

Shoham's Bangle

Remember Bangles

Shoham's bangle is a special object that helps her feel a sense of attachment, belonging and remembering. It helps her remember the Jewish world in Baghdad where she came from, and Hebrew words for settling in her new home in Israel. We all have different objects that are meaningful to us and help us remember.

Discussion Question: Do you have a special object that reminds you of something or makes you feel special? Perhaps you have a family object, like Shoham's bangle, which is special to your family.

Activity 1: Make paper remember bangles. Each child can decorate and write on their bangle, a Hebrew word they want to remember, or something important to them, before it's attached as a bangle on their wrist. As an alternative, make a stronger bangle by twisting golden thread/string/ribbon around a wire to make a golden bangle.

Activity 2: What's your story? Have each child bring a special object from home to share their family's story. As an alternative, write or draw about your object and then share with the group. Take turns showing and sharing your objects and their stories. Perhaps it is something from parents or grandparents.

Baking Date Cookies

Shoham comes from Iraq in the Middle East. She cuts out Iraqi date cookies called *Ba'aba Tamar* with her bangle. In Israel there are different ingredients so she makes semolina cookies.

Discussion Question: Each country has their own special cookie recipes. What's your favorite cookie? Do you have a special family cookie recipe, maybe even from another country like Shoham?

Activity: Baking Cookies

Make *Baba Tamar*-Iraqi date cookies using bangles to shape them, just like Shoham. You could also try semolina cookies, made in Israel when flour was scarce. The children can learn how dates were the main Iraqi fruit, used in many Iraqi-Jewish dishes, and can compare it to other kinds of cookies.

An alternative is to make *khubz* - a typical Iraqi pita bread, like Shoham's nana makes, and see how a bubble forms in the middle, and how something like a bangle can be hidden in it.

Semolina Cookie - Ma'amul Cookies

There are many different types of semolina cookies but I chose this one because it's Middle Eastern and fun to roll, and can be adapted with many different fillings. You can add chocolate chips with the nut mixture, or for kids just mix chocolate chips into the dough and roll like a normal chocolate chip (albeit rose water flavored) cookie. Thanks to the Sephardic Spice Girls for the recipe.

Dough

2 cups all purpose flour
1 cup semolina flour
1/2 teaspoon rose water
1 cup unsalted butter or margarine or coconut oil

Nut Filling

1 pound walnuts, ground
2 tablespoons confectioners sugar
1 tablespoon unsalted butter or margarine or coconut oil, melted
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon orange blossom water

Date Filling

1 pound pitted dates
1/2 cup ground walnuts
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon 1/2 teaspoon orange blossom water

Preheat oven to 350F

Combine flour and semolina in a large bowl until it has a crumb consistency
Add rose water, fold in the butter and add 1/2 teaspoon lukewarm water
Knead the dough well and place in the refrigerator until ready to use
Prepare the fillings by combining the ingredients

Divide the dough into four portions

Work with one portion at a time, while covering the rest as you work

Pinch walnut size balls of dough, then press down on the center with your finger, to form a 1/2 inch indentation

Fill the indentation with 1/4 tsp of the filling, then close the pastry

If using a ma'amoul mold, press the top of the pastry firmly against the mold, then lightly tap the mold on a hard surface to remove the pastry

Place the pastry on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper

Bake 10-12 minutes or until the bottom of the pastries are lightly browned and tops remain pale
Sprinkle the cookies with confectioners' sugar before serving

Recipe Source - <https://sephardicspicegirls.com/memories-of-maamul-the-delicate-aleppo-cookie/>

Savory Bracelets - Kaak M'Khash Khash

Growing up I loved twirling these cookie bracelets around my fingers. I thought it could be fun to make them bigger to make a bangle. It works, it's fun and it's savory, so perfect to have with a bowl of soup or warm cup of tea. They symbolize the circle of life for Iraqi Jews and are served for all occasions. Recipe is adapted from Daisy Iny's 'The Best of Baghdad'

Ingredients

4 cups unbleached flour
1 package dry yeast, or 1 cake compressed fresh yeast
1 cup lukewarm water
pinch of sugar
1/4 pound of butter
1 teaspoon salt
pinch of ground fennel seeds (optional)
tiny grain of ground mastic (optional - I don't use this)
sesame seeds (for dipping - also optional)
1 egg white

