

Passover Table Reference Guide

WHAT'S A SEDER?

- A seder is a yearly festive holiday meal celebrating the Exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.
- Seder means "order." The meal is done in a specific order that goes from slavery to freedom.
- The Haggadah - which means "the telling" – is the book used at the Passover seder. The Haggadah explains the foods on the seder plate, recounts the highlights of the Exodus, and includes songs, prayers, questions, and vignettes.
- A parent's responsibility is to teach their children about the Exodus, so several parts of the seder are especially directed at and fun for children:
 - Asking the Four Questions, an honor given to the youngest child who is able to sing or recite the questions
 - Searching for the Afikomen – a piece of matzah that is secretly hidden during the seder. The finder gets a prize
 - Dipping a finger in grape juice and putting a dot on your plate, once for each of the 10 plagues

ORDER OF THE SEDER

- **Kadesh:** A blessing is said while the candles are lit to mark the beginning of the holiday and the Kiddush blessing is said on the wine to mark the holiness of this day.
- **Urchatz:** A ritual washing of the hands
- **Karpas:** Eating a vegetable (celery or parsley) dipped in salt water to combine the hopefulness of spring with the tears of slavery.
- **Yachatz:** Breaking of the middle matzah to remember the brokenness that slavery represents.
- **Maggid:** Telling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt, beginning with the youngest able person at the seder asking the Four Questions (*Mah Nishtanah*). The questions provide the impetus for telling why this night is different from all other nights.
- **Rachtzah:** Washing of the hands a second time, done with a blessing since you are going to eat more substantial food
- **Motzi:** Recitation of the blessing before eating (leavened or unleavened) bread
- **Matzah:** A special blessing said before eating matzah at the seder
- **Maror:** Eating the bitter herbs to taste the bitterness of slavery
- **Korech:** Eating a sandwich of matzah and bitter herbs (horseradish) in fulfillment of Numbers 9:11. Then eating a sandwich of matzah, maror, and charoset. Charoset is a mixture of fruit, nuts, honey and wine (grape juice) that represents the mortar used by the Jewish slaves to build for Pharaoh.
- **Shulchan Orech:** Eating the dinner, which traditionally includes matzah ball soup, hard boiled eggs, gefilte fish, meat and vegetables, and macaroons
- **Tzafun:** A piece of the matzah that had been broken earlier is hidden. This piece, known by the Greek word afikomen, is then found and eaten before the seder can continue. Children are sent to look for it. This is one of several ways that the compilers of the Haggadah entertain kids. Finding the afikomen symbolizes a move from brokenness toward healing. The afikomen (now the matzah of freedom) is supposed to be the last thing you eat on this evening.
- **Barech:** The recitation of the Birkat HaMazon, the grace after meals
- **Hallel:** The recitation or singing of Psalms of praise
- **Nirtzah:** A prayer that God accept our service; as our ancestors have for hundreds of years, we end our seders with the words "L'shanah haba'a b'irushalayim!" – Next year in Jerusalem! With these joyful words we hope to join with all Jews in a peaceful Jerusalem and we remember to keep working to make the world a better place.

SIX PARTS OF THE SEDER PLATE

The seder plate holds ritual foods used throughout the Passover seder. Each item on a seder plate is a symbol of the Exodus story and helps participants at the seder retell the story each year. These items are:

1. **Beitzah:** The roasted egg is symbolic of the festival sacrifice made in biblical times. It is also a symbol of spring - the season in which Passover is always celebrated.
2. **Chazeret:** Lettuce is often used in addition to the *maror* as a bitter herb
3. **Zeroa:** The shank bone is symbolic of the Paschal lamb offered as the Passover sacrifice in biblical times.
4. **Charoset:** This mixture (often apple, nuts, and spices ground together and mixed with wine) are symbolic of the mortar used by Hebrew slaves to build Egyptian structures.
5. **Karpas:** Parsley or celery is dipped into salt water during the seder. The salt water serves as a reminder of the tears shed during Egyptian slavery.
6. **Maror:** Bitter Herbs (usually horseradish) symbolize the bitterness of Egyptian slavery. The maror is often dipped in charoset to reduce its sharpness. Maror is used in the seder because of the commandment (in Numbers 9:11) to eat the paschal lamb "with unleavened bread and bitter herbs".

DAYENU

Dayenu is a song of thanks sung near the end of the seder.

Dayenu means "that alone would have been enough, for that alone we are grateful."

Dayenu is a Passover standard and very beloved, with a catchy tune. Line by line, the song thanks God (Adonai) for individual acts he performed for his people. At the end of each line of the song, the word "Dayenu" is joyfully sung many times.

A sampling of the lines of the song are:

Adonai took us out of Egypt	DAYENU
Punished the Egyptians and destroyed their idols	DAYENU
Divided the sea and led us across on dry land	DAYENU
Took care of us in the desert for forty years and fed us manna	DAYENU
Gave us Shabbat	DAYENU
Brought us to Mount Sinai and gave us the Torah	DAYENU
Brought us to the land of Israel and built the Holy Temple	DAYENU
For all these—alone and together—we say	DAYENU

ELIJAH

An empty chair is set at the seder table for Elijah. The front door of the home is opened to greet Elijah and invite him to join the seder. A prayer is said the he will return and bring a time of peace and freedom. A special cup is also set for him. The cup symbolizes the coming of the Messianic age.