

## Passover 2015 begins Friday evening, April 3, and ends Saturday evening, April 11.

### **What is Passover?**

Passover is a festival of [freedom](#).

It commemorates the Israelites' [Exodus](#) from Egypt, and their transition from [slavery](#) to freedom.

The main ritual of Passover is the [seder](#), which occurs on the first night (or, outside of Israel, the first two nights) of the holiday—a festive meal that involves the re-telling of the Exodus through stories and song and the consumption of ritual foods, including [matzah](#) and [maror](#).

### **What are some Passover practices?**

The most salient Passover practice is a set of intense changes to the usual dietary cycle, including the absence of [hametz](#), or foods with leaven. The ecstatic cycle of psalms called [Hallel](#) is recited both at night and day (during the Seder and morning prayers). Additionally, Passover commences a 49-day period called the [Omer](#), which recalls the count between offerings brought to the [Temple](#) in Jerusalem. This count culminates in the holiday of [Shavuot](#), the anniversary of the reception of the [Torah](#).

### **What foods do we eat on Passover?**

[Matzah](#), or unleavened bread, is the [main food of Passover](#). You can purchase it in numerous stores, or you can make your own. But that's not the only dietary addition! There are many traditional, popular foods, from [haroset](#) (a mixture of apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon) to [matzo ball soup](#)--and the absence of leavening calls upon a cook to employ all of his/her culinary creativity.

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