Method

- Preheat oven 375 degrees
- Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and add the salt.
- Dissolve the yeast in the water (105-115 degrees for dry yeast, 80-90 degrees for fresh yeast), add a pinch of sugar, cover, and let stand for 10 minutes, or until liquid begins to bubble.
- Melt the butter. Season the flour with salt and, if desired, fennel and mastic.
- Add butter and the yeast mixture and knead vigorously for about 10 minutes, adding a little water if too dry, but dough must be fairly stiff. (Can be done with a dough hook.)
- Cover dough with a damp cloth, place in a warm place, and let it rise until double in size.
- Cut the dough in to walnut-size pieces and roll into thin long shapes about 4 inches long. Bring the ends together and press firmly to make little bracelets.
- If sesame-seed flavor is desired, place the egg white in a saucer and the sesame seeds in another, dip the top of each bracelet into egg white and then into the sesame seeds to coat the bracelet.
- Place the bracelets on a baking tray and let rise, covered with a damp cloth, in a warm place for 1 hour.
- Bake in preheated 375 degrees oven on the lower shelf for 15 minutes, then on the upper shelf for 15 minutes, or until lightly golden.
- Turn off heat and leave tray in oven until cool. Store in a tightly covered container.

(Photos below)



The Jews of Iraq

The Jews of Iraq trace their origins to the time of the Babylonian exile 2,500 years ago. This means they have different traditions, foods, and language from Jews that come from Europe and other places. This is an opportunity to explore differences and similarities among Jewish communities, how each is connected but has its own unique culture, for example, giving young girls bangles.

Discussion Question - What do you know about Jews in the Middle East? Iraq? What cultural differences do they have?

Activity - Match It Game - Present cultural similarities and differences through a match-it game, thus introducing Iraqi-Jewish traditions. For example, a picture of challah and Iraqi flatbread (khubz) would be a match. The children could discuss how both Jewish communities would bless two breads for Shabbat, but different types of bread. Other examples of picture matches would be:

Shabbat Candles - Europe - Candle sticks

Iraq - A glass bowl hanging with three silver chains from the ceiling, with seven cotton wicks.

Rabbinic Dress - Europe - Black coat and fur hat

- Iraq - Colorful embroidered robe and turban

Synagogues - Europe - Elaborate, big Synagogue like in Rome

- Iraq - The Great Synagogue in Baghdad had an open roof and the ark was in the middle

Music - European - Klezmer Band

- Iraq - Chalqi Band (very different instruments eg. the *oud*.)

The Iraqi-Jewish history of Operation Ezra & Nehemiah

Operation Ezra & Nehemiah was a historic event where 120,000 Jews, like Shoham and her family, were airlifted from Iraq to Israel from 1951-52.

Discussion Question - Shoham flew to Israel on an airplane, and it felt like being carried on a giant eagle's wings. What does flying feel like? What does it mean when an entire community flies out of a country?

Activity 1 - World Map

The idea of immigration, moving from one country to another, is hard to imagine until you see it visually. Give every child a world map, and paper people and an airplane to cut out and color. For a customized map, visit <https://www.mapchart.net/world.html>

Track Shoham's air journey from Iraq to Israel. Track the route from where you live to Iraq and to Israel. Explore the world map with different questions such as:

- a) Shoham's family originates from Iraq, where does your family originate from? Find it on the map and color it in. Track it from where you live now.
- b) Which countries have you traveled to on the map? Where would you want to travel to? Color and track it on the map.

The Immigrant Experience

There are many people who have had to leave their country of birth and move to a new one like Shoham and her family. Understanding the challenges the immigrant faces, such as learning a new language, eating new foods, lack of money, makes us compassionate and understanding of other people, so that we treat them with respect and dignity.

Discussion Question - What does it mean to leave the place you were born and rebuild a whole new life in a foreign country? How we can have compassion for immigrants, like Shoham, who have to leave their homes? Have you, moved homes, cities, countries? Do you know anyone that has? What was difficult? What was fun?

Activity 1 - Pack a Suitcase. Shoham and her family could only pack one suitcase. What would you pack in your suitcase if you could only take one suitcase? Make a list or drawing of what your family would take in one suitcase.

Activity 2 - Build Shoham a home. What would Shoham need to start a new life in a foreign place? Draw, or use paper cut-outs, and create Shoham a new home with everything she needs.

Activity 3 - Five Stones - One of the fun things about moving to a new country is the new things you learn. Five stones is a game in Israel that you can learn, just like Shoham. Find instructions here: <https://www.wikihow.com/Play-Five-Stones>

Below is a short Youtube tutorial of how to play - by Sewing Seeds of Love and a Youtube tutorial of how to make the stones from fabric (so it's soft) by Lessons Go Where. Note. small, real stones like Shoham's, can also be used.

