



PASSOVER

A Montreal Haggadah supplement





The Richness of Passover

The Pessach Haggadah is the Jewish book with the greatest number of variations and editions. While keeping the traditional text, different communities have created their own supplements to the haggadah, that enrich and embellish.

This makes sense: after all, the Passover Seder is not meant to be a mechanical repetition of things past, but a re-enactment of the liberation. It expresses a personal experience in which we relate to the foundational story of the Exodus. We need to make the story personal because, “in every generation, every person needs to feel as if he himself came out of Egypt.”

In this spirit, FEDERATION CJA is happy to present to you this supplement to the Haggadah to enrich your family’s Passover celebration. We want to bring to your Seder table a collection of thoughts and ideas that reflect central values of Pessach, as well as the rich history and diversity of our community.

The key number in the seder is 4. Four questions, four cups, four sons. Thus, we structured this supplement in 4 groups of 4. Pessach is the oldest continuous celebration in human history. So we wanted to bring to you four sedarim that occurred at key moments in Jewish history. Pessach is loaded with important values, so we wanted to dwell on four of the central values of Pessach. Passover is rich with customs, so we bring you four customs of Pessach practiced in communities around the world and in Montreal. And – of course – Pessach is about eating, so we bring you a selection of delicious Pessach recipes.

Why is the Pessach night different? Because, on that night, together with our loved ones, we embark on a wonderful trip across the centuries to feel the joy of liberation; to feel renewed and connected with a millenary tradition full of flavours and colours.

We hope to inspire you – on this special night – to think about our community and your place in it and to discuss the role your Jewish identity plays in your life, not just this special night, but at all times. Because community is a part of our being all the time.

We encourage you to share this supplement with others during the Seder and we sincerely hope to have contributed our part to make your Passover more special, more meaningful and more unique.

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SEDERS

We have celebrated Pessach continuously for over 3,400 years. Pessach has accompanied the Jewish people across history, marking key moments in our collective experience. Here are some examples of how Pessach was celebrated at different times in Jewish History.

Spain XVth century

Conversos or *Marranos* were Sephardic Jews on the Iberian Peninsula forced to adopt Christianity under threat of expulsion during the Middle Ages. But many continued to practice Judaism secretly, thus preserving their Jewish identity. When obliged to take their children to the baptismal font, on returning home they washed the place which had been sprinkled with water. They ate no pork, celebrated Passover, and gave oil to the synagogue.

In the city of Seville an inquisitor said to the regent, "My Lord, if you wish to know how the *Marranos* keep the Sabbath, let us ascend the tower." When they had reached the top, the former said to the latter, "Lift up your eyes and look. That house is the home of a *Marrano*; there is one which belongs to another; and there are many more. You will not see smoke rising from any of them, in spite of the severe cold; for they have no fire because it is the Sabbath." Pretending that leavened bread did not agree with him, one *Marrano* ate unleavened bread throughout the year, in order that he might be able to partake of it at Passover without being suspected.

- from *New World Encyclopedia*

Warsaw Ghetto 1943

The first evening of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto coincided with the first night of Passover. One of the Jewish fighters was wandering about in search of flashlights when he came upon the home of Rabbi Maisel. "When I entered the room, I suddenly realized that this was the night of the first Seder. The room looked as if it had been hit by a hurricane. Bedding was everywhere, chairs lay overturned, the floor was strewn with household objects, the window panes were all gone. It had all happened during the day, before the inhabitants of the room returned from the bunker.

"Amidst this destruction, the table in the centre of the room looked incongruous with glasses filled with wine, with the family seated around, the rabbi reading the Haggadah. His reading was punctuated by explosions and the rattling of machine guns; the faces of the family around the table were lit by the red light from the burning buildings, nearby.

"As I was leaving, the rabbi cordially bade me farewell and wished me success. He was old and broken, he told me, but we, the young people, must not give up, and God would help us."

- from *The Holocaust* by Martin Gilbert

Jerusalem 1948

April 23, 1948 marked the 3,388th observance of humankind's oldest continuously observed religious ceremony. There were approximately 100,000 Jews celebrating Passover in Jerusalem that year. Yet, for them, the symbol of Judaism, the western wall of Solomon's Temple, seemed "as distant and unreachable as it was for the most dispersed of their brethren. For the first time since Saladin, no rabbi, no Jew, had bowed before the stones of the Wailing Wall. Masters of every access to the site, the Arabs of Jerusalem had refused passage to even a symbolic group of rabbis.

