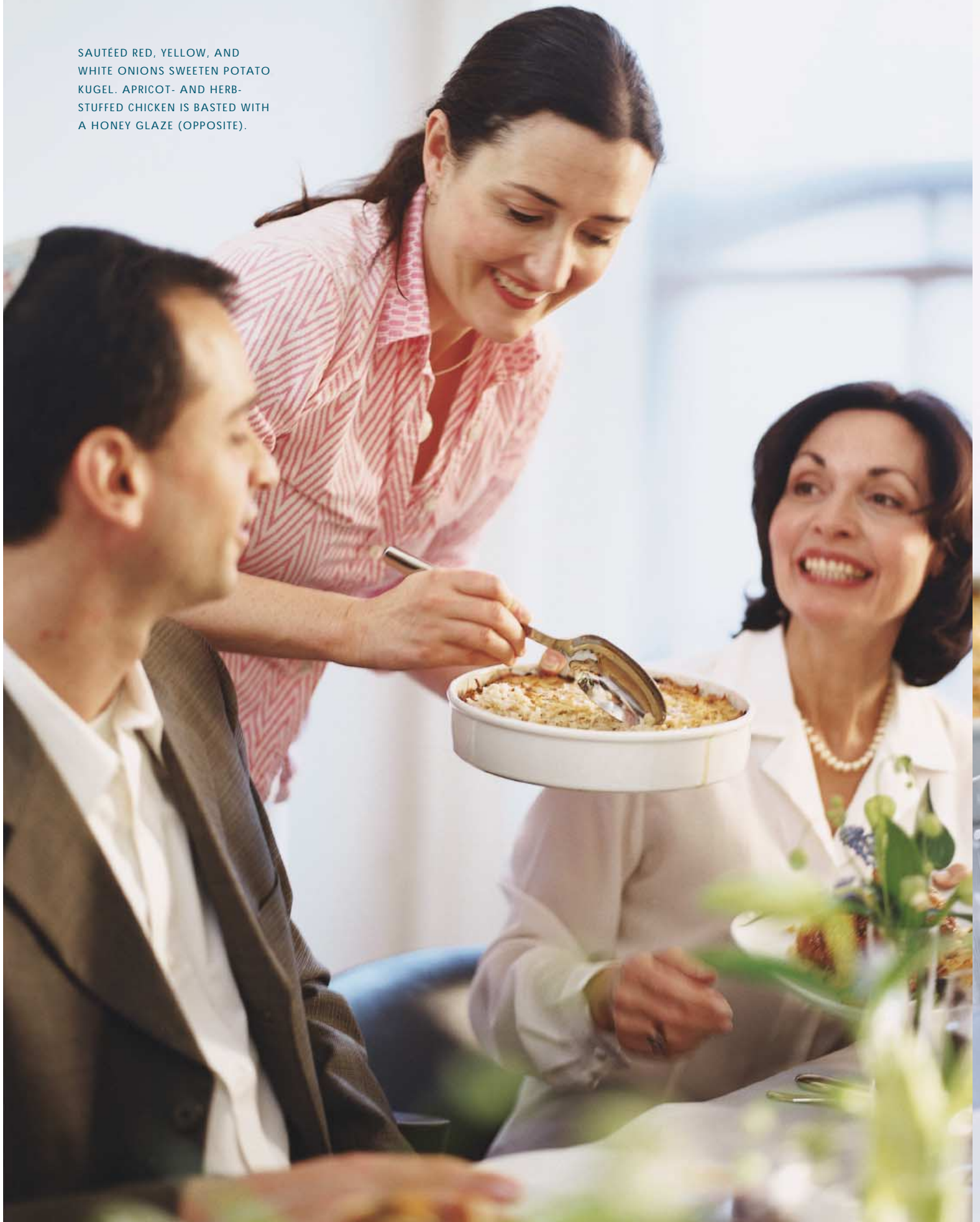


SAUTÉED RED, YELLOW, AND
WHITE ONIONS SWEETEN POTATO
KUGEL. APRICOT- AND HERB-
STUFFED CHICKEN IS BASTED WITH
A HONEY GLAZE (OPPOSITE).



a simpler seder

WITH MAKE-AHEAD STEPS, OUR PASSOVER MEAL BECOMES MORE MANAGEABLE

Passover was always a joyful holiday in my childhood home.

