

An Early First Century “Last Supper” Banquet

R. Bryan Widbin, Presenter. Delivered via Zoom video conferencing.

If you'd like, you can participate in this event merely by attending. If you'd like an even fuller experience, however, you may want to prepare the meal (recipes below) and take part with us!

For those not eating, just sit back and enjoy!

For those eating, Dr. Widbin suggests your table be prepared as follows.

In the center of the table: Place an unlit candle with matches and a filled carafe of juice/wine.

For each participant: Provide a bowl, bread, a glass for the wine/juice, and a small plate of bitter herbs with dressing on the side. Select “finger foods” as desired. You may also provide utensils, although these would not have been on the table in the 1st century. Diners grasped or soaked up food with rolled morsels of bread.

In the crockpot/oven: Keep the stew hot until directed to fill the bowls for each diner, approximately 30 minutes into the presentation.

THE PROGRAM

A Courtyard Welcome

A Short History of Passover.

The Deipnon

The Starters. The Lighting of Lamps. The Greetings. The Assignment of Table Positions. The First Toast (*Kiddush*). The Tearing of the Bread. The Second Toast (*Maggid*).

The Meal. Essential Foods Explained. The Lamb. The Bread. The Bitter Herbs. The Wine.

[We will take a short, two-minute break at this point for the stew to be served. Diners may begin to eat immediately when served and continue eating throughout the rest of the presentation.]

The Symposium

The Entertainment.

The Third Toast (*Birkat ha-Mazon*).

The Discourse of the Host.

The Benediction.

The Fourth Toast (*Hallel*).

The *Hallel* Song. *Psalm 118:24 (zeh ha-yom)*.

The Closing Charge. (1-2 minutes)

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THE EARLY FIRST-CENTURY “LAST SUPPER” TABLE

ESSENTIAL FOODS (suggest a candle on the table to be lit during the ceremony as directed)

1. *A STEW OR THICK SOUP (with meat chunks, lamb is traditional, but any meat or meat substitute will do, a cup or a bowl for each participant)
2. BITTER GREENS (e.g., chicory, dandelion, arugula, kale and/or escarole will do; a small plate for each participant). OIL AND VINEGAR DRESSING (on the side for dipping the greens, bread, and other items as desired; a small cup for each participant)
3. FLAT BREAD (yeast-free is traditional, e.g., roti, matza, or tortilla; but yeasted is okay for our purposes, e.g., pita or naan; a couple of pieces for each participant)
4. PURPLE GRAPE JUICE OR RED WINE (a carafe for the table and a glass for each participant, enough for 4 toasts p/p)

OPTIONAL (to fill out the meal as desired):

1. NUTS AND SEEDS (e.g., sunflower seeds, hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, and/or pistachios)
2. OLIVES AND RAW VEGGIES (e.g., radishes, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, celery sticks, carrot sticks)
3. BOILED EGGS (with salt or salt water dip)
4. DRIED FRUIT (e.g., figs, apricots, dates)

*Note: Any stew or thick soup is fine. But if you'd like to try something authentic to the day, below is a recipe for a basic **LAMB STEW** popular in eastern Mediterranean cultures.

3 lbs. lamb, in 1-in or smaller cubes - brown first in oil and drain off excess oil

2 t. sugar

1 ½ t. salt

¼ t. pepper

2 tomatoes, chopped

2 cloves garlic, mashed

3-4 carrots, in chunks

one large yellow onion, diced

1 bay leaf, on top for easy removal

4-6 cups chicken broth (begin with 4 c.; add additional as necessary/desired)

Cook in a crockpot/slow cooker on low 7-8 hours; on high 3-4 hours, or 1-¾ hrs. in a conventional oven at 325/350 degrees. Meat will be very tender when done.

Add and cook for 30 additional minutes (on high if in crockpot):

2 T. cornstarch or flour whisked into ¼ c. cold water - this is to thicken the sauce

1 pkg (10 oz.) frozen peas

1 pkg (10 oz.) frozen cut green beans