



sixth&i



romemu  
JEWISH LIFE, ELEVATED

## What it Takes: How to Lead a Virtual Seder

Rabbi Jesse Paikin • rabbijesse@sixthandi.org

One who is alone [at the Seder] asks themselves:

“How different is this night!?” (*“Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh”*)

היה לבדו שואל לעצמו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה

*Maimonides, Mishneh Torah: Laws of Chametz and Matzah 7:3*

1. Introduction
2. The best *seder* I ever attended
3. Why have a *seder*?
4. Order of the *seder*
5. Choosing a *Haggadah*
6. Supplementing your *Haggadah*
7. What you'll need for your *seder* table
8. Making it your own
9. The “virtual” part
10. Resources
11. Questions

“The best *seder* I ever  
attended was...  
Because...”

Why have a  
*seder*... at all?

So... What is *your*  
theme/goal/highlight  
of your *seder*?

What do you  
want to lift up?

# The Order of the Seder

## PROLOGUE

Candle lighting  
Order of the Seder

## ACT 1: THE BEGINNING

1. *Kadeish* / First cup of Wine
2. *Urchatz* / Washing Hands
3. *Karpas* / Dipping an earth vegetable
4. *Yachatz* / Splitting the middle matzah

## ACT 2: THE TELLINGS

5. *Magid* / Telling the story

### Scene 1

*Mah Nishtanah* / How is this night different?

*Avadim Chayinu* / We were slaves

### Scene 2

*Arba'ah Banim* / The Four Children

*Mitchila Ovdei Avodah Zarah* /  
In the Beginning, we were idol worshippers

*V'hi She'amdah* / The Holy One Saves Us

### Scene 3

*Tzei U'Imad* / Go and Learn

*Arami Oved Avi* / My father was a refugee

*Dayeinu* / It would have been enough...

### Scene 4

*Rabban Gamliel: "Pesach, Matzah, Maror?"*

*B'chol Dor Vador* / In Every Generation

The Second Cup of Wine

## ACT 3: THE FEAST

6. *Rachtzah* / Washing Hands (with blessing)
7. *Motzi Matzah* / Blessing over matzah
8. *Maror* / Bitter herbs
9. *Korech* / Sandwich of maror
10. *Shulchan Orech* / Set the table for the feast

## ACT 4: GRATITUDE

11. *Tzafun* / Afikoman
12. *Bareich* / (Grace after Meal)

Third Cup of Wine

## ACT 5: REDEMPTION

*Sh'foch...* / Pour Out...

*Eliyahu Hanavi*

13. *Hallel* / Praises

Fourth Cup of Wine

14. *Nirtzah* / Parting

*L'shanah ha'ba'ah b'yerushalayim* /  
Next Year in Jerusalem

*Sefirat Ha'Omer* / Counting of Omer (Night 2)

*Zemirot* / Songs

From *New American Haggadah*, Ed. Jonathan Safran Foer

Once everything  
is set, chant:

Let us...	Sanctify And Wash	קדש ורחץ
	Dip Split And Tell	ברפס יחץ מגיד
	Be Washed And Bless The Poor Man's Bread	רחצה מוציא מצה
	Bitter Bundle And Set Down to Eat	מרור בזרף שלקח עזרף
	Hide It And Bless	צפון ברך
	Praise It Be Pleased	הלל נרצה

