

COFFEE CULTURE: PAST AND PRESENT

Would you like *cafe hafuch* (קפה הפוך), *shachor* (שחור), *botz* (בוץ), or *nes* (נס)?

Once upon a time, not too long ago, these were the only choices for coffee in Israel. Nowadays the list is much much longer.

Coffee has been a part of the Arab culture in the country for centuries. It is an important aspect of Arab hospitality, usually in the form of intense, dark, Turkish coffee.

Before and after the establishment of the State of Israel, Jewish immigrants from Europe and elsewhere brought their customs and tastes, and the culture of coffee houses blossomed. Most renowned were the mythic cafés of bohemian Tel Aviv in the 1930s-1980s, where you could see artists, actors, authors, poets, and celebrities, each in their favorite hangout. Starting in the 1980s, Ethiopian-Jews immigrating to Israel brought with them the traditional Buna coffee ceremony, which is a central part of Ethiopian hospitality and culture.

Many cups have been brewed and blended with the beloved black liquid since the early days of the state. Today, the Israeli taste is varied and you can find quality coffee everywhere. On your next trip to Israel try sitting in different cafés, slowly enjoying the different kinds of coffee and watching the passersby. That, too, is an important aspect of sitting in a café—especially in Israel.

1. COFFEE, EAST AND WEST

A new exhibit at The Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem explores the origins of coffee, the cultural aspects, and the many functional and beautiful objects designed for coffee preparation and consumption.

“Coffee is considered the most coveted, mysterious, and popular drink



Image from prtfl.co.il



Photo Credit: Rosie Wisenshtein



Want to know more?

Check out the [Hebrew Coffee Guide](#) at the end



[Watch and learn](#) about the Ethiopian Buna Coffee Ceremony

Coffee Culture: Past and Present (continued)

in the world. Globally, people drink more than 500 million cups each year. But coffee is not just a drink, it is a phenomenon. Over the last few centuries, coffee has influenced the culture, economy, and society of entire continents. In its travels around the world, it evolved from a potion ingested as a part of religious ceremonies in the Arab world to a symbol of secular youth culture.

“Coffee has aroused the desire of designers from various fields to invent, plan, build and create the largest number of ancillary tools ever designed and still designed for a consumer product—spoons and cups, trays and kettles, roasting and grinding accessories, and home and professional machines that accompany coffee shop culture.”

2. CAFE SHACHOR CHAZAK | STRONG BLACK COFFEE | ETHIOPIAN-ISRAELI HIP HOP DUO

Besides sipping “Strong Black Coffee,” you can listen, sing, and move to it as well.

The Ethiopian-Israeli hip hop duo, Cafe Shachor Chazak, whose name means “Strong Black Coffee,” has risen to prominence over the last decade. The group is made up of cousins Uri Alamo and Ilak Sahalu.

The two grew up in a poor neighborhood in Netanya, where many Ethiopian immigrants settled. As teenagers, they started a five-member music group and after their army service, they regrouped, this time as a duo.

Growing up listening to both hip hop music and traditional Ethiopian music influenced their style and inspired their message. Their music features protest songs against racism and discrimination, alongside songs of hope for friendship and resilience.

Each word in the duo’s name has meaning:

Cafe (קפה), coffee/cafe, for the place they first recorded music, called “Youth Cafe”

Shachor (שחור), black, for their skin color

Chazak (חזק), strong, because they and their message are strong

The group is known for their popular singles, “Yihiye Beseder” (יהיה בסדר), “It’ll Be Alright,” and “Hineh, Zeh Koreh” (הנה, זה קורה), “Look, It’s Happening.” The group has a following locally in Israel, and around the world.



Resources:

- Learn more about the [Coffee—East and West Exhibition](#)
- Check out Cafe Shachor Chazak’s “Yihiye Beseder”: [watch](#), [lyrics](#)

Coffee Culture: Past and Present (continued)

3. WANT TO ORDER COFFEE IN ISRAEL?

If all this coffee talk made you thirsty, [here](#) is how to sound like a local when you order a cup of joe in Israel.

HEBREW COFFEE GUIDE

Need a quick primer first? Check out this Hebrew Coffee Guide!

Cafe Hafuch (קפה הפוך): Similar to cappuccino, it has more milk or foam than coffee. Hence the name ‘cafe hafuch’ literally means, ‘upside down coffee.’

Cafe Shachor (קפה שחור): This strong coffee is also known as Turkish Coffee. It is made from finely ground coffee, cooked in boiling water, and served in small cups, sometimes with cardamom spice.

Cafe Botz (קפה בוצ): This is the uncooked version of Turkish coffee where boiling water is added to finely ground coffee and served. The coffee sediments that settle at the bottom of the glass resemble ‘mud,’ which in Hebrew is ‘botz.’

Nes Cafe (נס קפה): Instant coffee, named after the Swiss company Nestlé’s “Nescafé,” which was the first instant coffee imported to Israel. It is also a play on words describing the dissolving instant coffee as miraculous—the word ‘nes’ means ‘miracle’ in Hebrew.



Check out this comedy sketch from Israel's satirical show, Eretz Nehederet. It features characters who get all tangled up when trying to order plain coffee at Aroma, a coffee chain known for its higher-end Starbucks-like coffee offerings. Today everyone knows the difference between a latte macchiato and a mochaccino.

[Watch in Hebrew \(no subtitles\)](#)