

# THE **Oomph!** DIGEST

## An Oomph! Digest Special: Passover



Passover, often referred to as Pesach, is a widely celebrated festival honouring the exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian enslavement and the oncoming of the Exodus.

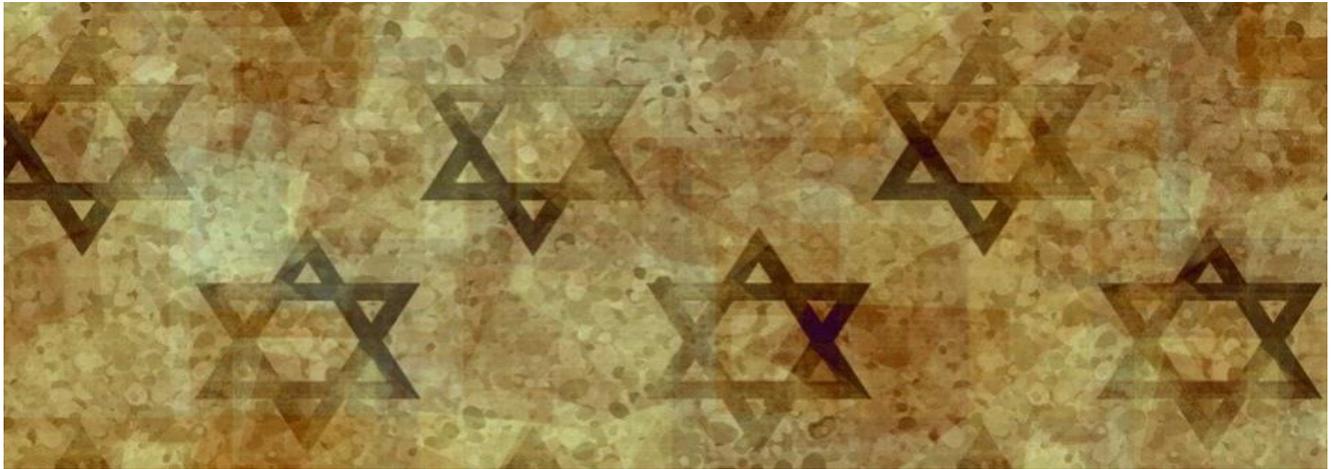
During the seven days of Passover, Jewish people do not eat anything leaven, including leaven bread and instead eat Matzah bread which symbolises the haste of Jews fleeing Egypt.

Passover is often celebrated with an elaborate family meal on the first day of the festivities called the seder. The seder is the most universally celebrated Jewish tradition and includes many traditions.

At seder, Jewish adults drink 4 cups of wine to symbolise the 4 expressions from God that the Jews would be delivered from slavery. People are also encouraged to taste bitter herbs, vegetables dipped in salt water, roasted lamb and roasted egg. These help families remember history and encourage them to discuss the story of Passover.

Passover is celebrated with songs and prayers from the book of Haggadah and children are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the celebration, often putting on plays and reading extracts from sacred texts.

## The Story of Passover



In ancient Egypt, after years of peace between the Jewish people and Egyptians in the province of Goshen, the Egyptian pharaoh ordered the enslavement of Jews and the killing of the first born Jewish sons.

One of these sons, Moses, was saved from drowning and adopted into the Egyptian royal family. When Moses learned of his cultural heritage, he begged the Pharaoh to free the Jewish population.

When the Pharaoh refused, Moses

escaped to the Sinai Peninsula where he stayed for 40 years. It is said that God spoke to Moses and told him to go back to Egypt and fight for Jewish freedom.

Moses warned that God would send 10 plagues to Egypt if this enslavement was not stopped, but the Egyptian royal family refused to free the slaves. As these plagues grew in intensity, the Egyptian people encouraged the Pharaoh to free the Jewish people. This is what Passover celebrates.

### Did you know...

The Jewish calendar does not follow the traditional Gregorian calendar, but instead follows the yearly lunar cycles. This means that Passover lands on different dates each year. The celebration lands on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the Hebrew month of Nisan and finishes on either the 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> (depending on whether or not you live in Israel). Jewish people who live in Israel celebrate for 7 days, but those living in other countries celebrate for 8.

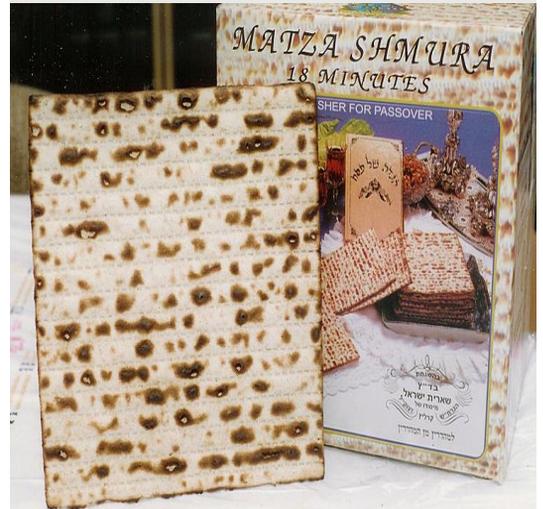


## The 10 Plagues of Passover



When the Pharaoh refused to free the enslaved Jews, despite the threat of God's retribution, 10 plagues were sent to Egypt. These included: turning Egypt's water into blood, an influx of frogs, an infestation of lice or gnats, wild animals, pestilence of livestock, boils, thunderstorms, hoards of locusts, three days of darkness and, finally, the death of Egyptian's first born sons. Jewish people painted lambs blood on their door frames so the plagues would 'pass over' their houses.

## Matzo Bread



Matzah bread is made with wheat flour and is unleavened. It is an integral part of Jewish cuisine and is often incorporated into a soup. Matzah Ball soup is an iconic recipe that incorporates Matzah with chicken soup. Jewish people eat it at Passover to represent the Jewish people fleeing Egypt before their bread could rise.

## Fasting for Passover

In traditional Jewish households, the oldest child may practise fasting for the first day of Passover to remember the Egyptian decree of killing the first born son of Jewish families. In homes with no children, the oldest member of the family often take on this responsibility. Passover is one of the oldest recorded holidays, with the initial events happening over 3,500 years ago.



## Passover Jokes

Q: Why did the Matzah quit his job?

A: Because he didn't get a raise.

Q: Why do we have a Haggadah at Passover?

A: So we can Seder right words.

## Jewish Word Scramble

Unscramble these words:

- a) WISHJE
- b) MAZAHT
- c) SEARDE
- d) TOARH
- e) ESUYGNOAG

**Word Scramble Answers:**  
 a) JEWISH b) MATZAH c) SEDER d) TORAH e) SYNAGOGUE

**Quiz Answers:**  
 1. a) 2. c) 3. b) 4. 2) 5. c)

## Passover Quiz

1. **Who led the Jewish people out of Egypt and into the wilderness for 40 years?**
  - a) Moses
  - b) Joseph
  - c) Adam
2. **The word Seder comes from which Hebrew word?**
  - a) Governance
  - b) Travel
  - c) Order
3. **According to the biblical story, which sea did 'parted to allow the Israelites to escape?**
  - a) The Adriatic Sea
  - b) The Red Sea
  - c) The Caspian Sea
4. **How many times do Jewish people wash their hands during the Seder meal?**
  - a) 2
  - b) 8
  - c) 5
5. **What piece of fruit is added to modern Seder plates to celebrate women?**
  - a) Melon
  - b) Apple
  - c) Orange