

Passover: Festival of Freedom and Renewal



“This day will be a day of remembering for you. You will observe it as a festival to the Lord. You will observe it in every generation as a regulation for all time.” Exodus 12:14,17 (CEB)

“Get ready. We are going on a journey. It will last only one night, but it will take us a long, long way. **We will travel from slavery to freedom. From sorrow to joy.** From a country not our own to the land given by God to our ancestors. **For this is the night of Passover,** the night when our ancestors left Egypt, the house of slavery. They left on foot, carrying their belongings on their backs, driving their flocks before them. **We are going with them.** Our journey is called the Seder. Our guide is... called the Haggadah. It tells the Passover story. **Get ready. We are leaving soon. Our journey is about to begin.”**

-Wonders & Miracles, by Eric A. Kimmel

As you prepare your table to be joined with our community table, remember that there are many different Haggadahs, many different ways of telling the story of the Exodus. As the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world, different traditions emerged, different experiences colored the telling of the story. Different foods and recipes became “tradition” in different regions.

Be Creative. We are limited by isolation, but not by imagination. Many of the following items may not be in your pantry. No horseradish? Maybe you have spicy mustard or hot sauce. Involve the children in your household. My guess is

they will come up with some great ideas. Let the preparation be part of the celebration.

Don't make yourself crazy over this. If cooking something special sounds like fun – give it a try. If not, please know that your presence at our virtual community table is vastly more important than getting every detail just right.

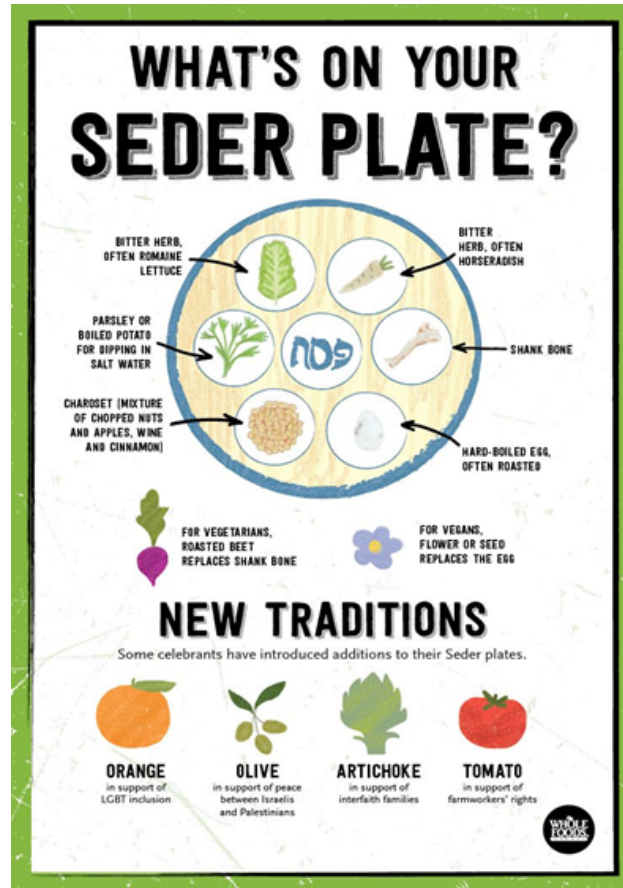
Setting the Table for a Passover Seder

2 Candles –*To remind us of our love for God and for each other*

“There is a tradition in many families to light not just 2 candles, but an additional candle for every child in the family as well. Parents explain to their children that every one of them brought extra light to their home when they came into their lives.

3 pieces of Matzah on a plate covered with a cloth -*Symbolize the Exodus of the Hebrew people when they fled Egypt and slavery.* (The priests, the Levites & the people of Israel) “Matzah” is unleavened bread, much like a cracker. It is available in the grocery store, but even more fun to make at home

- **Elijah's Cup** – a special wine glass or cup filled with wine or grape juice. *Elijah was a great prophet, whose coming will bring an age of peace. Elijah's cup symbolizes a welcome to Elijah, as well as all who are hungry or in need.*
- **Miriam's Cup** – a special glass or cup filled with water, *A symbol of Miriam's Well, the source of water for the Israelites in the desert. A modern addition to a Seder, Miriam's Cup draws attention to the importance of Miriam, also a great prophet, the other women of the Exodus story, and all that sustains us through our own journeys.*
- **Red Wine or Grape juice** (enough for 4 cups for each participant) -Symbolize the 4 expressions of redemption found in Exodus: “I will bring you out...I will deliver you...I will redeem you...I will take you to me for a people.”
- **Additional matzah on a separate plate**