Grandma Jenny would often come to visit a week before to help my mom with the extensive preparations for this eight-day festival. First, they would make the house *Pesadic* or “clean for Passover” with a thorough spring-cleaning. To honor the ancient Jews, who hastily fled from Egypt with no time for their bread to properly rise and bake, they would remove from the house any trace of *hametz*, or food containing leavening like yeast, baking soda, or baking powder.

Two days before Passover, I would eagerly help in the cooking marathon. Our aim: to prepare

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNA WILLIAMS



enough food to feed a crowd of beloved relatives and guests during the first two nights of the holiday. We used fresh vegetables, fruit, and eggs for Grandma's fragrant kugels and aromatic fruit compotes. The main-dish poultry or meat we purchased was always marked "kosher for Passover," as were any bottled ingredients we used, such as horseradish. In keeping with the holiday's dietary restrictions, my mother taught me to use matzo meal, matzo flour, and potato flour in place of wheat flour in baked desserts. For leaveners, she taught me to substitute whipped eggs and egg whites.

While back then our family had the luxury of lingering more over the details, these days my hectic schedule makes preserving religious traditions a bit more complicated. Now that I'm the designated holiday cook, I have to stay organized and do things a bit at a time in the weeks before Passover to get everything accomplished. To this end, the holiday dishes for our family's seder, or ceremonial feast, can be prepared in advance and frozen. Whether you're hosting a full-fledged seder yourself or just love trying new foods, I hope you'll enjoy them.

GEFILTE FISH SALAD WITH CREAMY ORANGE HORSE RADISH DRESSING

PREP AND COOK TIME: 35 minutes

NOTES: The dressing can be made up to 1 week in advance if kept refrigerated in an airtight container. If it is too thick to drizzle over the salad, you can add up to 3 tablespoons of water to thin it. Not only does the dressing taste great over the gefilte fish, it also works well in tuna salad and over grilled or poached fish.

MAKES: 8 to 10 servings

Creamy Orange Horseradish Dressing

- 1 cup low-fat or nonfat mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 2 teaspoons honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons prepared kosher-for-Passover horseradish
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion

Gefilte Fish Salad

- 1 large head or 2 medium heads butter leaf lettuce, leaves removed from stem but unturn
- 4 to 6 fresh navel oranges, peeled
- 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups English cucumber, thinly sliced into half moons

menu

- Make-Ahead Matzo Balls in Chicken Broth
- Gefilte Fish Salad with Creamy Orange Horseradish Dressing
- Honey-Roasted Apricot Lemon Rosemary Chicken
- Make-Ahead Caramelized Onion and Garlic Kugel
- Steamed asparagus (no recipe)
- Gingered Mixed Fruit Crockery Compote

- 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups shredded carrot
- 8 to 10 pieces prepared kosher-for-Passover gefilte fish, well drained

1. In a 2- to 4-cup bowl, mix mayonnaise, orange juice concentrate, honey, garlic powder, horseradish, and green onion thoroughly with a fork. Refrigerate in an airtight container until ready to serve.
 2. Thoroughly wash and dry lettuce. Press down the spine of each leaf with the palm of your hand so the leaves will lie flat. Line each of 8 to 10 plates with a few leaves.
 3. Cut the peeled oranges in half and then cut each half into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick half moons.
 4. Artfully arrange equal amounts of the oranges, cucumber, and carrot on top of the lettuce leaves, leaving a space for the gefilte fish. At this point, you can cover each plate tightly with plastic wrap or aluminum foil and stack them in your refrigerator for up to 8 hours before serving.
 5. Just before serving, place a gefilte fish on each plate. Drizzle with 1 to 2 tablespoons of the dressing. Serve immediately.
- Per serving: 155 cal., 33% (51 cal.) from fat; 5.2 g protein; 5.7 g fat (0.2 g sat.); 21 g carbo (2.5 g fiber); 361 mg sodium; 13 mg chol.