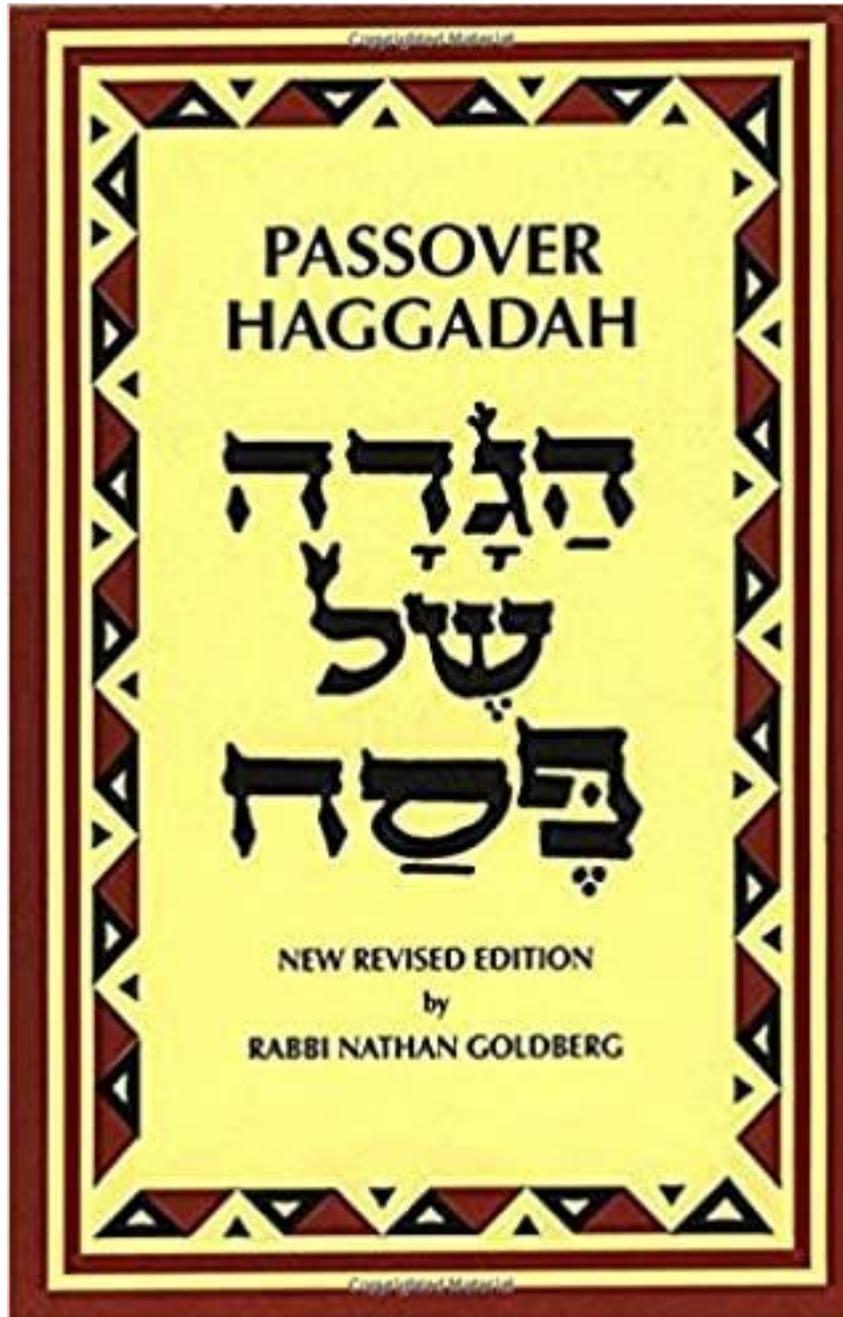
“Rabban Gamliel was accustomed to say:

‘Anyone who has not said these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled their obligation, and these are them:

the *Pesach* sacrifice, *matzah*, and *maror*.”

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר  
שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יָדָיו  
חֹבְתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמָרוֹר.

# Choosing a Haggadah



Consider how you're going to get everyone on the same page – literally!

How familiar are your guests with the outline of a *Haggadah* and *seder*?

Will everyone bring their own *Haggadah*?

Or... do you want to make sure everyone's reading from the same pages and text?

What relationship does your *Haggadah* of choice have to the *seder* you are creating?

Do you want a *Haggadah* with text that you'll just read through to narrate the *seder*?

Or do you want commentary, questions, and activities?

Are you going to use a traditional *Haggadah*, and flip through / pick and choose / skip ahead?

Or do you want a *Haggadah* that matches up with the theme, focus, and outline of your *seder*?

What about kids and younger people?

What about those who have vision impairments?

If you're compiling your own and sending to people– make sure you save as a PDF so all the formatting stays the same no matter what device it's accessed from.

