

MATCHMAKER, MATCHMAKER

*The ultimate guide to
Orthodox Jewish
dating in the 21st
century*



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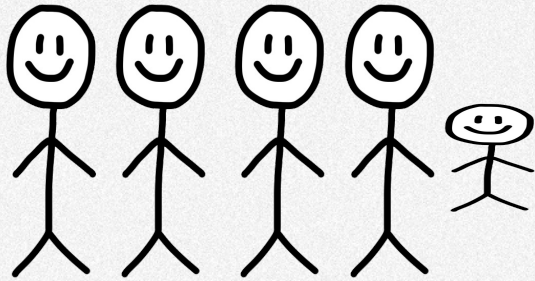
Table of Contents

<i>page</i> 3 <hr/> <i>The Stats</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 4 <hr/> <i>Orthodox vs. Secular</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 5 <hr/> <i>So, what are your options?</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 6 <hr/> <i>Online Advantages</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 7 <hr/> <i>Online Disadvantages</i> <hr/>
<i>page</i> 8 <hr/> <i>The Ideal Profile</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 9 <hr/> <i>Date Ideas</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 10 <hr/> <i>What to Wear</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 11 <hr/> <i>The Art of Shomer Negiah</i> <hr/>	<i>page</i> 12 <hr/> <i>Anecdote</i> <hr/>

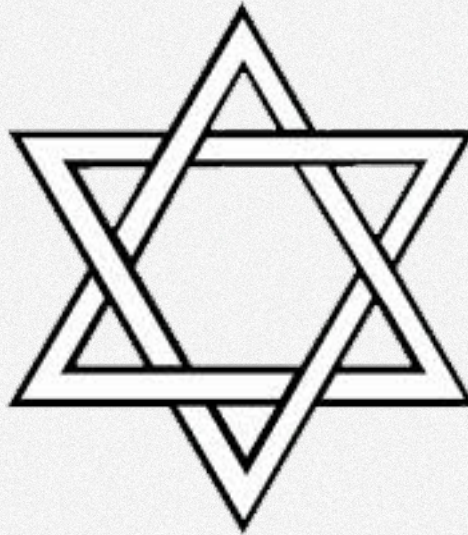
The Stats

If for some reason you feel as though you are the only single at the Shabbat table, the Pew Research Center has provided statistics about Orthodox Jewish men and women that will help you feel more set in your future.

According to the statistics, Orthodox Jews have higher fertility, an improving retention rate, and a much stronger connection with their spouses. With that information out of the way, you can start planning your honeymoon to the Holyland.



Orthodox Jews will have an average of 4.1 children



Orthodox Judaism has a retention rate of 83 percent amongst young people aged 18-29



74 percent of Orthodox Jewish women rate their marriage as "excellent" or "very good"

Orthodox versus Secular: What makes you special?



*As with any other religion,
Judaism has unique sects.*

When it comes to dating, there are similarities and differences between what an Orthodox woman expects out of the experience and what a less religious Jewish woman expects.

Although love, marriage, and family is the ultimate finish line when it comes to dating, the way that Orthodox women go about it can be quite different.

Orthodox women generally aspire to marry at a much younger age; the first man a woman dates may very well be the man she marries.

In addition, more religious women will generally abstain from touching of all kinds until marriage.

Regardless, women like you are learning ingenious ways to date by the book.

The Torah that is.

So, what are your options?



It is hard to find nice Jewish boys out there, especially in cities or towns where diversity is lacking. What makes it even more difficult is being an Orthodox Jewish woman, who has been raised by the standards of an ancient text.

Although your grandmother might tell you that you'll never meet a husband if you don't put your cellphone down, there is a way to make your babushka happy while browsing through your iPhone every once in a while.