MAKE-AHEAD CARAMELIZED ONION AND GARLIC KUGEL

PREP AND COOK TIME: About $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours

NOTES: This kugel can be made up to 2 months ahead and frozen. Refrigerate cooled kugel in the baking pans. When thoroughly cool, cut into 2-inch-square pieces; freeze in an airtight container. Defrost overnight in the refrigerator. To reheat, put on a microwave-safe platter and microwave, covered with vented plastic wrap, on high (100% power) for 5 minutes or until steaming. Serve immediately.

MAKES: 8 to 10 servings

- 9 tablespoons margarine, divided
- 1 red onion ($\frac{3}{4}$ lb.) or 2 cups, diced
- 1 white onion ($\frac{3}{4}$ lb.) or 2 cups, diced
- 1 yellow onion ($\frac{3}{4}$ lb.) or 2 cups, diced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coarsely chopped fresh garlic
- 5 pounds russet potatoes, peeled
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
- 7 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup matzo meal

1. In an 11- to 12-inch nonstick frying pan over medium heat, melt 3 tablespoons of the margarine. Turn the heat to medium low and stir in the red, white, and yellow onions and garlic to coat. Cook, uncovered, for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onions are translucent. Turn the heat to medium high. Cook an additional 15 minutes, until onions are browned around the edges. Remove from heat to cool to room temperature. (Cooked onions can be refrigerated for up to 48 hours in an airtight container.)
 2. While the onions are cooking, peel the potatoes. Shred them using the medium shredding blade of a food processor, or the medium section of a hand grater. Drain the potatoes well in a colander, pressing excess liquid out with your hands.
 3. Place oven rack in middle position in your oven and preheat oven to 400°. Liberally oil two 8- by 8- by 2-inch glass or metal pans with 1 tablespoon margarine each. Melt the remaining 4 tablespoons margarine in the frying pan.
 4. In a very large mixing bowl, using your hands, mix the potatoes with the lemon juice to prevent the potatoes from turning brown. Gently fold in the cooled onion mixture and the melted butter.
 5. In a 2-quart mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, salt, pepper, and matzo meal. Using your hands, evenly fold this into the potato mixture.
 6. Put half of the mixture into each of the prepared pans and pat to even out the surface. Cover with tented aluminum foil. Bake, covered, for 1 hour. Increase temperature to 425°, uncover the kugels, and bake for an additional 30 minutes until top of each kugel is lightly browned. Remove from the oven to cool for at least 10 minutes before serving. Or cool completely and refrigerate.
- Per serving: 395 cal., 32% (130 cal.) from fat; 11 g protein; 14 g fat (2.8 g sat.); 56 g carbo (5.1 g fiber); 656 mg sodium; 149 mg chol.

CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: CROCKERY COMPOTE CAN BE SERVED HOT, WARM, OR COOL. JUST BEFORE SERVING, ADD GEFILTE FISH TO SALAD PLATES AND DRIZZLE WITH HORSE RADISH DRESSING. THE WHOLE FAMILY PARTICIPATES IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS. SET THE SEDER TABLE A DAY AHEAD.





MAKE-AHEAD MATZO BALLS IN CHICKEN BROTH

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 20 minutes

NOTES: These matzo balls can be made ahead up to 2 months and frozen in an airtight container. The easiest way to form them is with an ice cream scoop with a release mechanism. If you don't have one, use your wet or oiled hands.

