



Eating the Simanim on Rosh Hashana

1. There is a minhag to eat certain fruits and vegetables as a good omen for the coming year on both nights of Rosh Hashana. Some have this minhag only the first night.¹
2. If one is eating dates and other fruits, one should make a HaEitz on the dates because they're from the seven species with which Eretz Yisrael is praised. Some say that one doesn't make a HaAdama on vegetables during the meal.²
3. Some say that one should say the Bracha of HaEitz, eat a little of the fruit, then make the Yehi Ratzon before continuing to eat, while others hold that one should say the Yehi Ratzon prior to the Bracha.³
4. One may say the Yehi Ratzon's with Hashem's name.⁴

1. The Gemara (Horiyot 12a) says that a person should see gourds, fenugreek, leek, beets, and dates (though these definitions are the subject of controversy) on Rosh Hashana as a good omen. The Gemara (Keritot 6a) records the same statement with the text that a person should eat these fruits and vegetables as a good omen. Beit Yosef 583:1 notes the different versions and rules in S"A 583:1 that a person should eat these foods as a good omen. Kaf HaChaim 583:6 writes that if one can't eat a certain food, he may just look at it and say the Yehi Ratzon nonetheless. Nitai Gavriel 29:24 agrees.

Eliyah Rabba 583:1 writes that the minhag is to eat simanim on both nights of Rosh Hashana. Machazik Bracha 583:2, Chazon Ovadyah (p. 93), Teshuvot VeHanhagot 2:266, and Rivevot Efraim 6:308:1 agree. However, Bnei Yisaschar 2:11 and Eishel Avraham MeButchach 583 explain the minhag of eating the simanim only on the first night of Rosh Hashana.

2. Chazon Ovadyah (p. 98) writes that one shouldn't make a Bracha upon the cooked vegetables because they're considered as part of the meal. Halichot Shlomo (1:18), however, writes that one should make a HaAdama upon the gourd and exempt the other vegetables. To avoid all doubt, Nitai Gavriel 29:18 writes that one should make a HaAdama on a banana. Chut Shani (Rosh Hashana p. 48) agrees. It is noteworthy to mention that S"A 211:2 rules that when eating a food which is HaEitz and a food which is HaAdama one should make the bracha on the food which one prefers first.

Halichot Shlomo (1:17) writes that one should make the HaEitz upon the dates because they're from the seven species with which Eretz Yisrael was praised and they come before pomegranates on that list (see S"A 211:4). Ben Ish Chai (Nitzavim #4) and Nitai Gavriel 29:4 agree. Kaf HaChaim 583:13 records the practice of some people to make a HaEitz on the apple to exempt the dates. He explains that perhaps they brought out the apple first, and in such a case, one need not wait for the dates to come out to make the bracha upon them. Rivevot Efraim 8:558:3 writes that after making HaEitz on the dates, one may eat the apples prior to the pomegranates because the rules of precedence apply only regarding the Bracha, not regarding when each food should be eaten.

3. Magen Avraham 583:2 quotes the Magalei Tzedek as saying that one should say the Yehi Ratzon in between the Bracha and eating. He explains that the Yehi Ratzon is a prerequisite for eating and thus does not constitute an interruption. The Magen Avraham, however, argues that it's not such a requirement to say the Yehi Ratzon, and as such it is preferable to say the Yehi Ratzon after taking a bite. Mishna Brurah 583:4 and Chazon Ovadyah (p. 93) agree with the Magen Avraham.

Rav Hershel Schachter said that it makes sense to say the Yehi Ratzon before the Bracha so that the Yehi Ratzon can function as a Tefilla and the eating as an action enhancing the Tefilla. Teshuvot VeHanhagot 2:266 agrees. See Chazon Ovadyah (ibid.) who quotes the Chemdat Yamim who argues that one shouldn't say the Yehi Ratzon prior to the Bracha because that is a violation of asking for one's personal needs before praising Hashem (See Gemara Brachot 32a).

4. Mishna Brurah 583:2 writes that the text of the Yehi Ratzon begin with Yehi Ratzon Milfanecha Hashem Elokeinu VeiyLokei Avoneitu with Hashem's actual name. Teshuvot VeHanhagot 2:266 and Chazon Ovadyah (p. 93) agree. Nitai Gavriel 29:22, however, writes that from some poskim it seems that there was a text without Hashem's name. Rav Shlomo Zalman's minhag (Halichot Shlomo p. 12 note 70) was to say the first Yehi Ratzon with Hashem's name and the others with Avinu SheBaShamayim. He explained that he did so because it's difficult to have the proper kavana when saying Hashem's name. Similarly, the Stiepler's minhag (Orchot Rabbenu vol 2, p. 175) was to say them without Hashem's name.