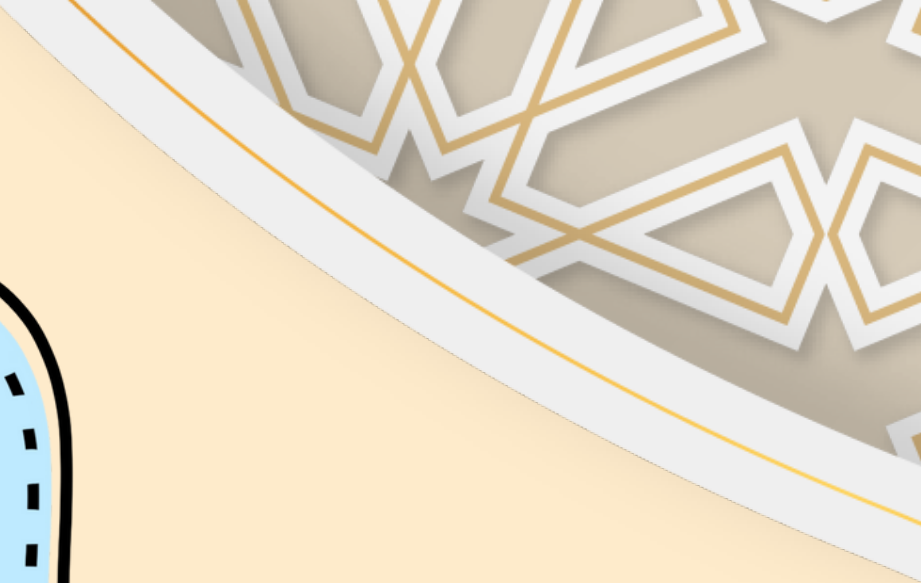
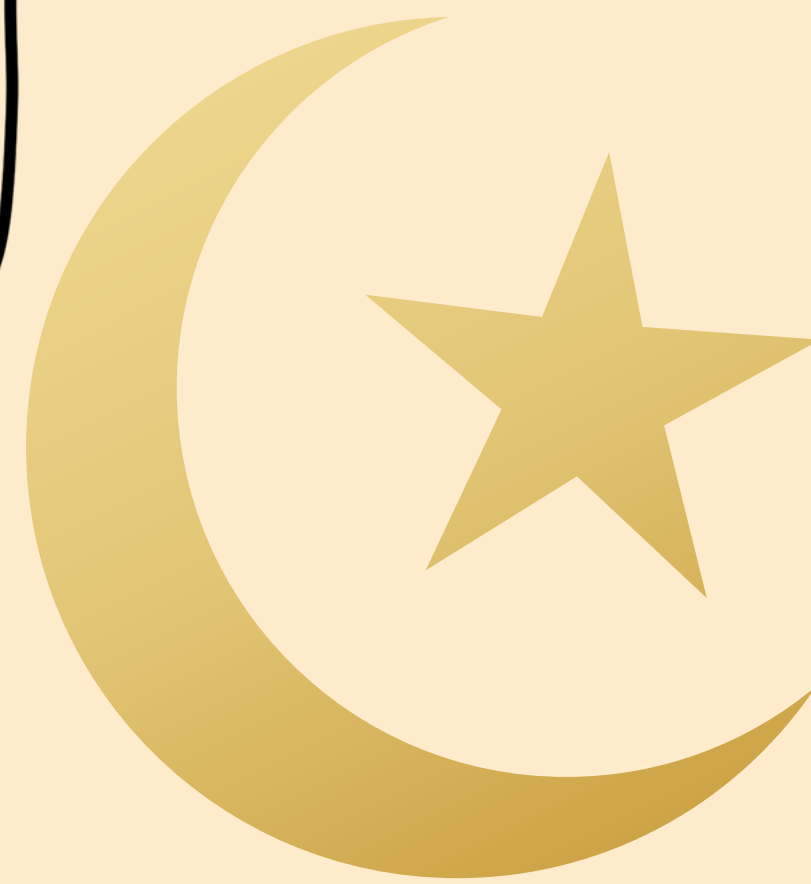
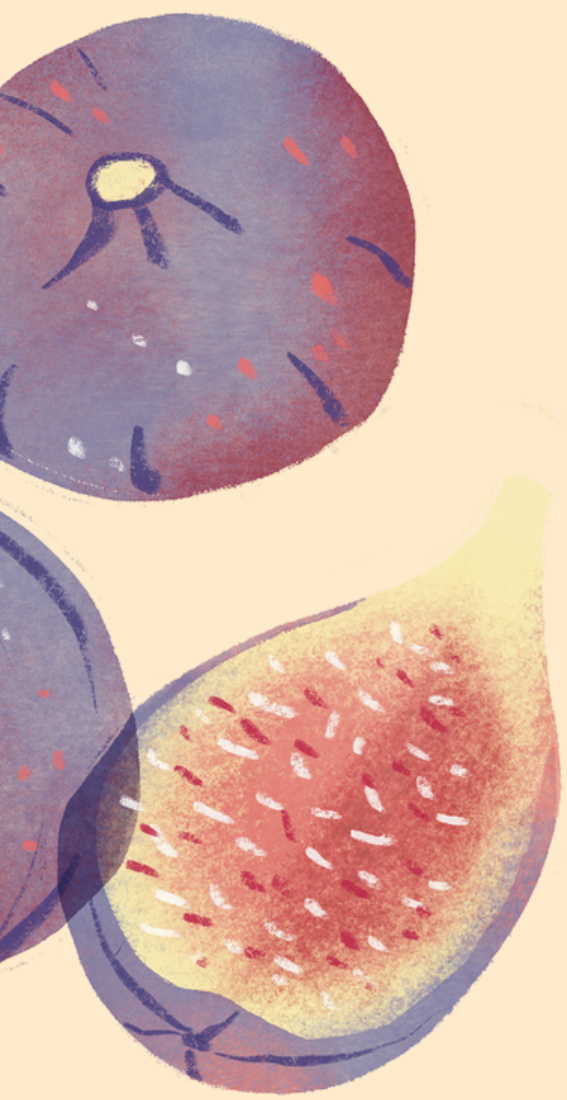
<https://www.hebcal.com/>



