



ENGINEER ARIELLE AND THE ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY SURPRISE

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Engineer Ari's great-great-granddaughter, Arielle, drives a lightrail train through Jerusalem. Readers follow her along her stops on a very festive day – Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day!

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Insert One Land, Many Peoples

All aboard! Engineer Arielle is driving the light rail from one end of Jerusalem to the other. As we zip along with her, we see a city that is diverse in a variety of ways. Ancient ruins sit down the street from shiny modern structures. People of all backgrounds—including Jews, Arabs, and visitors from all over the world—are waiting at the different stops Arielle makes.

When Arielle's great-great-grandfather, Ari, was driving his train through the countryside in the late 1800s, the land was known as Palestine, and the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway was the first railroad in the Middle East. Today Israel is home to more than eight million people, and despite its tiny footprint (about the size of New Jersey!), this young country is an influential player on the international stage.

Celebrating History and the Future

In this story, Arielle and her passengers are in very festive moods—it's *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*, Israel's Independence Day. Observed on the fifth day of the Jewish month of *Iyar*, which usually arrives between mid-April and mid-May, *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* commemorates the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948. On this day, Israeli flags fly from houses and shops, banners crisscross the streets, families go on hikes and picnics, and crowds gather to watch fireworks, concerts, and public events, including air shows. Most people get the day off from school and work—but not Engineer Arielle! For more on Israel Independence Day, visit pjlibrary.org/arielle.

Life on the Cutting Edge

Despite Israel's deep sense of history, the country is at the forefront of science and technology. Arielle is an engineer on a light rail train system that was just

completed in the past decade. This little country boasts one of the highest percentages of scientists and engineers in the world, which may explain why so many technological and medical breakthroughs come out of Israeli universities and research facilities. Israel is also active in outer space—it's the smallest country with space launch capabilities. Who knows, maybe one of Arielle's great-great-grandchildren will be behind the wheel of a rocket ship!

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Make Some Hummus

Here's a way to bring home the spirit of *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*: make some hummus, the Israeli chickpea dip. Once you've made your own, you may never go back to the store-bought kind.

Ingredients:

5 tablespoons tahini
3 tablespoons water
6 tablespoons lemon juice
16 ounces/450g canned chickpeas, drained
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 or 2 cloves garlic

Directions:

1. Blend tahini, water, and lemon juice in a food processor or blender.
2. Add chickpeas, salt, and garlic, and pulse ingredients until incorporated, then blend until smooth.
3. Dip veggies, bread, or whatever you like.