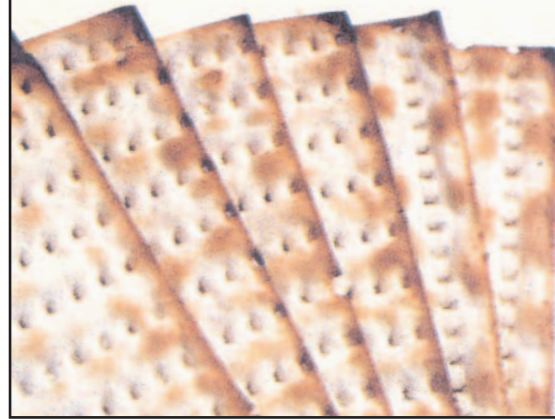


## Times Topics: Passover Recipes



What to serve for the holiday, and memories of Passover in old New York, including making matzo on the Lower East Side in 1871.

[nytimes.com/dining](http://nytimes.com/dining)

### QUINOA WITH THAI FLAVORS

Adapted from "Passover by Design," by Susie Fishbein (ArtScroll/Mesorah, 2008)  
Time: 30 minutes

- 1½ cups dry quinoa
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced
- ⅓ cup minced red onion
- ½ ripe but firm mango, peeled and diced small
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lime juice
- About 10 fresh basil leaves, finely shredded
- Small handful cilantro leaves, roughly torn.

1. Rinse quinoa well in a strainer, and drain. (Do not skip this step, or quinoa will be bitter.) Place in medium-size pot and add 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, immediately reduce heat to very low, cover, and simmer until grains have popped open and are tender and translucent, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain.
2. In a serving bowl, combine jalapeño, onion, mango, oil, salt and lime juice. Stir to combine. Add quinoa and toss to combine. Taste for salt. Serve warm or at room temperature. Just before serving, toss in basil and cilantro.

**Yield:** 6 servings; can be doubled.

### FRENCH ALMOND MACAROONS

Adapted from Susie Fishbein  
Time: 30 minutes, plus resting and cooling

- 1½ cups sugar
- 1¼ cups blanched slivered almonds
- ¼ cup potato starch
- 3 large egg whites
- Pinch fine sea salt
- 1½ teaspoons almond extract.

- Working in 3 additions, fold almond mixture into egg whites, turning over and over until incorporated. Batter will be sticky and thick. Set aside to rest 20 minutes.
3. Spoon batter by tablespoons onto prepared pans; cookies will spread to about 3-inch rounds, so leave plenty of room. Bake 1 sheet at a time until cookies are puffed, golden and shiny, 18 to 20 minutes. As soon as cookies come out of oven, remove paper (with cookies on it) from baking sheet. Let cookies cool completely before removing from paper; use a thin metal spatula or knife blade if cookies stick.

**Yield:** 24 large cookies.

### BEEF ROAST WITH MELTED TOMATOES AND ONIONS

Adapted from Susie Fishbein  
Time: About 2 hours

- 1 silver tip roast, 5 pounds, or rib roast, 7 pounds
- Fine sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 onions, coarsely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, cut into slivers
- 3 large or 4 medium ripe tomatoes
- 6 sprigs thyme, woody stems discarded.

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Season roast with salt and pepper. In a large heavy pot or Dutch oven, heat oil to very hot. Sear roast on all sides until crusty dark brown, at least 3 to 4 minutes a side.

Do not move roast around while searing, as this will prevent crust from forming.

2. Add onions, garlic, tomatoes and thyme to pot. Stir and cook vegetables 3 to 4 minutes. Add water to come a third of the way up the roast. Place pot in oven, uncovered.

3. Braise about 1½ to 2 hours depending on size, until meat thermometer inserted into center registers about 155 degrees (medium rare). Do not overcook. Remove from oven, tent with aluminum foil, and let rest 10 minutes. Transfer to carving board or platter and serve with tomatoes, onions and pan juices.

**Yield:** 10 to 12 servings.

### FROZEN PINEAPPLE-COCONUT TRUFFLES

Adapted from Susie Fishbein  
Time: 1 hour, plus 8 hours' freezing

- 1 medium-size ripe pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into chunks
- 1¼ cups firmly packed flaked sweetened coconut
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup kosher for Passover confectioners' sugar
- 4 large egg yolks.

1. In a blender or a food processor fitted with a metal blade, purée pineapple until smooth; work in batches if necessary. Transfer purée to medium-size saucepan. Add 1 cup coconut, ½ cup granulated sugar and the confectioners' sugar. Bring to a boil, then cook at a fast simmer to evaporate liquid, about 30 to 35 minutes. Check and stir often; do not allow to brown. Reduce heat, if necessary. When thick, almost dry and an intensely golden color, turn off heat.

2. Place egg yolks in a small bowl. Mix ½ cup thickened pineapple mixture into yolks. Return egg mixture to pot. Cook

over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until dry and pulling away from pot, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a glass, a metal container or bowl, and freeze until completely chilled, at least 6 hours, or overnight. (Mixture will not freeze hard.)

