

Seder Plate Ingredients

Maror and Chazeret: Bitter herbs symbolizing the bitter life the Jews led while slaves in Egypt. A bitter herb is any plant with leaves, seeds, or flowers used for flavoring or food. Commonly used is red or white horseradish for maror and romaine lettuce for chazeret.

Charoset: Mixture symbolic of the bricks and mortar the slaves used in building the Egyptian cities and tombs. One traditional recipe calls for a mixture of grated apples, nuts, and cinnamon mixed with a little red wine.

Zeroa: Symbol of God's mighty arm that convinced the Egyptians to free the slaves, it's a roasted bone (often a lamb shank or chicken bone). Also represents the Paschal lamb that was used as the sacrificial offering in the days of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

Beitzah: Hard-boiled or roasted egg representing the second sacrifice offered on Passover eve at the Holy Temple. It is also a symbol of mourning and sadness, caused by the destruction of the Temple.

Karpas: A spring vegetable other than bitter herbs (parsley, for example) to honor the arrival of spring. In some traditions, a potato, onion, or other vegetable is used and is considered the "appetizer".

Also on the table, but not on the Seder plate:

Salt Water: This represents the sweat and tears of our ancestors in bondage. Small bowls of salt water should be placed conveniently around the table for dipping.

Wine: Four cups of kosher for Passover wine are consumed during the Seder as a reminder of the four references to Redemption mentioned in the Torah. Grape juice may be substituted for some or all of the wine.

Matzah – There are 3 whole matzot - placed one on top of the other, separated and covered by a cloth or napkin. Since you'll be eating matzah many times throughout the Seder, make sure that there's enough for everyone to have an adequate portion.

Charoset Recipes

Traditional Ashkenazi-Style Charoset

1 cup finely chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds or a mixture)

5 small apples, peeled, cored and chopped*

½ tsp. lemon zest (grated lemon peel) – optional

4 Tbsp. sweet red wine

1 Tbsp. cinnamon

sugar (or honey)

Combine all ingredients except sugar.

Add sugar to taste. Sweet red wine can be substituted for the sugar.

Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Stir before serving.

*For a more festive looking Charoset, use both green and red apples leaving some of the skins on.

Pistachio and Dried Apricot Charoset

1 cup unsalted pistachio nut meats, chopped and lightly toasted

1 cup minced dried apricots

1/3 cup sweet white wine
1 ½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon shredded fresh mint

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Add more wine for a moister mixture. Chill for 30 minutes and serve.

Sephardic-Style Date Charoset

20 Medjool dates, pitted
3 bananas
½ cup golden raisins
¼ cup sweet red wine
3 tablespoons date syrup or syrupy honey
½ cup walnut halves or pieces, toasted
½ cup unsalted pistachio nut meats, toasted
½ cup whole almonds, toasted
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground allspice
½ teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground cloves

In a food processor, purée the dates until smooth.

Add bananas, raisins, wine, and date syrup and process to combine.

Add walnuts, pistachios, almonds, cinnamon, allspice, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves and process until smooth.

Cover until ready to serve.