

Passover



Our ancestors were slaves in Egypt and were suffering in bondage. They cried out to God, who heard their plea and remembered the covenant with their ancestors.

- God sent Moses to free the people of Israel from Pharaoh and the Egyptians.
- Pharaoh would not listen so God sent 10 plagues to Egypt. After each plague Moses asked to let God's people go. Time after time, Pharaoh hardened his heart and said no.
- After the 10th plague, the death of the firstborn children in Egypt, Pharaoh finally agreed and the Israelites left in great haste. They were in such a hurry that they did not have time for their bread to rise.
- Each year for eight days we refrain from eating *chametz* (leavened bread) and we gather together with family and friends to retell the story and remember our bitter slavery and the taste of freedom.
- We welcome all who are hungry to come and eat and we celebrate and feast with great fanfare and song.



Why do we call it Passover?

The Hebrew word *Pasach* means to “pass over,” as the angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites that were marked on the doorposts.



To do at home:

Bedikat Chametz ~ In preparation for *Pesach* (Passover), people clean their homes in order to remove all of the *chametz* (leavened bread). The special ceremony, done the night before the first seder, is called “*Bedikat Chametz*,” searching for *chametz*. This tradition comes from the Torah:

שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שָׂאֵר לֹא יִמָּצָא בְּבֵיתְכֶם

No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. (Exodus 12:19)

The search is traditionally conducted with a candle, a feather, a wooden spoon, and a paper bag for collecting any *chametz* found. It is customary to place 10 pieces of bread throughout the house to be “found” during the search.

On the evening before Passover, as soon as the sun sets, gather together with your family, light the candle, recite the blessing, and search for the *chametz*. This is the final cleaning act, symbolizing that your house has been cleared of *chametz*.

Go to https://bit.ly/bedikat_chametz for blessings and instructions on how to do this at home.

Host or attend a Seder!

Join with family and friends for the most-celebrated Jewish ritual of the year: a Passover seder! There are so many resources online, but the main thing to remember is to retell the story to your children and engage in activities that make this night different from all other nights and encourage questions. Check out <https://bit.ly/passoverquestions> for some questions to get your seder talking.



IMPORTANT TERMS:

Seder (סֵדֶר) ~ literally “order.” We call the celebration on the first two nights of Passover a “seder” as the ritual is laid out in 14 very detailed steps in the *haggadah*.

Haggadah (הַגָּדָה) ~ literally “retelling.” The name of the book that serves as our guide to prayers, questions, and rituals for Passover.

Mah nishtanah (מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה) ~ literally “How is this different?” These four questions are traditionally asked by the seder’s youngest participant.

Kadesh urchatz (קִדְשׁ וְרְחִיצָה) ~ literally “holy wine blessing and ritual washing.” The name of the table of contents is the first two steps in the order of the seder. Traditionally all 14 steps are chanted out loud to begin the seder.



Seder Highlight: *Dayenu* – It would have been enough

This special Passover song commemorates a long list of miraculous acts God did for us, any one of which would have been pretty amazing just by itself. But would it have been enough if God had just taken us out of Egypt but not split the Red Sea to allow us to cross to freedom? Or given us the Torah or Shabbat? *Dayenu* is a practice in contentedness, in noticing and being grateful for what we have. We sing it in an upbeat tune with a very catchy one-word chorus to help us feel the joy and celebration of having enough. As an exercise with your family, can you come up with your own version of “it would have been enough” for yourselves?

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים, דינו
אלו נתן לנו את התורה, דינו

Ilu hotsi, hotsi'anu, hotsi'anu mi'Mitzrayim, hotsi'anu mi'Mitz-ra-yim, Dayenu!

CHORUS: *Dai, dayenu, Dai, dayenu, Dai, dayenu, Dayenu, dayenu, dayenu!*

Ilu natan, natan lanu, natan lanu et ha'Torah, natan lanu et ha'Torah, Dayenu!

Had God brought us out of Egypt, it would have been enough!

CHORUS: It would have been enough!

Had God given us the Torah, it would have been enough!



Symbols on the Seder Plate:

Shank bone (*zeroa*) ~ to represent the Passover sacrifice offered in the Temple.

Egg (*beitzah*) ~ symbolizes the *hagigah* sacrifice which was offered on every holiday in Temple times. The roundness of the egg also represents the cycle of life and hope for a new beginning.

Bitter herbs (*maror*) ~ usually horseradish, which allows us to taste the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

Vegetable (*karpas*) ~ to represent the hope of Spring and new life and the beginning of the Israelites' time in Egypt. We dip the karpas in salt water to remind us of the Israelites' tears.

Haroset ~ a sweet paste made of apples, wine, nuts, to represent the mortar used to make bricks. The name itself comes from the Hebrew word *cheres*, clay.

Hazeret ~ romaine lettuce – another form of the bitter herbs.

Also on the seder table: a plate of three **matzot** (plural for **matzah**), one of which will be broken at the *yachatz* stage of the seder and a portion hidden away as the **afikomen** (dessert) to be found by children and eaten at the end of the meal.



Check out this Passover pump-up playlist at the QR code below and dance along with your family!

Did You Know? The “Fours of Passover”

1 **The Four Questions** (*Mah Nishtanah*)

2 **The Four Cups of Wine**



3 **The Four Children** (each representing different ways to approach the seder and life)



4 **The Four Names of Passover**

Z'man Cheruteinu ~ The time of our freedom

Chag Hapesach ~ The holiday of the “passing over”

Chag Ha'aviv ~ The Spring holiday

Chag Hamatzot ~ The holiday of matzot

פסח



Questions?
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