



PREPARING FOR PESACH 5780

Rebbetzin Esther Shurin

PART ONE: Before Erev Pesach

Cleaning:

- 1) Keep it simple. Whatever you can sell, tape or lock up in closed cabinets and sell. Make a sign of some kind on the sold cabinets. When you are cleaning, remember that dirt is not chametz and children are not the Korban Pesach. Especially this year when everyone is at home, cleaning for Pesach is very challenging. Focus on getting rid of chometz and don't stress about spring cleaning.
- 2) Whatever you need to clean, wipe with soap, which neutralizes chametz. Therefore you don't need to use toothpicks or toothbrushes in the cracks or corners, the soap is enough.
- 3) Try to organize yourself so that you can "turn over" the kitchen before Erev Pesach itself. It can take a day to cover surfaces and kasher things, so bear this in mind.
- 4) Cover surfaces with tin foil or plastic tablecloths. I use clear plastic tablecloths for my counters, which I buy by the meter and cut to size.
- 5) Anything you need to kasher, silver or metal, or your sinks or microwave, should not be used with chametz for 24 hours before kashering..
- 6) Many people find it helpful to use as many disposables as possible.

PART TWO: Erev Pesach

- 1) Note the times for the last time to eat chametz eating and for biur chometz. Make sure to get rid of your chometz before then. This year there will be no communal burnings so you will need to get your garbage out and/ or flush the last crumbs away. (Double check this with your local Orthodox rabbi)
- 2) Erev Pesach is a hungry time, you can no longer eat chometz and you can't eat matza yet. I highly recommend my mother-in-law's ZL minhag of eating a meat lunch. It will be a long time before Shulchan Orech and it will be late, so it's a good idea to have a proper lunch. We usually

eat hamburgers and mashed potatoes. Some people have chicken, liver, salami, etc Don't go into Chag starving...you know why!!

PART THREE: Making your own Seder

1) General thoughts: People get very nervous about the idea of making a Seder. The actual preparation of the food for the Seder is not so overwhelming as people think. In general, the best idea for Pesach cooking is to keep to as many of your regular meals as possible. I am a big believer in keeping things simple. Fish, meat, chicken, eggs, vegetables can be prepared in the usual way as long as there are no chometz or kitniyot (Ashkenazim) involved.

Following this idea, cook a usual Shabbat meal for the Seder, but bear in mind that the meat (including chicken for Ashkenazim) cannot be roasted (so it doesn't look like we are eating a Korban Pesach) but must be prepared some other way, for example, boiled beef or boiled corned beef, chicken sautéed or pot-roasted.

2) Special additions that must be prepared for the Seder:

A) The Seder Plate:

- 1) Zroa - Use a chicken wing or leg. Take from what you have cooked already. It must then be grilled over an open flame until it is browned a bit.
- 2) Egg - Use a hard-boiled egg and grill over an open flame until it is slightly brown. Be careful; you'll need a utensil that holds it so it doesn't burn or so that you don't get burned
- 3) Maror - Use horseradish (fresh, not bottled) or Romaine Lettuce. The lettuce needs to be washed and checked for bugs.
- 4) Karpas - Use boiled potato, sliced cucumber or celery
- 5) Charoses - My recipe is:
 - 4 apples peeled and chopped or grated
 - 1/2 cup ground walnuts
 - 2 teaspoons cinnamon
 - wine to taste, a few tablespoonfuls should be enough
 - (I must confess I have been known to add a little sugar. Please don't tell Nilli)

B) Other additions:

- 1) A platter with 3 whole matzot, hand or machine Shmura
- 2) Salt water for dipping. Use 1 tablespoon of salt in a 1/2 cup of water
(I was shocked in North America to see that they sell salt water for \$3!!!)
- 3) Your Haggada!!
- 4) 4 cups of wine/ grape juice and some for Eliyahu (I wonder if he has some way of avoiding all those germs!!)
- 5) Many people have a minhag to eat hard boiled eggs dipped in salt water at the beginning of the meal as a zecher for the mourning over the loss of the Beit HaMikdash and our inability to bring the Korban Pesach.

CHAG KASHER V'SAMEACH!

SOME OF MY FAVORITE PESACH RECIPIES

(If a recipe has gebrochts- meaning it uses matza meal, I will indicate that. If a recipe is not gebrochts bear in mind that it is gluten free)

Bubby's Kneidlach (gebrochts)

(This was the recipe of Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky's wife)

4 eggs
1/2 cup water or seltzer
1/3 cup oil
3/4 tsp salt
pinch pepper (optional)
1 cup matza meal

Whisk or whip the eggs, oil water and spices. This can be done by hand if necessary. Add the matza meal slowly and mix in briefly. Don't overmix or add too much meal.

Refrigerate 1/2 to 1 hour.

Boil a pot of water with a teaspoon of salt. Leave plenty of room because the kneidlach expand. Drop walnut sized balls of kneidlach into the boiling water. If the mixture is too loose to work with, add matza meal a little at a time. If you add too much the kneidlach will be heavy. Cook for 20-30 minutes.

