

Charoset Recipes



Around the World

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHAROSET

Charoset, the blend of fruits and nuts symbolizing the mortar which our ancestors used to build pyramids in Egypt, is one of the most popular ritual foods served at the Seder. The fruits and nuts found in almost all recipes refer to two verses in the Song of Songs closely linked with the Spring season. “Under the apple tree I awaken thee” (8:5) and “I went down into the garden of nuts” (6:11). The red wine recalls the Red Sea, which parted its waters for the Jews when they fled from Egypt.

The real purpose of charoset is to counterbalance the bitterness of the maror (bitter herbs) required at the Seder. The combination of charoset and maror sandwiched between two matzot is thought to be invented by Rabbi Hillel, the great Jewish teacher who lived between 90 BCE and 70 CE.

The variety of Charoset recipes collected here show how our “traditional” foods have been influenced by the migration of Jews across the globe and the availability of local ingredients.

While Ashkenazic charoset recipes generally only differ in texture and the choice of nuts, Sephardic charoset recipes changed according to country, and sometimes even the city of origin.

Have fun trying out these recipes at your seder table this year. You might even consider creating a smorgasbord of charoset dishes and asking your guests to rank their favorites.

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ASHKENAZIC CHAROSET

JAMIE GELLER



My sister-in-law's grandmother, of Polish descent, makes the best charoset—it's become somewhat of a legendary recipe for the extended family. When I called her, though, she told me that her recipe was never written down!

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

YIELD: 1 CUP

INGREDIENTS

- 6 apples, grated
- 1 cup walnuts, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2-3 tablespoon white sugar
- 1/3 cup sweet red wine

PREPARATION

Place the apples and walnuts into a large bowl. Combine the cinnamon and sugar and sprinkle over the apples. Stir in the sweet wine. Serve immediately or refrigerate until serving.

CHUNKY SEPHARDIC CHAROSET

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES YIELD: 2¼ CUPS

Sculpt the charoset into the shape of a pyramid to impress guests.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 c. dried cranberries
- ½ c. roasted, salted and shelled pistachios
- 1 large Fuji or Gala apple, peeled, cored, and cut into chunks
- 1/8 c. sweet red wine, such as Manischewitz
- 2 tbsp. fresh orange juice
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves

PREPARATION

Coarsely chop cranberries, pistachios, and apples. Transfer to bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate at least two hours to blend flavors. You can make it up to a day ahead. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

APPLE AND DATE CHAROSET TRUFFLES

ANITA SCHECTER

PREP TIME: 75 MINUTES YIELD: 8 SERVINGS



This recipe takes the best of Ashkenazi and Sephardic ingredients. It includes apples, walnuts, and pistachios for texture alongside dates for smoothness and sweetness. The mixture is formed into truffle balls and rolled in cinnamon sugar.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large, pitted dates
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 small apple, peeled, cored, and small diced
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/4 cup pistachios
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 to 2 tablespoons pear, apple, cranberry, or pomegranate juice
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

PREPARATION

1. Place the dates in a bowl and pour the boiling water over them. Allow to sit for one hour and then remove them from the water. Doing this will rehydrate them and allow them to be mixed into a smooth paste.
2. Peel, core, and dice the apple. You need very small pieces. Alternately, you can grate the apple on a large grater and set them in paper towels to drain excess moisture. Note that pureeing the apples in the food processor will make your mixture too wet.
3. Add the walnuts and pistachios to a food processor and pulse a few times until you have very small pieces but not dust or puree. Remove from the food processor and set aside.
4. Add the re-hydrated dates to the food processor and puree until smooth. Add the tablespoon or two of pear, apple, cranberry, or pomegranate juice to help the pureeing process.
5. Add the processed walnuts and pistachios to the pureed dates, add the pinch of salt and pulse once or twice to incorporate. Add the small diced apples and pulse once or twice to incorporate. Be careful not to overmix.
6. Transfer the mixture to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up.
7. Add the sugar and cinnamon to a shallow bowl and stir to combine.
8. Use a one-ounce scoop to form balls from the apple mixture and roll them in the cinnamon sugar.

ISRAELI CHAROSET WITH MIXED NUTS

GIORA SHIMONI

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES YIELD: 4 SERVINGS



INGREDIENTS

- 4 to 5 medium apples (green Granny Smith, peeled and cored)
- 2 bananas
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup almonds
- 1/4 cup pistachios
- 1/4 cup pecans
- 2-4 tablespoons red wine
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- Optional: 1/2 teaspoon sugar

PREPARATION

1. In the work bowl of a food processor with an "S" blade, combine the apples, bananas, raisins, and nuts. Pulse several times, scraping down the sides of the work bowl, if necessary, until the charoset reaches a lumpy-like paste, or until your desired consistency.
2. Transfer the fruit-nut mixture to a bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of wine, the orange juice, and cinnamon, and stir well to combine. Taste the mixture and add sugar if desired to sweeten the charoset. Add more wine, a

tablespoon at a time, if you'd like to moisten the mixture and intensify the wine flavor.

3. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

TIPS

- If you cover and refrigerate charoset, it will keep for five to seven days.
- If you prefer more textured charoset, you can skip the food processor and finely chop all the ingredients with a large, sharp knife or mezzaluna.
- Many charoset recipes specify the use of a sweet wine, such as Manischewitz. But thanks to the natural sweetness of the bananas and raisins, this recipe works nicely with a dry red.
- Not sure what to do with leftover charoset after the seders? It's a surprisingly versatile condiment. Try it with leftover turkey or meat, dolloped on fish, or spooned over quinoa for breakfast. If you set some aside to keep pareve, it's also great with toasted cheese on matzo or mixed into yogurt.

SYRIAN HAROSET

VICTORIA DWEK



My father-in-law, a Rav, told me he was once asked, “Why is Charoset delicious if it represents such sad things?” He responded, “Every difficulty in life is really sweet—they are blessings from G-d.” Every ingredient in the Charoset is symbolic of the Jewish labor in Egypt. The walnuts are the pebbles of the bricks. The dates represent the mud, and the wine is the blood of the babies who were used in place of bricks when the quotas weren’t filled. As most Sephardim eat gebrokts, the matzah meal represents the straw, also used to make bricks. This recipe is from my husband’s grandmother a”h, Rosa Dwek, from Aleppo, Syria.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds large, pitted dates
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup sweet wine
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 to 2 tablespoon matzah meal, as needed to bind

PREPARATION

Place the dates in a saucepan. Add water to cover. Bring to a boil, the lower heat and simmer until the dates are soft. Pass the dates through a strainer or use a food processor. Add remaining ingredients.

MOROCCAN CHAROSET BALLS

LAUREN DADOUN



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.

When I first got married, for the first 10 years, 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

PREPARATION

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 to be more textured and nutty-flavored. Others prefer to puree it more to achieve a smoother consistency.
4. Shape into balls and refrigerate until ready to serve.

PERSIAN CHAROSET (HALEG)

REYNA SIMNEGAR



Persian charoset (Haleg) is fabulous! This is my mother-in-law's charoset recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (6-ounce) package ground walnuts (1 1/2 cups)
- 1 (6-ounce) package ground almonds (1 1/2 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

PREPARATION

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

TRICKS OF THE TRADE:

Buy already ground walnuts and almonds, and purchase ready-made date paste. Process the rest of the ingredients together into a wet paste similar in texture to hummus. Charoset spice is made by mixing 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 grownup twist!

YEMENITE CHAROSET

JAMIE GELLER



PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES YIELD: 2.5 CUPS

This Charoset is gooey and fragrant with dried Mediterranean fruit. I like to roll it into walnut sized balls and dust it with cinnamon and ground almonds.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dried black figs with stems cut off
- 1 cup dried dates, pitted
- 1 cup dried apricots
- 2 cups red wine or apple juice
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon plus 1 additional tablespoon for dusting
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger or pinch of ground ginger
- ½ cup coarsely ground toasted almonds

PREPARATION

1. Place dried fruit in a large bowl.
2. Place wine or apple juice in a small pot over medium low heat until it comes to a simmer. Pour liquid over the dried fruit and steep for 1 hour.
3. Drain fruit into a sieve suspended over a bowl reserving liquid. Place fruit in a food processor and pulse or chop by hand until the mixture is

combined and only slightly chunky. You may need to add some of the reserved soaking liquid to help fruit stick together.

4. Add cinnamon, honey, and ginger to the chopped fruit and stir to combine.
5. Roll charoset into walnut sized balls and roll into ground almonds and additional cinnamon, if desired.
6. Yemenite Charoset can be made and stored covered in the refrigerator for up to 3 days before serving.

SPICY YEMENITE-STYLE CHAROSET

Yemenites like spicy foods and their charoset is no exception. Though they generally use very little sweetener in their cooking, those with “Western” tastes will probably prefer to include honey in this recipe.

INGREDIENTS

6 dried calimyrna figs
6 pitted dates
2 tbsp. sesame seeds
1 tsp. honey, or to taste (optional)
½ tsp. ground ginger
1/8 tsp. ground coriander seeds
Pinch of cayenne pepper

PREPARATION

Grind figs and dates in a food processor to make a sticky paste. Mix in sesame seeds, honey (optional), and spices. For best flavor, let charoset come to room temperature before serving.

