

*Moroccan Jewish bride
from Tangier- 1964*

Mimouna Festival





Introduction

Jews have been living in Morocco since the time of Antiquity. It is estimated that the Moroccan Jewish population reached 225,000 in 1945. Morocco's King Mohammed V who famously stated at a special meeting with both Nazi representatives and the Vichy government, " there are no Jewish citizens, there are no Muslims citizens , they are all Moroccans, has won an admirable place in the heart of all Jews. The Jews of Morocco were not sent away to concentration camps, and were not subject to the full brunt of Nazi evil.

As sovereign country, Morocco has long enjoyed a reputation of harmonious coexistence and respect for all its citizens regardless of their religious or ethnic background.

The Mimouna festival is emblematic of respect and coexistence whereby the Muslims of Morocco would reach out to their Jewish neighbours in a gesture of harmony, goodwill, and solidarity.



The origins of the holiday are not as clear as some of other Jewish traditions. There is no biblical mandate or rabbinic, and strangely enough, this is a tradition largely celebrated solely by one community – the Jews of Morocco.

Although traditionally it is far less widespread than other ethnic Jewish customs, its ethos of coexistence is however gathering momentum and Mimouna is now winning its rightful place in the Jewish calendar as a symbol of unity between fellow human beings.

Recent years have seen attempts to revive the old customs of Mimouna and refocus the holiday as an opportunity to champion the coexistence that was once more common in Morocco.

The Moroccan-Jewish community developed a fascinating tradition of rituals and pilgrimages to the tombs of holy sages. There are 13 such famous sites, centuries old, well kept by Muslims. Every year on special dates, crowds of Moroccan Jews from around the world, including Israel, throng

to these graves. A unique Moroccan festival, the Mimouna, is celebrated in Morocco and in Israel. In such spirit, The Moroccan Council for Moroccans abroad (CCME, this year has decided to hold this unique event in London at the heart of the Moroccan Jewish community in Hendon.



*Moroccan Jews
celebrating Independence
Day in the Streets of New
York*

Yocef Porat
Synagogue was
established in 1988
by the Moroccan
Jewish community
in Hendon, where
this ethnic minority
is estimated to be at
least 2000.

With the kind support of the Council for Moroccans abroad (CCME), the world's federation of the Moroccan Jewry and Al-Hasaniya Moroccan women centre, are delighted to invite you tonight to this unique cultural experience .




The event promises to be a spectacular evening, a showcase of harmonious co-existence between the people of Morocco, music, dance, cultural heritage in display and mouth-watering traditional Moroccan-Jewish recipes.

We hope that this will be one of many to come building bridges and bringing our community together.

Souad Talsi MBE

Member of CCME for the UK
and founder of Al-Hasaniya
Moroccan Women's Centre- London




Le conseil de la
communauté
Marocaine à
l'étranger

Mimouna Celebrations Partners:

The CCME (Council for Moroccans abroad) was established by Royal Dahir in December 2007 for an initial four-year term. The CCME is in charge of monitoring and assessing public policies of the Kingdom, pertaining to its Diaspora across the globe; thus ensuring the protection of their rights and enhancing their participation in the political, economic, cultural human and social development of the country as well as advocating for co-existence and civic participation in their respective country of residence. The CCME is made up of five distinct working groups to monitor and engage in issues of migration, and generally contributing to THE nurturing of better relations between Morocco, and the rest of the world. The council has 37 members all appointed by Royal decree

www.ccme.org.ma




Al-Hasaniya
Moroccan
Women
Centre:

Established 31 years ago, Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre seeks to serve the health, welfare, education and training needs of Moroccan and Arabic speaking Women and their families predominantly in North Kensington and surrounding areas, but also in Greater London. Its ethos is to eradicate discrimination and marginalisation due to both, language and cultural barriers.

The centre has since its inception, become a champion for the muffled voices within the Moroccan community. It has published books, produced three documentaries, won many awards including the Guardian Charity Award and participated and continues to do so, on the global platform of the UN as well as other organisations to support and raise the profile of Moroccan migrant women across the world.

www.al-hasaniya.org.uk



The world's
federation of
M O R O C C A N
Jewry:

Established in January 2001, the World's federation of Moroccan Jewry has been a beacon of hope of all Jews of Moroccan heritage. Its honourable goals are to support students from low income families aspire to greater things, to preserve the strong Moroccan heritage across the globe and wherever there may be a Moroccan Jewish community. Over 101 branches across the world including the UK, Rabi Moshe Dadoun is the president of the UK branch. He states that there are approximately 200 Moroccan Jews mainly in the London area. Although extremely well integrated in the UK, their unique distinction as Moroccans is an added asset that enables them to be global citizens, apply the multiple belonging ethos and ensure they continue to share their heritage and spread harmony, friendship and unity in the community they live in.


www.fede.maroc.org



Foreword from CCME :

I'm delighted to see CCME partnering with two great organisations this year to celebrate what is a uniquely Moroccan cultural heritage event. In these troubled times we live in , cultural heritage to spread peace and coexistence has never been so vital and nowhere more so needed than in the continent of Europe as we know it today. Cultural Heritage is often said to be an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values and so events like Mimouna, not only offer the opportunity to cement such belief but it also plays a vital role to transcend prejudice, eradicate misunderstanding and offer hope, fraternity and sorority between people.

One of the most vital components in our glorious heritage is tolerance and acceptance of others; and although our diverse ethnicity and religious beliefs may differ, there is a stronger bond that brings us together and that's our cultural heritage as a nation



of this ancient kingdom called Morocco. We hope that our modest contribution this year will offer an overview of our ancient nation, its traditions, cultural heritage and diverse ethnic makeup.

As Secretary General of this wonderful institution, the Jewish community abroad is a vital component of our diaspora and we are simply thrilled that we have been able to bring a traditional heritage to the community to be shared, enjoyed and preserved for future generations.

Dr Abdellah Boussouf
Secretary General of CCME
Contributors to the evening:



Bahja band

The Mustapha Bahja Band is a Moroccan band. It takes its name after its dynamic founder Mr Mustapha Bahja. Born in Marrakesh, the artistic heart of where West meets East, Mustapha comes from a musical family, he came to the UK in 1989 and has since made London his permanent home. Bahja Band has participated in many international festivals and cultural events. The band is known for its Moroccan culturally sensitive music, evoking the legacy of Nass El Ghiwane; a musical group established in 1971, which originated in avant-garde political theatre, has played an influential role in Moroccan chaabi (or shaabi) as indeed it has on the Bahja band. The band will be joined by three world renowned musicians from Paris who have played with the likes of Pinhas, Boutboul and many others.



Amelle
the Ziana or
bridal dresser:

Ziana Amelle's Moroccan bridal business was established six years as an extension of her interest in Moroccan caftan and having contributed over the years to Morocco's caftan fashion shows including editorials, Ziana Amelle, has truly cemented this unique, special and superbly executed tradition in the heart of the Moroccan Community in the UK. No wedding is up the mark without its Ziana. She has developed a unique range fused with contemporary style yet remained loyal to the timeless Moroccan traditional customs; befitting for a present-day clientele.

The guests are in for a sublime show of an ancient yet utterly modern fashion bridal statement that can only be Moroccan.



a typical Moroccan Berber bride