MAKES: 8 to 10 servings

Matzo Balls

- 8 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 8 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 8 tablespoons canned nonfat chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- About 3 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups kosher-for-Passover matzo meal

Soup

- 3 (32-oz.) cartons nonfat chicken broth
- 1 cup shredded carrot
- 1 cup thinly sliced green onion

1. To make the matzo balls, in a large bowl with a fork, mix the eggs, oil, broth, garlic and onion powders, pepper, nutmeg, and salt until well blended. Mix in the matzo meal until well blended. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 or up to 24 hours.

2. Bring 4 quarts of salted water to a boil in a 5- to 6-quart pan. Reduce heat to a simmer.

3. You will need two oiled plates to hold the cold matzo balls. Spray the inside of a 1 1/2-inch-diameter ice cream scoop with a mechanical release liberally with cooking oil spray. Scoop a mound of matzo batter into the scoop. Wet your free hand, then use it to round the upper portion of the mixture (to match the bottom of the scoop.) Release the matzo ball onto a plate. Roll it with wet or oiled hands to lightly shape, if desired. Repeat with remaining batter, working quickly so the matzo balls don't get overworked and warm; you'll have about 24. You may want to put one plate in the refrigerator as you fill the second plate.

4. One at a time, gently put the matzo balls into the simmering water; cover immediately. Cook at a simmer for 20 minutes. Do not lift the cover until the matzo balls are done, or their centers will be tough.

5. Using a slotted spoon, gently lift out

each matzo ball. Drain well and put into an airtight container. With the container lid ajar to release steam, cool the matzo balls to room temperature.

6. Refrigerate matzo balls, tightly covered, up to 2 days, or freeze up to 3 months. When ready to serve, defrost balls overnight in the refrigerator or in the microwave, covered, at 30% power for about 5 minutes.

7. To make the soup, in a 6- to 8-quart pan, bring chicken broth to a boil. Add carrot and boil for about 10 minutes to soften. Turn the heat down to a simmer, gently add defrosted matzo balls, cover, and cook for 10 minutes until the balls are heated through. Fill each of 8 to 10 soup bowls with equal amounts of soup, 2 or more matzo balls, and a sprinkling of green onion. Serve immediately.

Per serving: 313 cal., 45% (137 cal.) from fat; 17 g protein; 15 g fat (2.7 g sat.); 25 g carbo (0.6 g fiber); 960 mg sodium; 170 mg chol.

HONEY-ROASTED APRICOT LEMON ROSEMARY CHICKEN

PREP AND COOKING TIME: About 2 1/2 hours, plus 4 hours brining time

NOTES: To prevent splatter, use your broiler pan. The water in the bottom half steams, which helps keep the chickens moist. It also eliminates smoke by absorbing the fat and juice that drips as the chickens cook. If you do not have a broiler pan, use a large roasting pan fitted with a flat roasting rack that will lift the chickens at least 1 inch off the pan bottom. Fill the pan bottom with less than 1/2 inch water. The chickens should sit above their own juices so they get crispy instead of stewed.

MAKES: 8 to 10 servings

- 2 3 1/2 pound chickens, rinsed

Brine

- 2 cups kosher salt, or 1 cup table or sea salt
- 1 cup sugar

Stuffing

- 3/4 cup chopped dried apricots
- 4 tablespoons margarine, melted
- 2 teaspoons chopped garlic
- 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 4 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 3/4 cup grated onion
- 3/4 cup matzo meal

Glaze

- 4 tablespoons margarine, melted

countdown for a low stress seder

2 MONTHS TO

48 HOURS AHEAD

Make the matzo balls, wine sauce, and potato kugel. (If making these dishes more than 48 hours in advance, freeze them in airtight containers or plastic freezer bags.)

itself and the dressing until just before serving. Cover each plate tightly with plastic wrap or aluminum foil and store in stacks in the refrigerator.

4 HOURS AHEAD

Stuff the chickens.

UP TO 5 DAYS AHEAD

Make the horseradish salad dressing and the fruit compote. Refrigerate in airtight containers.

2 HOURS AHEAD

Preheat the oven to 400°. If serving the compote warm, reheat it in the slow cooker on low to medium.

