

Saving Dinner for the Holidays



Passover Menu, Shopping list and Timeline

to enjoy as you
Bring your Family Back to the Dinner Table

Recipes Include:

Chicken Livers with Currants
Matzah Ball Soup
Chopped Apple Haroset
Salad of Baby Greens with Balsamic Vinaigrette
Nancy's Husband's Traditional Brisket with Tzimmis
Sautéed Baby Spinach
Roasted Honey Carrots
Chocolate Flourless Torte

Saving Dinner for the Holidays: Passover Shopping List

Serves 8

The Menu:

Chicken Livers with Currants
Matzo Ball Soup
Chopped Apple Haroset
Nancy's Husband's Traditional Brisket with Tzimmis
Sautéed Baby Spinach
Chocolate Flourless Torte

The Shopping List:

The shopping list contains the food for the Seder supper, but not the stuff you'll need to make a Seder plate, should you want to make the Seder plate as well, so be sure to add those items to your shopping list.

MEAT:

1 pound chicken livers
1 (3 1/2 to 4 pound) brisket, "first cut"

CONDIMENTS:

Olive oil (extra-virgin)
Vegetable oil
Kosher red wine (1/4 cup)
Honey (2 tablespoons)
Horseradish

PRODUCE:

3 pounds onions
1 head garlic
1 bunch parsley
4 large Red Delicious apples
2 (10-ounce) bags washed baby spinach
2 1/2 pounds PLUS 3 to 5 large carrots
2 to 4 sweet potatoes (depending on size)
1 pint raspberries

CANNED GOODS:

96 ounces (12 cups) chicken broth (if not making homemade)

SPICES:

Cinnamon
Black peppercorns
Nutmeg
Vanilla extract

DAIRY/DAIRY CASE:

Eggs (16 or more)
Margarine (pareve)

DRY GOODS:

Currants (1/2 cup)
Chopped walnuts (2 cups)
Almonds (1/3 cup, finely ground)
Sugar
Brown sugar
Cocoa powder
3 (10-oz.) packages matzo crackers, plus extra for Seder plate

BEVERAGE:

Wine AND/OR grape juice

OTHER:

Foil wrap
Toothpicks
Plastic wrap

Passover Tools:

Blender/food processor
Large oven-proof pan with cover (Dutch oven)
One 15 1/2" x 1/2" x 1" jelly roll pan

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Saving Dinner for the Holidays: Passover

Passover Timeline List

Serves 6

One Week Ahead:

If you have a favorite butcher, order your brisket now.

- Plan your table. If you are using a linen tablecloth and napkins, do they need pressing? Press them now and hang them or fold them for later.
- Double-check your serving pieces and kitchen utensils against your menu. Make arrangements now to buy or borrow anything you'll need.

Two to Three Days Ahead:

- Clean out your refrigerator.
- Review your shopping list and buy every item you need. If you've ordered your brisket from a butcher, pick that up too.

The Day Before:

- If you've chosen the "reheat" option for the brisket, prepare and cook that now. Allow cooked brisket to come to room temperature; refrigerate, covered.
- Prepare Chicken Livers with Currants; cover and refrigerate.
- Prepare Chocolate Flourless Torte per directions in recipe; then insert a few toothpicks in the top; cover and refrigerate.
- Rinse raspberries in cold water; cover and refrigerate. (Don't add berries to torte until serving time.)
- Meanwhile, pull all the pieces you are going to use for serving. Write the name of each menu item on a 3" by 5" card and place it in/on that particular serving piece. Then stack your bowls, platters and other serving pieces together in one area, with the cards in/on them. Cover with a towel to keep them dust-free.
- Set your table and cover with a sheet to keep any dust out.

Four Hours Ahead:

- If you've opted to cook your brisket today, preheat your oven and prepare Nancy's Traditional Brisket.
- Prepare Chopped Apple Haroset; cover and refrigerate.
- Remove sheet from your table and check for completeness. Place salt and pepper (if not already there) and butter on the table. Consider two butters and two sets of salt and peppers on either end.

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Four Hours Ahead (continued):

- Remember to clean as you go—keep a sink full of soapy water available and dump stuff in there as used. Run the dishwasher and empty it.
- Take a time out and put your feet up for a while.
- Double-check bathrooms for clean guest towels, hand soap and extra toilet tissue.
- Set up the coffeemaker so all you have to do is flip the switch.

Fifteen Minutes Ahead:

- Prepare Seder Plate and place on table.
- Remove Chicken Livers with Currants from refrigerator. Arrange on a platter or tray.