"The Jews closest to the wall, trapped in the Old City's Jewish Quarter, celebrated their seder in two shifts, one for the Ashkenazim and one for the Sephardim, so that all the Haganah soldiers on guard duty could join one or the other."

- from *O Jerusalem*,
by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

Montreal 1986

During the 1970s and 1980s, Montreal's Jewish community was at the forefront of protesting for the release of Soviet Jews, who were neither permitted to openly follow their faith nor to leave the Soviet Union.

"About 200 Jews participated yesterday in a 'freedom seder' demonstration outside the Soviet Consulate in Montreal.

"Leaders of a number of Jewish organizations mounted a flatbed truck to participate in a ritual meal patterned on the seder, a meal that forms part of Passover celebrations.

"The ritual was rewritten to emphasize the demand that the Soviet Union approve applications of at least 10,000 Jews to emigrate to Israel."

- from *The Gazette*, April 28, 1986





VALUES

Pessach is a holiday loaded with values and meaning, of which we have selected four. We encourage you to think about the central value that you and your family consider during this wonderful holiday.

Community

Pessach marks the beginning of the Jewish people as a community. Since the Exodus, living in community has been one of the central tenets of Judaism. As Hillel the wise said, “Do not separate from the community and do not disengage from it.” Here’s an example of how this value played out in Montreal.

Bachelors were invited to a meeting on July 23, 1863 to consider the desirability of creating an association to assist needy Jews in Montreal. At the time, destitute immigrants were arriving from Eastern Europe. Also, poor Jews who were long established in the city needed coal or Passover food, but were too proud to ask for help. Furthermore, it was suggested that the proposed organization be “the means of making the Jewish young men of Montreal better known to each other.” The men in attendance responded enthusiastically. That night they created the Jewish community’s first social service organization, the Young Men’s Hebrew Benevolent Society.

- from *From the Ghetto to the Main: The Story of the Jews of Montreal* by Joe King

Nearly 150 years later, the spirit of communal assistance and mutual support lives on in the social and cultural services under the umbrella of FEDERATION CJA. Volunteers who give of their time and talents continue to enjoy the opportunity to become better acquainted with one another, programs that foster the development of Jewish identity are offered to engage all members of the community, and those who are experiencing a period of vulnerability in their lives are provided with much-needed assistance.

Education

The central element of the seder is, “and you will tell your children.” Transmitting values from one generation to the other is a basic tenet of our culture, and especially of the Seder. Here’s an historical example of this value.

In 1391, the Jews of Spain suffered their version of what, to a later generation would be known as *Kristallnacht* – synagogues were set on fire, Jewish businesses were looted and many Jews were killed. From then, until they were expelled in 1492, Jews were constantly pressured to convert to Christianity. Some succumbed, while practicing Judaism in secret. Many became victims of the Inquisition and were burned at the stake. In 1432, a gathering of Jews was convened at Valladolid. It ordained a series of taxes in order to raise funds for public education:

“We also ordain that every community of 15 householders (or more) shall be obliged to maintain a qualified elementary teacher to instruct their children in Scripture. They shall provide him with sufficient income for a living in accordance with the number of his dependents. The parents shall be obliged to send their children to that teacher, and each shall pay him in accordance with his means. If this revenue from the parents should prove inadequate, the community shall be obliged to supplement it with an amount necessary for his livelihood in accordance with the time and the place.”

At no other time in Jewish history has there been such an affirmation that education is a fundamental right for every child.

Freedom

It is deeply meaningful that our origins as a people start with an affirmation of freedom, of the fight to break the bonds of slavery. Since then, freedom has been a central Jewish value, embodied by all who fight for a freer, better world. Here's a contemporary example.

The death of the Egyptians upon the seashore is a glaring symbol of the ultimate doom of evil in its struggle with good. There is something in the very nature of the universe which is on the side of Israel in its struggle with every Egypt. There is something in the very nature of the universe which ultimately comes to the aid of goodness in its perennial struggle with evil. . .

Let us remember that as we struggle against Egypt, we must have love, compassion and understanding goodwill for those against whom we struggle, helping them to realize that as we seek to defeat the evils of Egypt we are not seeking to defeat them but to help them, as well as ourselves.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

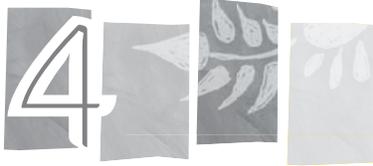
Caring

At the beginning of the Seder we say, "All that are hungry may come and eat, all that are in need may celebrate Pessach with us." Pessach refers the central Jewish value of Tzedakah – caring for the needy out of a profound sense of justice.

