

## Orange on the Seder Plate

Contributed by [Jewish Boston](#)

**Source:** David Levy, from INCLUDING WOMEN'S VOICES: The Jewish Women's Archive edition of The Wandering Is Over Haggadah

(<http://www.jewishboston.com/64-jewish-women-s-archive/blogs/1996-the-wandering>)

### The Orange

Even after one has encountered the collection of seemingly unconnected foods on the seder plate year after year, it's fun to ask what it's all about. Since each item is supposed to spur discussion, it makes sense that adding something new has been one way to introduce contemporary issues to a seder.

So how was it that the orange found its place on the seder plate as a Passover symbol of feminism and women's rights?

The most familiar version of the story features Susannah Heschel, daughter of Abraham Joshua Heschel and scholar in her own right, giving a speech about the ordination of women clergy. From the audience, a man declared, "A woman belongs on the *bima* like an orange belongs on the seder plate!" However, Heschel herself tells a different story.

During a visit to Oberlin College in the early 1980s, she read a feminist Haggadah that called for placing a piece of bread on the seder plate as a symbol of the need to include gays and lesbians in Jewish life. Heschel liked the idea of putting something new on the seder plate to represent suppressed voices, but she was uncomfortable with using *chametz*, which she felt would invalidate the very ritual it was meant to enhance. She chose instead to add an orange and to interpret it as a symbol of all marginalized populations.