

Holy Land Meal for Easter Week

An experiential way to bring the Lord and His life to mind.

Overview

Share a meal using foods mentioned in the Word that the Lord might have eaten while on earth.

Do Ahead of Time

Choose a date for your meal: For example, Palm Sunday, Thursday (the day of the Lord's Last Supper), Good Friday, or Easter Sunday.

Choose foods: Read through the Food List below, decide which foods to include, and buy the ingredients. If a meal is too much, choose one or two things to try.

Labels: Print and cut out labels (pp. 4-5). *Optional:* Have children decorate the labels, e.g. draw palm branches, flowers, or pictures of the food on each label.

Tables/Decor: Choose a place to lay out labeled foods, e.g. the center of a dining table, a side table/counter. *Optional:* Choose a tablecloth, pottery, baskets, wooden bowls/spoons and decorations that add to the Holy Land theme.

Cooking: *Optional:* If you prefer, these foods can be prepared the day before — bulgur wheat, unleavened bread, date cakes, toasting the almonds (if bought raw), seeding pomegranates (if bought as whole fruits). *Optional:* Invite children to prepare simple foods, e.g. unleavened bread.

Options: Choose whether to serve authentic foods, or tweak the idea by accommodating modern tastes. For example, serve pomegranate seeds for dessert or prepare a more modern dessert that uses pomegranates as a feature ingredient; find a local fish like the fish in the Sea of Galilee, or prepare fish you know children will eat. Choose foods to create a positive and mindful experience.

Preparation on the Day

Cooking: See the Food List overleaf for cooking instructions where relevant. Give yourself time so that the experience is positive and not stressful.

Set-up: Lay out each food with its Scripture quote label next to it (see labels pp. 4-5). *Optional:* Set up a low table with pillows around it and recline to eat, like people did in , e.g. place ancient Palestine, e.g. place a folded card table or board on top of low stools.

Before the Meal: If desired, children can be asked to read quotations on the labels aloud before saying grace and eating.

After the Meal: *Optional:* End the meal by singing a favorite hymn together, just as the Lord and His disciples did at the end of the Last Supper.

Food List

Salad: For “bitter herbs”, use lettuce mixes with tangy items such as endive, arugula or radicchio. Halve or quarter a section of cucumber lengthwise and then chop. Canned black olives make a nice addition. Dress with wine vinegar and olive oil or a vinaigrette containing these ingredients.

Unleavened bread: Mix 1 cup whole wheat flour (for lighter bread, use white whole wheat flour or whole wheat pastry flour) with ½ tsp salt. Add 4 tbsp olive oil and 2 tbsp ice water. Mix the ingredients together. Use your fingers to press hunks of the mixture into thin round wafers on a cookie sheet. Bake lightly at 350 degrees for 5-10 minutes. The recipe can be doubled, tripled, or quadrupled. Unleavened bread with honeycomb can be popular, so be sure to make enough! Note: Depending on the type of flour used, the flour to liquid ratio will vary, because different flours have different water content and the fineness of the grind can vary. If needed, adjust liquid amount by small increments.

Wild honey: Look for honeycomb in health food stores, farm stands, or online. It freezes well. Take it out of the freezer the day before you use it. Serve it on a plate using a dull knife. The wax is edible.

Fish: Choose a fish you like. Find a recipe online recipe or use the following: Lay the fish in an ovenproof pan. Pour a seasoning mixture on top, e.g. melted butter and/or olive oil, herbs and spices, onion, citrus juice, etc. Bake until cooked.

Lamb: There are many cuts of lamb. Find a recipe you like.

Bulgur/burghul/cracked wheat: Bulgur is eaten like rice. Look for it in the middle eastern section of a grocery store. To prepare: Boil 2 cups water with ½ tsp salt and 1 tbsp of butter/olive oil. When it boils, add 1 cup bulgur wheat, remove from heat, cover with a lid and let stand 20 minutes. Fluff with a fork.

Goat cheese: Creamy white rolls of goat cheese may be found in the cheese section of a grocery store. Eat on unleavened bread, serve with crackers, or top your salad with goat cheese crumbles.

Olives: Canned black olives are mild and agreeable to most people. Eat olives plain or in salad. Consider getting multiple types of olives from a deli.

