

THE KITCHEN

a field guide

WHAT IS THE KITCHEN?

The Kitchen is one part indie shabbat community, one part San Francisco experiment and one part tool kit for DIY. We're doing old and holy things in new ways.

We believe that Jewish religious practice can transform: It can change lives, make meaning, and invest people in the world.

And we want to do everything we can to get you in on it.

IS THIS RELIGIOUS?

Yes. Totally.

You can call it spiritual if you want.

WHAT IF I DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD?

Many people think Jewish practice is off limits if the God thing is “so not me.”

Not so fast.

We think believing in “God” and having a God connection are two different things. Take love, for example. If you had to believe in “Love” before loving anyone, it might get complicated.

We don't think the question is, “Do I believe in God?”— We think it's more like, “Do I want to do Jewish spiritual stuff?” If the answer is yes, we're in business.

Even if the answer is no, we still want you around. Call us crazy, but it would be no fun if everyone agreed all the time. (Not to mention, some of the most notable Jews in history were not entirely down with God.)

WHAT IF I'M NOT JEWISH?

(or)

What if my girlfriend / boyfriend /
partner / wife / husband /
child / Aunt Susie isn't Jewish?

Let's not get hung up on who is Jewish or not. All that really matters here is who wants to do Jewish or not. Put it this way: You could be a direct descendant of Moses, but if you aren't interested in trying anything Jewish, the ride is pretty much over. By the same token, you can be Santa Claus himself, and if you decide to jump on the Jewish train, and are open to seeing where it takes you, then the ride has just begun.

WHAT IF I'M NOT SURE I'M THE PRAYING TYPE?

Some people don't like praying at all. If that's you, we still want you in The Kitchen. Sit in the back, bring a book, walk outside, think deep thoughts, have some shnapps, whatever.

Being in the room counts towards being a part of the community as far as we're concerned. And, if you want to learn what all the fuss is about, talk to our Rabbi. It's those kinds of questions that make her day.

I'M A BEGINNER, WHERE DO I START?

1 Remember that learning to pray will be like trying a new exercise: Not easy. Also like exercise, it takes a little while to see the benefits, but it'll totally be worth it.

2 We pray in Hebrew because we think the Hebrew leads us places English cannot. But we also want to help people who are new, so we've put our services on the interwebs* and transliterate everything. Let us know how we can help.

*http://bit.ly/thekitchen_shabbat

3 Take heart: Lots of people who pray don't only focus on the words but also the sounds of the words and tunes as a jumping off point to something holy.

4 Finally, start with this: "A prayer is the articulation of something very particular at the core of one's being, flung out into the universe. Perhaps it finds a mark, perhaps not. The essential thing is the articulation and the flinging." –Merle Feld, *A Spiritual Life*

WHO PAYS FOR THIS?

We're so glad you asked.

To build The Kitchen, the people who love it (and there are a lot of you out there) join. It's as simple as that.

No one else is responsible for financing your Jewish experience. And while we're lucky to have some start up help, it can't (and probably shouldn't) last forever. We know we're building something meaningful. We can hardly believe how many of you have told us and how many have stepped up in such a short time. If you like what you've found and want it to stay, we invite you to become a part of The Kitchen.

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU JOIN THE KITCHEN?

Yes, you get unlimited access to our now infamous shabbats, first pick at those over-the-top feasts and holidays you've heard about, an opportunity to participate in our ground-breaking Freedom School, and a meaningfully modern approach to life cycle events from the cradle on up.

Sure you get all that, but really, joining the Kitchen means upping your game and connecting with a community of folks like you. We want people who can see where we're going and are willing to help get us there. If you're ready to be counted in and counted on, this is for you.

YOU GET TO BUILD SOMETHING THAT MATTERS.

THE DEETS

Please turn off your phones. God rarely tweets.
Also, no pictures.

Kids are definitely welcome. Feel free to bring toys, snacks, whatever helps. However, if there are tantrums (it happens), or your kids need to run around, we have Camp Kitchen for kids 5 and under run by the talented early childhood educator Mimi Greisman. If they do stay, the only time we need everyone pretty quiet is during the teaching and the kaddish yatom (mourners kaddish).

Kitchen services are not performances, so please, no clapping. If you like what someone has done or taught, say “yasher koach”—it means “may you be strengthened.” It’s our version of “righteous job, bro.”