

A Taste of PASSOVER

RECIPES AND REFLECTIONS ON PESACH
WITH TEACHINGS FROM RABBI YECHIEL ECKSTEIN



International Fellowship
of Christians and Jews®



INTRODUCTION:

At the center of the Passover celebration is the *Seder* — the commemorative meal during which we retell the story of the Exodus as God commanded the Israelites more than 3,000 years ago. Our *seder* table is brimming with symbolic foods and objects that help us relive that night when the children of Israel were led from slavery into freedom, from oppression into redemption.

This booklet contains 10 recipes for customary foods that are served at the *Seder* — some symbolic, some traditional. Each is accompanied by a teaching to help you understand this ancient observance and its deeper lessons of faith, prayer, deliverance, freedom, and service to God—core values for both Christians and Jews.

It is my hope that you will be blessed as you read and sample the foods of Passover and that you will share the recipes with your friends and family.

With prayers for *shalom*, peace,

Rabbi Eckstein
Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein

A TASTE OF PASSOVER

APPLE-MATZAH KUGEL

INGREDIENTS

6 matzot	2 tablespoons margarine, softened
6 eggs	1 cup soaked raisins
1 cup sugar	1/2 cup chopped pecans (optional)
1 teaspoon vanilla	2 apples, chopped

PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Break *matzah* into small pieces.
- Place in a medium-sized bowl and cover with hot water. Wait one minute and drain.
- In another bowl, beat the eggs. Add sugar, vanilla, margarine, raisins, pecans, and apples.
- Mix with the *matzah*.
- Pour into greased 3-quart casserole dish.
- Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar and dot with margarine.
- Bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes.
- Lower heat to 300 degrees and bake for another 20 minutes.
- Great served warm or cold.

Serves 8



TEACHING

"Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders."

— Exodus 13:7

The Passover story is both about affliction and redemption. The bridge that brings both parts together is the staple food of Passover — *matzah*. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt they ate *matzah*. With their meager provisions, the simple flatbread was all they could manage to make.

Later, during the Exodus, the Israelites also ate *matzah*, but this time it was for a very different reason. The *matzah* eaten during the redemption of Egypt was a result of salvation coming

sooner than anticipated. The Israelites didn't have time to allow their bread to rise before fleeing Egypt.

Matzah is a symbol of slavery and of salvation. The Jewish sages called it "the food of faith" because it took faith for the Israelites to see their afflictions as a precursor to deliverance. Today, *matzah* reminds us that God hears our prayers and brings about redemption. This sweet dish recalls that even as we dine on *matzah* in our sufferings, we are still the apple of God's eye.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

CHICKEN SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 whole chicken legs and thighs,
skinned and separated | 2–3 parsnips, peeled and cut in half or in thirds |
| 4 medium onions peeled and left whole | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 2 stalks of celery cut in half or in thirds | 1 teaspoon pepper |
| 6 carrots, peeled and cut in half or in thirds | Dill and parsley (optional) |
| 3 medium turnips peeled and cut into quarters | Chicken soup powder to taste (optional) |

PREPARATION

- Place the chicken at the bottom of a large pot (at least 6 quarts) and add the vegetables on top except for the dill and parsley (if using).
- Add enough water to float the contents but not cover them completely.
- Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a simmer.
- Skim any foam, residue, or fat that rises to the surface using a large spoon or skimmer and discard. Simmer on low heat for two hours, then add spices, chicken soup powder, dill, parsley, and simmer for a half-hour more.

Serves 6–8



TEACHING

*“... I will free you from being slaves to them, and
I will redeem you with an outstretched arm...”*

— Exodus 6:6

While chicken soup is a staple of any Jewish festival or Sabbath meal, it is especially significant on Passover. One of the items featured on the *seder* plate is the *zeroah*, or shankbone. This is a roasted animal bone which represents the Passover offering that was first offered on the eve of the Exodus by the Israelites, and then during the time the Temple stood in Jerusalem. While this sacrifice was originally a lamb, today we commonly use a chicken wing.

Symbolically, it reminds us that God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites who had placed the blood of a lamb on their doorposts during the plague of the firstborn. It also alludes to the Israelites’ faith as they brought that first Passover offering in spite of the danger it posed by angering the Egyptians, who worshiped the lamb as a god.

