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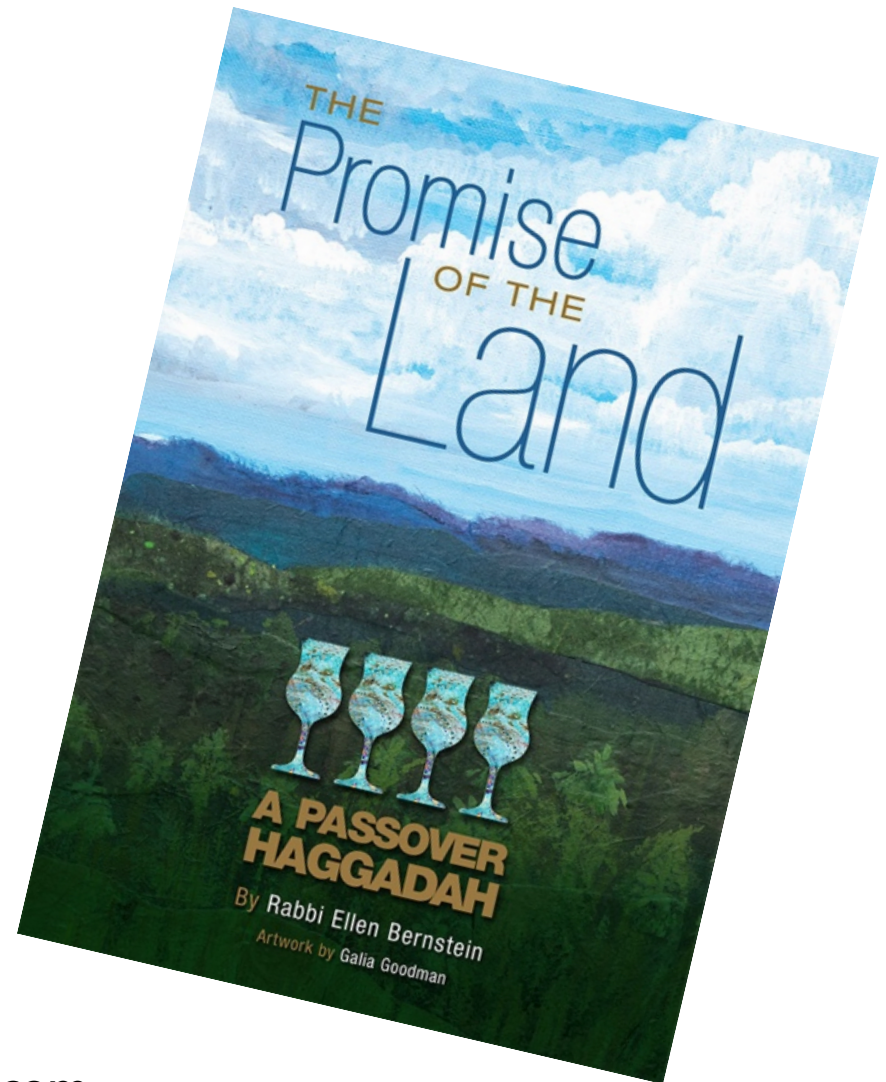
***The Promise of the Land:
A Passover Haggadah***

by Rabbi Ellen Bernstein
with artist Galia Goodman

Seder Checklist

Preparing for the Seder

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The Seder

The Fifteen Steps of the Seder

קִדְּשׁ *Kadeish*
Making holy

וְרַחַץ *Urchatz*
Washing

כַּרְפָּס *Karpas*
Fruit of the Soil

יַחַץ *Yachatz*
Splitting

מַגִּיד *Maggid*
Telling

רְחִיצָה *Rochtzab*
Washing

מוֹצִיא *Motzi*
Bringing Forth

מַצָּה *Matzah*
Matzah

מָרוֹר *Maror*
Bitter herb

כוֹרֵיב *Koreich*
Wrapping

שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵד *Shulchan Oreich*
Set Table

צַפּוּן *Tzafun*
Hidden

בִּרְדָּה *Bareich*
Blessing

הַלֵּל *Hallel*
Praise

נִרְצָה *Nirtzab*
Parting

The seder's fifteen steps are a reminder of the fifteen steps leading up to the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

Adorning your home with early spring flowers, like daffodils or forsythia, or any green growing things will add to the beauty of the celebration and will remind your guests that Passover heralds the coming of spring. If you have your own garden, pick whatever is in bloom. Consider dressing up your table with the leafy greens that can be used for *karpas*, the appetizer you will be eating at the seder. In some Sephardic traditions, Jews adorn the table itself with all the ritual foods of the seder, forgoing the seder plate altogether.

