

Chef Judi Travels to Israel with Embracing Our Differences

BY JUDI GALLAGHER | MARCH 20, 2015

The trip was organized by Sarasota's Embracing Our Differences and the Jewish Federation.



It is an honor to have made this long journey to Israel. Thanks to the vision and generosity of the Sarasota-based [Embracing Our Differences](#) and the [Jewish Federation](#), eight students, local Christian leaders and Embracing Our Differences supporters were offered a unique, life-changing experience to travel to Israel and celebrate the opening of the first ever Embracing Our Differences exhibition, hosted in the port of Jaffa, Israel.



Imagine the emotion, the excitement and the acceptance of the link between two countries with this event.





As a chef and food journalist, this is an opportunity for me to enjoy Israeli food, spices, and 1,000-year-old recipes while meeting with the locals. Here, Arabs and Israelis coexist. They eat in each others' restaurants and have respect for the land in which they all live. Not everything is perfect, and it's not always completely harmonious. But to walk the streets eating shawarma with eight local high school students after a day in Old Jerusalem,

to experience the essence and evolution of world religions, and to see everything through the eyes of the students has brought us together in a truly unique way.



When the Embracing our Differences displays are placed at the bayfront again this spring in Sarasota--and now at RiverWalk in Bradenton (for the first time)--take a moment and speak with the student docents and listen to their perspectives. You just might experience the voice of many cultures, the sounds of varied traditions, the flavors of so many ethnic heritages...and it's all thanks to Embracing Our Differences.

In the coming weeks you will read many more stories on this culinary and spiritual journey. I can't wait to share more.