Moreover, the *zeroah* calls our attention to the verse where God promised to redeem Israel with a *zeroah netuya*, an outstretched arm.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

KNEIDLACH — MATZAH BALLS

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4 eggs | 5–6 tablespoons oil |
| 1 cup <i>matzah</i> meal | 1/2 teaspoon onion powder, optional |
| 1/2 cup water | A small pinch of salt and pepper |

PREPARATION

- Beat the four eggs until light and fluffy, preferably with an electric mixer.
- Stir in the other ingredients by hand so that the eggs will still retain some fluffiness.
- Place mixture in the refrigerator for an hour or more.
- In a large pot, boil the water with some salt, until it is boiling rapidly.
- Using wet hands, form small balls and drop them gently into the boiling liquid.
- Boil rapidly for 30 minutes.
- Remove gently from the pot, drain, and cool.
- Reheat with chicken soup for about 20 minutes before serving.

Serves 6–8



TEACHING

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.

— Micah 4:1

*M*atzah balls were created as a dumpling that could be eaten on Passover because they do not include yeast, or *chametz*. Ground *matzah* is substituted, creating a delicious addition to chicken soup. However, the round, white *matzah* ball also resembles another element on the *seder* plate — the egg.

The egg, which for the *seder* is boiled and then roasted, symbolizes a second offering that was brought during Temple times. An egg was

chosen to represent this offering because in Judaism any round food, especially an egg, symbolizes mourning. The round shape represents the cycle of life and reminds a mourner that an end is also a new beginning.

On Passover night, we remember that we still mourn the loss of the Holy Temple and that we yearn for our ultimate redemption. At the same time, we express our faith that our loss is not permanent and that the Temple will be rebuilt.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

CHOCOLATE-COVERED MATZAH

INGREDIENTS

Olive oil cooking spray
4 unsalted *matzah* crackers
1 cup unsalted butter

1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
3/4 cup chocolate chips

PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil; then spray with cooking oil.
- Arrange *matzot* to fit into pan, breaking if necessary.
- Combine butter and brown sugar in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly until boiling.
- Boil for about 3 minutes.
- Pour butter mixture evenly over the *matzah*.
- Place the baking sheet in the preheated oven and immediately reduce heat to 350 degrees. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 325 degrees if the *matzot* are smoking too much.
- Remove baking sheet from oven and sprinkle *matzah* with chocolate chips. Let stand to melt chocolate, about 5 minutes.
- Spread the melted chocolate over the *matzah*.
- Place in refrigerator until chilled and set. Break into pieces when cooled and serve.

Serves 4–6



TEACHING

With the dough the Israelites had brought from Egypt, they baked loaves of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves. — Exodus 12:39

*A*nother name for *matzah* is “the bread of freedom.” This is because the Israelites were commanded to eat it on the eve of the Exodus, and also because *matzah* was the result of redemption coming so quickly that the Israelites didn’t have time to let their dough rise. But the symbolism of *matzah* goes deeper.

Unleavened bread represents the basic necessities of life. Flour and water are baked together to form a substance, that while not the tastiest, is

fully capable of sustaining life. *Matzah* reminds us to distinguish between what we want and what we truly need.

It encourages us to embrace the freedom of knowing what we need and being free from those things that we might desire. When we recognize that all we truly need is basic and easy to come by, we are free from the grasp of materialism that enslaves so many people in modern society.

With this chocolate-covered *matzah* recipe, freedom never tasted so sweet!

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

GEFILTE FISH

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 2 pounds of fish (white fish, haddock, carp, pike, or any combination) | 2 teaspoons salt |
| 1 peeled carrot | Pepper |
| 1 small piece of celery | 3 tablespoons <i>matzah</i> meal |
| 3 medium onions | 1 teaspoon sugar |
| | 2 eggs |

PREPARATION

- Fillet and skin the fish. Wash fish, bones, and skin.
- Place bones, skin, carrot, celery, 1 sliced onion, 1 teaspoon of salt and pepper into a large pan.
- Cover contents with water and cook for 40 minutes.
- Grind the fish with the other 2 onions and combine with *matzah* meal, 1 teaspoon of salt, pepper, sugar, and beaten eggs.
- With wet hands, form mixture into patties, place into fish stock, and simmer gently for at least 1 hour.
- Remove patties from stock and place on plate. Garnish with slices of cooked carrot.
- Optional – strain stock, chill, and serve separately.

