

Your Seder Plate

Each seder includes a set of symbolic foods.

During the Boston Workers Circle Passover Seder, we will raise each item on the plate, and hold up each symbol as it is discussed. We invite you, as it is safe and practical during this scary time, to create your own seder plate.

If you don't happen to have moror or other items in your house already, you can print photos of the symbolic food to cut out and put on your plate. Another alternative is for kids (or adults) to draw, color, and create their own seder plate. Whatever you have is enough.

(photo credit: The Kitchn/Nina Callaway)



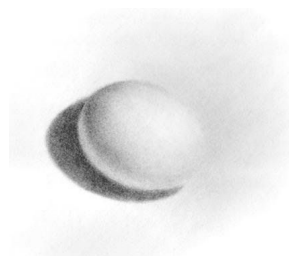
Here are other items mentioned in our seder:

- Two cups to represent Elijah's cup and Miriam's cup
- Wine or grape juice or ritual beverage of choice
- "Afikomen" (traditionally matzah) for kids of any age. An alternative afikomen can be pieces of paper with letters spelling out a word, with one letter per piece of paper. For example, the letters can spell "H-O-P-E." Or kids can create and decorate the pieces of paper and parents can write a letter on the back of each piece of paper and hide them for the kids to find.
- Candles

SYMBOLIC FOODS FOR THE SEDER PLATE

MATZAH

This is matzah, the bread of liberation, of rebellion, that our foremothers baked and ate in a time when they had to be organizing more and cooking less.



EGGS

The eggs are a symbol of springtime, fertility, and the giving of life. We are reminded of Pharaoh's threat to kill newborn Jewish babies, and of the courageous midwives who refused to carry out his orders. The egg also tells us, "The longer things are in hot water, the tougher they become." We dip the eggs in salt water to taste the tears that accompany birth and death in times of enslavement and freedom.



PASCHAL LAMB

Tradition directs us to hold up a roasted lamb bone (z'roa), to recall the Passover story of the doorposts of Jewish homes in Mitzrayim marked with the blood of the sacrificed animals so that the angel of death would “pass over” and not take the first-born Jewish children. You can also use a beet to represent the blood and a model or drawing of a lamb bone to represent the lamb, so that no animals are in fact sacrificed for our seder plates, but the ancient symbol of that first Passover is retained.

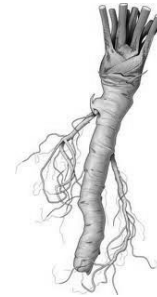
In this way we affirm our ancient traditions while acknowledging ethical and ecological concerns about the eating of meat.

MOROR

The bitter herbs symbolize the bitterness of enslavement.

SALT WATER

This represents the tears of our ancestors in enslavement.



CHAROYSES

CharoySES is a sweet mixture of fruits, nuts, and spices. In some Jewish cultures, chopped apples, nutes, wine, and spices are combined. In some Jewish cultures, dates, figs, apricots, and prunes, or oranges, peanuts, and bananas, are made into a paste. It symbolizes the mortar that our ancestors used to build pyramids. The sweet taste of the charoySES also reminds us that even in the bitterest times of enslavement, our people have always remembered the sweet taste of freedom.

KARPAS

The parsley and the salt water remind us that both the tender greens of the earth and the salt of the sea are joined together to sustain life.

ORANGE

One of the gifts of our tradition is that we are able to interpret and expand the customs that have been handed down to us. One modern custom is the addition of an orange on the seder plate. Scholar Susannah Heschel began putting an orange on her seder plate to symbolize the fruitfulness that LGBTQ people bring to the Jewish community. And there are those who add: We left Mitzrayim as enslaved and were reborn as a free people. So we bring to the seder plate a fruit that carries, within itself, the seeds of its own rebirth.

OLIVE

We add the olive to our seder plate to bring to mind the olive branch, which has long been a symbol of peace, and to remember the olive tree that evokes an ancient past, shared by generations, tied to the ritual of harvest and to the traditions of preparing and sharing food with family and friends. When we think of the tensions in the Middle East and the massive uprooting of Palestinian olive trees, we also celebrate the olive branch as a sign of hope and an enduring future dating back to the time of Noah, the receding flood waters, and the beginning of a new life.