



# CHAROSET FROM AROUND THE WORLD



**INTRODUCTION: FROM 'THE SWEET  
STORY OF CHAROSET', MOMENT MAG,  
MAR-APR 2009, BY JOAN ALPERT**

Charoset, that aromatic ensemble of fruits, nuts, spices and wine, may be the tastiest traditional food on the Seder plate, but why it is there is a matter of debate. The Torah does not command us to eat it, and, in fact, never mentions charoset at all. Nor is there a blessing for it in the Haggadah. Yet its connection to Passover is ancient.

Scholar David Arnow and others believe that charoset may have come to the Passover ritual through the influence of ancient Greek civilization. The Greeks held symposiums during which free men consumed large quantities of wine while discussing philosophical issues and “dipping” food in mixtures of pounded nuts and spices—key ingredients in charoset.

The symbolic meaning most often mentioned is that charoset reminds us of the mortar Hebrew slaves used to build clay bricks. The fact that Hebrew for clay is *chassis* or *ceres* is frequently given as proof for this interpretation. In his 11th century *Mishneh Torah*, Moses Maimonides gives one of the first written recipes for charoset in which it is said to look like clay mixed with straw: Crush “dates, dried figs, or raisins and the like...add vinegar, and mix them with spices,” because, before being ground, spices are long and stringy like straw.

Properly prepared charoset tastes sweet so that it can soften the harshness of maror, the bitter herb. Reasons for dipping charoset in maror are explained by Rabbi Akiva: According to this second century CE Talmudic scholar, charoset is a reminder of the Egyptian apple orchards where Hebrew women secretly made love to their husbands and bore children, thus defying the pharaoh’s ban on procreation. Akiva says that Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt because of these “righteous women’s deeds.”



# CHAROSET DEFINITION AND GLOBAL VOCABULARY FROM JEWISHLANGUAGES.ORG



**Charoset** – a sweet mixture of fruits and nuts – represents the sweetness of freedom, as well as the mortar the Israelite slaves used to build pyramids in Egypt. Jewish communities around the world have different words for this symbolic food placed on the seder plate, for example:

- Ladino in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: *harosi*
- Yiddish in Lublin, Poland: *chroyses*
- Western Yiddish in Amsterdam, Netherlands: *charouses*
- Judeo-Greek in Ioannina, Greece: *charoeth*, *charosef*
- Judeo-Italian in Venice, Italy: *haroset*
- Judeo-French in Bayonne, France: *rharoche*
- Judeo-Persian in Tehran, Iran: *halegh*
- Judeo-Median in Hamadan, Iran: *haliká*
- Jewish Neo-Aramaic in Betanure, Iraq: *ħəllíq*
- Judeo-Arabic in Baghdad, Iraq: *hilq*, *silan*, *shira*
- Judeo-Arabic in Tripoli, Libya: *lahliq*
- Judeo-Arabic in Sana'a, Yemen: *dukkih*

# ASHKENAZIC APPLE-NUT FROM THE JEWISH HOLIDAY KITCHEN & THE CHILDREN'S JEWISH HOLIDAY KITCHEN BY JOAN NATHAN

**YIELD - 3 cups**

## **Ingredients**

- 6 peeled apples, coarsely chopped
- 2/3 cup chopped almonds
- 3 tablespoons sugar, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- grated rind of 1 lemon
- 4 tablespoons sweet red wine

Combine all ingredients, mixing thoroughly. Add wine as need. Blend to desired texture—some like it coarse and crunchy, others prefer it ground to a paste. Chill.



**CHAROSET THREE WAYS: TROPICAL, PERSIAN, TEX-MEX**  
**FROM 'LITTLE FERRARO KITCHEN' FOOD BLOG BY SAMANTHA**  
**FERRARO**

**PREP - 20 minutes   YIELD - 8 servings**

**Tropical Ingredients**

- 1 cup diced pineapple
- 1 cup cubed dragon fruit or sub papaya
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cubed mango
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ground macadamia nuts
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shredded coconut

**Instructions**

Add all ingredients to a bowl and stir to combine. Store in the refrigerator for up to three days.