Will people be printing at home, or following on one screen? Think about text size.

## Haggadot.com

Open source, create-your-own, lots of beautiful options available



### Koren

5 for 4 sale on the [Sacks Haggadah](#). Beautiful [children's and youth options](#).

Traditional, full text. Not transliterated Great commentary, instructions, and essays.



### A Different Night

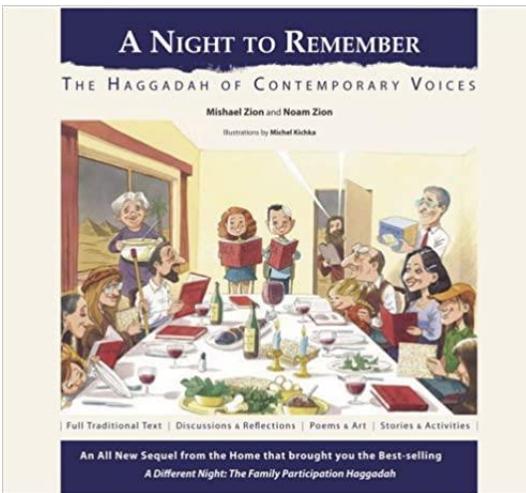
Full traditional seder, but with large amounts of art and commentaries, and discussion starters -- all in a user-friendly format that makes it easy to customize your seder. The Four Children section (with 20 representations going back to 1526) is already a classic.

[Leader's Guide](#)



## New American Haggadah

Beautiful design and commentary from Jeffrey Goldberg, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Lemony Snicket, and Nathaniel Deutsch. Less user friendly – large, and you have to turn the pages a lot. More expensive.



## A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices

A full traditional *haggadah* with a contemporary and Israeli accent. Commentaries from scholars and rabbis, mostly late 20th century, but also from novelists, poets, political leaders, and others. This book is for the family that wants to enhance their seder by bringing in ideas that will make the evening rich, thought-provoking, and fun for all. Many items for younger and older children are sprinkled throughout the book.



## Asufa Haggadah

It's become a tradition: every year, a group of more than 40 Israeli artists comes together and creates a new Haggadah. They follow only two rules: Each artist creates only a single page. The artists must use the standard Haggadah text.

**Hebrew/English Edition**  
**2020 Hebrew Edition**



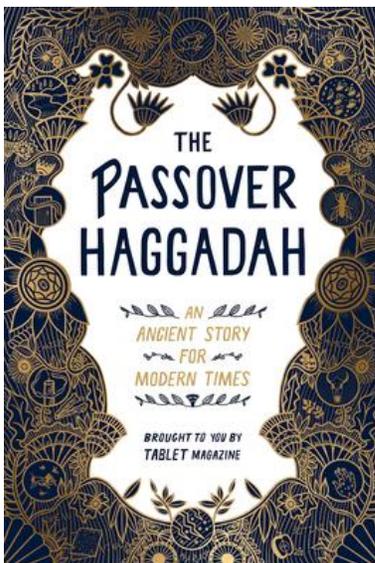
## Unbound

This designer piece is an interactive series of 12 tactile cards with the full text of the Passover seder in Hebrew and in English, designed with visuals that illustrate old and new interpretations of the text.



## The Kveller Haggadah

“For curious kids and their grown-ups. Designed to guide families through an epic journey from slavery to freedom, we go deep into Jewish traditions in a kid-friendly way, yet we don’t overlook the dramatic tensions of the Passover story. We created the Kveller Haggadah to promote curiosity, even when there are no easy answers.”



## Tablet - The Passover Haggadah

“Both proudly traditional and blazingly modern, it is a perfect blueprint for remembering the past, living in our present, and imagining the future. Here you’ll find the entirety of the Seder text for those who don’t want to miss a thing—including Hebrew, English, and a newly developed transliteration that makes the Hebrew surprisingly accessible. And, alongside, contemporary questions, illustrations, and meditations on freedom, community, destiny, and other topics that will engage the whole group in a lively and memorable discussion, especially once you’ve started in on those obligatory four cups of wine.”