Pomegranates: Look for labor-saving containers of pomegranate seeds in the produce section of the grocery store or buy pomegranate juice. For whole pomegranates, allow plenty of time to seed them. Note: *They stain*. You may find easier seeding methods online. Eat the seeds alone or sprinkle them on a salad. For a pomegranate dessert, look online for parfait recipes that use pomegranate seeds.

Figs: Look for figs in the dried fruit section of the produce area or in the middle eastern section of a world foods aisle. Mission figs are darker and often not quite as dry, golden figs may come in a softer version or in garland/ring of figs that are more thoroughly dried.

Dates: Dates are available in the same areas of the store as figs. We recommend pitted whole dates.

Food List (continued)

Grape juice: White grape juice is less likely to stain for small children. Older kids may enjoy sparkling grape juice as being a little closer to wine.

Wine: For adults, choose wine that will go well with your main dish. Alternatively, find kosher wine such as is sometimes used in Holy Supper.

Further ideas: Lentil stew such as Esau bought with his birthright, squash (see Biblical references to gourds, such as in the story of Jonah), melon, barley, etc. An alternative dessert idea, or something that could be done on a different day of Easter week, is what is known as “scripture cake.” Look it up online to find a recipe. For each ingredient, an amount/measurement is given, but the ingredient itself is a Scripture passage and needs to be looked up to find out what the ingredient is.

Labels

Wild honey

...was eaten by John the Baptist.

“Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.” Matthew 3:4

Olives

...and olive oil are mentioned in many places in the Word, for instance in the Psalm about the blessings of those who fear the Lord:

“Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table.” Psalm 128:3

Grape juice

...is mentioned in the requirements for becoming a Nazirite like Samson:

“He shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins.” Numbers 6:3

Bitter herbs with **wine vinegar**: A salad with Biblical ingredients.

Bitter herbs: These were part of the Passover feast which the Lord ate with His disciples, as it was commanded to the Israelites in Egypt: “Then they shall eat the flesh (of the lamb) on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” Exodus 12:8

Wine vinegar: The Lord was given wine vinegar (sour wine) on Good Friday: “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” John 19:28-30 This event was prophesied centuries before in the Psalms: “They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” Psalm 69:21

Almond

...blossoms of pure gold were part of the gold lampstand in the tabernacle: “bowls made like almond blossoms.” Exodus 26:33-34

Lamb

...was part of the Passover feast that the Lord ate with His disciples, as it was commanded to the Israelites in Egypt:

“On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons.” Exodus 12:3-4

Wine

...was part of the Lord’s first miracle at the wedding in Cana. It was also an important part of His Last Supper with His disciples, when:

“He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Luke 22:17-18

Figs

...are mentioned in one of the Lord's parables told during the week before Easter:

"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for your-selves that summer is now near. So you, likewise, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near." Luke 21:29-31

Fish

...was part of the breakfast enjoyed by the Lord and His disciples after Easter when he came to them on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

"As soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. . . . Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.'" John 21:9, 12

Bulgur/cracked wheat

The Lord mentioned wheat in the parable of the wheat and the tares, and also in the following teaching, which could be seen as the message of Easter:

"Most assuredly, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." John 12:24

Date cakes

Cakes with flour were placed on the table of shew-bread in the tabernacle: "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it." Leviticus 24:5

In the wilderness, the Israelites took manna and made it into cakes, "and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil." Numbers 11:8

Cinnamon was part of the holy anointing oil the Lord described to Moses (Exodus 30:23).

Spices are mentioned in story of Easter Day: "Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb." Luke 24:1-2

Date

...palms were common trees in the Holy Land. The prophet Joel mentions palm trees:

"The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered; The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also, And the apple tree—All the trees of the field are withered; Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men." Joel 1:12

Unleavened bread

...was part of the Passover feast and is now part of the Holy Supper.

During His Last Supper with His disciples, the Lord "took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Luke 22:19

Goat cheese

The Lord mentioned goats during the week before Easter when He was talking to His disciples about the Last Judgment:

"All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats." Matthew 25:32

Pomegranates

...are mentioned by Moses in the same set of instructions in which he gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel:

"Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing." Deuteronomy 8:6-9