INDIAN STYLE CHAROSET (JAROSETH)

JAMIE GELLER



PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

YIELD: 2 CUPS

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

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ripe mangos, cut into medium dice
- ¼ cup dark raisins
- ¼ cup pitted dates
- ¼ cup slivered almonds
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Pinch of kosher salt

PREPARATION

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.

SEVEN FRUIT CHAROSET FROM SURINAM

IRMA ROBLES LOPES CARDOZO



PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES YIELD: 4-6 SERVINGS

Coconut is the base of Surinam charoset. The ingredients reflect the tropical source of this recipe. Originally, Surinam cherries were simmered and added to the fresh fruits. Today, since most cherries available do not have the same taste, cherry jam is used instead. However, you may be able to find real Surinam cherries under the name "pitango" in Hebrew in Israel around the time of Passover and if you do, you will love the flavor they provide.

Some families replace one or two of the ingredients with peaches or pineapple. Like other Sepharadim, Surinamese Jews wouldn't only make charoset for the seder — they make enough to eat all week long with matzah. Preparation time does not include soaking.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups unsweetened coconut
- 2 cups walnuts or almonds, chopped
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups raisins
- 1 1/2 cups dried apples
- 1 1/2 cups prunes or plums

- 1/2 cup cherry jam (or Surinam cherries/ Pitango in Hebrew)
- 1 cup sweet red wine
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, cover the dried fruit with water. Soak overnight in the refrigerator to soften. The next day, finely dice all the fruit.
2. In a large saucepan over low heat, add the ground coconut. Add the wine and bring to a simmer. Add the nuts and sugar. Keep stirring to prevent the coconut from sticking to the pan.
3. When the wine and coconut mixture is well combined (neither too wet or too dry), add the fruits, continuing to stir until ingredients have come together. Stir in the cherry jam.
4. Remove from heat. Add cinnamon and mix thoroughly. Keep refrigerated until serving.

EGYPTIAN CHAROSET

PREP TIME: 1 HOUR AND 20 MINUTES

YIELD: 4 CUPS



INGREDIENTS

8 oz. large yellow raisins or sultanas

8 oz. pitted dates

1/2 c. sweet red Passover wine

½ c. chopped walnuts or pecans

PREPARATION

1. Chop raisins and dates and place in a heavy saucepan with wine and enough water to cover.
2. Cook on very low heat, stirring occasionally, until the dates turn to mush and the fruit thickens to a soft paste. It should take about 20 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat and place in a jar. When cooled, sprinkle with chopped nuts and secure lid.

VENETIAN CHAROSET

LUZZATTO FAMILY OF VENICE

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

YIELD: 4 CUPS



This recipe has been handed down the generations from the Luzzatto family of Venice. Members of the family have lived in Italy since at least 1541. Names like Benedetto Luzzatto, Simone Luzzatto, Moses Haim Luzzatto, and Samuel David Luzzato were well-known to Italians from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment as authors, professors, and rabbis.

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups chestnut paste
10 oz. dates, chopped
12 oz. figs, chopped
2 tbsp. poppy seeds
½ c. chopped walnuts
½ c. chopped almonds

½ c. pine nuts
Grated rind of 1 orange
½ c. white raisins
¼ c. chopped dried apricots
½ c. brandy
Honey to bind the mixture

PREPARATION

Chop fruits separately to maintain individual integrity. Combine all ingredients in a bowl, adding just enough brandy and honey to make the mixture bind.

To make chestnut paste, boil chestnuts for a minute or two and drain. Or use a vacuum-packed package of chestnuts and grind to a paste.

TURKISH CHAROSET

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

YIELD: 3 CUPS



INGREDIENTS

1 c. pitted dates, halved

1 c. dark or white raisins (or a mixture of the two)

1 large apple, peeled and cut into large pieces

½ c. walnut pieces

½ c. blanched, slivered, or whole almonds, toasted for a richer flavor

1 medium-sized navel orange, peeled and cut into chunks

About 2 tbsp. sweet red wine

PREPARATION

Put all the ingredients, except the wine, in a food processor equipped with a steel blade. Coarsely grind in batches. Place in bowl and slowly add wine until mixture becomes soft yet still slightly coarse. Refrigerate in a covered container and serve chilled. Charoset will get slightly firmer when chilled. When refrigerated, mixture will keep fresh for two to three days.

UGANDA CHAROSET

TZIORAH SIZOMU OF ABAYUDAYA

Tziporah is a leader in the Abayudaya community in Uganda. Her husband Gershom is the community rabbi and Tziporah is responsible for the Shabbat and holiday meals that are eaten together by the Abayudaya as a community. Apples are expensive, as they must be imported from South Africa, while peanuts, known as groundnuts, are local to Uganda. This charoset makes a fabulous spread for matzah all week long.