# Supplementing your Haggadah



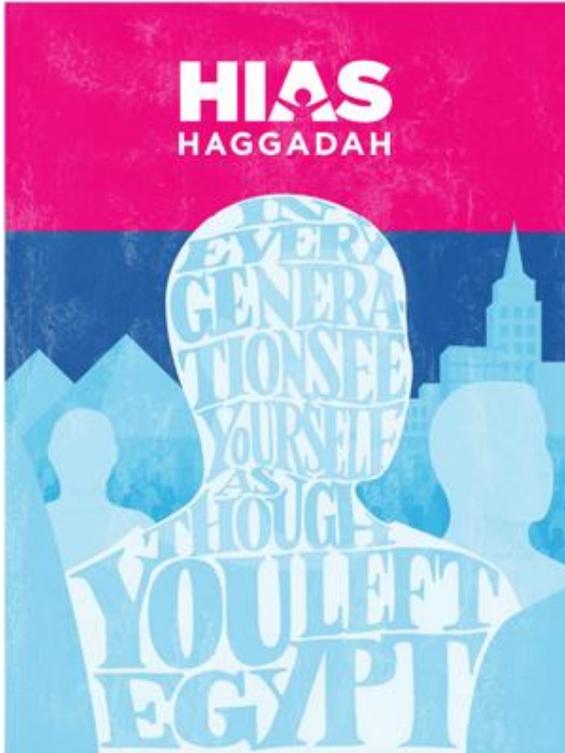
## JDC Entwine Reordered: Global Passover Toolkit

Created to bring a global, interconnected experience around the themes of Passover, this Entwine at Home Toolkit transforms your Seder with unique Passover stories and flavors from all over the world.



## American Jewish World Service Haggadot & Resources

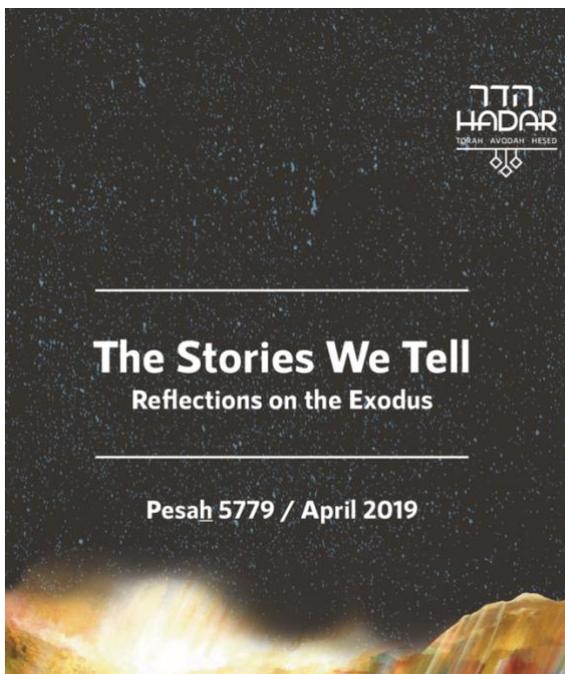
Use the AJWS Global Justice Haggadah to spark meaningful conversations at your Seder — and connect our shared story of liberation with people fighting for freedom around the world today.



## **HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)**

The HIAS Haggadah offers a deeper exploration of the global refugee crisis. It can be used as a whole or each part can be used as a stand-alone addition to a family or communal Seder.

Before your Seder, spend some time reading through the entire document to familiarize yourself with which piece(s) might resonate most with your guests. Consider balancing discussion, readings, and ritual.



## **Hadar Institute**

The story of Pesach is our foundational story; the way we tell it on Seder night says a lot about us. In the following pages are reflections on the holiday and its traditions from Hadar's distinguished faculty, offering insights old and new on everything from the Haggadah liturgy to the story of the Exodus itself. Use this resource to enrich your experience of Pesach, prompting questions to discuss at your Seder and beyond.

