



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **WJT SEEKS TO PROTECT GLOBAL JEWISH HERITAGE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND TRAVEL**

**World Jewish Heritage Fund launches new digital platform and eBook at chic Israeli eatery in NYC**

**NEW YORK, Jan. 15** – The newly formed World Jewish Heritage Fund (WJH) last night unveiled a planned global digital platform to protect and promote Jewish cultural heritage around the world, during an event at the chic haute-Israeli eatery “Balaboosta” in the heart of New York’s trendy Soho neighborhood.

WJH Founder **Jack Gottlieb**, an American expatriate based in Tel Aviv, introduced the ambitious project at the trendy restaurant with an e-book, “Israel’s Top 100 Ethnic Restaurants,” serving as a digital appetizer to a wider menu of planned technology, including mobile applications, that will put the power of online, collaborative communications in the hands of the Jewish community to preserve Jewish heritage.

“We decided that what was needed was a kind of UNESCO for Judaism,” Gottlieb said. “Think of us as a cross between UNESCO, Wikipedia and TripAdvisor, with Jewish heritage and culture being the unique components tying it all together.”

Gottlieb founded the WJT as a non-profit to preserve and protect the world’s Jewish heritage sites after he realized that no other organisation was solely dedicated to that mission. After a trip to see Jewish sites in Belarus and Ukraine, Gottlieb said he realized “they had no voice; no one knew about them and they were falling into disrepair. I thought, ‘Can we do something about this?’” he said.

So Gottlieb set out to build what he calls the World Jewish Travel Preservation Model: “...using digital-tourism tools in order to push more and more visitors to Jewish heritage sites and cultural events, will create incentives for countries, local authorities and organisations to keep preserving and investing in their Jewish heritage assets, which will further promote tourism to these sites and events, creating an ecosystem of Jewish heritage tourism” Gottlieb explained.

The first type of heritage the organisation is set up to preserve is Jewish culinary heritage, via its new ebook about Israel’s hidden ethnic culinary gems, and an ebook series to follow, about Jewish culinary in North America and Europe. “We chose food as the first assets of our heritage we’re trying to



preserve, as it represents such an important part of our culture” Gottlieb explains, “it’s the stories behind the food, and behind the people who make it, that are the gateway to so many other aspects of our heritage.”

The WJTtravel, a travel app serving as a “Jewish trip advisor” according to Gottlieb, is currently in beta testing, and is available on the App store; the WJTpedia, a community based resource, fully integrated with both the app and the ebook, is available online for users to share their experiences of Jewish heritage travel all around the world.

To help celebrate the event, Balaboosta offered special classic and nouvelle Israeli foods, like fried olives; mini falafel; kubeh (the Iraqi meat pastry), bourekas (savory hand pastries), Moroccan carrot salad, and a lemony cocktail with the licorice liqueur arak. Also telling the WJT story was renowned Israeli food critic, author and TV personality **Gil Hovav**, who regaled a crowd of food bloggers and other foodies with stories about his life in Israeli cuisine.

To learn more about the WJT, please visit: <http://worldjewishtravel.org>

***Please see attached event photos (all photos, credit Shahar Azran):***