

# Passover 5779

First Night Seder: Friday, April 19  
Second Night Seder: Saturday, April 20

## What Goes on the Seder Plate?

Most seder plates have six dishes for the six\* symbols of the Passover seder.

These are:

Maror (bitter herbs)

Karpas (vegetable)

Chazeret (bitter vegetable)\*

Charoset (apple, nut, spice and wine mixture)

Zeroa (shankbone)

Beitzah (egg)

\*Some seder plates have only five dishes, as there is some controversy among the authorities as to the requirement of chazeret. Plates with five dishes omit the second bitter herb (or bitter vegetable).



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## A Little Disorder to the Order

The Passover Seder is conducted in an orderly fashion, with each ritual performed at a certain time, in a certain way, according to thousands of years of tradition. This is surprising, as the Jewish people do not have a history of being particularly well organized. Even God Himself often seems engaged in convolution, a phrase which here means "as if He has not quite followed His own plan." If you look around your Passover table now, you will most certainly see the muddle and the mess of the world. There is likely a stain someplace on the tablecloth, or perhaps one of the glasses has a smudge. Soon things will be spilled. You might be sitting with people you do not know very well, or do not like very much, so your own emotional state is somewhat disordered. Nobody likes everything served at the Passover dinner, so there will be chaos within people's palates, and the room is likely to be either too cold or too hot for someone, creating a chaos of discomfort. Perhaps there is someone who has not yet been seated, even as the seder is beginning, because they are "checking on the food," a phrase which here means "sneaking a few bites" when they're supposed to be participating in the ceremony.

This is as it should be. Passover celebrates freedom, and while the evening will proceed in a certain order, it is the muddle and the mess around the order that represent the freedom that everyone deserves, and that far too many people have been denied. With that in mind, why not excuse yourself, in an orderly fashion at some point in the ceremony, so that you might check on the food?

~Daniel Handler (aka Lemony Snicket) From *New American Haggadah*, p. 12. ed. Jonathan Safran Foer, 2012

## The Order of the Seder

The "order" of the seder is recounted in a book called the *Haggadah*. There are fifteen steps in the Seder that we follow the one by one in the *Haggadah*.

### 1. Kadesh, Recite the Kiddush.

קִדְּשׁ

We make a special Kiddush for the Festival of Passover. This is the first glass of wine (there are 4 glasses during the 15 steps).

### 2. Urchatz, Wash hands.

יְרַחֵץ

Since the next step in the Seder will be the eating of a vegetable dipped in salt water we wash our hands to be ritually clean.

### 3. Karpas, Eat the green vegetable dipped in salt water.

כַּרְפָּס

Salt water is symbolic of the tears shed by the Jewish People in Egypt during slavery and throughout our history.

### 4. Yahatz, Break the middle matzah and hide half for Afikoman.

יַחַץ

The smaller piece, representing the "bread of affliction," is returned to the Seder plate to be eaten later for the Mitzvah of Matzah. The larger piece, representing the Passover Sacrifice is set aside, to be eaten at the end of the meal.

### 5. Maggid, Tell the story of Passover.

מַגִּיד

This is the part where the youngest child asks the four questions. We drink the second cup of wine. A new tradition is Miriam's cup, which is filled with water, and the story of how she helped find water in the desert and how women have helped the Jewish people is told.

### 6. Rachtzah, Wash hands before meal.

רַחֲצָה

This is the regular blessing recited before every meal in which bread is eaten, but during Passover we only eat Matzah.

### 7. Motzi, Say Hamotzi (the blessing for bread).

מוֹצִיא

While holding the remaining Matzot.

### 8. Matzah, Special blessing for the matzah.

מַצָּה

Everyone eats a part of the top and the middle matzah.

### 9. Maror, Eat the bitter herb.

מָרֹר

Everyone eats lettuce leaves or stalks which are dipped into Charoset (a mix of nuts, apples, cinnamon, and sweet wine).

### 10. Koresh, Eat the bitter herb and matzah together.

כוֹרֵךְ

### 11. Shulchan Orech, Serve the festive meal.

שֻׁלְחַן עֹרֵךְ

The term *Shulchan Orech* actually means "set table".

### 12. Tzafun, Eat the Afikoman.

צָפוֹן

The *Afikoman*, which symbolizes the Passover Sacrifice, which is eaten at the end of the meal. Some traditions ransom it from the children who have "hidden" it. Other traditions put the Afikoman into a pillow case to symbolize that when we left Egypt we carried everything on our backs. The pillow case is passed around the table during the Seder.

### 13. Barech, Say the grace after meal.

בָּרַךְ

The third cup of wine is drunk. The cup of Elijah the Prophet is filled.

### 14. Hallel, Recite Hallel.

הַלֵּל

We recite the second part of Hallel, the selection of chapters of Psalms used as special praise for Hashem.

### 15. Nirtzah, Conclusion

נִרְצָה

## Some fun facts about Passover:

- ✧ Passover holiday has three names: *Pesach* - literally meaning the Passover sacrifice; *Hag Hamatzot* - Feast of Unleavened Bread; and *Zeman Heirutenu* - the Season of Our Freedom.
- ✧ Many centuries ago, Jewish people who lived in the Sahara used to abandon their fortified villages on the Passover day and march into the desert, in memory of the first Passover, when the ancient Israelites left Egypt to follow Moses to the Promised Land.
- ✧ During World War I, in Vilna, Poland, when it was very difficult to find kosher wine, the rabbinical authorities made a special announcement to allow sweet tea in the Seder ceremony, instead of the traditional four cups of wine.
- ✧ Coca-Cola Makes a Special Batch of Kosher Coke for Passover. While Coke is generally a kosher product, the dietary laws tighten during the Passover holiday making high-fructose corn syrup a no-no for those who avoid *kitniyot* (soda really should be a no-no for everybody all the time, but that's for another time). In response, Coca-Cola produces a batch of limited edition Coke that uses (gasp) real sugar instead of the corn kitniyot. Look for bottles with yellow caps on them to be sure you're getting the good stuff!
- ✧ For decades, the world's largest Seder has been taking place in Kathmandu, Nepal, with an excess of 2,000 attendees. To host so many celebrants, they get shipments of 2,000 bottles of wine, 2,000 pounds of matzah and 3,000 units of gefilte fish on an average year.



How can you make this night different from all others?

This Passover, you can help make a difference in the lives of 35 million Americans at risk of hunger. Your support enables them to eat and provides them the tools they need to achieve a better future.

So join us. Together, we can make this night different.



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