In the past year especially, online dating apps catered to Jews of all levels of observation have become increasingly popular. Some of these apps include but are not limited to:

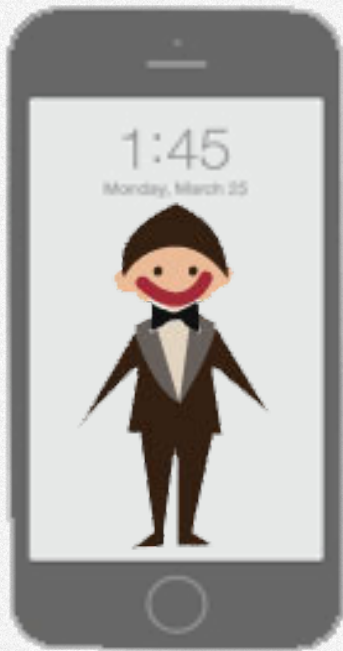
-Saw You at Sinai

-JDate

-JSwipe

These are all great options in order to get started in the world of virtual dating. The apps are all fairly similar, but JDate and Saw You at Sinai cost money because they are far more personalized and provide space for lengthier online profiles.

Advantages to Online Dating



Want to meet for
kosher dinner?

Although online dating might seem awkward and impersonal at first, there are some stark advantages, especially for a modern Orthodox woman.

The main advantage is having control over who you decide to meet in person, if the online interaction seems forced, it is easy to simply stop communicating (the beauty of the Internet!)

Additionally, you have more time to formulate your own opinions without the commentary from an old-fashioned matchmaker. This form of dating is much more carefree and discreet, as you have the ability to pre-screen the people you meet in the flesh.

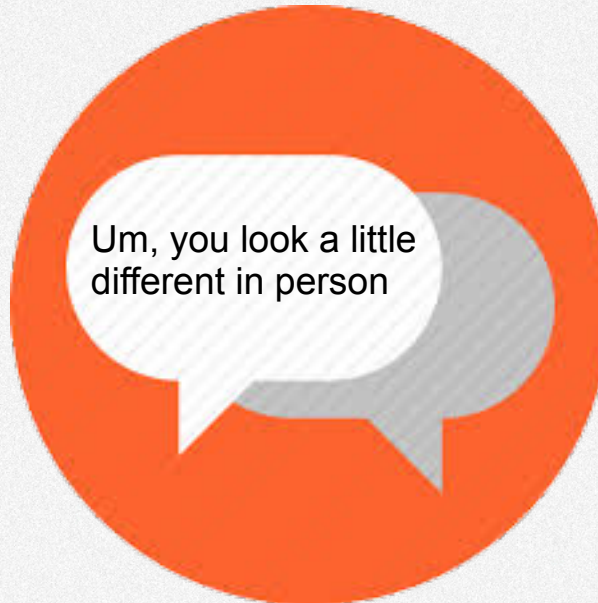
Disadvantages to Online Dating



Of course, there are some downfalls when it comes to meeting someone online. *The main disadvantage is that this person may adopt a fake persona or turn out to be quite awkward in person.*

In this way, caution should of course be taken when meeting with somebody online for the first time. If physical boundaries are especially important to you (i.e. no shaking hands), this should be clarified upon before meeting as well.

Although some people might be ashamed to admit that they met someone they like through an iPhone app, the prevalence of this is very high in recent years. This can easily be remedied by creating a funny story about how the two of you met.



The Ideal Profile



Once you have decided to take the plunge to join an online dating site, the options are endless for what to include on an internet profile.

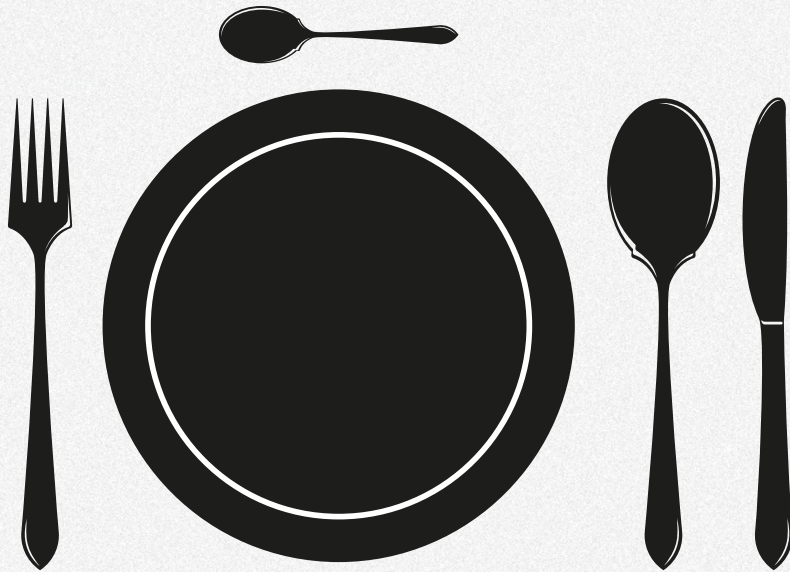
"Should I put how religious I am on my profile, or do I wait to speak about that in person?"

