

**\*SEPHARDIC DATE HAROSET**

\*Makes: about 2 cups

Haroset is a spread for matzo made from fruit, nuts and wine; it symbolizes the mortar used by the Jewish slaves to build ancient Egyptian cities. Sephardic harosets are made in various ways, but usually contain dates.

- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1 medium apple, peeled and diced
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 to 4 tablespoons sweet Passover wine

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor; process until finely chopped. Pat into a serving container and cover until serving.

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**\*MOROCCAN-STYLE MATZO BALL SOUP\***

Serves: 8 to 10

Matzo balls aren't always a part of the Sephardic tradition, but a Turkish friend remembers them from his childhood Seders. They'd be sorely missed at any American Seder; boxes of Passover matzo ball mix feature a foolproof recipe for them.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 2 large or 3 medium leeks, white parts only, quartered lengthwise and chopped
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 medium white turnips, peeled and diced
- 3 medium carrots, sliced
- 3 medium stalks celery, diced
- 1/2 pound mushrooms, chopped
- 8 cups vegetable stock or water, or a combination
- 1 teaspoon each: paprika and ground cumin
- 1 large onion, quartered and thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups frozen peas
- Matzo balls (make according to package directions)

Heat the oil in a large soup pot. Add the onion and leeks; sauté over medium heat until the leeks are limp, about 10 minutes.

Add the potatoes, turnips, carrots, celery, mushrooms, stock or water, paprika and cumin; mix well. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer gently, cover, until vegetables are tender, about 45 minutes.

Season to taste with salt and pepper, and simmer 10 minutes more. Stir in the peas.

Let stand off the heat for several hours or overnight in refrigerator to develop flavor. Reheat before serving. Serve with matzo balls.

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**\*SPINACH AND POTATO MATZO PIE\***

Serves: 8 to 10

Matzo pies, called minas, are common at Sephardic Seders. They consist of layered matzos, vegetables and cheese.

- 8 medium potatoes
- Two 10-ounce packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed
- 4 to 6 scallions, diced
- 15-ounce container part-skim ricotta cheese, preferably organic
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 to 8 matzos
- 2 cups grated mild white cheese, such as mozzarella, Monterey Jack or white cheddar

Bake or microwave the potatoes in their skins until tender; cool. Peel and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a mixing bowl, combine the spinach, scallions, ricotta cheese, lemon juice, and salt and pepper.

Soak the matzos in warm water in a shallow container until pliable but not mushy, about 2 minutes; drain. Lightly oil two 9- by 9-inch casserole dishes; line the bottoms with a layer of matzos. Layer each with the spinach mixture, potato slices, more matzos and 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese. Repeat until all ingredients are used. Finish with a layer of matzo.

Bake until top matzo is golden with spots of brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Cut into squares to serve.

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**\*TURKISH EGGPLANT STEW\***

Serves: 8 to 10

Eggplant is always abundant in the Mediterranean, so it is not unusual to find eggplant on the Sephardic Seder table. It is unusual, however, for Ashkenazic Jews to eat rice during Passover, so it is optional for this stew.

- 2 medium eggplants (2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 14- to 16-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- Juice of 1/2 to 1 lemon, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley, to taste
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Cooked rice (optional)

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Prick the eggplants in several places with fork; place on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake until softened and collapsed, about 45 to 55 minutes. Cool, slice open and scoop the pulp from the skin. Discard the skin and chop the pulp.

In a large, heavy saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion; sauté until golden, 5 to 7 minutes. Add eggplant, tomatoes, lemon juice and sugar. Simmer gently, covered, 20 minutes. Add the parsley, then season with salt and pepper. Simmer 10 minutes more. Serve alone or over rice.

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**\*ROASTED PEPPER SALAD\***

Serves: 8 to 10

This traditional Moroccan salad is often served during the Passover meal in the homes of Sephardic Jews.

- 6 large green bell peppers
- 4 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (optional)
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- Salt to taste
- Lettuce leaves

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Place the peppers on a foil-lined baking sheet; bake until skins are blackened on all sides, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven and place peppers in paper bag; seal and set aside at least 15 minutes. Peel off the skins, remove the stems and seeds, and cut into 1-inch pieces.

Combine peppers with remaining ingredients; mix thoroughly. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Arrange lettuce leaves on serving platter and top with the salad. Serve 1 or 2 lettuce leaves with each serving of salad.

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**\*SWEET AND SOUR ARTICHOKE HEARTS\***

Serves: 8

This simple side dish is traditional to the Sephardic Passover tables of several countries, including Turkey.

- Two 10-ounce packages frozen artichoke hearts, or two 15-ounce cans artichoke hearts (not marinated), drained
- 1/3 cup apple juice
- Juice of 1 lemon, or to taste
- 2 tablespoons honey, or to taste
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

In a deep saucepan over medium heat, combine the artichoke hearts and apple juice; bring to a simmer. Stir in enough lemon juice and honey to achieve the desired sweet-sour taste. Add salt and simmer, uncovered, until liquid is reduced slightly.

Transfer to serving plate; sprinkle with parsley.

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**\*SEPHARDIC WINE AND FRUIT PUDDING\***

Makes: 24 or more little squares

- 1/2 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1/2 cup chopped dates
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 3/4 cup sweet Passover wine
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup honey
- 3/4 cup matzo cake meal
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2/3 cup finely chopped walnuts

Combine the dried fruits with the wine in a small mixing bowl. Let soak overnight or for the good part of a day, then drain off any excess wine.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Combine the remaining ingredients in a mixing bowl, then stir in the soaked fruits. Pour into an oiled 9- by 13-inch baking pan. Bake, covered, for 45

minutes, then uncover and bake for 15 minutes more, or until the pudding looks dark but still moist and springs back at a gentle touch. Cool, then cut into small squares or diamonds to serve.

Other interesting links:

[http://kosherfood.about.com/od/passovervegetarianmains/Passover\\_Vegetarian\\_Mains.htm](http://kosherfood.about.com/od/passovervegetarianmains/Passover_Vegetarian_Mains.htm)

<http://vegetarian.about.com/od/specialoccasionrecipe1/tp/vegpassoverrec.htm>

Also, any Mexican/Texican food without flour tortillas or meat will be good. I am actually thinking about bringing my own special vegetarian kosher for pesach taco filling. I will use it with my home-made matza. Just to let you know that when it comes to ethnic food or other, one does not have to be fiddler on the roof compliant to be a major player in the pesach food game.

Best regards

-David