

# Seder Plate

Contributed by [JewBelong](#)

Source: <http://www.jewbelong.com/passover/>



Nothing on the Seder table is selected randomly; each item has its purpose and often its specific place. The Seder plate holds at least six of the ritual items that are discussed during the Seder: the shankbone, maror, charoet, karpas, salt water, orange, roasted egg, and boiled egg.

## PASSOVER ROUND

*(to the tune of "Frère Jacques")*

Roasted Shankbone  
Hard Boiled Egg  
Karpas and Charoet  
Bitter Herbs

## ROASTED SHANKBONE

One of the most striking symbols of Passover is the roasted lamb shankbone (called zeroah), which commemorates the paschal (lamb) sacrifice made the night the ancient Hebrews fled Egypt. Some say it symbolizes the outstretched arm of God (the Hebrew word zeroah can mean "arm"). Many vegetarians use a roasted beet instead. This isn't a new idea; the great Biblical commentator Rashi suggested it back in the eleventh century.

## MAROR (BITTER HERB)

Bitter herbs (usually horseradish) bring tears to the eyes and recall the bitterness of slavery. The Seder refers to the slavery in Egypt, but people are called to look at their own bitter enslavements.

## CHAROSET

There's nothing further from maror than charoet ("cha-ROH-set"), the sweet salad of apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon that represents the mortar used by the Hebrew slaves to make bricks.

## KARPAS

Karpas is a green vegetable, usually parsley (though any spring green will do). Karpas symbolizes the freshness of spring. Some families still use boiled potatoes for karpas, continuing a tradition from Eastern Europe where it was difficult to obtain fresh green vegetables.

#### **SALT WATER**

Salt water symbolizes the tears and sweat of enslavement, though paradoxically, it's also a symbol for purity, springtime, and the sea.

#### **ORANGE**

The tradition of putting an orange on the seder plate is a response to a less evolved rabbi who told a young girl that a woman belongs on a bimah as much as an orange on a Seder plate. The orange is now said to be a symbol of the fruitfulness of all Jews, whether they be gay, straight, male or female.

#### **ROASTED EGG**

The roasted egg (baytsah) is a symbol in many different cultures, usually signifying springtime and renewal. Here it stands in place of one of the sacrificial offerings which was performed in the days of the Second Temple. Another popular interpretation is that the egg is like the Jewish people: the hotter you make it for them, the tougher they get.

#### **BOILED EGG (TO EAT)**

May we reflect on our lives this year and soften our hearts to those around us. Another year has passed since we gathered at the Seder table and we are once again reminded that life is fleeting. We are reminded to use each precious moment wisely so that no day will pass without bringing us closer to some worthy achievement as we all take a moment to be aware of how truly blessed we are.

Our faith gives us many holidays to celebrate throughout the year and they are all times for self reflection, gently guiding us to a better path in life. We are each given a chance to reflect on our past year; to think about where we have been and how we will live our lives in the year to come. We reaffirm our commitment to lead good and meaningful lives, promoting peace wherever we go.