"What are my hobbies? Why is this website interrogating me?"

And perhaps the most daunting of all, "what picture am I supposed to use?"

The most useful advice for creating a popular profile is to be the best version of yourself. If you portray yourself completely differently in order to get more matches, your date will not have the chance to like you for who you are.

Date Ideas



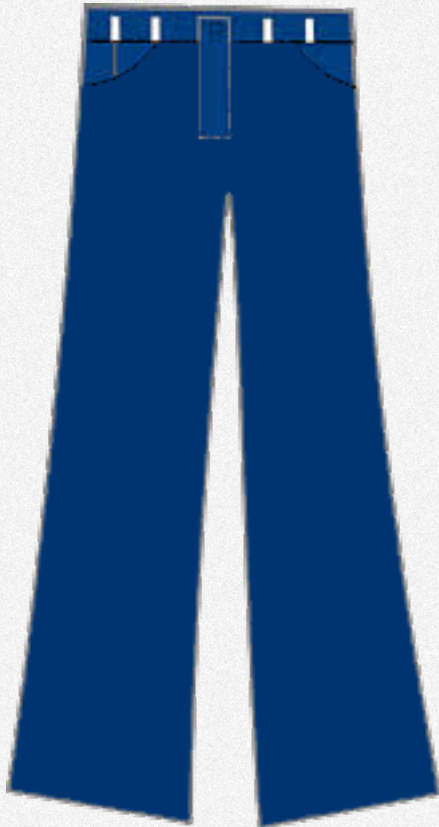
So you found a date, but are any first date ideas against the rules when it comes to a religious relationship?

Although most first dates for Orthodox couples include activities such as coffee, or dessert at a hotel or anywhere that is public, typical first date ideas usually work just as well.

Although movies aren't preferred because you do not get to know very much personal information about your date, dinner is always a classic idea even for more traditionally Orthodox couples.

That is, as long as there is no temptation to brush hands accidentally over the salt shaker.

What to Wear



For many Orthodox men and women alike, tradition and modesty is extremely important. According to the rules of Torah, observant women generally cover their elbows, knees, and cleavage at all times.

If you follow these rules, it is best to wear an outfit that makes you feel comfortable while also allowing you to express yourself and your religious observance level.

However, this does not mean you can't wear pants.

Many Orthodox women have joined the "Pants, Pants Revolution" and as long as you feel like yourself in a pair of jeans, you can easily rock them on any casual date.

Even if jeans weren't worn in the ancient days of the Torah, as a modern woman, it is ok to interpret religion with a modern mindset as well.

The Art of Shomer Negiah

Not only is the term "Shomer Negiah" quite a mouthful, but it is also the main thing that young couples have the most trouble wrapping their minds around.

In English, it translates to "observant of touch", or for a clearer translation: do not touch each other until you're married. And that includes hugs and handshakes.

Even though this sounds like dating advice your rabbi would give you, mainly because it is, sometimes doing things in an unorthodox manner (pun intended) will reap the benefits.

No touch equals no confusion about boundaries. And no confusion equals stability, which is something that young women may yearn for but struggle to find.



It Worked for Me...



*Dating is hard. It is literally the most awkward and painstaking part of being a 20 something woman. Being raised Jewish especially, there were certain expectations that my family had for me that I felt I simply could not meet. After moving to Israel for a year to study and still not finding my soulmate, I decided to try out one of these dating sites. I went in with no expectations, but if you ask me now I can happily tell you that **I am in a serious relationship of over two years, and we're on our way to being engaged.***



-Kayla Greenberg
22 year old from Los Angeles, California

References



Special thanks to:

Freepik.com for vector graphics

Pew Research Center for statistics

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/17/eight-facts-about-orthodox-jews-from-the-pew-research-survey/>

**Now, go find your NJB
(Nice Jewish Boy)!**

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