**Persian Ingredients**

- 3 dried figs
- 3 pitted dates
- 6 dried apricots
- 2 tablespoons golden raisins
- 1 teaspoon pomegranate molasses
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped pistachios + more for garnish
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped almonds
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cardamom
- 2 tablespoons fruit juice just in case mixture is too dry
- Dried rose petals for garnish (optional)

**Instructions**

Add all ingredients to a food processor and blend until evenly incorporated. If you don't have a food processor, you can chop all the ingredients finely and stir to combine





# CHAROSET THREE WAYS: TROPICAL, PERSIAN, TEX-MEX FROM 'LITTLE FERRARO KITCHEN' FOOD BLOG BY SAMANTHA FERRARO

## Tex-Mex Ingredients

- 1 avocado pitted and cubed
- 1 orange peeled and chopped into small cubes
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons ground almonds or ground pepitas
- ½ jalapeno seeded and finely diced (optional for heat)
- ½ teaspoon tajin spice or substitute lime zest + ½ tsp. chili powder
- Salt to taste

**Instructions** - Combine all ingredients in a bowl and stir to combine.

## Notes

- The Persian charoset uses dried fruit and can be made into truffle balls as well.
- The other fresh charoset are best served within two days or the texture changes a bit.



# YEMENITE STYLE CHAROSET FROM 'JEWISH HOLIDAY COOKBOOK' BY GLORIA KAUFNER GREENE

**YIELD - 2/3 cup**

## **Ingredients**

- 6 large, brown (calimyrna) dried figs
- 6 pitted dates
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds (optional)
- about 1 tsp honey or to taste
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/8 tsp ground coriander
- pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)

## **Instructions**

Put the figs and dates through the fine blade of a food grinder, or finely grind them together in a food processor fitted with the steel blade, to make a very firm, sticky paste. Mix in the sesame seeds, honey, and spices, adjusting the latter to taste. Store the charoset in the refrigerator, tightly covered for up to 2 weeks. For best flavor, let it come to room temperature before serving.



# INDIAN STYLE CHAROSET OR JAROSETH BY JAMIE GELLER

APRIL 6, 2017

**Wine vinegar in this Indian style Charoset makes the Seder classic very similar to a chutney. The blend of sweet and sour adds another dimension to the condiment.**

**PREP - 10 minutes   YIELD - 2 cups**

## **Ingredients**

- 2 ripe mangos, cut into medium dice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dark raisins
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pitted dates
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup slivered almonds
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Pinch of kosher salt

## **Instructions**

1. Pulse mangos, raisins, dates, almonds, sugar, vinegar and salt in a food processor until they are a paste. Alternatively, you can chop the ingredients very finely with a sharp knife.
2. The charoset can be made 3 days before serving and can be stored, covered in the refrigerator.





# PERSIAN CHAROSET (HALEG) BY REYNA SIMNEGAR

MARCH 14, 2012

**Persian charoset (Haleg) is fabulous! Traditional, charoset symbolizes the mortar used by the Hebrews back in Egypt.**

## Ingredients

- 1 (6-ounce) package ground walnuts (1 1/2 cups)
- 1 (6-ounce) package ground almonds (1 11/2 cups)
- 1/2 cup pistachio nut meats, ground
- 1 cup date paste
- 1/2 cup raisins, ground
- 1/2 cup grape juice
- 1 banana, peeled and ground
- 1 apple, peeled and ground
- 2 tablespoons charoset spice

## Instructions

Grind together all the ingredients that do not come already ground. Combine very well.

### **Tricks of the trade:**

I buy already ground walnuts and almonds to make my life easier. I also purchase date paste so I don't have to grind that either. These are easily available kosher-for-Passover at many kosher groceries. The rest of the ingredients I process together into a wet paste similar in texture to chummus. Charoset spice is made by Sadaf and you can get it online; or simply mix equal parts of cardamom, ginger, and cinnamon. Keep haleg refrigerated and if it gets too thick, thin it with grape juice or even sweet wine to give it a grown up twist!



# MOROCCAN CHAROSET BALLS BY LAUREN DADOUN

JULY 14, 2011

Moroccans roll charoset into balls and place individual servings on each plate. That's what I always remembered in my grandmother's home, and that's what I do today.