The Seder Plate – A beautiful platter to hold symbolic foods

- **Salt water** (tears of slavery & Miracle of the Red Sea)
- **Roasted or hard-boiled Egg** (New Hope & New Beginnings)
- **Roasted Shank Bone** (the lamb each family ate on the 1st Passover)
Free at local butcher counter -just ask, or substitute chicken leg bone
- **Parsley** (Symbol of Spring & the leaves used to smear the blood on the doorposts on that first night when God “passed over” the Israelites.)
- **Bitter herbs** (horseradish and/or radishes to remind us of the bitterness of slavery.)
- **Haroset** (sweet mixture of fruit, nuts, honey & wine to remind us of the mortar used to bind together the bricks our ancestors made for the Egyptians.) Make a generous amount – it is delicious on Matzah!
- **Lettuce** - another bitter herb. The lettuce is to remind us both of the kindness of the Egyptian people, as well as the bitterness of slavery.)

Preparing the meal for a Passover Seder

“For weeks prior to the Festival, houses are thoroughly cleaned to remove any trace of leavening...No products made from regular flour and no leavening agents can be eaten at Passover.” -The Jewish Holiday Kitchen by Joan Nathan

Ms Nathan suggests substituting $\frac{1}{4}$ cup matzah meal (ground Matzah) and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup potato starch for 1 cup of flour.

Other than “No flour or leavening agents,” there is no set rule for menus or dishes. Traditional dishes have evolved according to a family’s country of origin.

Some Common Seder Dishes served:

Haroset: A blend of chopped fruit, nuts with honey, spices and a couple of teaspoons of wine or grape juice. Like peanut butter, some like it chunky, some like it creamy. My recipe varies, depending on what is in the cupboard. This is where I start:

2 coarsely chopped apples	2-4 TBLS Honey
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped almonds or walnuts	1tsp cinnamon
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried apricots, finely chopped	Grated rind of 1 lemon
2 TBSP matzah meal	1TBSP Red Wine

Combine ingredients. Blend, adding a little more of this or that until you achieve your desired consistency. I like it chunky, but feel free to use a food processor, if you prefer a smoother texture. Too much work? Substitute peanut or almond butter.

Wanna Make Your Own Mazah? - Recipe *Courtesy of Tal Oron Cohen*

The Matzah, is very simple to make but there are rules to make it Kosher. All needs to be done within 18 minutes (from start, until the matzah is in the oven. To make 6:

250 Gram (9 oz) flour –whole wheat or a combination of white and whole wheat

175 gram (6 oz) water and A bit of salt.

All kneaded together, fast and by hand, flattened out thin, you make holes all over the matzah with a fork and place in a very hot pre heated oven (400F) for 3-4 minutes – turning it in between.

Chicken Soup with Matzah balls Note: There are 2 schools of thought when it comes to matzah balls: The “Light & Airy” vs. “The Cannon Ball.” Anecdotal tips:

Canon ball: Just like with pie dough, over working the matzah balls will produce a heavy, tough product. Using olive oil instead of chicken fat is possible, but tends to produce a heavier matzah ball.

Light & Airy: Use Chicken fat instead of oil. Be gentle while forming the matzah balls. If available –boil in salted seltzer water. MOST IMPORTANT – cover while cooking, and do not remove the lid for 20 minutes. – I promise you, they will still be there!

Gefilte Fish (a sort of cold fish meatball. It does not look or sound appealing, but it is very tasty – eaten with matzah and horseradish). This you will want to buy in a jar – I recommend in broth vs. jellied broth. (Just my own bias.)

Meat dishes: Lemon Chicken, beef brisket, Lamb, or turkey

Side dishes: Green Salad, Fresh Asparagus, Honey-glazed Carrots, Potatoes

Tsimmes: A traditional Ashkenazi Jewish sweet stew typically made from carrots and dried fruits such as prunes or raisins, often combined with other root vegetables

Vegetable Kugel: a baked pudding or casserole made of eggs and potatoes.

Deserts: Fruit, Any Sponge cake made with matzah, instead of flour, Almond Macaroons, Matzh Almond Torte, Chocolate covered matzah, fruit dipped in chocolate

Google “Passover Recipes”, or any of the suggestions listed above. You will find many wonderful options. Choose the ones that appeal to you. Or –check out the Passover recipes at Martha Stewart.com.

When your children ask you in time to come, “What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord our God has commanded you?” then you shall say to your children, “We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.”

- Deuteronomy 6:20-21