48 HOURS AHEAD

If frozen, put the matzo balls, apricot sauce, and potato kugel in the refrigerator to slowly defrost.

1 1/2 HOURS AHEAD

Roast the chickens.

1/2 HOUR AHEAD

Prepare the soup. Bring the chicken broth and shredded carrot to a simmer. Put the matzo balls and green onion into the soup to heat just before serving.

24 HOURS AHEAD

Prepare and brine the chickens. Make the stuffing for the chickens and store in an airtight container. Set the seder table.

8 HOURS AHEAD

Prepare the gefilte fish salads. Leave off the fish

10 MINUTES BEFORE

SERVING THE CHICKEN
Steam the asparagus.

- 2 tablespoons honey
- Fresh rosemary sprigs

1. To butterfly the chickens, using poultry shears, cut along either side of the backbone and tail and remove them. Turn each chicken breast side up and lay it as flat as possible. Press on the breastbone to flatten further.

2. To make the brine, in a 10- to 12-quart bowl or pan, mix the salt and sugar with 2 cups very hot water. Whisk to partially dissolve. Put the chickens in the bowl, and smear the salt mixture inside the cavities and over the skin. Fill bowl with water to cover. Cover bowl and put in the refrigerator for 4 hours or up to a day.

3. Preheat oven to 400°.

4. To make the stuffing, in a food processor fitted with the metal chopping blade or in a blender, coarsely chop the apricots. Add in the melted margarine, garlic, poultry seasoning, rosemary, white pepper, lemon

TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR MATZO BALLS ARE LIGHT AND FLUFFY "FLOATERS," COVER THE PAN IMMEDIATELY AFTER ALL THE BALLS HAVE BEEN PUT INTO SIMMERING WATER. DO NOT LIFT THE COVER UNTIL THEY ARE DONE COOKING OR THEY WILL BE TOUGH-IN-THE-CENTER "SINKERS."

the center of the feast



Jews celebrate Passover to commemorate their liberation from the oppression of the Egyptian pharaohs and subsequent exodus into the desert. Seder, which means "order" in Hebrew, is the ceremonial family meal that reenacts the hardships the Jewish slaves endured. During dinner, the story of Passover is read by the family from a book called the Haggadah (meaning "to tell" in Hebrew).

The centerpiece of every Passover table is a seder plate upon which every food represents a part of the Passover story: (clockwise from top) Maror, bitter herbs (horseradish is often used), is a reminder of the bitterness of slavery. A roasted lamb shank, zeror, commemorates the lamb sacrificed on Passover eve. The blood of the sacrificed lamb was smeared over the door lintel to keep the angel of death from visiting Jewish homes. Haroset, a mixture of apples, nuts, and wine, resembles the mortar the Jews used to build Pharaoh's cities. Hazeret, peeled and grated raw horseradish, is more bitter herbs. Karpas (usually parsley, lettuce, or watercress) is a symbol of spring, the time when the exodus occurred. Beitza, a hard-boiled egg, symbolizes eternal life.

zest, onion, and matzo meal. Process or blend for about 5 to 10 seconds to make a thick mixture. Set aside, covered, in the refrigerator up to a day until ready to use.

5. Fill the bottom half of a large broiler pan with 4 cups of water. Put the top of the broiler pan in place and arrange the two flattened birds so the necks face opposite corners of the pan and the legs are facing each other. Arrange the legs so one bird's legs lie between the other's.

6. To stuff the birds, with your fingers, gently lift the skin of the breast away from the meat, being careful not to tear the skin. Using a rubber spatula or your fingers, gently spread the stuffing evenly between the skin and the meat.

7. To make the glaze, in a small dish, mix the margarine with the honey. Baste the outside of each bird. Bake for 30 minutes at 400°. Baste again, then turn down the heat to 375° and bake an additional 30 minutes. Baste again, then bake an additional 10 to 20 minutes, until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast reaches 165° to 170°.