"The most loved food for Allah is that which is touched by many hands" -
Shu'ab al-Imān (a Hadith book - consists of accounts by Muhammad)

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Food assumes a central role in Islam, fostering community bonds and providing avenues for expressing gratitude. The Qur'an also references the importance of the health of the body and the soul and that this is achieved through certain food choices. However, 1/5 of Muslims surveyed in a 2022 census have relied on food banks since the beginning of the cost of living crisis in August 2021. In turn, a considerable proportion of the community is being restricted from an integral part of their culture.



HALAL

The observance of Halal is the adherence to certain food restrictions which are permitted by the Quran. Like Kashrut (page 4), it is a way in which Muslims can demonstrate a commitment to the values and principles that are held within the faith and to strengthen a shared sense of identity through their food choices. It is this sense of 'choice' which is out of reach for those who wish to abide by the laws of Halal but have limited access to food; a challenge that can be alleviated through conscious donations.



Certified Halal food items have a symbol which typically looks like this

Alternatively, the site below can be used to determine whether a certain item is Halal:

<https://www.verifyhalal.com/>



Click on the video here for an explanation of the Halal laws

EID-AL-FITR

Eid Al Fitr marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan; a period in which Muslims observe fasting from dawn til dusk. It celebrates religious fulfilment and is also an opportunity for families to come together to exchange gifts, enjoy feasts, and express their gratitude.



Certain foods eaten during Eid have religious and historical significance and it is important that people are able to embrace that significance. One should also note that Eid-al-Fitr translates to the "Festival of Sweets". In spite of food insecurity, those celebrating the festival are entitled to a sense of comfort as well as a sense of identity during what should be a festival of joy and sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

Dates

The Prophet Muhammad is said to have broken the fast on dates

Honey

Given its sweetness, honey can be used to mark the "Festival of Sweets"

Olives

Figs

Olives and figs are referred to as plants of the Qur'an and therefore of general religious significance.

Lentils

Kidney beans

Chickpeas

These items are not Eid-specific but are legumes which are commonly eaten within Islamic culture and would help to create a sense of familiarity during the festival

KEY DETAILS

Eid-Al-Fitr falls on the 1st and 2nd day of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

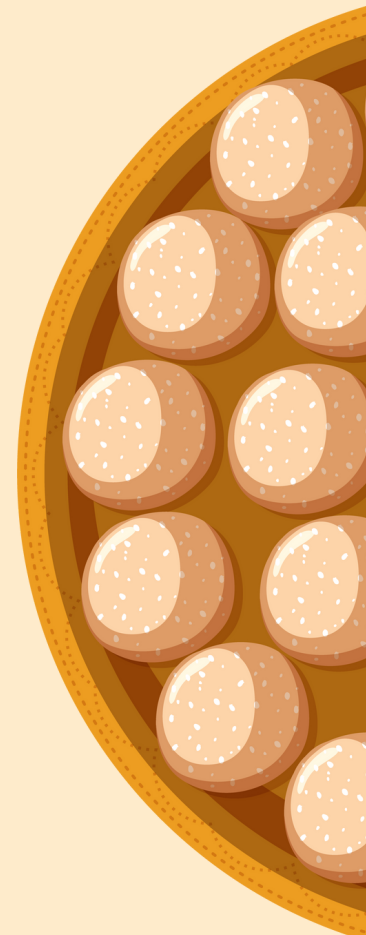
In the Gregorian calendar, the date varies by around 10 days each year. The website below can be used to determine the date it falls each year:

