

# A Delicious GLUTEN-FREE Passover

*Passover is the Jewish celebration of the Biblical story of the Jews leaving slavery in Egypt and journeying to the Holy Land. It usually falls in early spring. This year, it begins on April 3. During Passover, there is a Seder dinner that includes many customs centered around food and drink. Fortunately, many aspects of Passover are actually pretty gluten-free friendly. Most Passover recipes are also corn- and soy-free, and many are dairy- and grain-free. So if you have multiple food allergies or sensitivities, Passover may become your new favorite holiday!*

## The Scoop on Passover Rules

As the story goes, while fleeing Egypt, the Israelites didn't have time for their bread to rise, so the tradition is to eat only unleavened bread, or matzo, as a way of honoring that journey. Matzo are thin, dry flatbreads, and look and taste a lot like big crackers. According to Jewish rules, matzo itself must be made from wheat, spelt, rye, barley, or oats, making life a bit tricky for gluten-free folks.

Matzo is used as the primary bread substitute, and matzo crumbs are used in many dishes, too. Matzo makes an appearance at Seder dinner. People keeping Kosher for Passover avoid most other forms of wheat, barley, rye, and oats for the full eight days of Passover. Special noodles are allowed, but regular pasta, breads, all flour, and wheat-based dishes are not permitted. Some traditions, such as Ashkenazi Jews, also don't allow consumption of rice, corn, millet, or beans. Quinoa is a source of ongoing debate as well.

In the past few years, several brands of gluten-free oat matzo have appeared on the market, such as Lakewood Matzo and Rabbi Kestenbaum's Gluten-Free Oat Matzo. Both are certified gluten-free through the Gluten Intolerance Group and are easy to find online as well. The downside is that they're very expensive.

For those who can't tolerate oats or would prefer a make-your-own option, there are many recipes for gluten-free matzo-like crackers made from potato or almond flour. (In my humble opinion, most taste better than regular matzo!) "Matzo-style crackers" made of tapioca and potato starch are sold by Yehuda and Manishevitz and are widely available in many stores and online. The only catch is that they're technically not matzo because they're not made from a gluten-containing grain, so they don't follow Jewish law for those who are very religious.

## The Meal

Most dishes in the classic Passover meal are naturally gluten-free: a roasted chicken or turkey, brisket or a beef roast, veggies, hard-boiled eggs, haroset (a supremely delicious apple and walnut mixture), gefilte fish, and horseradish. Matzo ball soup and kugel, a pudding with egg noodles, are only gluten-free if gluten-free matzo and noodles are used. Many Passover desserts are gluten-free, including nut- and potato starch-based Passover cakes, macaroons, or chocolate covered jellies or candy.

## Easy Gluten-Free Options:

- **FOR THE MAIN MEAL:** Entrees such as chicken, turkey, fish, beef, and lamb are naturally gluten-free. If necessary, make sure breading uses gluten-free matzo crumbs or almond meal.
- **VEGETABLES:** Most vegetable side dishes should be gluten-free.
- **STARCHES:** Potatoes are naturally gluten-free. Swap in gluten-free noodles as needed.
- **BEVERAGES:** Water, juice, tea, and coffee are allowed for Passover, but beverages like soda with high fructose corn syrup are not. Wine is naturally gluten-free and Kosher for Passover. (However, after the traditional four cups, it's probably about time for a non-alcoholic option, right?)

- **DESSERTS:** Good dessert options include cakes (made with potato starch or nut meal and eggs), flourless cakes, macaroons, meringues (must use powdered sugar without cornstarch), flan, chocolate-covered fruit, nuts or matzo, baked apples, sautéed bananas, poached pears, or fruit salad.

## Great Gluten & Allergen-Free Finds:

Many Kosher for Passover products, except matzo and noodles, are free of gluten, soy, and corn, which means that in many areas of the country there will be more gluten-free products than usual on the shelves during March and April. Brands like Katz, Dr. Praeger's, Manishevitz, Lieber's, and others label their crackers, noodles, and other products gluten-free and have extended gluten-free offerings during Passover.

If a package says "non-gebrok," "gebroktz," "gebrochts," or another similar spelling variation, you're good to go. This means the item is grain-free and therefore it has no gluten-containing ingredients.

As a special bonus, usually Kosher for Passover items are heavily discounted right after the end of Passover, so it's a great time to stock up on products you enjoy.

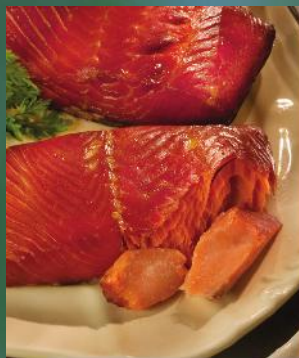


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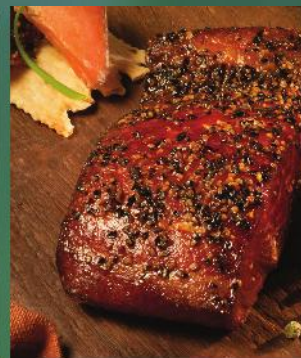
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Yukon Keta  
Candy



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### Cautions:

- Kosher and Kosher for Passover do not mean the same thing. Kosher refers to the standard, year-round Jewish laws, such as avoiding pork, shellfish, not mixing meat and milk, etc. Kosher for Passover keeps all of those restrictions and adds in additional restrictions on wheat and other grains, aside from matzo and specially made noodles.
- Often, Passover products are imported, so they may have different labeling laws than the US. However, most are from places like Israel and France, which also have laws regulating the term "gluten-free." Look for "gluten-free" on the label, and beware of words like matzo, cake meal, and farfel.
- Imported foods may not label for cross-contamination, but traditionally, great care is taken to separate Kosher for Passover from "chametz," or wheat, barley, rye, and oats.

#### Not sure where to start? Several websites have great gluten-free Passover recipe roundups:

- Elana's Pantry: [elanaspantry.com/passover-recipes](http://elanaspantry.com/passover-recipes)
- Food.com: [food.com/cookbook/gluten-free-passover-recipes-112835](http://food.com/cookbook/gluten-free-passover-recipes-112835)
- My own gluten-free Passover friendly recipes: [gfgoodness.com/2014/03/22/passover-desserts](http://gfgoodness.com/2014/03/22/passover-desserts)
- A great eBook from Kids with Food Allergies about celebrating Passover with various food restrictions: [kidswithfoodallergies.org/KFA-Celebrates-Passover.pdf](http://kidswithfoodallergies.org/KFA-Celebrates-Passover.pdf)

#### Resources for finding gluten-free and Kosher for Passover products:

- OU Kosher: [oukosher.org/product-search](http://oukosher.org/product-search)
- Star-K: [star-k.org/cons-pesach.htm](http://star-k.org/cons-pesach.htm)

There are many different variations on Jewish customs. Always consult with your religious leaders if you are concerned about the appropriateness of specific foods for yourself and your family. [SGF](#)



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

**Cheryl Harris** is an award-winning Registered Dietitian, Nutritionist, and Certified Wellness Coach helping clients learn to live and love a gluten-free lifestyle. She is a contributor to the

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