

# SWEET SEDER



JUDAISM  
*Ta'am*  
ON A PLATE

a member  
of the  
**jewish  
futures**  
family



During the Seder, the Passover story is recounted and re-lived through a progression of symbols and ceremonies as recorded in the Haggadah. “The sights, sounds, tastes and smells of the Seder — the Four Cups of Wine, the Four Questions, the Seder Plate, Elijah’s Cup, the Hillel Sandwich, the search for the Afikoman and the songs — captivate young and old alike,” writes food historian Gil Marks in his 2010 opus *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*.

Out of all the rituals of Judaism, Seder night is the one that Jews by and large come back to. The reason may be memory and immersive education: The Seder obliges us to recount the story of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egyptian slavery by the hands of the Lord, every year. We not only tell the story but we are instructed to pass it onto the next generation.

The *Geonim* (Talmudic scholars in Babylon between 700—1000 CE), as they convert the Seder night into the celebration we have today, must have realised that to learn something deep down in your bones, it needs to be an immersive experience. And that is what Seder night is; we are immersed in the recounting of the Exodus. Through story, song, action, drink, and food — and it is in fact encouraged to find meaning in our food — to utilise it to further ingrain the story into our *neshama* (Hebrew for soul).

Why *neshama*? The Hebrew word for soul actually shares its root with the Hebrew word for breath — *linshom*; just as we breathe, the story of the Exodus should be in our souls with every breath we take and with every morsel we eat. We are on this night reminded of where we came from and how we got here.

The recipes and ideas in this book are to further enhance your Seder: Different sweets for some of the Plagues, charoset balls in different flavours to represent the four sons, and pyramids — though not built by the Children of Israel, they serve as a definite reminder of our sojourn in the land of the Nile. We hope that your Pesach is one filled with joy and song and the comfort of memories old and new.

Wishing you a *Chag Kasher v’Sameach*,

## THE TA’AM TEAM



**ILANA EPSTEIN**

**WITH**

**BLAKE EZRA  
ZAHAVA KAHEN  
JAY ROSEN  
EMILY THEODORE**

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# COCONUT PYRAMIDS

Do you know that Pesach standard, the coconut macaroons in a canister? This recipe is nothing like that! It is delicious and moreish, and the secret is in the ground almonds. Once you make your own, the canisters of coconut macaroons may be a thing of the past.

## INGREDIENTS

5 large / 6 medium egg whites  
200g granulated  
60g ground almonds  
½ tsp lemon juice  
½ tsp vinegar  
Pinch of salt  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
500g desiccated coconut

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C, line the two baking trays with parchment/ baking paper.
2. In a large bowl beat the egg whites until frothy, then start adding the sugar a tablespoon at a time (be patient, this is well worth the effort) Whisk until you have a shiny mass with peaks that hold their shape.
3. Using a spatula fold in the almonds, lemon juice, vinegar, salt, vanilla, and coconut.
4. Using slightly wet hands shape into 2-inch sized pyramids, place on the baking sheet.
5. Bake in the oven until just beginning to brown, about 25 minutes. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.



# STRAWBERRY

For years, we have been trying to amuse the younger people at the table with cups of water that turn to blood — (actually, it was only a drop of red food dye at the bottom of the glass!) — in recreating the famous plague of blood, when all the water in Egypt, including water already in a cup, turned to blood, the most fun is in using red jelly. You can use a packaged jello that all you need to do is add water to, or for a slightly more elaborate treat, make our Strawberry Jelly from scratch. It's delicious and serves as a wonderful Pesach dessert!

# BLOOD JELLY



1. Place the strawberries, water, honey, and lemon juice in a blender and purée until smooth. For super-smooth results pass the purée through a cheesecloth and discard the strawberry pips.
2. Scoop out ¼ cup of the purée and place it in a small bowl. Sprinkle the gelatin over the bowl and mix it with the purée until well-combined.
3. While the gelatin is blooming, place the remaining purée in a small pot and heat over medium-high heat. When the purée is hot but not yet boiling, remove it from heat.
4. Immediately add the bloomed gelatin and whisk until thoroughly combined.
5. Divide the jello mixture between 4-5 small glass cups. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours, or until the strawberry jelly has set.