3. When chilling is almost complete, process remaining ¼ cup coconut with remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar in blender or food processor. Remove to a plate or a shallow container.

4. Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper. Using a small melon baller or a ½ teaspoon measure, make bite-size balls of pineapple mixture. Roll each in coconut and sugar mixture and place on prepared pan. If pineapple mixture gets too sticky, return to freezer to firm up.

5. Place finished truffles in freezer and freeze at least 2 hours. To keep longer, transfer truffles to an airtight container, separated by layers of parchment. Serve frozen, arranged on a platter or in shot glasses or in paper candy cups.

**Yield:** About 50 balls; 12 servings.

# Dining In

## The New York Times

F1

APRIL 16, 2008

## One Cook, Thousands Of Seders

By JULIA MOSKIN

**T**O Passover cooks parched for new ideas, wandering in a desert of matzo and dried-out brisket, Susie Fishbein is like a tall, icy Coca-Cola — the kosher for Passover kind, made with sugar instead of corn syrup.

Mrs. Fishbein is the author of the popular *Kosher by Design* cookbooks, which have sold more than 300,000 copies.

"No corn, no grains, no legumes, no seeds — not even mustard or soy sauce for eight days," she said, searing a rib roast as big as a bread machine in her kitchen in Livingston, N.J. "It's quite challenging, as a cook."

She will not be making her famous tricolor matzo balls (colored by spinach, tomato and turmeric) for the Seder this year, and her signature napkin rings made of braided challah are prohibited during Passover.

But she has produced beef roulades with creamy parsnips, molten chocolate soufflés and yet another cookbook, "Passover by Design," her fifth since 2003. On Tuesday it was the best-selling book in three categories on Amazon.com: holidays, entertaining and kosher foods.

Among strictly kosher cooks, she has an unparalleled following and unparalleled credibility: at ArtScroll/Mesorah, the religious press in Brooklyn that publishes her books, two Orthodox rabbis review her books for Jewish content and kosher law before publication.

A review of her closets reveals no edict limiting the number of platters one woman can own. In all of Mrs. Fishbein's books, tables drip with feathers and hydrangeas, sparkle with crystal and shimmer with tea lights, tinsel and gold.

"I go shopping at Pottery Barn and Crate & Barrel right after



**FRESH AND FORWARD** Susie Fishbein's roast beef.

Christmas, when everything goes on sale," she said, looking with satisfaction at her silver-clad Passover table, set weeks ago for the first Seder. "Their holidays end after New Year's Eve, but we have them all year round."

But, Mrs. Fishbein stipulated, her daily table resembles that

*Continued on Page 4*

# One Cook, Thousands of Seders

From First Dining Page

of anyone with four children and a full-time job. "I would rather be the kosher Rachael Ray than the kosher Martha Stewart," she said. "My books speak to harried everyday cooks like me."

That is, women with a fundamental commitment to Jewish faith and family, some disposable income and a house to be proud of — along with a matching appetite for entertaining friends and occasionally impressing the socks off the neighbors.

According to Lubicom, a marketing firm for the kosher food industry, about 350,000 households in the United States keep kosher kitchens year-round, a number that has gone up by 3 percent to 5 percent every year since 2005 as some American Jews have become more observant.

Mrs. Fishbein has earned her star status in those kitchens partly with knife skills and charisma, but mostly by tireless appearances on the national circuit of Jewish benefits, Hadassah bake sales, kosher cruises and food festivals.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVAN SUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## QUICK LEARNER

Susie Fishbein, who writes kosher cookbooks, at home in Livingston, N.J., above.

Left, almond macaroons with a pineapple-coconut truffle.

Right, Thai quinoa with mango. Below, she adds water to her roast with tomatoes.



"These ladies cook three meals every day, so they are not rookies," said Debbie Cohen, a member of the Orthodox B'nai B'rith Jacob congregation in Savannah, Ga., who arranged for Mrs. Fishbein to teach a Passover cooking class to 50 members last month. "But everyone there felt that they had learned some great new thing for the Seder."

In her congregation, Ms. Cohen said, it is not unusual for women to have all five of the *Kosher by Design* books.

"She is a contemporary baleboosteh," Matthew Shollar said of Mrs. Fishbein, using a Yiddish term of praise for an excellent homemaker. Mr. Shollar is chief executive of *Chosen Voyage*, a travel service for religious Jews. *Chosen Voyage* sends rabbis to purify kitchens on vintage European train cars, makes sure that men and women will have separate swimming pools on cruise ships, and provides upscale entertainment, like cooking classes that are taught by Mrs. Fishbein.

