Charoset is a dialectical symbol, representing opposite ideas. On the one hand, Charoset (probably derived from the word “heres” meaning “clay”) is a reminder of the mortar with which the Israelite slaves made bricks during the days of bondage - a symbol of slavery. On the other hand, Charoset itself is made of sweet foods - wine, fruits, nuts, honey and spices - and its purpose at the Seder table is to somewhat blunt the effect of the maror, the bitter herbs. Its sweetness is a symbol of God’s kindness which made the bitterness of slavery easier to bear. We dip maror into the Charoset, both symbols of bondage, yet the sweetness of the Charoset takes the edge off the bitterness.

Although most Americans are familiar with the mixture of apples, walnuts, cinnamon, and wine, this is by no means the only combination possible. Walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, peanuts, or chestnuts can be mixed with apricots, coconuts, raisins, dates, figs and even bananas. Here are some recipes for Charoset from around the world:

**ASHKENAZIC CHAROSET**

- ½ apple, coarsely chopped
- 1 Tbs. Red wine
- ½ tsp. Sugar
- ¼ cup chopped nuts
- ¼ tsp. Cinnamon

Mix all ingredients together. Chop until flavors are blended.

**SEPHARDIC CHAROSET**

- 1 lb. Pitted dates
- ½ lb. Shelled walnuts
- ½ lb shelled almonds
- ½ lb. Hazelnuts
- ½ cup white raisins
- 1 apple

Chop nuts until fine in food processor. Save nuts in bowl. Chop dates and raisins, a few at a time. Add nuts and continue chopping. Add slices of apple. Continue chopping until consistency of paste.

**THE JEWS OF GREECE**

- 1 cup black currents
- 1 cup chopped almonds
- ½ cup pine nuts
- 1 cup raisins

Cinnamon and ground cloves to taste

Combine the currants, raisins, almonds and walnuts in the bowl of a food processor. Process until ingredients are finely chopped and well blended. Add wine and spices and process to make a thick paste (it will be quite stick). Remove mixture from processor bowl. Mine in the whole pine nuts. Makes 3 cups.

**YEMENITE CHAROSET**

- 1 cup sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 lb. raisins
- 1 cup chopped almonds
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 lbs. dates, pitted
- 4 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- ½ tsp. ground ginger

Chop fruit together. Mix with seasonings and wine. Add just enough Matzah meal to bind.

**PERSIAN CHAROSET**

- ½ cup unsalted pistachios
- 1 cup pitted dates
- ½ cup bleached almonds
- 1 cup yellow raisins
- ½ cup unsalted walnuts
- 1 cup pitted dates
- ½ cup unsalted hazelnuts
- 1 large apple
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 1 large pear
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup apple juice
- 1 glass sweet red wine

Soak the nuts in water 2 days and keep them in the refrigerator. When ready, peel off the skins. Soak the raisins and dates for two days. Mix all ingredients in the food processor. It should not be too soft or too hard. If you like it spicier, substitute more cinnamon and wine in place of apple juice.

**ISRAELI CHAROSET**

- 1 apple
- 2 bananas
- 1 tbs. lemon juice
- 10 dates
- juice/rind of ½ orange
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- rind of one lemon

Mazah meal and sugar as needed