[5780/2020](#) | [5779/2019](#)

# What you'll need for your Seder Table

From *JewishGiftPlace*

## 7 SYMBOLS OF THE PASSOVER SEDER PLATE

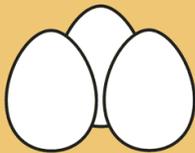


### MAROR AND CHAZERET

Bitter herbs, such as romaine lettuce, endives, and horseradish, is eaten to remind us of the harshness and bitter lives of the Jewish slaves in Egypt.

### CHAROSET

This sweet mixture of apples, cinnamon, wine, and nuts is symbolic of the mortar that the Jewish slaves used to build pyramids and buildings during their captivity in Egypt.



### BEITZAH

An egg is roasted to symbolize the mourning and sadness after the destruction of the Temple. It also symbolizes Spring, renewal, and rejuvenation.

### ZEROAH

A shank bone of meat or poultry reminds Jews of the mighty arm of God. It also symbolizes the Paschal lamb offered at Passover in the ancient Temple.



### KARPAS

A vegetable of parsley, celery, or potatoes, is dipped into salt water, and should be allowed to drip off, to symbolize the bitter tears of the Jewish slaves.

## And also...

Candles (x2)

Washing bowl & cup

Bowl(s) of salt water

Plate with 3 *matzot*, covered with cloth

Plenty of *matzah* for eating

Wine or juice (for at least 4 cups pp)

Extra cup with wine for *Eliyahu* (Elijah)

Enough *haggadot* for everyone

Extra cup with water for Miriam

An Orange

Other symbolic additions to *seder* plate

# Making it Your Own

**Open with Inspiration:** Beforehand, make sure each person has at least three slips of paper with “Comment / Question / Story” written on them. Everyone has to use up their slips during the *seder* – this sets the tone right from the beginning.

**Introduce yourself:** With your name, and one way you feel you’ve come out of *mitzrayim* / Egypt / a narrow place. And how is this night different from other nights? Use the Iraqi Jewish custom of looking in mirror as you say it!

**What’s valuable to you:** Bring objects of value to your *seder* table. If you had to leave in a hurry, what would be most important to you?

**Seder/Order:** When has something in your life happened in the wrong order? What did it feel like? Has anyone disobeyed an order? Why?

**Wine:** Why do we drink so much wine at the *seder*? What does it bring out in you?

**Washing:** What does it mean to cleanse ourselves this year? What are you washing away? What do you want to purify and prepare yourself for?

**Maggid:** The core of the *seder* is the telling of the story. The traditional text contains four different tellings, each beginning with a question. What are your four stories of freedom? How much do you know about your family’s actual exodus from a country? What can you retell at the *seder*?

## What are the crucial components of the *maggid*?

- **Assimilation and Identity:** How does a minority preserve its identity?
- **Freedom:** Freedom *from* **and** freedom *to*
- **Prejudice:** How do antisemitic stereotypes function both in the minds of the oppressors and in the self-image of the Jews?
- **Suffering and Empathy:** Does it make us more empathetic to others? Can it make us vengeful or insensitive or apathetic?

**Plagues:** What are the ten literal and figurative things that plague us today?

**Blessings:** What are our ten blessings today?

**Eliyahu / Elijah:** What does redemption look like for you?

## From *A Different Pesach: Ideas for the Solo Seder*:

**Front Porch/Stoop/Threshold L'Chaim:** If you live in an urban area or close enough to the next house, make a time before Yom Tov to go outside and have a L'Chaim or share one part of the Seder. You don't have to share exactly the same religious practices as your neighbor. This is a perfect moment to come together in spirit, but please be sure you're at least six feet apart and on separate stoops/porches, and not actually congregating.

**Lean, baby, Lean.** Haseiba. The moment where we awkwardly lean in mid-air as a nod to "royalty" and "comfort" can actually be done on the couch. Or pillows on the floor. A yoga mat, a hammock, a lawn chair! This is an example of where a solo seder can actually be more comfortable and luxurious than usual. You won't be crowding anyone else out this year! Where do you feel the most royal in your home?

**Stay Moving:** Create little movement prompts for yourself to shake things up and get you to move throughout the seder. Walk from one space to another. Stretch your body. Open the door for Elijah and look up at the moon. Also, find ways to be in physical contact with your own body, if that feels right to you. Put your hand on your heart during certain readings or sections of the seder, or hold your own hand. Take intentional breaths, and experience your body that way.