8. Remove from the oven and let the birds rest 10 minutes so the juices settle. Transfer the birds to a large serving platter. Surround the birds with fresh rosemary sprigs. Serve with Rosemary Apricot Wine Sauce (see recipe below) on the side.

Per serving: 485 cal., 52% (245 cal.) from fat; 40 g protein; 27 g fat (6.6 g sat.); 19 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 123 mg chol. An accurate sodium measurement could not be obtained.

ROSEMARY APRICOT WINE SAUCE

PREP AND COOK TIME: About 35 minutes

NOTES: This sauce can be made up to 2 days in advance and kept in an airtight container in the refrigerator, or up to 2 months ahead and frozen. Defrost and reheat, covered, in the microwave.

MAKES: 3 cups; 8 to 10 servings

- 2 tablespoons margarine
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons pressed garlic
- 1 tablespoon dried or 3 tablespoons fresh rosemary
- 1 cup Safeway SELECT Apricot Jam
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- 1½ cups canned nonfat chicken broth
- ½ cup plus 4 tablespoons kosher-for-Passover white wine or white grape juice, divided
- 2 tablespoons potato starch
- Salt

1. In a 2-quart microwave-safe container, microwave the margarine uncovered for 30 to 40 seconds on high (100% power) until melted.

2. Stir in the onion, garlic, and rosemary, coating all surfaces well. Microwave, covered, for 6 to 8 minutes on high, until onions are translucent and tender.

3. Whisk in apricot jam and white pepper until well blended. Then whisk in the chicken broth and ½ cup of the wine. Microwave uncovered on high for 5 minutes or until bubbling.

4. While the liquid is coming to a low boil, in a small measuring cup or bowl, whisk the potato starch with the remaining wine. When the liquid boils, whisk in the potato starch mixture. Microwave, uncovered, an

additional 5 minutes on high until sauce is thickened. Add salt to taste.

Per serving: 127 cal., 18% (22 cal.) from fat; 1.6 g protein; 2.4 g fat (0.4 g sat.); 23 g carbo (0.7 g fiber); 53 mg sodium; 0 mg chol.

GINGERED MIXED FRUIT CROCKERY COMPOTE

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 5½ hours

NOTES: This dish tastes like the inside of a fruit pie without the crust. It can be made up to 7 days in advance and stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container. You can serve it right out of the slow cooker, reheated to warm, at room temperature, or cold. To serve warm, spoon the compote back into the slow cooker before the seder starts. Cover and cook on low for 2 to 3 hours.

MAKES: 12 (1-cup) servings

- ¼ cup coarsely chopped crystallized ginger
- 4 8-ounce packages dried mixed fruit
- 1 5-ounce package dried cherries
- 1 7-ounce package dried peaches
- 1 6-ounce bag dried nectarines
- 7 cups pineapple-orange juice, divided
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 3 tablespoons potato starch
- Safeway SELECT Toasted Almonds or walnuts
- Prepared kosher-for-Passover macaroons

1. In a 5- or 6-quart slow cooker, mix the ginger with the dried mixed fruit, cherries, peaches, and nectarines.

2. In a medium bowl, using a fork, mix 2 cups of the pineapple-orange juice with the brown sugar until dissolved. Pour over the fruit with the remaining juice.

3. Place the cinnamon sticks under the fruit. Press the fruit down with a large spoon so the juice covers most of it.

4. Cover and cook on high for 3½ hours.

5. In a small bowl using a fork, mix the potato starch with about ¼ cup cold water to dissolve. Pour over the fruit. To mix the potato starch evenly into the fruit, use a large spoon to gently move the fruit from the bottom to the top of the cooker. Cover and cook on high an additional 2 hours.

6. To serve, spoon into decorative bowls and sprinkle with toasted almonds or walnuts. Serve prepared kosher-for-Passover macaroons on the side.

Per serving: 452 cal., 1.1% (5.3 cal.) from fat; 3.8 g protein; 0.6 g fat (0.1 g sat.); 117 g carbo (8.6 g fiber); 35 mg sodium; 0 mg chol.