

Contact: Gigi Lubin
gigi@newsmarkinc.com
773/549-0000, ext. 102

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
3-08

Different Yes, But Passover and Easter Have Food and Symbolism in Common

Charoseth a Favorite Around the World

Elgin, IL -- Connected through shared themes of hope and rebirth, Passover and Easter both employ food as part of symbolic observances. And both include practices stemming from ancient spring rituals.

Nuts are one ubiquitous food at Easter and Passover celebrations, probably because they have been part of the human diet worldwide for thousands of years. Almonds and walnuts are among the earliest cultivated foods, according to historians.

The Passover staple called charoseth, which features almonds and walnuts, is especially loved by children for its sweetness and rich flavor. The symbolic color and texture are reminiscent of the mortar used by the Israelites to bond bricks during their enslavement in ancient Egypt. The word actually comes from the Hebrew word “cheres,” – clay.

Recipes for charoseth are as different as the people who make it. The basic recipe usually includes apples, chopped nuts and sweet red wine. One Jewish scholar is quoted as saying that non-Jews tend to think of charoseth as “Waldorf salad without the mayonnaise and celery.”

While Passover and the Seder focus spiritually on the exodus of the Israelites from slavery and the rebirth of the Jewish people, the Easter observance ending with a Sunday feast has its roots in Gospels depicting the Last Supper as a Passover Seder, and many Christian Easter services mark the connection between the “passing over” from death to life for the Israelites and that of Jesus’ resurrection.

On the Easter table, nuts have their place in symbolic foods such as fruit and nut eggs, another symbol of spring and rebirth, which like

charoseth are sweet and a favorite of children. Almonds, pistachios and walnuts are specifically referenced in the Bible and pistachios were among the presents Jacob sent into Egypt “for the purpose of conciliating Joseph (Gen. 43:11),” according to Bible History online.

Today, many families have their own Easter and Passover traditions, often combining modern American Easter customs such as the omnipresent “Easter bunny” with those from antiquity. Both have their roots in ancient beliefs.

And both have a common element in feasting that features foods that have been around as long as history itself – such as nuts. Here’s one recipe for Charoseth that members of both faiths can enjoy together.

From Fisher Nuts:

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cup Chef’s Naturals Walnuts
1/2 Large cooking apple (or other red apple)
Kosher wine to moisten
4 teaspoons - Cinnamon
4 teaspoons - Sugar

Directions:

Mince the walnuts and the apple together well, keeping the texture coarse as mortar.

Moisten with wine.

Flavor with cinnamon and sugar.

Makes about 20 one-teaspoon servings.

Can last for 3 days in a refrigerator.