

A kosher food bank unveils 50-pound Purim cookie to raise awareness about hungry New Yorkers

By [Julia Gergely](#) March 4, 2024



The giant hamantasch was displayed at Congregation Orach Chaim during a volunteer event on Sunday. (Courtesy Masbia)

[\(New York Jewish Week\)](#) — A giant, 50-pound hamantasch (singular of hamantaschen) was unveiled Sunday at Congregation Orach Chaim on the Upper East Side as part of a fundraiser for Masbia, a kosher soup kitchen and food bank.

Strauss Bakery in Borough Park made the giant pastry in honor of the Orthodox-run organization's new initiative, [Hamantaschen for Hunger](#), which aims to raise money for needy New Yorkers in the weeks leading up to Purim. On the holiday, which begins this year on the evening of March 23, it is traditional to give gifts to the poor — as well as to friends and family.

In January, the kosher bakery helped [create a massive, 35-foot challah in attempt to set a Guinness World Record](#), in partnership from Congregation

Rodeph Sholom, the Jewish Federations of North America and the Orthodox Union.

The 42-inch apricot jam-filled triangular cookie, however, was made only to promote Masbia's Purim anti-hunger campaign. For every package of hamantaschen bought via the initiative's website, Strauss will donate half of the proceeds to help Masbia feed the hungry.



The giant, apricot-filled hamantasch weighs 50 pounds and measures 42 inches in width.

“This is a new thing — we’ve never done this before,” Alexander Rapaport, the executive director of Masbia Soup Kitchen Network, told the New York Jewish Week.

Masbia offers free hot meals and snacks to New Yorkers in need through their kosher soup kitchens in Borough Park, Flatbush and Forest Hills. They also operate [Masbia Relief](#), a communal disaster relief team.

Raising money by selling goods is a departure from Masbia's typical charity efforts. Rapaport said that many Jewish donors and philanthropies have turned their attention to the war in Israel over the past few months, leaving local non-profits scrambling.

“I’m pretty sure we’re not the only American charity that’s suffering — we are barely keeping our lights open. That’s how dry it is,” Rapaport said. “We are

hoping the situation will get better in Israel and hopefully with the fundraising season coming up with the Purim and Pesach, that it'll give us some breathing room because we're really feeling it."

Trays of (regular-sized) hamantaschen, which are said to represent the [three-cornered hat of Haman, the villain in the Purim story](#), can be bought in quantities of 20, 40 and 70, which cost \$50, \$100 and \$180, respectively. Each tray of the pareve treats comes with a variety of traditional flavors and non-traditional varieties like apple cobbler, passion fruit, Oreo, s'mores, lemon meringue, dulce de leche and espresso.



Volunteers from Masbia, Congregation Orach Chaim and City Council spent the day chopping vegetables and creating DIY hamantaschen kits. (Courtesy Masbia)

Sunday's event also included a volunteering element: Synagogue members, city officials and Masbia volunteers spent the day packing DIY hamantaschen kits filled with ingredients to make the cookies at home, as well as chopping 1,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables for Masbia's kitchens.

For now, the hulking hamantasch will be stored at the Masbia Food Reserve Depot in Borough Park, just down the street from Strauss Bakery.

"We're gonna try to keep it around with us for the season — eventually, at some point we're going to enjoy it," Rapaport said. "Luckily hamantaschen tends to hold fresh for a while."

