Charoset recipe is Yemenite

These Passover recipes are given by American-born Kathy Ozery, who makes her home in Israel with husband Yefet, who was born in Yemen.

Kathy's recipe for Yemenite Charoset was published in an Israeli cookbook. The recipe makes large amounts but portions are easily reduced, she said.

The Ozerys are temporarily living in Southfield. Yefet is a resource person on Israel to the Jewish Welfare Federation. Kathy works at the Jewish Community Council as community affairs associate for Soviet Jewry.

ISRAELI-STYLE ROASTED CHICKEN

1 chicken or chicken parts
1 cup orange juice
1 cup white wine
1 sliced onion
1 sliced carrot
1 stalk celery
1 ½ teaspoon salt
pinch black pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
3 tablespoons oil
½ cup raisins
1 teaspoon cumin
1 orange

Place vegetables in bowl, pour juice and wine over, add spices. Put chicken in marinade for one hour, turning from time to time. Heat oil in frying pan and saute until golden brown; place in baking dish and pour marinade over. Arrange vegetables on top, cover with lid or aluminum foil and bake 45 minutes at medium heat. Remove cover from baking dish and bake another 30 minutes, turning from time to time to brown chicken evenly.

Strain sauce (remaining juices) through a fine strainer and boil until liquid is reduced by half. Peel orange into segments and arrange over chicken. Add raisins to sauce and pour over chicken.

Garnish with a few cumin seeds or thin strips of orange peel (soaked in hot water to remove bitter taste).

YEMENITE CHAROSET

8¾ ounces sesame seeds, toasted
2 pounds dates, pitted
1 pound raisins
1 cup almonds, chopped
1 cup walnuts, chopped
4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon salt

Toast sesame seeds by stirring frequently in pan over medium flame until evenly browned. Combine all ingredients in a pot over a low flame, adding water to achieve desired consistency. Mixture should resemble preserves. Continue cooking, aproximately 15 minutes, to allow flavors to penetrate, adding water as necessary to maintain desired consistency.

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Gathering for Seder

By Helen Zucker
special writer

The Sturman family of Bloomfield Township is gathering for a Passover Seder this year as it has for the last 20 years.

A traditional Reform Jewish family, the Sturmans belong to Temple Beth El, as their parents and grandparents did. Over the years, the family has adapted and changed the Passover ceremony, in keeping with Reform custom.

Elaine Sturman grew up in Huntington Woods. She has stayed close to her roots except for five years in Chicago, where husband Dr. Stephen Sturman spent his residency. The couple has three children, Julie, 17; Jeffrey, 15; and Marcia, 10.

Over the last 10 years, the keeping of the Seder rituals moved naturally from Elaine's parents, to an aunt and uncle, to Elaine and Fran, her sister. Fran does the first night, and Elaine does the second Seder. Both nights are equally important. The sisters cook for a week before the holiday.

Each does her own cooking, making the main dish, usually roast chicken, and many of the side dishes. Some of the guests brings matzoh farfel, a side dish, or a special dessert. Elaine likes to make lemon-filled cream puffs this time of the year.

THE STURMANS retain the family closeness, the inclusion of children in the reading of the Haggadah, lots of music, singing traditional songs such as "Dayanuh" and "Chad Gadya."

They include a Matzoh of Hope in remembrance of Soviet Jews, and they use the Union Haggadah, a rewritten version of the ancient story of Exodus. This includes a special service asking the people around the dinner table to remember and think about Soviet Jewry.

Julie Sturman brings her best friend, Rebecca Leitman, to the Sturman Seder every year. Marcia, who has a pen pal in Russia, brings a different friend each year.

The gathering of 25 also includes Fran's husband, Julian Greenebaum; the sisters' parents, Jean and Irving Rosen; Beth and Bob Sklar and their children, Josh, 8, and Elyse, 3, and, in keeping with an ancient tradition, always a guest who has no Seder to which to go.

THE SEDER begins with the arrival of the guests at about 7 p.m. Everyone catches up on what members of the family have been doing. In this busy household that takes an hour and half. At 8:30 p.m., everyone is seated.

