

Seder Plate

YOUR ESSENTIAL SEDER TOOLBOX



Before beginning the Seder, assemble your Seder plate, placing it atop (or near) three complete Matzot.

1 ZRO'A: Shankbone; traditionally a roasted chicken neck, symbolic of the Pesach offering

2 BEITZAH: Hardboiled egg, symbolic of the festival offering

3 MAROR: Bitter herbs, often romaine hearts or horseradish

4 CHAROSET: Sweet mixture of apples, nuts and wine; reminiscent of the clay used for brickmaking by our ancestors

5 KARPAS: Spring vegetable; often onion, parsley, celery, or potato

6 CHAZERET: More bitter herbs



1. Kadesh

Sanctify the Passover holiday over the first cup of wine

Holding the cup in your hand, recite the Kiddush prayer and blessing over the wine. Drink the wine while leaning to your left as a sign of freedom.

THOUGHT: The hardest step is the very first one. But it will be the beginning of a wonderful journey.



2. Urchatz

Ritually purify your hands in preparation for the next step

Using a vessel, pour water three times on your right hand; then your left. No blessing is recited.

THOUGHT: Before any hands-on interaction with worldly matters, we take steps to remind ourselves that we're part of a higher mission.



3. Karpas

Eat a spring vegetable dipped in saltwater

Dip a small piece of vegetable, recite the blessing (have in mind also the Maror to be eaten later) and eat.

THOUGHT: As we think back to the salty tears shed in Egypt, remember that today's hardships too will be tomorrow's memories.



4. Yachatz

Break the middle matzah

Break the middle matzah in half, and set aside the larger half for the Afikoman.

THOUGHT: Though but simple and broken, we are the only creations entrusted with the task of making the world a G-dly place.



5. Maggid

Retell the story of the Exodus

Ask the Four Questions, retell the story which answers them all, and discuss the many details of the story of our nation and its lessons today. Conclude our story with the second cup of freedom.

THOUGHT: Every single day, we wake up enslaved to our physical needs. By transcending them through mitzvot and G-dly pursuits, we free ourselves from "Egypt," each and every day.



6. Rachza

Purify your hands in preparation for eating the matzah

Using a vessel, pour water generously three times on your right hand, then your left; recite the blessing and dry your hands.

THOUGHT: A meal is generally a pleasurable activity. By sanctifying our hands first, we demonstrate that we are eating primarily to aid us in serving G-d, not merely to satisfy our own desires.



7. Motzi

Make the blessing over eating bread or matzah

Holding the matzah, recite the blessing.

THOUGHT: We, too, are like bread. We begin as a seed, then lose our identity to become something greater. The cutting, crushing, and heat we undergo may be painful, but bring us to our potential.



8. Matzah

The mitzvah of eating matzah

Make the blessing over the mitzvah of eating matzah, and enjoy the simple flavor of this handmade treat, while leaning.

THOUGHT: Matzah is the food of faith, and the food of healing. As you eat the matzah, know that you are strengthening your intrinsic faith in G-d and tapping into the reservoir of healing, for yourself and for the world.



9. Maror

Eat the bitter herbs

Dip the Maror into the Charoset, recite the blessing over the mitzvah of eating Maror, and eat, without leaning to your left.

THOUGHT: Experiencing bitterness is the key to change. When we identify what is painful, we will do all we can to overcome it.



10. Korech

Eat Hillel's Seder Sandwich

Sandwich another serving of Maror (dipped in Charoset) between two pieces of matzah, note that this was Hillel's way of doing the mitzvah, and eat, leaning to your left.

THOUGHT: Unity is not about dulling the uniqueness of any part, but of seeing the greatness of all parts combined.



11. Shulchan Orech

Eat the holiday meal

Begin your meal by dipping the egg into saltwater, and then enjoy a full and delicious Seder feast.

THOUGHT: No matter what we go through, there is always what to celebrate! Allow yourself to experience the true Passover joy of freedom!



12. Tzafun

Eat the Afikoman

End your meal with a delicious treat – your last piece of matzah, hidden away just for now, and eat it while leaning.

THOUGHT: Just as there's always room for dessert, there's always room to add one more good deed in our lives.



13. Beirach

Grace After Meals

Over your third cup of wine, recite the blessing thanking G-d for the matzah and Seder feast, then drink.

THOUGHT: Expressing gratitude helps us be more cognizant of the many blessings in our lives.



14. Hallel

Songs of Praise

Pour the cup of wine for Elijah, and open the door to welcome him inside. Sing the words of Psalms recited on joyous occasions, and conclude with the fourth cup of wine.

THOUGHT: Praise does more for us than for the one we are praising. When we praise another, we are broadening our own appreciation for them and the deeds we wish to emulate.



15. Nirtzah

Our Seder is accepted

Rest assured in the knowledge that G-d has seen and appreciated our Seder journey. Next year in Jerusalem!

THOUGHT: Recognizing that G-d appreciates our efforts, however imperfect they may be, is an essential step in continuing our journey to freedom throughout the year.

A PASSOVER MEDITATION:

There's really only one difference between matzah and chametz.

They're both made from flour and water, both baked in an oven, and both provide nourishment.

But one stays flat and humble, while the other fills itself with hot air.

That's why matzah is a key ingredient for leaving your personal Egypt:

As long as we are full of delusions of self-importance, there's no way to break out and grow to a new level.

Once we make ourselves small, we can fit through any bars and fly past any cloud. —Tzvi Freeman, from the wisdom of the Lubavitcher Rebbe