

SHEHECHEYANU - part one

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Shehecheyanu was instituted by Chazal for partaking in seasonal fruit that does not appear in the marketplace for part of the year. When the fruit is in season and available in the marketplace, the joy of its renewed appearance warrants a blessing of shehecheyanu.

Things were much simpler in ancient times. Today we have to examine the situation and see which fruits (and vegetables) can still be considered seasonal, since many techniques are currently used to extend sales time for fruits and vegetables:

- Growing cultivars of the same fruit/vegetable that ripen at different times
- Cultivation in different regions with various climates
- Hothouse cultivation (especially during the winter)
- Refrigeration and long-term storage
- Imports from abroad
- Pickling and roasting
- Agrotech: using agricultural techniques for cultivation during different seasons

Torah VeHa'aretz Institute is involved in the comprehensive study of fruits and vegetables availability in the marketplace. Our data (last updated in Tammuz 5778) was gathered from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Plants Production and Marketing Board, and discussions with farmers and salespeople.

Shehecheyanu on Vegetables

The Rema writes that one should not make a shehecheyanu on a vegetable; some Acharonim explain that it is possible with seasonal vegetables, while others say this is only if the vegetable is considered important.

In our opinion, while shehecheyanu is not appropriate for most vegetables, there are a few vegetables that are seasonal and are unavailable in the marketplace at certain times: watermelon (rarely available in the supermarkets in the fall; shehecheyanu should be said in early spring); artichoke (unavailable in the summer); okra (unavailable in the spring); raspberry (unavailable in the winter); and strawberry (rarely available in the summer).

Next week we will list the fruits that do and do not warrant a shehecheyanu as well as those whose status is not clear-cut.