Serves 4–6



TEACHING

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. — Exodus 1:6–7

Gefilte fish is a distinctly Jewish food traditionally made with *matzah* crumbs, designating the dish suitable and popular on Passover. However, fish in general has particular significance on Passover. In the Jewish tradition, fish is considered a symbol of fertility.

The growth of the Israelites in Egypt is a critical component of the Passover story. At the beginning of Exodus, we read that the Israelites had become numerous and filled the land, just as God had promised Abraham.

However, that led to the Egyptian Pharaoh resenting the Israelites and devising a plan to enslave them. Yet, amazingly we learn that “*the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread*” (Exodus 1:12).

The proliferation of the Israelites under harsh circumstances teaches us that we, too, can become greater through challenges. The more hardships come our way, the more we can prosper when we choose to learn and grow from our difficulties.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

HAROSET — ASHKENAZI VERSION

INGREDIENTS

6 apples, grated
1 cup walnuts, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

2–3 tablespoons white sugar
1/3 cup sweet red wine

PREPARATION

- Place the apples and walnuts into a large bowl.
- Combine the cinnamon and sugar, then sprinkle over the apples.
- Stir in the sweet wine.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate until serving.



Serves 4–6

TEACHING

They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

— Exodus 1:14

*H*aroset is a key component in the Passover *Seder*. It is featured on the *seder* plate and eaten during the meal together with *matzah* and bitter herbs. The *haroset*, with its brownish colour and paste-like consistency, is meant to look like the mortar that the Israelites were forced to use as slaves in order to build Egyptian cities.

It recalls the bitterness of the Egyptian slavery when the Israelites were often beaten and made to work under inhumane conditions.

However, the *haroset* tastes sweet which reminds us that even in bitter times, we can always find something sweet in our lives.

Moreover, the *haroset* teaches us that bitter times are eventually followed by the sweetness of salvation. Hard times don't last forever, and eventually when we pass through them in faith, we are led to better times and a greater appreciation of our blessings.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

CHRAIN — HORSERADISH SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 2 medium beets, cooked and peeled | 2 teaspoons kosher salt |
| 1 horseradish root, about 4 inches long | 1 teaspoon white sugar |
| 2–4 tablespoons white vinegar | |

PREPARATION

- Grate the beets into a bowl using the fine side of a hand grater (wear gloves to prevent staining).
- Finely grate the horseradish root into the bowl.
- Add the vinegar, salt, and sugar, and taste for seasoning.
- Let the mixture stand at room temperature for 2 hours before serving.
- Store covered in the refrigerator. This will keep for several weeks with same strength; beyond that, the intensity will be reduced.

Serves 4–6



TEACHING

“That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.”

— Exodus 12:8

Horseradish is another component of the *seder* plate, representing the bitterness of slavery that is a central theme of Passover. Traditionally, we use grated horseradish root to serve as our bitter herbs on the *seder* plate and bitter-tasting leafy greens as our bitter vegetable, also on the ritual plate. Both recall the cruelty that the Israelites endured as slaves in Egypt.

As we are commanded in the Bible, on this night of celebration,

we taste bitterness in order to help us focus on the harshness of slavery. This allows us to also appreciate the greatness and sweetness of God’s salvation. It reminds us that no matter how bitter a situation we may find ourselves in, God can redeem us as well.

Just as He was able to free an entire people from bitter slavery, God can bring us out of our difficulties and struggles, too.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

MATZAH FARFEL

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 large yellow onions, diced | 2 cups <i>matzah farfel</i> (pasta), or equivalent amount of crushed <i>matzah</i> , broken into bite-sized pieces |
| 2–3 tablespoons canola oil | |
| 1 tablespoon chopped garlic | 3–4 cups boiling chicken or beef stock |
| 16 ounces sliced mushrooms or combination of shitake, portobello and cremini (optional) | Salt and pepper to taste |

PREPARATION

- Sauté onions and mushrooms in oil until soft.
- Add garlic and *farfel*, brown well.
- Add salt, pepper, and stock. Cover and simmer for 20–30 minutes, stirring often.
- Serve warm.