Adorning the long table are placemats, white plates, black napkins folded into seashell napkin rings, a centerpiece of baby's breath and daisies, a decanter that belonged to Dr. Sturman's mother filled with "classic" Manischewitz red concord grape wine (the children partake along with the adults), and Shabbat candlesticks that belonged to Elaine's great-great grandmother in Russia.

BOB MCKEOWN

Around the Seder table are Julian Greenebaum (left), Frances Greenebaum, Jeff Sturman, Dr. Stephen Sturman, Elaine Sturman, Jenny Greenebaum, Julie Greenebaum and Marci Sturman.

The ceremonial plate, filled with bitter herbs or white borseradish, charoset, a shank bone, greens, a hard-boiled egg and salt water, sits near the head of the household. A platter of matzohs is near it.

DR. STURMAN begins the Seder by reading from the Haggadah. Parts are given out and everyone present who is old enough to read gets a part. A guest springs up and opens the door for the prophet, Elijah, to take his sip of wine. A glass has been poured for him, and each year a guest swears the glass looks as if someone has taken a quick nip.

Midway through, the reading stops. Elaine and Fran go into the kitchen and a long, lively dinner is served. Restless children are allowed to rise and search for the "Afikomen," the hidden matzoh. Elaine gives a small gift to everyone under 18, not only to the child who finds the wrapped "Afikomen" under the sofa cushions or behind the piano.

The Seder ends with lots of singing, and the guests leave reluctantly at about 10 p.m. They will have to wait a year to enjoy another Seder.

Though the purpose of the Seder is to remember the days of slavery in Egypt and to give thanks for freedom, the holiday is always a happy one that gives way to wine, good food and music.

For Elaine, who is chairperson of the Freedom Seder for Soviet Jewry, this is an invigorating season.

Pancakes: Here's how they size up

For every meal, every course, from appetizer to dessert, there's a pancake.

A traveler could circle the globe and find some form of this international favorite — in sizes as small as quarters and almost as big as manhole covers — stacked for breakfast, glorified for dessert, stuffed for entrees, rolled and sliced for hors d'oeuvres.

Call them hotcakes, crepes, blini, palacsintak, pfannkucho . . . they're all pancakes.

Today's pancakes are a fluffy, tender, civilized version of an ancient bread.

PANCAKES HAVE been known to be intertwined with religion, tradition and legend. Jewish people eat them on their holidays — at Hanukkah, latkes, potato pancakes; at Passover, pancakes made with matzoh meal and no leavening; at Shabuoth, when dairy dishes are eaten, cheese blintzes.

In early Christian days, when Lent was a time of abstinence from meat as well as from animal foods like milk, cheese and eggs, pancakes became a treat for the day before the beginning of Lent. Shrove Tuesday, pancakes are still eaten in many countries, and in England, Shrove Tuesday is often called "pancake day."

taste buds

chef Larry Janes

Let's not forget about the old North American legend Paul Bunyan, who had a pancake appetite that supposedly needed a grill so big with a corral around it and grain elevators to hold the flour. Concrete mixers were said to have churned the batter that merged in four-foot waves onto a griddle greased by cooks, who skated over it with slabs of bacon tied to their feet. (Sounds like some of the Janes clan at the last family reunion.)

PANCAKES CAN be cooked in many different ways. Basically, all start with a batter using flour, butter, eggs and milk. Taste and texture difference begin with the addition or omission of a leavening agent such as yeast, baking soda or baking powder.

Should you prefer to use yeast, it would be best to allow the batter to "ripen" for at least six to eight hours before beginning to cook.

Personally speaking, I think the lightest pancakes are achieved by separating the egg yolk from the egg white — with the yolk beaten into the batter and the white beaten separately until stiff but not dry — then gently folding the white into the batter and pouring immediately onto a hot, greased griddle.

A SECRET tip used by the great chefs before beginning to cook their favorite pancakes has them heating up the griddle or frying pan from the start with a small amount of grease and/or butter to coat the pan bottom. After the pan is heated significantly, pour out the grease, wipe with a clean cloth and add more fresh grease or butter and heat accordingly.

Then, just before the pan begins to smoke, add your batter. Always throw out your first, as it only begins the seasoning of the pan and collects too much of the pan taste. Then, repeat with the grease, and you're in business.

Bon appetit!

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