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Passover Thoughts

Although preparations for Passover are the most time consuming of all holidays, it is the richest and most meaningful for our family and friends – and it is the most fun.

I chose a charoset recipe to share because this paste of nuts and fruit symbolizes the mortar that the Jews used to make bricks when they were slaves in Egypt. Different varieties of charoset represent to me the regional wanderings of the Jews in the Diapora where they adapted their tradition to what was available in the region. I always serve 5 different types of charoset from around the world including a Moroccan haroset that is always rolled into balls or, as the French call them, truffles.

We, like, many other Jewish families, have inherited Passover traditions and created our own.

What makes our seder tradition unique, aside from the food, is our Passover play, presented each year between the main course and the dessert. The play has the same slightly irreverent theme of the story of Moses with slightly different casts, incorporating new children and anyone who is willing to have some fun. We love it.

Menu

Five Charosets

- Iraqi Date Jam or "biblical honey"
- Seven-Fruit Charoset from Surinam
- Apple and Nut Charoset
- Israeli Mixed Sephardic Ashkenazi Charoset
- Moroccan Charoset Truffles with Dates, Almonds, and Apples

Eggs Baked in Sand

Homemade Gefilte Fish

Chicken Soup with Matzo Balls and Escarole

Brisket with Wine, Tomatoes, and Herbs

Panoply of Cooked Salads

- Asparagus Salad
- Red Pepper
- Carrot
- Artichoke and Orange
- Swiss Chard

Chocolate Truffles with Fresh, Local Strawberries

Almond Torte with Lemon

Recipe

Moroccan Charoset Truffles with Dates, Almonds and Apples, adapted from *Quiches, Kugels and Couscous: My Search for Jewish Cooking in France* (Knopf)

1 pound almonds

1 pound pitted dates

2 apples, peeled, cored, and quartered
1 teaspoon plus ½ cup cinnamon for rolling
¼ teaspoon dried ginger

1. Place the almonds in a food processor with a steel blade and pulse until finely ground. Add the dates, apple, 1 teaspoon of the cinnamon, and ginger and continue pulsing until the apples form little pieces and the mixture comes together. You might have to do this in 2 batches. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. The next day, shape the mixture into balls the size of a large marble. Put about ½ cup of cinnamon in a bowl, and roll the balls in it. Serve 2 per person.

Yield: About 40 charoset balls which will serve 20 people