INGREDIENTS

4 cups roasted peanuts
3 apples, chopped fine
2 bananas, chopped into small pieces
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup sweet wine

PREPARATION

1. Grind the peanuts in a blender and place them in a medium-sized bowl. Rural Ugandans use a mortar and pestle. They don't have blenders as very few have electricity.
2. Mix with the chopped apples and bananas.
3. Add the wine and stir.
4. Add the honey and mix everything together. If it isn't thick enough, add more peanuts.

GREEK CHAROSET

SARAH AROESTE

Sarah's family roots in Greece trace all the way back to the expulsion of Jews from Spain. A vocal artist, she has dedicated her career to modernizing Ladino classics and creating new music that captures the vibrancy of the Sephardic experience. For Passover, she draws on traditional Greek customs and makes this fruity recipe that gets its punch from a variety of spices.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup black currants, finely chopped
1 cup finely chopped raisins
1 cup dates, finely chopped and then mashed (if they are very dry soak them in boiling water for 10 minutes)
Pinch of grated orange rind
Cinnamon, allspice, cloves, nutmeg to taste
Sweet red wine

PREPARATION

Chop all the ingredients as fine as possible. Mash them into a paste in a mortar and pestle. Or briefly process in food processor. Moisten as necessary with the red wine.

Makes 3 cups

ANOTHER GREEK VARIATION:

1 cup dried cherries soaked in dark grape juice or wine
1 cup of golden raisins soaked in apple cider vinegar
2/3 cup toasted and ground almond slivers
1/8 tsp. Cayenne pepper
1 tbsp. White sugar
Dark grape juice or red wine to moisten

GUATEMALAN CHAROSET

ADAT SHALOM COMMUNITY

INGREDIENTS

4 apples, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
1/2 cup sweet red wine (such as Manischewitz)
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3 tablespoons maple syrup
5 oz of refried red beans
4 oz of chopped almonds

PREPARATION

1. Chop the apples by hand as finely as possible and press them with a fork.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients. mixing everything well.
3. Add beans at the end, depending on how juicy the apple is so that the charoset thicken.
4. After plating, add a little of the almonds as decoration.

BRAZILIAN CHAROSET

INGREDIENTS

2 pears finely chopped
2 mangos peeled and mashed
1 orange segmented, bitter membrane removed, and chopped (reserve juice)
1/2 cup walnuts, finely chopped
2 tbsp. honey to taste

PREPARATION

Prepare each ingredient separately then toss together in bowl. Add honey to taste. Add reserved orange juice if mixture is too thick.

CUBAN CHAROSET

JENNIFER STEMPEL

Jennifer “The Cuban Reuben” Stempel blogs about food that explores her twin Jewish and Cuban heritages. This Cuban charoset is her own invention inspired by the island flavors that influence so much of her cooking. While most charoset is served as a paste, Stempel drew on the Sephardic tradition of making charoset into small balls for this unique take on a classic dish.

INGREDIENTS

5oz dried unsweetened mango, coarsely chopped

8oz dried unsweetened pineapple, coarsely chopped

½ cup almond slivers, toasted

2 cups shredded coconut, toasted, and separated

PREPARATION

1. In a small bowl, soak the mango in hot water for half an hour.
2. Drain well and add to a food processor.
3. Add pineapple, almonds, and 1 cup of the coconut to the mango in the food processor, and pulse only until the mixture starts to form a ball. There should still be some visible chunks.
4. Form the mixture into bite-sized balls and set atop a pan lined with wax paper.
5. In a small bowl, add the last cup of shredded coconut. Roll the balls in the coconut until they are lightly coated and return them to the wax paper.
6. Refrigerate the balls for 1 hour or until set.

MEXICAN CHAROSET

INGREDIENTS

2 peeled avocados, mashed
2 bananas mashed up
1 orange segmented, bitter membrane removed, and chopped (reserve juice)
2 Granny Smith apples, finely chopped

PREPARATION

Prepare each ingredient separately then toss together in a bowl.

CALIFORNIAN CHAROSET

INGREDIENTS

1 cup minced dried apricot, preferably Californian
1 cup dry roasted, shelled pistachio (not red dyed), chopped
1/3 cup white grape juice or sweet white wine
1½ tablespoon fresh lemon juice
¼ cup fresh mint chiffonade
8 threads of saffron, crumbled

PREPARATION

Prepare each ingredient separately then toss together in a bowl.
To chiffonade mint, roll leaves up like a cigar and thinly slice them into tiny ribbons.