

Making the Seder

Step by Step



Items needed for the seder should be prepared before the start of the holiday.

Why is this night called “the Seder”?

Seder means "order", and there is a precise order of events that must be followed.

The 15 steps of the Seder are as follows:

Kadesh, U'Rchatz, Karpas, Yachatz, Maggid, Rochtzah, Motzi, Matzah, Maror, Korech, Shulchan-Orech, Tzafun, Beirach, Hallel, Nirtzah

The Seder Plate

Three Matzos: The Seder plate is set up atop three matzos, corresponding to three categories of Jews: Kohen, Levi and Israel.

Some use an elevated Seder plate with a separate “shelf” for each matzah and the Seder plate arranged on top. Others prefer to use a cloth matzah cover with a pocket for each matzah. It is also possible to use cloth napkins to separate between the matzos, with the Seder plate set up on the top napkin. It should not be so heavy that it breaks any of the matzos, however.

Symbols of the Seder

The Seder plate contains six symbolic items:

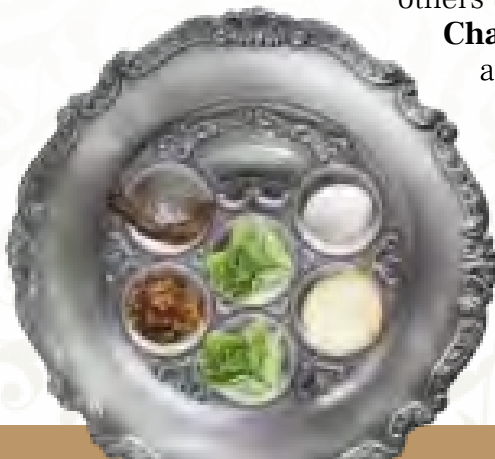
Z’roa: A small piece of roasted meat, usually a chicken wing or neck. The roasting reminds us of the Pesach offering which was eaten during the time of the Temple. We do not eat the z’roa.

Beitzah: A hard-boiled egg, which symbolizes the Chagigah offering, and is eaten during the holiday meal.

Karpas: Any vegetable. Many use a piece of onion or cooked potato; others use celery.

Charoset: A paste made of ground apples and nuts, with a bit of wine added. This symbolizes the cement that the Jews used for building in Egypt.

Maror and Chazeret: We use both ground horseradish and romaine lettuce. The bitter taste of these vegetables symbolizes the bitterness of our lives in Egypt.



KADESH

Kiddush



The Seder begins with Kiddush over wine, through which we sanctify the holiday. We use a cup holding at least 3.5 ounces of wine or grape juice. We hold the cup in the right hand while reciting the Kiddush that is written in the Haggadah.

Each participant in the Seder should make his or her own Kiddush, or have in mind to be included in the Kiddush recited by the head of the household. He, too, must have them in mind during his Kiddush.

The Kiddush wine is the first of the four cups of wine we drink at the Seder. Each person drinks his or her own cup, whether or not they recited Kiddush themselves.

The wine should be drunk while reclining to the left, to symbolize freedom and liberty.

U'RCHATZ

Washing the hands



Before eating the Karpas, we wash our hands. Fill up a washing cup with water and pour three times over the right hand and three times over the left. We do not recite a blessing.

KARPAS

Dip vegetable in salt water



We take the prepared vegetable from the Seder plate, dip it into salt water, and say the blessing:

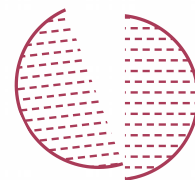
Blessed are You, G-d, our L-rd, King of the universe, Who has created the fruit of the ground.

While saying this blessing, we should also have in mind the maror, which will be eaten later in the meal.

We eat a small amount of the vegetable, less than the size of an olive (0.68 ounces).

YACHATZ

Dividing the middle matzah



We divide the second of the three matzos into two parts. The larger part is set aside for the Afikomen, while the smaller one is returned to its place under the Seder plate.