Potato Kugel

Preheat the oven to 450 or 500 degrees (very hot)

Oil a 13x9 pan

Peel 7- 9 potatoes and place in water.

Grate 1 onion

Add 5 eggs to the grated onion.

Add 1 tsp salt, a pinch of pepper and 2 tblsp oil.

After everything else is combined, grate the potatoes.

Do this last so they will remain as white as possible.

Mix the potatoes and onion/egg mixture and bake until it is brown on top. Then reduce the heat to 350 until it's ready.

Pineapple Chicken (appropriate for the seder)

Use a deep frying pan large enough for at least 1 cut up chicken.
(If I use 2 chickens I use 2 frying pans)
Cut the chicken into quarters or eighths.
Coat the chicken with potato starch, with a little pepper and garlic powder mixed in.
Brown the coated chicken in oil on both sides.
Meantime chop an onion into coarse pieces.
Drain the liquid from a can of pineapple (any shape).
When the chicken is browned slightly, not for too long, add in the chopped onion and pineapple juice.
Bring to a boil and then simmer for an hour or until the chicken is done.
Serve with the reserved pineapple as a garnish

Arnold's brownies (13x9)

3 cups of sugar (I know!!)
1 1/4 cups of oil (I know that's a lot!!This is not diet food!)
8 eggs, whole
1 cup cocoa
1 1/2 cups potato starch
Walnuts (optional)

Mix the sugar and oil, beat in the eggs.
Mix in the cocoa and starch.
Bake 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out dry

Lemon Sponge Cake (13x9)

7 eggs, separated
1 1/4 cup sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (for a variation you can use orange juice)
1 cup potato starch
2 packets vanilla sugar

Beat yolks until light and add the sugar gradually, beating until creamy. Add the flavors. Slowly sift in the potato starch.
Whip the egg whites until stiff and fold into the batter
Bake at 350 about 20 minutes until a toothpick inserted comes out dry

Chocolate Chip Cookies (gebrochts)

3/4 cup oil
5 eggs
1 cup white sugar
1 1/4 cup brown sugar (if there isn't any use more white)
2 cups potato starch
2 cups matza meal
2 packets vanilla flavor
1 tsp baking soda
chocolate chips

Mix all the ingredients together and chill if there is time.

Before baking, adjust the consistency so that you can form balls to place on the baking trays. If it is too sticky add potato starch; if it is too dry add oil. Use baking paper if possible

Form balls and bake 10 minutes or so at 350

Chocolate Almond Souffle Cookies

3 (100 gram) good quality parve chocolate bars

3 egg whites (use the yolks for something else)

1/2 cup sugar

3/4 cup ground almonds

1 packet vanilla sugar

(You may want to double this recipe)

Melt the chocolate in a small pot or microwave.

Whip the egg whites and gradually add in the sugars.

Fold the melted chocolate and the nuts into the egg whites.

Drop by tablespoonfuls on baking sheets (use baking paper)

Bake 8-10 minutes at 350.

Let cool before removing and use a metal spatula to remove.

(If they are hot they will break)

(This recipe is from "A Taste of Pesach" and is the only cookie my children asked me to make after Pesach as well!)

Chremslach or Matza Meal Pancakes (gebrocht)

3 eggs

3/8 cup milk or water

1/2 tsp salt

4 tsp sugar

1/2 cup matza meal

pinch cinnamon

Beat the eggs and milk. Add spices and then matza meal.

Let stand a few minutes, until the consistency is not very drippy. Then drop by spoonfuls into hot oil. Turn once when the first side browns slightly. Drain on paper towels.

A useful non-gebrochts recipe is a potato starch blintze-noodle recipe:

3 eggs

1/2 cup water

4 tsp sugar

1/4 tsp salt.

1/2 cup potato starch

Mix the eggs and water, add the spices and then the starch.

Fry the batter as crepes or fill with cheese and use as blintzes.

People also roll them up and slice thinly for "noodles"

Matza Pizza/ Lasagna

Matza pizza is just tomato sauce and cut or grated cheese on matza. Bake in a toaster or a pan. This doesn't work so well in a microwave.

Lasagna, which is just the same as a regular lasagna except you take pieces of matza, run water on them so they are slightly damp, and then layer the cheese and sauce with the wet matza.

Rabbi Shurin's mother's matza brei (gebrochts)

Depending on the size of the frying pan you will use, break a matza into small pieces and soak in water for a minute. Meantime, heat oil or butter in the pan. Drain the water from the matza and fry the pieces in the oil or butter, taking care that the pieces are not one on top of the other.

In other words, there should be a thin layer of matza all around the pan.

Turn them over so that both sides become crisp. Salt can be added to the matza while it's frying.

Meantime, beat 1-2 eggs and when the matza is crispy, pour in the eggs and cook. You can add milk or water to the eggs while you are beating them.

When the egg is set the matza brei is done.

Be'tayavon