

Karpas, Karpas, Karpas, And Dessert

A Pesach Cooking Program

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for the Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Shalom

March 14, 2021



Borough Market, London 2017

When does the Seder really begin? In my house, with Karpas!

We have said the first Kiddush, and sanctified the day, followed by Urehatz, dipping our hands in a bit of water. It is almost as if we are at a fancy Roman or Greek Symposium. Especially if there are flowers floating in the water we used, and the younger members of the table take the water around to us.

Now, as we recline, dainty and tasty morsels will delight us as we start the telling of stories, remembering of traditions, and the wait for the main meal.

Growing up, Karpas was parsley and boiled white potatoes. It took forever to get through the uninspiring Maxwell House Hagaddah, and we had to read EVERYTHING.

It was awful. There were as many unhappy children as adults.

There had to be a better way!

Fast forward to a grown up me, hosting my own Seders...and the change was me!

Additional kinds of Haroset, more than just salt water for dipping, and real vegetables! Why not make it a whole course?

A little research helped back me up. If, in fact, we are modeling our Seders on the classical symposiums, then there ought to be tasty treats. Afterall, the Symposiums were parties! So there is a need to eat and drink.

According to Gilad J. GEVARYAHU AND Michael L. WISE (1999)

The word karpas is a reminder of the sale of Joseph into slavery, an act that led to the descent of the Israelite people into Egypt. The karpas itself is, there-fore, an appropriate introduction to the events recounted in the Haggadah -- the enslavement of the Israelites and their ultimate redemption.

They also remind us that in later references, in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud, the word Karpas derives from the Greek karpos, meaning "fruit" of the land.

In the 9th century, Amram Gaon, refers to karpas as "a specific vegetable eaten at the Seder." He uses the Aramaic form of the word: karpesa. This reference is the source for Sefer haMinhag (12-13th century), which indicates that it was a "known tradition" to dip vegetables.

So, armed with all this knowledge, let's dip and eat some vegetables!

Dips!

Chimichurri

An essential component of Argentinean and Uruguayan cooking, Chimichurri can be Verde or Rojo. While they can vary by regions, all must include chopped parsley. They usually include red wine vinegar, garlic, salt, black pepper, oregano, and red pepper flakes.

- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ c red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 c chopped parsley
- 3 T chopped oregano
- ¾ c extra virgin olive oil
- Black pepper to taste

Optional add ins

- ½ c chopped cilantro
- ¼ c chopped chives
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes

Combine all ingredients except oil and pepper. Stir them together and let sit for 5 to 10 minutes.

Slowly, whisk in oil.

Adjust taste with pepper.

Chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

Pistou

This is my reworking of a Paula Wolfert recipe. Next to Julia Child, no one has done more to educate the cooking public about French food.

The recipe here, is a Provençal pistou, or France's version of a pesto. In the local dialect, pistou means "pounded." It dates back to the Roman poet Virgil. He describes a sauce that is "crushed" with garlic, salt, and olive oil.

- 2-3 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 c torn basil leaves (no stems), about 2 ½ ounces
- ¼ c chopped plum tomatoes (no seeds)
- ¼ c evoo

Optional add ins

- 2-3 ounces of aged gouda, grated

Place garlic, salt, and half the basil leaves in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until everything starts to break down, adding the rest of the basil after a few pulses, along with the tomato.

Slowly, pour in the oil.

Adjust taste with salt.

Roasted Red Pepper Sauce

Originally thought to have come from Syria, this dip is popular throughout North Africa, into the Mediterranean.

- 1 c roasted red peppers
- 2 T pomegranate molasses
- 1 T red pepper flakes
- 1 T lemon juice
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 small cloves of garlic, chopped
- ½ c chopped walnuts
- 1-2 T of red pepper or tomato paste
- 3-4 T evoo
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Optional add ins

- Chopped chives, mint, and/or parsley, for garnish

In a food processor, pulse the peppers, molasses, pepper flakes, lemon, cumin, and garlic until coarsely chopped. Consistency should be cohesive.

Add walnuts, paste, oil and ½ tsp salt. Pulse again, until combined.

Adjust to taste with any, and all, ingredients.