If it weren't for the community seder, Yaacov and his family would have nowhere to celebrate Passover. They came to Montreal less than a year ago. It isn't just the absence of family with which they have to cope. It is also the difficulty in securing steady employment and having the money to purchase all the food necessary for the seder. As well, Yaacov, having grown up in the Former Soviet Union without any formal schooling in Judaism, is unable to perform a proper service. Since settling here, he has rediscovered his Jewish roots and wants to ensure that he provides a proper Jewish upbringing for his children.

In keeping with the specific requirement to provide for the poor at Passover, community organizations make a special effort to set a place at the table. For many years, community seders have been organized for those who would otherwise not be able to celebrate properly.





CUSTOMS

Pessach is a multi-sensorial experience. In order to make the history of the Exodus alive and relevant for every generation, different communities – and sometimes families – have added their own customs and traditions. They make the Seder lively, colourful and personal. Here are some examples.

Ten Plagues of Passover

Certain families customarily recite each of the 10 plagues of Passover. As each plague is recited, everybody around the table dips a pinky into their wine glass and shakes a drop of wine onto a plate or into a bowl. Since wine symbolizes joy and freedom, reducing the amount of one's wine by one drop at the mention of each plague symbolizes the diminishment of joy and freedom. Based on this diminishment of joy, this ritual also symbolizes and is performed in memory of the Egyptians who suffered during the time of the plagues in Egypt, as well as those who drowned in the "Sea of Reeds," likely the Red Sea, when they were pursuing the Israelites.



Sephardic Seder

At some Sephardic Seders, it is a custom for people to hold bunches of either celery, chives, leeks or scallions in their hands and lightly beat each other on the back and shoulders to symbolize the sting generated by the whip of the Egyptian taskmasters, while singing *Dayenu*. A variation practiced among some Iranian families is to take turns acting as an Egyptian taskmaster until each person at the table has played the role. While this ritual is going on, all others at the table wish one another, *Sentak Khadhra*, which is a blessing for a green, fruitful year for all. Iraqi Jews will say to each other, *Sant-il-Khadra*, meaning "a year of good fortune."



Miriam's Cup

Some families honour Miriam, the sister of Moses, who played a prominent role in the Book of Exodus. They place a cup filled with water on the seder table in her honour, and refer to it as Miriam's Cup. This cup also symbolizes the contribution made by Jewish women throughout Jewish history. The cup is filled with water to symbolize the miraculous well that G-d gave Miriam to help sustain the Hebrews through their journey in the Sinai desert after they fled Egypt.

Mimouna

At the end of Passover, Moroccan and Turkish Sephardim participate in the *Mimouna*, a celebration of freedom, community values, togetherness, and friendship. It is, as well, a demonstration of great hospitality. It is a celebration of the renewal accompanying spring. On the eve of Mimouna, family members, friends, and cousins visit each other's homes, in a particular order. On their way home from synagogue services, celebrants visit the Rabbi's family first, followed by the Cantor, their parents, and then friends, and neighbors. A big buffet feast is hosted by each household. Traditional embroidered dress is worn by members of the household. Mimouna represents a symbolic new beginning, as exemplified by the Jews' freedom from slavery. Sweets, symbolizing the sweetness of a new beginning, are set out on a table with a white tablecloth decorated with flowers and wheat sheaves, which is the centerpiece of the Mimouna Day.





RECIPES

What would Pessach be without great food. Here we bring you some recipes to enrich your culinary Pessach experience. Don't worry, you'll start the diet after the holiday!

Paradise, or Eat-It-as-a-Main-Dish Haroses

Makes about 1¾ cup

This delectable haroses, the symbolic mortar used to sandwich pieces of matzoh together, is a new feature on my table. This haroses is bright, sweet and tart, filled with apples, cranberries, raisins, and cinnamon. The traditional mixture includes nuts, but I'm not fond of it, and there are nut allergies in my home. This is wonderful to have around Passover week for a spread on matzoh, or to serve alongside roast turkey or chicken. Its fresh fruit taste and stunning scarlet color is winning in every way; one taste and you will see why it is called "Paradise."

After the mixture has cooked down and thickened, adjust the tartness to taste with more orange juice and sugar, or, if it seems too thick, add a touch more water or orange juice. Cool well, then refrigerate. Serve cold or at room temperature. This is used on the Seder plate and may be offered as a side dish with the main meal.

