

Passover 5778

First Night Seder: Friday, March 30
Second Night Seder: Saturday, March 31

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).

Pesach, or Passover, celebrates our freedom from almost four hundred years of Egyptian slavery.

Moses asked Pharaoh “to let our people go,” but he refused. It took 10 plagues to convince him and, in the end, he lets the Israelites leave Egypt. As they are fleeing Egypt, Pharaoh changes his mind and sends his army after the Jews. God parts the waters of the Reed Sea, allowing the Jews to pass through on dry land, while Pharaoh’s army is drowned as the sea closes in around them as they try to pass through.

Kosher for Passover?

Passover is a holiday that has certain dietary restrictions associated with it. The biggest one has to do with eating unleavened bread, called matzah. This custom comes from the part of the **Passover story** that says the Hebrew slaves fled Egypt so quickly that their bread didn’t have time to rise. Matzah is a kind of bread that is made without yeast and not allowed to rise, so eating it in remembrance of this part of the story is a way to bring some of the Passover narrative to life.

In addition to eating matzah, Jews avoid any leavened bread during the week of Passover. They also **avoid eating any food** products containing wheat, barley, rye, spelt, or oats if they have leavening. According to tradition, these grains naturally rise if they are not cooked in 18 minutes and are called “*chametz*” during Passover. In the Ashkenazi tradition corn, rice, millet and legumes are also on the no-no list.

Because things like corn syrup and cornstarch can be found in unexpected places, the easiest way to avoid inadvertently violating the rules of kashrut during Passover is to only use food products that are specifically labeled “Kosher for Passover.”

Traditionally, families prepare for Passover by ridding the house of all *chametz* (leaven). There is a ceremony to search for the *chametz* and it is called *Bedikat Chametz* (the searching out of the leaven) and *Biur Chametz* (the burning of leaven). Today, many families choose to donate their *chametz* to their local homeless shelter or food pantry.

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 is the oldest continuously celebrated Jewish festival.
- ✧ During Passover, the Coca-Cola bottling company of New York makes Coke that is kosher for Passover. Sugar is used instead of corn syrup, because some consider corn inappropriate for Passover.
- ✧ The last item of food eaten at the seder dinner is afikomen. The words is from the Greek word for "dessert" and nobody is allowed to leave the table until everyone has had a bite of the half piece of matzah.
- ✧ The world's biggest matzah ball was really big. It was made in the heart of New York City in 2009. Chef Anthony Silvestry managed to make a matzah ball measuring 22.9 inches wide and weighing a whopping 267 pounds!
- ✧ On Passover 3,000 years ago, a nation of Jews escaped Egypt through the splitting of the Red Sea. On Passover 152 years ago, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. Many Jewish Americans were in synagogue at the time of the assassination, both to observe Passover and to celebrate the end of the Civil War, and the American Jewish Historical Society notes that synagogue bimahs "were quickly draped in black and, instead of Passover melodies, the congregations chanted Yom Kippur hymns."



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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