ACT! Take apartheid off the menu

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Alternative Information Center (AIC)

http://www.alternativenews.org/index.php/headlines/249-act-take-apartheid-off-the-menu

BDS activists urge participants to withdraw from a ‘gastro-diplomacy’ food festival in Tel Aviv.

Tomorrow, on November 8, chefs from 13 famous restaurants from cities around the world will arrive in Tel Aviv to participate in Round Tables by American Express, a weeklong international food festival.

The festival, according its [website](http://www.roundtablestour.com/en/about-us/), “highlights the sense of living in a global village” by inviting “Israeli foodies” to “taste and experience new cuisines, surprising culinary techniques and flavors that previously required a passport, flight tickets, and days off.” The festival defines itself as an “honorary member in the gastro-diplomacy world.”

Palestinians and those who care about their rights, however, find the project deeply problematic. Over 140 civil society organizations [signed a letter](https://bdsmovement.net/news/campaigners-restaurant-chefs-cancel-your-participation-tel-aviv-round-tables-tour) drafted by the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) National Committee as a part of [its campaign](https://bdsmovement.net/news/tell-these-food-chefs-boycott-apartheidroundtables) to convince chefs to cancel their participation in Rounds Tables and Italian sparkling water bottler Farrarelle to withdraw sponsorship of it.

Israeli government ministries, the Tel Aviv Municipality and businesses operating in illegal Israeli settlements, the BDS National Committee explains, are sponsoring the festival to cast international prestige onto the Israeli culinary scene and thereby mask Israel’s systemic denial of Palestinian rights.

The letter concludes by quoting South African anti-apartheid campaigner and BDS supporter Archbishop Desmond Tutu: “Respecting the Palestinian BDS call is the best way to ensure that Palestinians… are not reduced to ‘picking up crumbs of compassion thrown from the table of someone who considers himself [their] master,’ but rather have ‘the full menu of rights.’”

Activists for Palestine around the world took to the streets and [protested](https://bdsmovement.net/news/campaigners-denounce-international-chefs-participating-%E2%80%98apartheid%E2%80%99-round-tables-tour-tel-aviv) outside of restaurants participating in the festival, including at the Musket Room in New York, L’ami Jean in Paris and the Maruja in Limon in Vigo.

Israeli activists supportive of the BDS movement and the campaign published [a satirical video](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x50p2pj) on Round Tables. The clip plays on the irony of Israeli foodies’ insistence on eating from ethical food sources, at the same time as they maintain unethically racist beliefs about Palestinians and Arabs.

To make a final appeal to the chefs, restaurants and sponsors, tweet #ApartheidRoundTables to the list of participators provided by the BDS National Committee, [here](https://bdsmovement.net/news/tell-these-food-chefs-boycott-apartheidroundtables).

The BDS movement advocates boycotting, divesting from, and sanctioning Israel as well as companies that collude with it until Israel respects Palestinians’ rights and international law.