**Karpas:** Why is it important to acknowledge the sadness during a day of freedom? What power does it have to begin the night from the tears of slavery? What are the different types of tears you have in life? What do we need to purify ourselves from? What are we purifying ourselves for?

**Rachtzah:** What is different about washing your hands to prepare yourself to "do something" as opposed to washing away something?

**Motzi Matzah:** What nourishes us in this season?

**Maror and Korech:** Lots of the steps of the seder are reliant on our senses, and on experiencing the story of the seder in our bodies. Spend some time thinking about sensations, and on how the sensory nature of the seder helps us think more deeply about empathy.

**Four Children:** How is each of the four children present within each one of us? This is a relevant question to ask when we're flying solo at the seder. Check this out by Jordan Namerow [The Four Children and COVID-19](#), and use it to have this conversation with yourself, or to discuss it before the seder or after Shabbat ends with someone else.

**Vhi-Sheamdah:** is a story of resilience and overcoming challenges. What are challenges you have overcome in your life? Who supported you? Who have you supported?

**Dayeinu:** Make a list of all the things you're grateful for in your life. Use the liturgy to list them out: *Since I have \_\_\_\_\_, Dayeinu.*

**Mah Nishtana:** Try standing on a chair and singing the four questions as if you were 8 years old. What other important, challenging, or nourishing questions are arising for us this season?

**Afikoman:** What are we hiding from ourselves? What would be possible if we allowed ourselves to find the truth? Why is it important to finish the meal with “being found”?

**Nirtzah:** Experiment with solo singing challenges. Sing all of Ha’Gadya in one breath. Sing Who Knows One in English and Hebrew with the hand-motions. Sing your favorite song about freedom or happiness. Don’t be afraid to move, clap, snap, or dance!

## From *Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts*

### ***Virtual seder activities***

Meant to educate, engage, and connect people around Passover prep and the seder. Each may be used as is, or you can make a copy of the sheet and adapt it for a different setting or audience.

### ***Great Things Come in Fours***

On Passover, great things come in fours. We drink four cups of wine, tell the stories of four children, and ask four questions. In keeping with the spirit of the upcoming holiday, Sefaria’s education team has four questions of our own to share, complete with materials to explore as you prepare for Passover. Each sheet pairs classical texts with fascinating images so that learners can explore some of the big ideas of Passover.

### ***Four Children: Different Understandings, Different Ways to Learn***

The rabbis of the Haggadah understood that each person is an individual who sees the world through a different lens, who learns differently, and who has different strengths and weaknesses. In this sheet we will look at a passage from the Haggadah and several illustrations that were inspired by it. Each illustration will be followed by questions to help us better understand the quote from the Haggadah and our own approaches to learning.

### ***Matzah and Meaning-Making***

What is the meaning of Matzah? Is it the “Bread of Affliction,” the “Poor Person’s Bread,” or something else? Includes historical photos of *matzah* production from around the world, from the collection of the National Library of Israel.

### ***The Art of the Ten Plagues***

# The “Virtual Part”

## What platform/service are you going to use?

- Video? Conference Call?
- Have you used it before? Have you used it before as a host?
- What are your guests familiar with?
- Do you want to screenshare, or just video?
- Do you have hard of hearing people? Google Hangouts has auto-captions

## Technical Considerations

- Audio
  - Where is the device positioned, so that you don't have to yell?
  - Who is going to manage muting/un-muting participants? Do you have a script so you know when, or are you just going to wing it?
  - Audio doesn't sync in real-time, so who's in charge of muting during singing?
- Visual
  - Lighting – what are the sources? Windows, too.
  - Where is the camera angled, so that everyone can be seen naturally?
- Chat?
  - If using Zoom/Skype or a platform that has a chat feature – is this going to be something you make use of?
- Your computer's bandwidth
  - Only open what you need
  - Plug in to your modem/router if you can
  - Backup plan?

