

## Pesach

Pesach (Passover) is a spring holiday, which celebrates the Jews being freed from the slavery in ancient Egypt. According to Jewish tradition, this happened more than 3000 years ago. The Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, had turned the Jews into slaves. They were forced to work incredibly hard for him and, if they didn't, they were punished. There was a Jewish man named Moses in those days. God commanded Moses to lead the Jews out of slavery. Moses obediently went to the Pharaoh and asked him to release his people. But, of course, the Pharaoh was not convinced. The Jews worked for him for free, so he didn't want to let them go. Then God cursed Egypt with a numerous plagues: heaps of hailstones fell from the sky and there were suddenly grasshoppers and frogs all over the place. There were ten plagues in all. This was even too much for Pharaoh. He released the Jews and allowed them to leave Egypt.



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### How is Pesach celebrated?

Before Pesach begins, the entire house has to be cleaned. All the bread – or anything related – is taken away. There is yeast (leaven) in bread to make it rise. Since the Jews were in a hurry to leave Egypt, they didn't have time to let their bread rise, so they took along flat, unleavened breads: matzos. These matzos are now eaten during Pesach as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt. The celebration begins on Seder night, the evening before Pesach. On this night, the entire family comes together to eat a special meal and listen to the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Different foods are placed on a special Seder plate – each with a symbolic meaning. One of them is horseradish, also known as the bitter herb. Its biting and bitter taste reminds us of how the Jews suffered in Egypt. There is also a special book on the table: the Haggadah. It tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt and includes songs sung on Seder night.

Every year during Pesach you think about oppression and celebrate freedom. And then it's not only about your own freedom, but also about the freedom of people everywhere in the world.



**My notes:**

### Tip from Max



Working on a school project about Pesach? Then let your class see my [rap](#) video clip! And when the Hollanders are celebrating Passover, you can show the films from the living room and the kitchen.