

# *Brit Hadasha Fellowship*

## Preparation Guide for a Passover Seder at Home

This guide is designed to provide all of the necessary information that will enable you to hold a Passover Seder at your own home.

### 1. Plan how you will do the dinner

The meal takes place in the middle of the Seder. So you will have to plan how the meal can be prepared in advance and is ready to be eaten at the designated time. You will find some food suggestions and recipes below in this guide.

### 2. Obtain the necessary food

In addition to the food for the meal, you need to obtain the ceremonial foods that are needed for Passover. These include:

- **Matzah** (unleavened bread). It is available in most stores, typically in one pound boxes. Scripture calls for eating *matzah* for seven days altogether, so an authentic observance necessitates having enough to last for a whole week (Orthodox Jews add an eighth day).
- **Fruit of the vine** (grape juice or red wine). Keep the juice or wine in its container and then pour it into an empty glass for each of the four times when we drink during the *seder*.
- **Maror** (horseradish) – a bitter herb used when dipping *matzah*.
- **Karpas** (parsley) – a second bitter herb. A small sprig will do for each person.
- **Charoset** – a mixture of apples or applesauce, diced nuts and raisins (see recipe below).
- **Bowl of salt water** for dipping the parsley.
- **Seder plate** – many people use formal plates with designated places for ceremonial foods. But a regular large plate will suffice.
- **Two candlesticks with candles**. Candles are traditionally lit at the beginning (right before sunset).

Typically, a lamb shankbone is placed on the *seder* plate in group settings. But since there really isn't anything done with the bone, you can get by without one, although it is appropriate to maintain this connection to the original Passover. You may have noticed hard-boiled eggs being used on some *seder* plates. However, the egg should not be part of a Messianic observance, as it is non-biblical in nature and it originated from pagan fertility sources which incorporated it into the *Seder* (in the same way that Easter eggs became popular).

### 3. Before the Seder, remove leaven from your home

Prior to Passover, it is customary to remove all leavened food products from the home. Leavening refers to products that cause grain to rise, like yeast, baking powder and baking soda. Typically, these are foods like bread, cake, cookies, and crackers. While rabbinical authorities have established additional prohibitions against foods like peas, beans, legumes and rice, not all branches of Judaism are in agreement with these restrictions. The important consideration is that Scripture calls for the

removal of leaven from your house (Ex 12:15), but it does not prohibit the presence of grains themselves. So in that regard, it would not apply to dry flour, and raw grains in the form of cereal.

The easiest approach is to place all leavened food in a box or a plastic container and then store it somewhere outside the house for a week (a storage shed is ideal). Orthodox Jews will often burn or otherwise destroy their leavened products, but this seems especially wasteful in these times when it is helpful to keep a reserve supply of food at home. Just set your leavened products aside for a time while you eat unleavened bread.

#### **4. On the day of the *Seder*, prepare the ceremonial foods**

- Make the *charoset*.
- Place a scoop of the *charoset*, a spoonful of *maror* (horseradish), and *karpas* (parsley) on your *seder* plate.
- Wrap three pieces of *matzah* inside a napkin.
- Make sure an additional napkin is available (during the *Seder*, the middle piece of *matzah* is broken and placed in the second napkin).
- Mix some water with salt in a bowl. It doesn't have to be full.
- Select a glass or cup to be used for drinking the fruit of the vine.

#### **5. Observe the *Seder***

The observance should begin after sunset, although the candles should be lit before that. Just follow the steps outlined in the *New Covenant Passover Haggadah - At Home Version*. This is an abridged version of the *haggadah* ("the telling") that is used at Brit Hadasha Fellowship community seders. It can be easily adapted for your particular set of circumstances, and you can interject your own commentary along the way.

## RECIPES

This suggested menu lists only a few of the dishes that are served for Passover. Recipes for alternate foods can often be found in cookbooks, especially Jewish or holiday books. The dishes that we recommend, however, do make up a menu that works well and is easy to prepare.