## What's the “run of show”?

- Does the leader read everything?
- Will you go “around the table”? (If so - is someone muting and unmuting?)
- Do people get an outline ahead of time, if not sharing a *haggadah*?
- Announcing page numbers / sections?

## Pesach Ritual Items

- Ideally, every location should have a *seder* plate at each location
- At the minimum, each location should have:
  - Wine/grape juice
  - Three matzahs (at least)
  - Karpas (any green vegetable)
  - Maror (any bitter vegetable: horseradish, endive, other bitter greens)
  - Salt water

## Food

- Are you going to share menus? Do a recipe swap?
- How about meal preparation together? From *Alma*: “This is nice because you can rotate your cooking buddies and get some quality time in with a bunch of people.”
- [\*How to Cook for Passover During the Coronavirus Crisis\*](#)

## Day of

- How are you going to balance between cooking, setting the table, and prepping the tech?
- Depending on the layout of your home - are you okay with others seeing food being prepped at the same time the *seder* is taking place?
- Make sure everyone knows when to log on, and what your expected timing is, so people can coordinate cooking food, battery life, etc.
- Open the “room” before you begin to give people lots of time to show up and troubleshoot
- Will there be socializing before and after?
- What happens during dinner – cameras on, or each group to themselves?

[Visual guide to using Zoom](#)

[10 Critical Insights for Successful Online Gatherings](#)

*How Different Will This Night Be: 10 Tips for Your Virtual Seder*, Dr. Ron Wolfson

# Practice Beforehand!

# Resources

**Tablet Magazine** is putting together a resource-distributing project devoted to helping Jews across the USA prepare for Passover and their seders: “What do YOU need from us. Haggadahs? Kosher for Passover food? Seder supplies? How-to tutorials? Let us know through [this form](#) and we’ll be in touch soon. Please share [the form](#) widely, so that it gets to those whom we can help.”

Days: [Passover in a Box](#)

[Pinterest](#)

## DIY Seder Plates

- [toriavey.com/home-garden/homemade-passover-seder-plates/](http://toriavey.com/home-garden/homemade-passover-seder-plates/)
- [breakingmatzo.com/fun-projects/diy-seder-plate/](http://breakingmatzo.com/fun-projects/diy-seder-plate/)

## How to Sing the Haggadah:

- [www.templerodefshalom.org/nusach-of-the-haggadah/](http://www.templerodefshalom.org/nusach-of-the-haggadah/)
- [offtonic.com/nusach/Pesach2011/Pesach2011.html](http://offtonic.com/nusach/Pesach2011/Pesach2011.html)
- [www.ashbournemusicpublishing.com/product/chanting-the-haggadah-selected-passages/](http://www.ashbournemusicpublishing.com/product/chanting-the-haggadah-selected-passages/)
- [Hagada for Passover \(הגדה של פסח\) on Spotify](#)

## [MyJewishLearning.com on Pesach](#)

- [General Guide](#)
- [How to Conduct a Passover Seder and The Passover \(Pesach\) Seder](#)
- [Must-Know Passover Terms](#)
- [What It Means to Keep Kosher for Passover](#)
- [Passover \(Pesach\) At Home](#)
- [9 Things You Didn't Know About Passover](#)

## Other Pesach Guides & Resources

- [Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies → Interactive Seder Experience](#)
- [Tablet Magazine's Passover FAQ](#)
- [Jewish Theological Seminary's Passover Resources](#)
- [Union for Reform Judaism's \*Digital Content to Enliven This Year's Virtual Seder\*](#)

## Articles

*How to Host a Virtual Passover Seder*, Annie Weinberg

*How to Celebrate Passover During the Pandemic*, Meryl Ain

*Passover in a pandemic: Families on Zoom, solo seders and broken traditions*, Ben Sales

*Pesach in the Age of Social Distancing*, Rabbi Rebecca Blady

[New York Times: The Tech Headaches of Working From Home & How to Remedy Them](#)

*From shoddy Wi-Fi to digital distractions, our tech can make remote work miserable. Here's how to overcome the problems.*

## Other Webinars

Jewish Education Project: [Seder in the Time of Social Distancing](#)