Dinnertime:

- Remove towel from stack of serving pieces. Place finished dishes in/on their designated pieces.
- Ring the dinner bell!

Chicken Livers with Currants

Makes 3 cups

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound chicken livers, washed and patted dry
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 cup coarsely chopped onions
1/2 cup currants
4 hard-cooked eggs, peeled
Salt and pepper to taste
1 (10-ounce) package matzoh, to serve



COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

In a skillet, over medium-high heat, sauté onions in half the oil, cooking till nicely browned, about 5 minutes. Remove onions from skillet and set aside. To the skillet, add remaining oil, then the chicken livers. Cook until livers are cooked through and well done, but not too rubbery. Add additional oil, if necessary. Cool slightly before the next step.

Using a blender or food processor, finely chop livers, together with the hard-cooked eggs, and onions. Now add the currants and mix thoroughly. Place chicken liver mixture in a serving bowl; add salt and pepper and splash of olive oil, if needed. Refrigerate till ready to serve.

To serve, place the bowl in the middle of a platter with matzoh around the periphery.

Matzo Ball Soup

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS:

2 (10-oz.) packages matzo crackers, broken into small pieces
1/2 cup margarine (pareve)
6 eggs
Salt and pepper, to taste
3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
2 onions, chopped fine
64 ounces chicken broth (homemade is preferable)



COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

In a large pot over high heat, bring about 8 cups of lightly salted water to a boil.

Break matzo crackers into small pieces and place in a large bowl. Add water to cover. Allow to soak for a few minutes, until soft. Drain off excess water.

Melt margarine in a large skillet over medium heat and stir in drain matzos; stir until mixture is dry and slightly browned. Set aside and let cool a minute.

Remove matzo mixture from heat and mix in eggs, salt and pepper to taste, parsley and onions.

Mix in just enough matzo meal to make the matzo mixture hold together. Roll the matzo into golf ball-sized balls. Place the matzo ball in the boiling water to test the mixture. The ball must rise to the top of the water and not break apart. If it does not rise, then too much matzo meal was added. In this case, add another beaten egg to the mixture and try again. When desired consistency is reached, roll all of mixture into golf ball-size spheres.

In a large saucepan, bring chicken broth to a slow boil over medium heat, add balls to broth. Serve soup as the balls rise to the top of the broth.

Chopped Apple Haroset

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS:

4 large red Delicious apples, chopped
2 cups walnuts, finely chopped
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/4 cup kosher red wine



COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

In a large bowl, mix together the apples, nuts, sugar and cinnamon. Add the wine and thoroughly blend. Refrigerate till serving time.

Roasted Honey Carrots

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS:

2 1/2 pounds carrots, peeled and cut on an angle
(French cut)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons honey
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste



COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

In a medium saucepan, bring about 3 cups of water to a boil. Add the carrots, reduce the heat to medium, cover and cook until tender, 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine the oil and honey. Drain the carrots, add them to the bowl and toss with the oil and honey, salt and peppering to taste.

On a baking sheet, place the honey/oil tossed carrots in a single layer (no overlapping) and roast for 25 minutes, then serve.

Chocolate Flourless Torte

Serves 8

This recipe is a little strange the way it is written. It is not a typo that there is cocoa mentioned twice in the recipe's ingredients list. Please read the recipe through before you start making it to see how it all works. It's an easy recipe, as long as you know what you're doing and what to do when!

INGREDIENTS:

1/3 cup cocoa powder
1/4 cup boiling water
3 tablespoons margarine (pareve), softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 eggs
2/3 cup white sugar, divided
1/3 cup almonds, finely ground
1 tablespoon cocoa powder



COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line the bottom of a 15 1/2- x 1/2 x 1-inch jelly roll pan with foil, extending slightly over sides and lightly grease the foil with a little oil.

In a small bowl, mix together 1/3 cup cocoa powder and the boiling water. Keep stirring until mixture is smooth. Stir in the margarine and vanilla. Set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the egg yolks and 1/2 cup sugar and using electric beaters, beat on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the cooled chocolate mixture and almonds, beating until well blended.

In another large bowl, beat the egg whites until foamy. Gradually add the remaining sugar and continue to beat until stiff peaks form. Fold 1/4 of egg white mixture into chocolate mixture then add the remaining whites, folding in carefully.

Pour the batter into your prepared pan and bake 18 to 20 minutes or until cake springs back when touched lightly in the middle. When cake is done, remove from oven and let cool on a wire rack, while cake is still sitting in the pan. Dust with 1 tablespoon of cocoa. Cool completely in the pan sitting on wire rack. Cut into serving pieces and serve, garnishing with fresh raspberries on each plate.