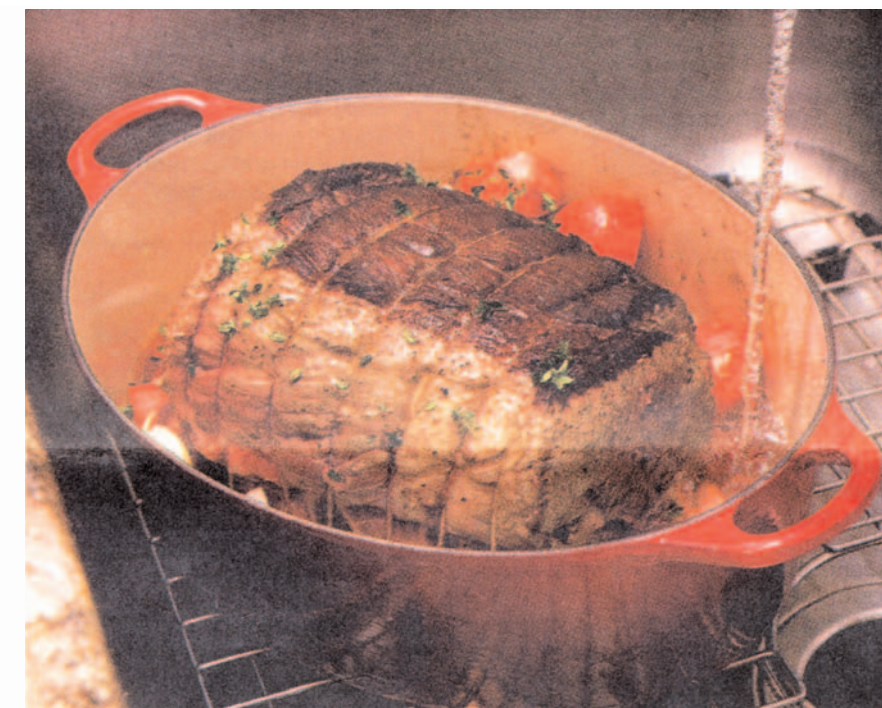
"Susie is part of this whole trend in the Orthodox community to a more luxurious lifestyle that is still very religious," he said, referring to the drift toward American-style consumption from the traditional scholarly, synagogue-based model of family life. "And she knows exactly what her audience wants."

One thing they want is to move beyond the classics. Like many of her readers, Mrs. Fishbein, who was raised in Oceanside, N.Y., has never eaten non-kosher food, meaning that whole worlds of flavor are unfamiliar to her. She has never, for example, eaten in a Chinese or a Japanese restaurant. ("There is one kosher Thai restaurant, in Florida," she said wistfully.)

But she has figured out how to adapt the culinary experiences of others to her own purposes, quizzing chefs, reading cookbooks and strip-mining menus to come up with dishes like quinoa seasoned with mango, lime juice and red onion; slow-roasted tomatoes with fresh herbs; and chewy-crisp macaroons that reflect French *pâtisserie* more than Passover tradition.

(Quinoa is fashionable among kosher cooks, she said, because although it tastes and chews like grains, which are forbidden during Passover, many religious and botanical authorities consider it a berry.)

"A lot of kosher cooks just make what they know, and they get bored, their families get bored," Mrs. Fishbein said, citing common missteps like overcooking, using dusty herbs from jars that



date from the time of the Second Temple and relying on packaged foods (\$15 billion in kosher food products were sold in 2007, according to the Orthodox Union, the largest kosher certification agency).

Her recipes, she said, are modern without being exotic or scary; virtually all of the ingredients are available at the supermarket.

Mrs. Fishbein is hardly the first ambitious cook to rise from the ranks of Jewish women, but she is one of a handful to have acquired an international following.

Her business model may be unique: in 2000, having compiled a successful community cookbook at her children's day school, she decided to upgrade the results by soliciting recipes from chefs. After developing a network of contacts in the small world of kosher fine dining, she began hiring chefs with kosher experience who were between gigs to provide cooking lessons and recipes for publication in her books.

"It's all about the out-of-work chefs and restaurants that have closed," she said.

Damian Sansonetti, now the executive chef at Bar Boulud, near Lincoln Center, had just finished a stint at an upscale kosher restaurant in New York when Mrs. Fishbein called him in 2002.

"I would never have thought I would spend so much time teaching one lady to cook," he said. "But Susie is humble and fun and very curious. It was in-

teresting to take someone with no experience of seasonal vegetables to the farmers' market for the first time."

She soon began absorbing principles of cooking that were new to her: cooking with fresh herbs, sea salt and freshly ground spices; getting a good sear on a piece of meat; using water instead of broth as a braising liquid to lighten flavors, as in her rib roast with melted tomatoes and onions.

The books, like Mrs. Fishbein herself, remain enthusiastic, encouraging and uncritical, presenting ambitious recipes like pineapple-coconut truffles and salmon tartare with undemanding ones like brisket roasted in barbecue sauce and ketchup and baked chicken stuffed with boxed rice pilaf and apricot jam.

Kosher cooks have built-in responsibilities for a great deal of cooking. In most parts of the country, takeout and restaurant options are limited; cooking is still a daily necessity.

And observing the Jewish calendar generates many festive meals, like a weekly Shabbat lunch for 13 people or the formal first Seder, where Mrs. Fishbein provides each guest with a bento box and sake flask of warm water for ritual handwashing.

"Aren't they great?" she said, pulling back the creamy silk drapes in her dining room to reveal even more table *tchotchkes*, stacked on the floor because they did not fit anywhere else. "I go shopping in Chinatown in every city I go to."