Passover affords us abundant opportunities to adopt healthy habits for ourselves and for the earth. It's an ideal time of year to commit to new life-affirming and sustainable practices.

CONSCIOUS PURCHASING

“There is a Chasidic custom to avoid any processed food on Passover, in order to stay clear of the accidental consumption of *chameitz*. Imagine an entire meal prepared without plastic packaging, machine manipulation, or unknown ingredients. Imagine how that food—just one step removed from the land—can help us to feel connected to the source of life.”—JONATHAN DUBINSKY

Purchase fresh, locally grown products without preservatives or packaging. You can also find a variety of artisanal kosher-for-Passover items. These days, some young Jews, in an effort to live more simply and closer to the land, have turned to farming, and some are preparing products that are kosher for Passover. By purchasing these products, you are supporting the people who grow your foods and the healthy treatment of the land.

As you prepare for the seder, you may want to think about a prize for the winner of the *afikoman* hunt. Consider a plant, gardening supplies, or other earth-friendly gift. Or perhaps you want to make a donation to a favorite environmental or conservation organization in the winner's name.



Preparing for the Seder

CREATING A BEAUTIFUL AND ECOLOGICAL SEDER

Too often we subscribe to the idea that more is better—that a more lavish Passover meal is preferable. Yet, a simple and elegant meal can be extremely satisfying. Remember that the seder commemorates a trek in the desert, where our ancestors would have enjoyed the most basic foods. At its root, Passover is an homage to simplicity.

Since your guests will be eating plenty of appetizers for the *karpas* step in the seder—including green vegetables, potatoes, and dips—they may welcome a less elaborate yet tasty meal. There's something pleasurable about eating just enough to satisfy your hunger. Consuming sensibly at the seder can help us get in the habit of consuming sensibly in the rest of our lives.

For your main course, consider a vegetarian meal, or include a vegetarian or vegan option in addition to a traditional meat, fish, or poultry dish. Vegetarian dishes require fewer resources and take less energy to produce. Guests with food allergies or special diets often prefer vegetarian or vegan offerings and will be appreciative of your efforts to include them.

The atmosphere of the room will add as much to feeling full and fulfilled as the food you eat. Consider everything that will contribute to the beauty of the seder—the physical space, the fragrances, the colors, shapes, and tastes of the foods; the conversation. Some of us may assume that we need a white tablecloth, matching napkins, and a coordinated set of dishes for a proper seder. Happily, these days, such conventional ideas about elegance no longer dictate what our seders look like. Think eclectic; think individuality; think freedom. So bring out the fabrics and dishes that you love. Your seder will be much more earth-friendly if you set your table with reusable cloths and dinnerware.



THE SYMBOLIC FOODS OF THE SEDER

Matzah (symbolizing affliction and liberation): Making matzah is a great way to connect to the elemental aspects of the holiday. While it's complicated to make matzah at home, since it is difficult to ensure that matzah is kosher for Passover, you may find opportunities to bake matzah in synagogue kitchens. Or you can purchase handmade round *sh'murah* matzah (matzah that is "watched" from harvesting until it's packaged) from specialty stores or online, or you can ask your grocer to order it. Each handmade matzah with its burnt edges and wavy texture adds character to the seder table. Of course, you can also purchase regular matzah at the grocery store.

Wine (symbolizing joy and transformation): Many years ago sweet Manischewitz was the only kosher-for-Passover wine available, but today we have many options. Consider assigning the job of selecting wines to one of your wine-loving guests. Remember to provide grape juice for children and for those who prefer it.

Karpas (a green vegetable symbolizing spring): People commonly use parsley for *karpas*. Yet here too, there are many choices. *Karpas* refers to a green vegetable arising from the earth; you can experiment with various greens. In many parts of the country, the first vegetable to sprout up is asparagus, so it's fitting to use it for *karpas*. Asparagus can connect you to the earth, and because it's fleshy rather than leafy, it can help stave off hunger. Consider including lots of greens for *karpas*, like cilantro, arugula, and watercress—they all taste earthy and signify spring. Use what is local and tasty to you.

Generations back, Ashkenazi Jews in eastern Europe used potatoes for *karpas* because it was impossible to find fresh green vegetables in April. Today, in honor of this tradition, many people still enjoy potatoes for *karpas*. Potatoes (boiled, roasted, or baked) are dense and hearty, making them a filling snack that can be eaten throughout the seder.

Some people serve hard-boiled eggs with their *karpas* course. Eggs symbolize the roundness of life and the renewal of spring, and they keep guests satisfied as they engage in lively Passover conversations before the formal meal.

