Your first memories of drinking wine may be the sweet taste of Manischewitz at Passover. That venerable drink for filling Elijah’s cup originated in Cincinnati, Ohio. But today choices in kosher wines are bountiful and run the gamut from oaky Chardonnays to fruity Pinot Noirs. Many are produced in Israel, which has been making wine since Biblical times. The 1990s, however, saw a tremendous boom in the opening of boutique wineries. By 2000 there were 70 wineries in Israel and by 2005 that number had doubled. There are also wineries producing more than 10 million bottles per year. Israel has emerged as a driving force for winemaking in the Eastern Mediterranean, because of its willingness to adopt new technology and its large export market, particularly to the United States. Israel has also seen the emergence of a modern wine culture with upscale restaurants featuring international wines dedicated to an ever-increasing wine-conscious clientele. Sacramental wines now make up less than 15 percent of Israeli wine production.

Today, Israeli winemaking takes place in five vine-growing regions: the Galilee, including the Golan Heights, the region most suited for viticulture because of its high elevation, cool breezes, marked day and night temperature changes and rich, well-drained soils; the Judean Hills, surrounding the city of Jerusalem; Shimshon located between the Judean Hills and the Coastal Plain; the Negev, a semi-arid desert region, where drip irrigation has made grape growing possible; and the Sharon plain near the Mediterranean coast and just south of Haifa, which is the largest grape growing area in Israel.

For the last 13 years, the Jerusalem Wine Festival has offered the opportunities for Israelis and visitors from around the world to taste hundreds of wines, some entirely new. The wine festival is one of the most popular summer events in Jerusalem and is a celebration of Israeli wineries. The festival is held in the beautiful Art Garden of the Israel Museum with live music every evening, making the wine festival a wonderful way to spend a summer evening in Jerusalem. Last year’s festival hosted around 60 wineries. In addition to the wine, there are food stands with sushi, fish & chips, pastries, chocolate and cheeses for purchase.

Jerusalem Wine Festival 2017 runs from Monday - Thursday, Aug. 7-10, 7-11 p.m. The ticket includes unlimited tastings from all participating wineries. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the ticket includes a visit to the museum until 9 p.m.

NIS 95 admission ticket for first evening of the festival
NIS 140 includes entrance to the festival and Red Band show.

Tickets can be purchased online[here].