<https://www.islamicfinder.org/islamic-date-converter/>

"From earth, herbs from herbs, food;
from food, seed, and from seed,
human beings. We thus consist of the
essence of food" - Taittiriya
Upanishad (one of the Upanishads -
ancient philosophical texts of
Hinduism)

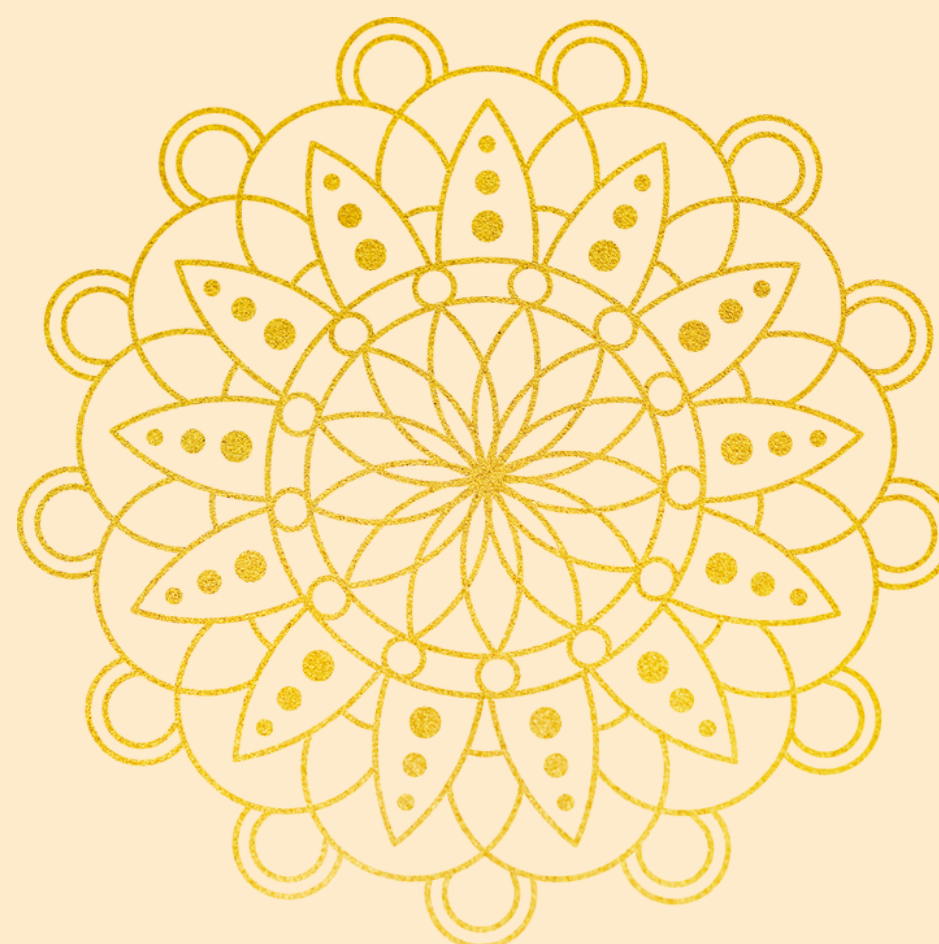
THE HINDU COMMUNITY

In the Hindu tradition, food is regarded as the essence of the body. As such, the food that one chooses is believed to contribute towards the purity and harmony of the self. Given this significance, limited availability of culturally appropriate food in food banks poses a real difficulty for Hindus that depend on them but also align themselves with this understanding of the role of food.



DIWALI

Diwali is the 'Festival of Light' amongst the Hindu community which celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, goodness over evil. Diyas are lit and homes are decorated. It is a festival of joy, hope, and renewal.



Diwali is also a festival of identity and culturally appropriate food is an effective means of embracing that. It is difficult to determine food-bank friendly items which are relevant to Diwali specifically but, during this time, it would make a difference to bring in 'Sattvic' foods. In Hinduism, these foods are those which create balance and harmony within the self.

INGREDIENTS

Whole grains (e.g brown rice, quinoa, barley)

Legumes (e.g lentils, chickpeas)

Nuts

Seeds

Honey

The items above are all Sattvic foods. They are nutritious and mainly unprocessed. In Hinduism these types of food are said to contribute to the ideal state.

KEY DETAILS

Diwali is observed on the day of the new moon in the Hindu month of Kartik.

In the Gregorian calendar, this typically corresponds to the months of October or November.


The website below can be used to determine the date it falls each year:

<https://planetcalc.com/9146/>

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

This resource was prepared by Roxana Isaacs, as part of the René Cassin Youth Ambassador Programme. René Cassin is a charity that aims to promote and protect human rights, drawing on Jewish experience and Jewish values.

The programme is designed to equip the next generation of advocates with the capacity to be able to make genuine change in the world of human rights. I hope to continue to fight for causes that I care about with this new confidence and greater understanding of modern activism.



The link below can be used to
access the main René Cassin
website:

<https://www.renecassin.org/>



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