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Saving Dinner for the Holidays: Passover

Sautéed Baby Spinach

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

2 (10-ounce) bags prewashed baby spinach
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 garlic cloves, pressed
Salt and pepper, to taste

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

In a large skillet or wok, heat half the olive oil over medium-high heat and add one clove of the pressed garlic when the skillet is hot.

Add the 1 bag of the baby spinach and move quickly to heat. Salt and pepper to taste and keep moving it. As it begins to wilt and turn bright green, remove from the skillet, place in a serving bowl and repeat the process with the second bag of spinach.

This whole side dish will take you all of 6 minutes to prepare, start to finish with both bags (unless your stovetop takes longer to heat).



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Saving Dinner for the Holidays: Passover

Nancy's Husband's Traditional Brisket with Tzimmis

Nancy Miller is the senior editor at Ballantine. When it was time to forage for Passover recipes, she came to the rescue with her husband's brisket recipe that is rumored to be the best brisket this side of the equator—thanks Nancy, it is really is wonderful.

Serves 8

Time required: about 3 hours in first version, but 3 hours plus an overnight for the second version.

INGREDIENTS:

1 (4 pound) brisket, i.e. "first cut" brisket, in which the butcher removes the lower, fattier half.
2 - 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 quart chicken stock
2 - 4 sweet potatoes, depending on size, cubed into 1 1/2-2 inch pieces
3 - 5 large carrots, cut into large chunks
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/3 cup dark brown sugar.
Approximately 1/2 teaspoon salt
10 twists of pepper from a pepper mill (black pepper)
Horseradish served on the side

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose a large oven-proof pan with cover, the kind sometimes called a Dutch oven. The brisket should fit inside without too much crowding. It will shrink, but you'll need to flip it over, so you can use the space.

Heat the pan until hot, then add all of the vegetable oil.

Rinse and pat dry the brisket, then slip it into the hot oil. Brown well, about 10 minutes a side. Add salt and pepper.

Add the chicken stock, letting it nearly cover the brisket. Allow it to boil rapidly for a minute or so, then turn the heat to a simmer, and cover.

Slowly cook for 45 minutes.

In the meantime, turn the oven to 400 degrees.
(continued above)

Remove top and sprinkle in nutmeg. Turn the meat over in the chicken stock and stir. If a lot of the stock has boiled away, add water.

Add carrots, sweet potatoes and brown sugar. Cover and place in oven for one hour.

Remove from oven; spoon out the carrots and potatoes into a separate bowl. Place brisket on a cutting board, and let it sit for about 15 minutes before slicing. Slice across the grain with a long, very sharp knife, making each slice about 1/8" thick.

--OR--

For easier slicing, and a more attractive presentation, refrigerate the brisket overnight then slice cold. Reheat with the carrots and potatoes and serve with horseradish, if you like.

Seder Plate

The Seder Plate by Judy Gruen

Passover is above all about the miraculous deliverance of the Jewish people after hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt. It is also about learning to understand the concept of true spiritual freedom. A centerpiece of the Seder, both literally and figuratively, is the Seder plate, containing foods that symbolize many facets of the holiday.

Here's what you'll need on your Seder plate:

1. A roasted shank bone or turkey bone ("zeroa," in Hebrew), representing the lamb that was offered by the Jews to God on the eve of the Exodus
2. A bitter vegetable ("maror", in Hebrew), such as grated horseradish or some bitter greens, reflective of our bitter slavery
3. A root vegetable ("karpas"), such as a boiled potato, yet another symbol of back-breaking labor and the minimal food we had to eat during slavery
4. An apple-nut-wine mixture ("charoset"), symbolizing the mortar we had to make to build bricks. Although it symbolizes part of our slavery, the charoset is a sweet dish that people like to eat along with their matzoh, so make a lot!
5. A roasted egg, ("beitzah") representing the traditional holiday sacrifice that the Jewish high priests used to offer in the ancient Temple of Jerusalem
6. Romaine lettuce or other bitter vegetable ("chazeret"), also reflective of bitter enslavement

(continued above)

Of course, Jews don't "break bread" at the Passover Seder -- they break matzah! And because it is (let's be honest here) flat and dry, it breaks very easily! A Seder table will also feature prominently a plate with three unbroken matzohs, covered by a special covering. As the Seder progresses these matzohs will be eaten, all in due time.

Four cups of wine or grape juice are also drunk throughout the Seder, so stock up since it will go fast if you have a lot of guests!