For the first 10 years of my marriage, my family and I would travel back to Montreal to spend the holiday. When I started making my own Pesach, I called my mother, not knowing what to do or what recipes to use. This is my great grandmother's authentic charoset recipe, straight from Casablanca.

PREP TIME - 10 minutes   YIELD - 12 balls

## Ingredients

- 1 cup walnuts (almonds can be substituted)
- 1 green apple, peeled and cubed
- ½ cup pitted dates
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup pitted prunes
- 2 teaspoon grape juice
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon sugar



## Instructions

1. In the jar of a blender, add the walnuts, apple, dates, raisins, prune, juice, cinnamon, and sugar.
2. Blend to desired consistency.
3. Some prefer their Moroccan charoset more textured and nutty; others prefer to puree more and achieve a smoother consistency.
4. Shape into balls and refrigerate until ready to serve.

## CHINESE CHAROSET FROM BREAKINGMATZO.COM

**Common ingredients in Chinese cuisine are highlighted in this version of charoet: soy sauce, pine nuts and honey. In contrast with most charoet recipes, this one is slightly savory.**

**YIELD - 6 cups**

### **Ingredients**

- ½ pound of dates (about 1½ cups, finely chopped)
- 4 apples (finely chopped)
- ½ cup pine nuts
- 3 tbsp soy sauce (you can use gluten-free) Coconut Aminos or Bragg's Liquid Aminos can be substituted for soy sauce for Passover.
- 4 tbsp honey
- juice of one orange

### **Instructions**

1. Heat all ingredients in a saucepan until soft and smooth (about 5 minutes).





**ISRAELI STYLE**  
**“A PASSOVER SEDER WITH ISRAELI FLAVOR,” FROM THE**  
***ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH* BY JUDY ZEIDLER**

**YIELD - 10 side-dish servings**



**Ingredients**

2 apples, peeled, cored and chopped  
2 bananas, peeled and chopped  
Juice and grated peel of 1/2 lemon  
Juice and grated peel of 1/2 orange  
15 dates, pitted and chopped  
1/2 cup ground pistachios  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 cup sweet Passover wine  
5 tablespoons matzo meal

**Instructions**

In large bowl, combine apples, bananas, lemon juice and peel, orange juice and peel, dates and nuts; mix well. Add cinnamon, wine and matzo meal; blend thoroughly.

# ITALIAN STYLE

## FROM "THE BOOK OF JEWISH FOOD" BY CLAUDIA RODEN

### Ingredients

3 apples, sweet or tart  
2 pears  
2 cups sweet wine  
1/3 cup (50 g) pine nuts  
2/3 cup (50 g) ground almonds  
1/2 lb (250 g) dates, pitted and chopped  
1/4 cup (100 g) yellow raisins or sultanas  
4 oz. (100 g) prunes, pitted and chopped  
1/2 cup (100 g) sugar or \* cup (125 ml) honey or to taste  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

### Instructions

Peel and core the apples and pears and cut them in small pieces. Put all the ingredients into a pan together and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour, until the fruits are very soft, adding a little water if it becomes too dry.

Variations: Other possible additions: chopped lemon or candied orange peel, walnuts, pistachios, dried figs, orange or lemon juice, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves.



# CHICKEN WITH THYME, INCLUDING LEFTOVER CHAROSET FROM THE PHILADELPHIA JEWISH EXPONENT/THE NOSHER

**YIELD - 4 servings**

## **Ingredients**

8 chicken drumsticks  
1 head garlic, cut in half widthwise  
2 large red onions, finely sliced  
1 lemon, sliced into rounds  
1 lemon, juiced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup leftover charoet  
6 sprigs fresh thyme  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups water  
Olive oil



## **Instructions**

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.

Place the garlic and sliced onions in a medium-sized roasting dish. Dot the lemon rounds around the dish and sprinkle with the thyme. Drizzle with a tablespoon of olive oil.

In a separate mixing bowl, toss the chicken pieces with the charoet and add the lemon juice, a pinch of salt and pepper, and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Mix well, allowing the mixture to get under the chicken skin.

Place the chicken pieces in the roasting dish, along with the garlic, onions, lemon and thyme. Pour water in the bottom of the roasting dish and roast for 30 minutes. Turn the chicken pieces over and continue cooking another 15 minutes. The chicken should be caramelized and crisp, and the onions should be softened.