- ***Charoseth***

1/2 cup apple sauce  
1/4 cup chopped almonds or walnuts  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
enough raisins to hold together

- ***Matzah ball soup***—there are two components to this soup: the broth and *matzah* balls. The broth can be made from canned chicken broth or chicken base, or from your own chicken soup recipe. Some people like to add carrots and celery to the soup. A serving suggestion is 1 1/2 cups of soup with one large or two small *matzah* balls per bowl. *Matzah* balls can be made two ways: “sinkers” and “floaters.” To make floaters, add one additional egg for every two batches of *matzah* balls. A recipe is usually on the back of a box of *matzah* meal. Here is a recipe that works well:

**Matzah balls**

4 eggs, beaten  
1/2 cup water  
1/3 cup shortening  
1 tsp. salt  
dash of pepper  
1 cup *matzah* meal

Combine eggs with water, melted shortening, salt and pepper. Mix well. Add *matzah* meal and stir thoroughly. Let stand 20 minutes. Form into balls and drop into soup or 1 1/2 quarts boiling water to which one Tablespoon salt has been added. Cook 20 minutes. Makes 15-20 *matzah* balls.

- ***Salad***—can be prepared according to the preference of the cook. Tomatoes are permitted but not legumes such as beans. Croutons also cannot be used because they are made with ordinary grain. For salad dressing, no milk products are allowed (thus eliminating blue cheese or ranch dressing). A simple oil and vinegar dressing, for example, can be used.
- ***Main course***—chicken and beef brisket are commonly served for Passover. Here is one suggested way of preparing chicken:

Prepare a coating by beating eggs and adding *matzah* that you have crushed (a food processor works well for this). Bread the chicken and bake. Another option is to barbecue marinated chicken.

- ***Side dish***

**Potato Kugel**

6 medium potatoes  
6 T. oil  
4 eggs (beaten)  
grated onion  
1 tsp. salt  
dash of pepper

Boil or bake potatoes, mash fine. Add 3 T. oil, seasoning and fold in eggs. Add remaining oil to a baking dish. Put mixture in dish and bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes or until top is brown. Serves 6-8.

### Tzimmes

3 lg carrots, peeled & sliced  
1 can sweet potatoes  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
3 apples peeled, cored & sliced

In 2 1/2 quart baking dish, layer carrots (sprinkle 1/3 of brown sugar), continue layering with sweet potatoes (sprinkle 1/3 of brown sugar) and finish layering with apple (sprinkle remaining brown sugar). Add 1 cup of water. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 min or until apples are tender. Uncover and bake 5 min longer.

**Carrots**—baby carrots are the easiest kind to prepare. If you prefer, they can be glazed or served without flavoring.

- **Dessert**—many options are available, but bear in mind that ordinary flour and leavening cannot be used. During Passover you can obtain Honey Cakes at the grocery store. These cakes are easy to make and come complete with a pan. Fruit and macaroons can also be served for dessert. Or, if you prefer to cook from scratch, we suggest the following recipes:

### Sponge Cake

8 eggs, separated  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup Passover cake meal  
1/2 cup potato starch  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/2 tsp. almond extract  
1/4 tsp. salt

Beat egg yolks until light; gradually add sugar, beating until fluffy. Mix and sift cake meal and potato starch; fold into creamed mixture with flavoring. Beat egg whites with salt until stiff but not dry; fold lightly into batter. Turn into ungreased pan. Bake in slow oven (325 degrees) for 1 1/4 hours. Invert on cake rack and allow to cool in pan.

### Chocolate Almond Torte

1 cup chocolate chips  
1 cup margarine  
1 cup sugar  
6 lg eggs, separated  
2 cup almond flour  
1/4 cup potato starch  
1 tsp vanilla extract

Melt chocolate chips. Beat margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks one at a time beating well after each yolk. Add melted chocolate chips, ground almonds, potato starch and vanilla. Blend well. Add stiff but not dry egg whites. Gently fold egg whites in 3 additions. Bake in 9" diameter springform pan at 350 degrees for about 1 hour.

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