Fresh Lemon Herb Vinaigrette

- ¾ c evoo
- ¾ c fresh parsley
- ¾ c fresh basil
- ½ c fresh chives
- 3 sprigs of rosemary, leaves removed to use
- 3 T lemon juice, about the amount from one lemon
- 1 T lemon zest
- 1 tsp salt

- ½ tsp black pepper

Optional add ins

- ½ c mayonnaise
- ½ sour cream
- ½ c yogurt

Combine all in a blender or food processor. Mix until smooth.

Salads and Vegetables!

Cabbage Salad

You cannot open an Israeli cookbook without finding some version of this salad. Inspired by the large collection on my shelves, this is my take on the classic dish.

2 c shredded green cabbage
 2 c shredded red cabbage
 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
 1 large carrot, shredded
 2 scallions, thinly sliced
 2-3 medium radishes, thinly sliced
 ½ c chopped parsley
 ¼ cup chopped mint

Mix everything together except the herbs. Dress salad at least minutes before serving, up to 4 hours before. Toss herbs in at last minute.

Honey Lemon Dressing for Cabbage Salad

- ½ c evoo
- 2 T honey
- 2 T lemon juice
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper

Mix all together in a jar.

Roasted Vegetables

Assorted vegetables

- Asparagus

- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Onions
- Squash
- Eggplant
- Ewoo
- Salt
- Pepper

Oven at 425

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Toss cut vegetables with ewoo, salt, and pepper. Roast until done!

Shaved Zucchini and Melon Salad with Mint and Almonds

This is Melissa Clark's recipe from her latest book, *Dinner in French*. The recipe, and the cookbook, are great.

- 2 medium zucchinis, ends trimmed
- Fine sea salt
- 1 c fresh mint leaves, torn
- 2 T ewoo, plus more as needed
- 2 T white balsamic vinegar or fresh lemon juice
- 1 small, sweet melon (or half a large one), halved, seeded, and thinly sliced into half-moons, no skin
- Flakey sea salt
- 1/3 c sliced almonds, toasted
- Shaved parmesan cheese
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

Use a sharp knife to slice zucchini lengthwise into very thin ribbons. Place the ribbons in a colander, sprinkle then lightly with fine salt, and toss. Let sit for 5 minutes to drain. Pat dry with a clean dish towel and place in a bowl.

Add the mint, oil, vinegar, and a pinch of the fine salt. Mix gently but thoroughly.

Fan the melon slices on a serving plate and sprinkle with flaky salt. Heap the zucchini ribbons in a mound on top of the melon. Scatted almonds, parmesan, and more salt and pepper, to taste. Drizzle with more oil and serve.

Dessert!

Hazelnut Citrus Torte

Another Melissa Clark recipe, this one from the archives of the New York Times. While Clark calls for hazelnut and quinoa flour, you can use only almond flour. That is what I do.

Keep it well wrapped and it will hold for several days, at room temperature. This is helpful when we have days of Chag. Delicious with sorbet, sweet citrus pieces, or a dollop of crème fraîche or mascarpone.

- ¼ c evoo, plus more for oiling the pan
- 200 grams (1 c) granulated sugar
- 95 grams (1 c plus 1 t) hazelnut or almond flour
- 30 grams (1/3 c) quinoa flour
- 4 large eggs, separated
- 2 T grated lemon zest
- 1 T fresh lemon juice
- 1 T fresh orange juice
- 2 grams (1/4 tsp) salt

Heat oven to 350. Line the bottom of an 8- or 9-inch springform pan with parchment and brush pan with olive oil.

Combine 1/3 c of the sugar with the flour in a bowl.

In another bowl, use an electric mixer to whip another 1/3 c of the sugar with the egg yolks on medium speed until thick and pale yellow in color, about 5 minutes. Beat in ¼ c olive oil, zest, and the citrus juices. Fold in dry ingredients.

In a clean bowl, use a mixer to beat the egg whites and salt until frothy. Beat in remaining sugar until stiff peaks form, about 2 to 5 minutes.

Fold a third of the egg white mixture into the batter. Gently fold in the remaining mixture in two batches. Pour batter into pan.

Bake 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

Remove pan sides. Invert the pan, remove parchment and turn cake right side up on a plate.