Serves 6

TEACHING

Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste—so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt. —Deuteronomy 16:3

In Hebrew, another term for *matzah* is *lechem oni*, which means “poor man’s bread,” because it contains nothing but flour and water, the bare minimum required for survival. Toward the beginning of the Passover meal, we break a whole *matzah* in half, putting away the larger portion for the end of the meal.

We do this to symbolize how poor people are often forced to split their meals in half, putting away the rest so that they will have something to eat later

on. On Passover, we envision ourselves as poor and oppressed people who don’t know where the next meal is coming from or what the future will hold.

The broken *matzah* is also a symbol of our brokenness and the brokenness of the world. Even as we hold this evening to celebrate salvation, we must always remember those who are hungry and in need. Only when all people are free, safe, and provided for will the world’s redemption be complete.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

PASSOVER ROLLS

INGREDIENTS

1 cup boiling water
1/2 cup canola oil
2 cups *matzah* meal

1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
4 eggs

PREPARATION

- Heat together boiling water and oil on the stove until the mixture is boiling.
- Add *matzah* meal, sugar, and salt and turn off the heat.
- Mix together until a ball is formed.
- Let cool for a few minutes and then add the eggs, one at a time, and stir until combined. It's very important to add the eggs one at a time!
- Let the mixture rest for 15 minutes in the refrigerator.
- To form the rolls, wet your hands with water and roll some of the dough in your hands and shape however you want.
- Place the dough on parchment paper and continue forming rolls.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes to an hour.
- Eat hot right out of the oven or wait until cooled.
- To store, place in an airtight container for as long as the rolls last on the counter or freeze for later.



Serves 8-12

TEACHING

*The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.*

— Isaiah 2:11

*I*t may seem contradictory to have Passover rolls on a holiday where we don't eat bread, but bread is not prohibited, only leavened bread. Unleavened bread of any form is permissible. While these rolls are not flat like *matzah* and they are sweet, they still constitute unleavened bread because they do not contain any yeast.

In Judaism, yeast, the leavening agent that causes bread to rise, represents pride. A prideful person is all puffed up like a risen loaf of bread.

By removing any products with yeast on Passover, we symbolically rid ourselves of pride.

We also learn that just as a small amount of yeast can ruin a batch of dough on Passover, so can a small amount of pride spoil a person if allowed to grow unchecked. While we may enjoy "bread" on Passover, it is not quite as puffed up, reminding us to deflate our egos and affirm that God is our Master and we are His humble servants.

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A TASTE OF PASSOVER

STRAWBERRY COMPOTE WITH BLOOD ORANGE JUICE

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 6 1/2 cups halved hulled strawberries
(about 2 pounds) | 3 tablespoons sugar |
| 6 tablespoons fresh blood orange juice
or orange juice | 2 teaspoons grated blood orange peel
or orange peel |

PREPARATION

- Place berries in large bowl.
- Add orange juice, sugar, and orange peel; mix gently.
- Let stand at least 30 minutes, up to 1 hour, tossing occasionally.



Serves 8

TEACHING

"The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."

— Exodus 12:13

On Passover, as we celebrate our freedom and our special relationship with our God, the King of kings, we demonstrate that we are privileged people. One way we do this is by drinking four cups of wine (or grape juice) at specific points in the meal.

The custom is to serve only red wines at the *Seder*. The color red symbolizes the blood of the Passover lamb, which represents both salvation and faith. The blood represents salvation since it was used to mark

the homes of the Israelites on the eve of the Exodus, saving them from the killing of the firstborn.

It also represents faith because the Israelites had to trust God when they slaughtered the lamb and placed its blood on their doorposts for all to see, since the lamb was considered an Egyptian god. The red wine, and this blood orange compote, remind us of faith and redemption, and more specifically, that faith is the key to salvation.

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