

PREPARING FOR PASSOVER

What does it mean to prepare for passover?

"Preparing for Passover" might conjure up images of parents or grandparents scrubbing countertops furiously, covering surfaces in tin foil, taking out the Pesach dishes, taping closed cabinets and selling, donating or tossing all the leavened products (cereal, pasta, bread, beer) in the house. That is not insignificant – the Torah does say "There shall be no leaven found in your dwelling for 7 days" (Exodus 12:19). (If you are looking for more guidance on how to do all that, check out our favorite resource below.)

BUT, all that scrubbing of the kitchen is really pointing toward an inner journey that each one of us is invited to take. Hametz/leavening represents the ego: the puffed-up space-taker-upper that gets in the way of our most direct, honest, fulfilled lives and impact in the world. Notice that Passover is about six months away from the High Holidays – the themes and questions are similar and are worth re-visiting at this midpoint in the year.

As we start moving toward Passover, clean out some spiritual hametz and ask yourself —

ME: What is something you did this year that you wish you had gone about differently? How might you approach it (or something similar) in the future?

OTHERS: What is getting in the way of me being my kindest, most generous self toward others? What am I going to do about it?

WORLD: How am I joining forces with others to be part of efforts to free oppressed people and to heal the world?

OKAY, BUT...

What about preparing for the actual seder?

Mark off the few hours before seder to focus.

- Sign off Zoom, close down the computer and put down your work. Listen to music that gets you feelin' the spirit of freedom (we've put a few of our favorite artists on our website's passover page for you to check out).
- Chop, mash, cook, clean! Whether you start a few days before or a few hours before, gather and make the ritual and dinner foods you'll need for seder. Boil/roast eggs, wash and dry shank bone, chop and mash haroset, boil water and throw some salt in.
- Create your Seder Space! On a plate, gather and place all your items (listed on next page).
- Set yourself up with a nice place setting and the computer nearby, but not at risk of having a glass of wine spill on your keyboard!

p.s. Looking for a simple list of how to traditionally cook, clean and prepare your home for Passover? We recommend The Minimalist's Guide to Passover and Seder — courtesy of our friends at Anshe Shalom

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/188NcDqRa69qxxvGmZwuSrwfh4yIR58McKul9EgglgAAM/edit>

BYO SEDER PLATE

Whether you're joining Mishkan's virtual community seder, logging on with family and friends, or sitting down with the people in your household, you'll need to put together a seder plate. Below are the items you need, the ritual reason we include them, and a few ideas if you can't get your hands on the traditional version.

TRADITION

Bottle of wine or grape juice and a glass

A bowl and wash cloth for hand washing

Karpas: Green vegetable (most common is parsley)

Cup of salt water

Matzah and matzah cover

Your favorite Haggadah

THE REASON

It's a holiday!

Do we really have to explain why you need to wash your hands?!

Seasonal change, the earth coming alive in Spring.

The tears of our ancestors, and people still oppressed.

The bread of oppression and the bread of freedom. Yeah, kind of confusing.

Something, a script, that helps us tell our exodus story together.

PANDEMIC VERSION

Something you enjoy drinking (not water... keep it interesting).

Your sink.

Anything green, from the earth, that you can eat! Pickles, cucumbers, celery, thawed green beans from the back of your freezer.

Your own tears?

Your best bet is to try to order or pick up ahead of time from a store or Chabad. If you have flour, you can make matzah in 18 minutes in advance of seder. In this case, better to not have matzah than to have leavened wheat products as a substitute.

Any haggadah, or, if you have a computer screen, the haggadah that everyone in your digital seder is sharing.

CONTINUED...

TRADITION

THE REASON

PANDEMIC VERSION

Maror (generally horseradish)

Tasting the bitterness of slavery

Anything so spicy it makes you tear up. If you can't get horseradish, how about some of that leftover wasabi from the sushi you ordered last week? Ooo ooo! Sriratcha or some intense hot sauce.

Charoset: a sweet mix of mashed up fruit, wine and nuts that resembles mortar. (Sefardi and mizrahi Charoset can involve many dried fruits like apricots, dates, plums, almonds, and alcohol other than wine)

Chewing on the cognitive dissonance. Charoset is generally sweet and delicious, but represents mortar of the bricks we laid as slaves in Egypt.

Oatmeal! Mashed up dried fruits and nuts! Apple cut up finely, mixed with wine. Have fun with this one. Mash a banana up with a fork and mix it with peanut butter. Consider this is the spreadable smoothie of the ancient world.

Roasted and boiled egg

Rebirth, and the egg offering in the Temple in Jerusalem

No eggs? Find something in your home that symbolizes the cycle of life (seeds, nuts, milk, an inanimate object that has personal meaning to you).

Lamb shank bone

The original Pesach offering – the slaughtered lamb and the painting of the doorpost with its blood to keep everyone inside safe.

A dog bone, a beet, a chicken or steak bone of some kind. Whatever you are using to keep your household safe – hand sanitizer, lysol wipes, etc.

An orange

Inclusivity and embracing people who have been marginalized and excluded.

Anything that resembles inclusion for you. (Pride flag, pomegranate, your Mishkan t-shirt)

Other foods at many seders: potatoes, brisket, matzo ball soup, smoked fish

Eat! You're skin and bones!

Just make some food you like to eat that doesn't involve leavening. Have fun with this.