

# SEDER PLATE

## Explaining the Seder Plate

There are many traditions as to how the seder plate is arranged and what elements appear on it. Here is a chart giving an explanation of the various options for the seder plate elements.

### BEITZAH

Beitzah means "egg," and it is usually served boiled and "roasted." See "Beitzah" article for more information. The beitzah corresponds to the *chagigah* ("festival") offering of Passover.

### KARPAS

Karpas means "green vegetable." It can include: parsley, celery, lettuce, radishes, a boiled potato, a raw onion, or a variety of other options. The karpas serves as the appetizer and represents the newness of springtime.

### CHAZERET

Chazeret means "lettuce." This is another instance of maror and is most often Romaine lettuce. However, some customs use freshly ground horseradish. It is used to fulfill the obligation to eat "matzah and bitter herbs" together (Exodus 12:8).\*



### Z'ROAH

Z'roah means "arm," and is most often a roasted shankbone. However, there are some customs that use a roasted chicken neck. It symbolizes the Passover offering.

### MAROR

Maror means "bitter." Most often this is either freshly ground horseradish or Romaine lettuce. It symbolizes the bitterness of slavery.

### CHAROSET

Charoset comes from the word *cheres*, which means "clay." This yummy mixture of fruit and nuts symbolizes the mortar the Hebrews used when they were enslaved in Egypt. We dip our matzah and maror into it, but shake the bulk of it off before eating. It is also added to the Hillel Sandwich.

\*Although this phrase is a biblical commandment, we are unable to actually fulfill today it as specified in the Torah. The Torah states, "They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it" (Exodus 12:8). The commandment is to eat the matzah and bitter herbs along with the Passover offering. Since we are no longer able to bring the Passover offering, this commandment cannot be fulfilled in actuality and has therefore been reduced to a rabbinic injunction to remember this commandment.