MAGGID

Reading the Haggadah



The word "Haggadah" derives from the central mitzvah of Pesach, "V'higad'ta l'vincha": "You shall relate to your children" (Exodus 13:8). The purpose of the Seder is to retell the story of the exodus from Egypt to our children, so it will be remembered from generation to generation. We read the Haggadah aloud in a dynamic way, to involve the children and engage their interest. Each family member should read a passage out loud, which should be explained according to the levels of understanding of the Seder participants.



RACHTZAH

Washing
hands

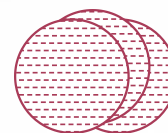
We wash our hands a second time, before eating matzah. After washing, we recite the blessing: **'Blessed are You, G-d, our L-rd, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to wash our hands.'**



MOTZI

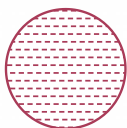
Blessing
over bread

We hold the three matzot in our hands and recite the blessing: **"Blessed are You, G-d, our L-rd, King of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the ground."**



MATZAH

The mitzvah
of eating
matzah



We put the bottom matzah down, and hold only the upper two in our hands (the whole upper one and the broken middle one) and recite the blessing: **"Blessed are You, G-d, our L-rd, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to eat matzah."**

While saying this blessing, we have in mind to include the matzah that we will eat later in the meal for korech and afikomen.

We eat at least a k'zait of matzah (27 grams / 1 ounce, about a third of a hand-made matzah). One who has difficulty consuming this much matzah can suffice with ten grams, about a sixth of a matzah. We should eat the matzah while reclining, within a time period of four minutes.

MAROR

Bitter
herbs



We take the bitter herbs from the Seder plate and dip it into charoset. It is customary to shake off the charoset so that its sweetness should not diminish the bitterness of the maror. Before eating we say the blessing: **"Blessed are You, G-d, our L-rd, Creator of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to eat maror."**

We eat a k'zait of maror, about 0.68 ounces. We do not recline while eating maror.

KORECH

Matzah-
Maror
sandwich



The "sandwich" custom originated with Hillel, a sage in the time of the Holy Temple, based on the verse "It [the Pesach offering] shall be eaten with matzah and maror." In his time, the sandwich included matzah, maror and the meat of the Pesach offering. Today, we use the third matzah on the Seder plate and the maror – at least a k'zait of each. We dip the maror lightly in charoset, place it between two pieces of matzah, and eat it while reclining. Before eating we recite **"This is what Hillel used to do in the time that the Temple stood. He would combine Pesach with Matzah and Maror and eat them together, to fulfill that which is written, 'Together with Matzah and Maror you should eat IT!'"**



SHULCHAN ORECH

The festive meal

At this point, we serve the holiday meal. It is customary to begin with the hard-boiled egg from the Seder plate.



TZAFUN

Eating the afikomen



We eat the afikomen as a symbol of the Pesach offering, which the Jews would bring while the Temple was standing. It was forbidden to eat anything else after the Pesach offering, so that its taste should remain in our mouths. Therefore, after the afikomen, we do not eat anything else.

The word afikomen consists of two Greek or Aramaic words: **Afiko** – taken out, **men** – delicacy, referring to desserts that are brought out after a meal. For the afikomen, we use the large piece of matzah that had been set aside from the beginning of the meal. It is also possible to add more matzah, if there is not enough for all participants.

We eat at least a k'zait (27 grams/1 oz, about a third of a handmade matza) of afikomen (some say at least two) while reclining, and it is preferable to finish eating it before midnight.

BEIRACH

Grace after Meals

Before reciting Grace after Meals, we pour the third glass of wine, and also set up another goblet for Elijah the Prophet, who will announce the coming of Moshiach.



HALLEL-NIRTZAH

Singing praise-Accepted

The Seder concludes with a recital of passages of Hallel from the book of Psalms, praising G-d for the miracles of the Exodus. Afterwards we drink the fourth glass of wine.

The Seder night is unique in that it is the only holiday when Hallel is recited at night. The first time the Jewish people recited Hallel was when they left Egypt.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

