

What's on the Table

Contributed by [Hillel at UCLA](#)

Source:

What's on the Table Contributed by Geoff Chesman

The Seder Plate

We place a Seder Plate at our table as a reminder to discuss certain aspects of the Passover story. Each item has its own significance.

Maror – The bitter herb. This symbolizes the harshness of lives of the Jews in Egypt.

Charoset – A delicious mix of sweet wine, apples, cinnamon and nuts that resembles the mortar used as bricks of the many buildings the Jewish slaves built in Egypt

Karpas – A green vegetable, usually parsley, is a reminder of the green sprouting up all around us during spring and is used to dip into the saltwater

Zeroah – A roasted lamb or shank bone symbolizing the sacrifice made at the great temple on Passover (The Paschal Lamb)

Beitzah – The egg symbolizes a different holiday offering that was brought to the temple. Since eggs are the first item offered to a mourner after a funeral, some say it also evokes a sense of mourning for the destruction of the temple.

Matzah

Matzah is the unleavened bread we eat to remember that when the Jews fled Egypt, they didn't even have time to let the dough rise on their bread. We commemorate this by removing all bread and bread products from our home during Passover.

Elijah's Cup

The fifth ceremonial cup of wine poured during the Seder. It is left untouched in honor of Elijah, who, according to tradition, will arrive one day as an unknown guest to herald the advent of the Messiah. During the Seder dinner, biblical verses are read while the door is briefly opened to welcome Elijah. In this way the Seder dinner not only commemorates the historical redemption from Egyptian bondage of the Jewish people but also calls to mind their future redemption when Elijah and the Messiah shall appear.