- from *The 10th Anniversary Edition of A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking* by Marcy Goldman (Whitecap Books, 2009) and www.betterbaking.com

- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ cup dried cherries
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ⅓ cup yellow raisins
- 2 cups coarsely chopped apples
- ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup water
- ½ cup water or orange juice
- 2 tablespoons sweet red wine
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Place all the ingredients in a medium saucepan. Over medium-low heat, cook the fruit slowly, until the apples soften and the cranberries pop open. Stir, ensuring the mixture does not burn on the bottom—you may have to lower the heat.



Decadent Fudge Brownies with Glossy Fudge Frosting

Makes 30 squares

Just wonderful even when it is not Passover—fudgy, dense, delicious. Another “most requested” recipe.

BROWNIES

2 cups granulated or brown sugar
 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter or unsalted Passover margarine, melted and cooled
 3 eggs
 1 tablespoon brewed coffee
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 1 scant cup matzoh cake meal
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped toasted walnuts (optional)

GLOSSY FUDGE FROSTING

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup water or brewed coffee
 7 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or Passover margarine, softened

TOPPING

Finely chopped nuts (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 7- by 10-inch rectangular baking pan, a 9-inch square pan, or an 8- or 9-inch spring-form pan.

BROWNIES

In a bowl, mix the sugar into the melted butter, then the eggs, coffee, cocoa, salt, cake meal, and toasted walnuts, if using.

Spoon the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 25 minutes. Do not over-bake. The brownies should be set and seem dry to the touch, but there should not be a crust around the sides. Cool in the pan.

FROSTING

Heat the water or coffee in a small saucepan. As it comes to a boil, reduce the heat and stir in the chopped chocolate. Remove the pan from the stove and stir until the chocolate is thoroughly melted. Cool in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes. Whisk in the softened butter or margarine and spread the frosting on top of the cooled brownies. Decorate the top by running the tines of a fork through the frosting and sprinkle with additional chopped nuts, if desired. Cut into squares or (if baked in a round pan) into wedges.

- from *The 10th Anniversary Edition of A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking* by Marcy Goldman (Whitecap Books, 2009) and www.betterbaking.com

Caramel Matzoh Crunch

An outstanding, unique, and easy confection. If you make only one thing at Passover, make this.

4–6 unsalted matzohs
 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter or unsalted Passover margarine
 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 ¾ cup coarsely chopped chocolate chips or semisweet chocolate

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a large (or two smaller) cookie sheet completely with foil. Cover the bottom of the sheet with baking parchment—on top of the foil. This is very important since the mixture becomes sticky during baking.

Line the bottom of the cookie sheet evenly with the matzohs, cutting extra pieces, as required, to fit any spaces.

In a 3-quart, heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the butter or margarine and the brown sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture comes to a boil (about 2 to 4 minutes). Boil for 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and pour over the matzoh, covering completely.

Place the baking sheet in the oven and immediately reduce the heat to 350°F. Bake for 15 minutes, checking every few minutes to make sure the mixture is not burning (if it seems to be browning too quickly, remove the pan from the oven, lower the heat to 325°F, and replace the pan).

Remove from the oven and sprinkle immediately with the chopped chocolate or chips. Let stand for 5 minutes, then spread the melted chocolate over the matzoh. While still warm, break into squares or odd shapes. Chill, still in the pan, in the freezer until set.

- from *The 10th Anniversary Edition of A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking* by Marcy Goldman (Whitecap Books, 2009) and www.betterbaking.com



Passover Cookies – Galletes

Galletes are hard, sweet cookies. They are always served with coffee at the end of Passover.

5 cups matzoh meal
 1 ½ cups sugar
 1 cup vegetable oil
 1 cup white wine
 1 (8-ounce) envelope vanilla sugar or add
 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract to granulated
 sugar
 ½ teaspoon baking powder
 1 egg, lightly beaten

Makes 2 dozen

Preheat the oven at 350oF.

Combine all the ingredients, except the egg, in a large mixing bowl and knead the dough until smooth.

Roll out the dough using a rolling pin to 3/8 inch-thick. Using a round cookie cutter, cut out the galletes and lay them on a baking sheet.

Using a pastry brush, brush each galette with beaten egg, then sprinkle with sugar.

Bake until golden, approximately 20 minutes.

- from *A Pied Noir Cookbook: French Sephardic Cuisine from Algeria* by Chantal Clabrough





FEDERATION CJA acknowledges the following sources:

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New York: Henry Holt, 1987.

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