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## INGREDIENTS

2 cups fresh strawberries  
(previously frozen will also work as long as the strawberries are partially thawed)

175ml (¾ cup) room temperature water

5 Tbsp honey

1 Tbsp lemon juice

4½ tsp powdered gelatin

צפרדע

THE PLAGUES: FROGS

# CHOCOLATE FROGS

After due warning, the second plague came to Egypt. Aaron stretched his hand out over the waters of Egypt, and frogs swarmed forth. They covered every inch of land, and entered the houses and bedrooms! Wherever an Egyptian turned, whatever he touched, he found there the slimy bodies of frogs, the croaking of which filled the air.

For our chocolate frogs, we used simple plastic frog molds and filled them with dark chocolate that we tempered. The tempering of chocolate is an extra step that helps chocolate stay shiny and gives it its distinctive snap.



# CINNAMON HAIL BALLS

## INGREDIENTS

2 egg whites  
Pinch of salt  
75g caster sugar  
1 Tbsp cinnamon  
200g ground almonds  
Icing sugar (for decorating)

The devastating plague of hail was more than just small tiny pebble-like hailstones; they were balls of fire and ice that rained from the heavens and inaugurated a paradigm shift in Pharaoh's Egypt. This is when the story starts to turn. For hail, we have used the British Pesach classic: the cinnamon ball. White on the outside and brown with cinnamon on the inside, much like the hail that was said to be ice on the outside with a fiery center. The cinnamon balls, unlike the hailstones, should be soft inside, with a strong cinnamon flavor; but they will harden with keeping, so defrost as you plan on serving.

1. Heat oven to 180°C (350°F). Line a baking tray with baking paper and set aside.
2. Whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt until they hold soft peaks. With beaters still running, add one tablespoon of sugar at a time until the egg whites are glossy and hold stiff peaks.
3. Fold in the cinnamon and ground almonds, and with wet hands roll small spoonfuls of mixture into balls and place, spaced out onto lined cookie sheet.
4. Bake for 15 minutes until set, but still soft in the center. Release the cookies from the baking sheet and dust with icing sugar. Store in an airtight container.





# CHOCOLATE LICE BARK

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## INGREDIENTS

300g white, milk, or dark chocolate, roughly chopped

## TO DECORATE *(All optional)*

Freeze-dried raspberries or strawberries

Pistachios, roughly chopped

Flaked almonds

Sea salt

Mini marshmallows

Raisins

Dried cranberries

1. Melt 200g of the chocolate in a glass bowl of a simmering pan of water or in the microwave. Stir in the remaining 100g until melted. Leave to cool for 5 minutes.
2. Pour out onto a large sheet of baking paper and use a teaspoon to even out the melted chocolate, leaving a few waves in the mix. Scatter over your chosen toppings and refrigerate until solid.
3. Use a knife to cut the chocolate into shards of bark.

Never imagined the plague of lice or locusts as a yummy treat? Now you can! No dessert in our arsenal is easier or yummier than this one, and at the same time a great way to get others involved in the action. When we read of the plague of lice, when God turned the very dust of Egypt into lice, this is when Pharaoh's magicians are beaten and they finally see the finger of God. The chocolate bark is nowhere near as terrifying, but it is a great way to discuss how small things that seem insignificant have the power to change something much bigger and stronger.

THE PLAGUES: LICE



# BLACKOUT CHOCOLATE BROWNIE COOKIES

The plague of darkness was incredibly dense and intense for the Egyptians, while the Israelite nation enjoyed a miraculously bright and lit-up environment. Much like the cookies—incredibly rich and dark, but at the same time miraculously delicious!

