

## THE COMPLETE SEDER TABLE

The Seder table, around which family and friends gather in the home, is the setting for a ritual display of symbolic foods - tangible reminders of the flight from Egypt. Traditionally, the table is made to look as festive as possible.



**A Haggadah** is put at each place setting along with a goblet for wine. During the Seder, everyone drinks four cups of wine at specified times to recall the four promises of redemption made by God to the Israelites.

**The Cup of Elijah**, a special, often very decorative goblet of wine - from which no one drinks - is left for the prophet of hope and faith, and the door to the home is opened during the ceremony in order to welcome him.



**Miriam's Cup.** This is a new ritual object that is placed on the Seder table beside the Cup of Elijah and filled with water near the beginning of the Seder. It serves as a symbol of Miriam's Well, the source of water for the Israelites in the desert.

The following text for Miriam's Cup is from the Ma'ayan Passover Haggadah.

### All

We begin our Seder with Kos miryam, Miriam's Cup. Legend tells of a mysterious well of mayim hayyim, living waters, that followed the Israelites through their wandering in the desert while Miriam was alive.

### Reader

Miriam's Well was said to hold Divine power to heal and renew. Its fresh waters sustained our people as we were transformed from a generation shaped by slavery into a free nation. Throughout our subsequent journeys, we have sought to rediscover these living waters.

Tonight at our Seder, let us remember that we are still on the journey. Just as the Holy One delivered Miriam and her people, just as they were sustained in the desert and transformed into a new people, so may we be delivered, sustained and transformed on our journey to a stronger sense of ourselves, both as individuals and as one people.

### All

Zot kos Miryam, kos mayim hayyim.

This is the cup of Miryam, the cup of living waters.

Zeicher lee-tsee'at mitzrayim.

Let us remember the Exodus from Egypt.

These are the living waters, God's gift to Miriam, which have new life to Israel as we struggled in the wilderness. May the cup of Miriam refresh and inspire us as we embark on our journey through the Haggadah.

### Symbolic foods include:



**Matzah** is the unleavened bread eaten as a reminder of the hurried departure from Egypt. Three matzot, slipped into a special three-part cover, are placed at the head of the table. They represent the three groups of Jews in ancient Israel: the Kohanim (the priestly class), Levites (who assisted the priests), and the Israelites (everyone else). The three together symbolize the unity of the Jewish people.

**Afikoman**, this piece of matzah served to mark the end of the meal. It comes from one-half of the middle of the three matzot and is set aside deliberately for this purpose. By custom, it is wrapped in a napkin and hidden during the Seder for the children's Afikoman hunt that follows the meal. The child who finds the Afikoman gets the reward.

**Ka'arah**, is the decorative platter on which the following ceremonial foods are placed:

**Maror**, the bitter herb - symbolizes the bitterness of the slavery experienced by the Israelites in Egypt. Rabbinic preference is for Romaine lettuce or something similar with a bitter aftertaste. Those of you hooked on horseradish may want to try a little of the horseradish rolled up in the Romaine.



**Haroset**, a mixture of apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon, which stands for the mortar and bricks used by the Jewish slaves to build Egyptian cities.

**Z'roah**, the roasted lamb bone, signifies the paschal lamb offered on Passover night in the Temple.

**Beytza**, the roasted egg, denotes the festival offering brought to the Temple to supplement the paschal lamb.

**Karpas**, (parsley, celery, onion, radishes or cooked potatoes) dipped in salt water before eating - is a two-fold symbol. It stands for both the poor diet of the Jews while they were slaves as well as springtime.

**Salt water** represents the bitter tears shed by the Jewish slaves.

### More on Symbolic Foods

**Four Cups of Wine.** We drink four cups of wine during the Seder, representing the four different expressions used by God when God promised our people freedom from Egyptian bondage. They are found in the Torah in Exodus, chapter 6, verses 6-7.

I will free you from the bondage of Egypt  
I will deliver you from bondage  
I will redeem you with an outstretched arm  
I will take you to be my people



**Matzah** is the unleavened bread eaten as a reminder of the hurried departure from Egypt. Three matzot, slipped in a special three-part cover, are placed at the head of the table. The matzot represent the three groups of Jews in ancient Israel: the Kohanim (the priestly class), Levi'im, (who assisted the priests), and the Israelites (everyone else). The three together symbolize the unity of the Jewish people. If you have a large number of people at your Seder, place more than one piece of matzah in each compartment.

**Afikoman.** This piece of matzah served to mark the end of the meal. It comes from one-half of the middle of the three matzot and is set aside deliberately for this purpose. By custom, it is wrapped in a napkin and hidden during the Seder for the children's Afikoman hunt that follows the meal. The child who finds the Afikoman is rewarded. Be prepared for some heavy duty negotiating!