

Seder Plate

The seder plate holds each of the principal items for Passover: the three matzot, egg, shankbone, maror (bitter herbs), karpas (vegetable greens), and charoseth. Although the three matzot are actually displayed on a separate plate, they are ceremoniously considered to be part of the seder plate because of their prominent status. Although many of these items are eaten during the course of the Seder, the actual items on the seder plate are for display only. For those items that are to be partaken, other portions are set out around the table within easy reach of each celebrant.¹

The order in which the items appear on the seder plate is not to be random, but follows a specific arrangement, although different traditions follow different arrangements. The most common arrangement was developed by the Kabbalist, Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed, also known as Ari, who set out the objects to correspond to the ten sefirot, or divine emanations of God.²

The plate itself is often of extremely fine craftsmanship and is the highlight of the Passover table setting. It is used once a year for this specific purpose and will typically have labels or markings on it to show where each of the items should be placed.

¹ Levin, Meyer. *An Israel Haggadah for Passover* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, no date) 28-30

² Klein, Mordell ed. *Passover* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973) 52-53