**TIP:** Do not be tempted to overbake these, they will set up as they cool. Make sure to space these well apart, as they will spread a lot! Finally, feel free to use higher cocoa percentage chocolate here, it is really a matter of taste.

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## INGREDIENTS

75g butter (or margarine)  
325g bittersweet chocolate  
(55% cocoa solids)  
3 eggs  
200g (1 cup) light brown sugar  
30g cocoa powder  
75g bittersweet chocolate  
(55% cocoa solids), chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Line two large sheet cookie sheets with baking parchment.
2. Place butter and chocolate in a very clean very dry microwave-safe bowl. Blast on high 20 seconds at a time, stirring between each blast until the chocolate and margarine are melted and smooth, set aside.
3. In a large bowl with a handheld electric beater, or in the bowl of a stand mixer with the whisk attachment, whisk the eggs and sugar until very light in color and fluffy, about 5-8 minutes.
4. Add the melted chocolate and whisk briefly. Fold in the cocoa powder and chopped chocolate.
5. Using a piping bag, or two spoons, drop about two tablespoons onto the prepared cookie sheets, at least 2 inches apart — they will spread a lot!
6. Bake for 8 minutes, or until they have formed a crust but are still very soft. Remove from oven and let cool completely on baking tray.
7. Store in an airtight container with baking paper between each layer. They will keep at room temperature for 5 days.

# CHAROSET BALLS

*Charoset* is the fruit mixture that is one of the food items on the Seder plate. We dip the *maror* (bitter herb) in the Charoset. The Charoset is also one of the components, along with maror and matzah, in the Hillel sandwich. The Talmud tells us that the more symbolism we can impart on our Seder food, the better. Charoset, therefore, is simultaneously sweet, because of the good we wish upon ourselves and our people; and it is mortar-like to remind us of the mortar our forebearers had to make, a reminder of our slavery and oppression.

The first known recipe for Charoset is found in the *siddur* (prayer book) of Saadya Gaon (882-942 CE), the head of the Yeshiva (Talmudic academy) in the Babylonian city of Sura. His recipe calls for a sauce made from dates, walnuts, and spice, and kneaded into red wine vinegar. In terms of the Ashkenazi custom, we have a recipe from Rabbi Elazar ben Judah (c. 1165-1230) of Charoset made from grated apples, into which he added the fruits mentioned in the Song of Songs — e.g. walnuts, figs and pomegranates. Also in the mix was black pepper, ginger, cumin and horseradish!

Basically, when it comes to Charoset, the rule is that anything goes — as long as it is sweet and in some way mortar-like. We have turned our Charoset into balls — easier to eat and, at the same time, each one flavoured in its own unique way to represent one of the Four Sons mentioned in the Haggadah. You decide who is who!

## METHOD FOR ALL FOUR:

1. Place all the ingredients (aside for the extra nuts or coconut for rolling) in the bowl of the food processor, then process until the mixture has come together into a paste.
2. With slightly wet hands roll the mixture into 2cm balls, and then roll in the extra topping.
3. Store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to a week, bring to room temperature to serve.



## CHILLI CHOCOLATE

110g pecan halves  
200g pitted dates  
2 Tbsp cocoa powder  
2 Tbsp honey  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1/2 tsp hot chilli powder

## APRICOT LEMON

120g slivered almonds  
60g desiccated coconut  
(plus extra 4 tablespoons for rolling)  
Juice and zest of 1 lemon  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
200g dried apricots



## CLASSIC

200g pitted dates  
100g walnut halves  
3 Tbsp sweet red wine  
50g walnuts  
(chopped fine for rolling)

## COCONUT LIME

80g desiccated coconut (plus  
extra 4 tablespoons for rolling)  
125g cashew butter  
50g granulated sugar  
Zest of 2 limes  
2 tsp lime juice