Conscious purchasing also means limiting waste. Bring reusable bags to the store, including smaller bags for produce and nuts. If it's necessary to purchase paper goods, biodegradable paper products are best. Look for unbleached and recycled products, ideally with 100 percent post-consumer content. If you must use disposable utensils and cups, try to find bioplastics. It's best to stay away from Styrofoam and disposable plastic utensils, plastic packaging, plastic table coverings, and composites like hot cups or poly-lined plates.

You can also reduce waste when cleaning up after the seder. Save old containers to use for leftovers, and encourage guests to bring containers so that they can take home leftovers, too. Try to divert as much waste as possible from landfills and incinerators. Establish a spot in your kitchen where you can set up three bins, each with its own sign: Compost (if you have a compost pile), Recycling, and Trash.



"When we host large gatherings, there's often a temptation to grab the disposable plates and cutlery so that we can maximize time with the guests and minimize time in the kitchen. However, remember:

- 1) Passover is special! Elevate the mood of the seder with china, not Chinet.
- 2) Create community by asking for help. We often avoid asking guests to help clean up, imagining they will interpret clean-up as a chore. But guests often appreciate being asked to help. This can create a wonderful opportunity to wind down while participating in a mutually beneficial project."

—JONATHAN DUBINSKY



SEDER CHECKLIST

You'll need to provide the following items for the seder table:

- *Haggadot*
- Pitcher of water, bowl, and towel for hand-washing
- Seder plate, with the following ritual foods:
 - Roasted shank bone or beet, burned or scorched
 - Parsley, cilantro, arugula, asparagus, or any green vegetable(s) for *karpas*
 - Horseradish root for *maror*, the bitter herb
 - Romaine lettuce for *chazeret*, the second bitter herb
 - A bowl of *charoset*
 - A roasted egg
- A plate with three pieces of matzah, wrapped in a special cloth
- Other ritual foods and items
 - Candlesticks, candles and matches
 - Kiddush cup
 - Elijah's cup, a special cup for wine
 - Miriam's cup, a special cup for water
- Serving platters and bowls with extra matzah, *karpas*, grated horseradish, romaine lettuce, and *charoset*, and small bowls with salt water
- Wine or grape juice—enough for each participant to drink four cups
- Pillows for reclining (optional)

Optional: potatoes for *karpas*

Some people place an orange on the seder plate as a symbol of inclusion. Some put an olive or a coffee bean on the plate to symbolize contemporary types of slavery. Feel free to add symbolic foods that have meaning to you.

Optional: hard boiled eggs for snacking



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Zeroa (a roasted shank bone symbolizing God's outstretched arm): The shank bone recalls the Passover sacrifice and ancient Israel's pastoral culture. You may be able to get one from your grocer. If your guests are vegetarians, then a roasted beet is a popular substitute.

Beitzah (burnt egg symbolizing the festival offering): You may be able to purchase eggs from local farmers or—if you're lucky—from friends who raise chickens in their backyards. If you buy from a grocery store, look for free-range or cage-free eggs. The chickens who laid these eggs run about freely and live healthier lives than industrially farmed ones.

Maror (bitter herbs representing slavery): While in ancient times a type of bitter lettuce was used for *maror*, for the past nine hundred years, horseradish—even though it is a root—has been adopted as the bitter herb of choice among Ashkenazi Jews. In southern and western Europe and Mediterranean countries, lettuce and endive are still used for *maror* today. Horseradish probably became popular for the same reason that potatoes did for *karpas*—because in colder, eastern Europe, the lettuce didn't leaf out in time for Passover.

Fresh horseradish is a wonderfully curious and gnarly root that can stimulate questions and conversation. Most grocery stores carry fresh horseradish root, which can be more interesting (and ecologically sound) to use than the minced variety. You will need to grate some and apportion it in dipping bowls, so that everyone can partake of it.

Chazeret (a second bitter herb, usually romaine lettuce, also representing slavery): Two bitter herbs usually sit on the seder plate: *maror*, typically horseradish, and *chazeret*, or lettuce—although not all seder plates have a spot for *chazeret*. Both kinds of bitter herbs can be used for the *maror* blessing and the Hillel sandwich.

Charoset (fruit-nut-spice mixture representing the mortar used in constructing Pharaoh's cities): Ashkenazi Jews typically make *charoset* by dicing up apples and adding chopped walnuts, spices, and red wine. Sephardic Jews use a combination of dates, other dried fruits, bananas, oranges, pistachios, and almonds. The texture should resemble something between a fruit salad and a fruit paste. Experiment with *charoset* from other Jewish Diaspora communities, such as Greece and Yemen. *Charoset* is a crowd pleaser, so be sure to have plenty on hand.

While some claim that in ancient times the Talmud permitted beets on the seder plate as a substitute for the shank bone, it seems more likely that beets were just a popular side dish. (P'SACHIM 114B)

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