

**Peter Hoffman, Chef of Savoy Restaurant
New York, NY**

Passover Thoughts

Each year at Savoy we use Passover as a time to explore the world of Jewish food different from the one I grew up with. There is no matzoh ball soup, no brisket, no gefilte fish. Instead we take the opportunity to eat our way around the Mediterranean cooking Sephardic dishes. This year is no exception and in honor of the liberation struggles being fought and won in Egypt, Tunisia and the ongoing struggle in Yemen our menu draws on those traditions for our inspiration.

Our haggadah or telling of the Exodus story is one that emphasizes human acts over acts of God. It is a story of human struggle for freedom and has many parallel stories that are instructive- the civil rights movement in the US, the recent democracy movement in Egypt and Tunisia. My favorite part is that when the Jews got to the Red Sea that the waters didn't recede until an old man who nothing else to risk made a leap of faith and waded into the waters...and then they realized that they could pass. Scary as it may be, struggling for what we believe in and making leaps of faith are critical to achieving social or personal change.

Passover Menu (Egyptian)

Mixed Mezze

Melokheya Soup, traditional Egyptian soup with greens, garlic, cardamom and coriander

Quail stuffed with raisin, pine nuts and lamb

Rose water and mastic ice cream with matzo fritters

Recipe

Tahrir Square Salad (Egypt)

1 celery root

2 medium fennel bulbs

3 cloves garlic, sliced

2 lemons, juiced

Sugar, to taste

¼ teaspoon turmeric

Salt and pepper, to taste

2 tablespoons flat leaf parsley, chopped

1. Clean, peel and cut the celery root and fennel into julienne strips.
2. Sauté the sliced garlic in olive oil. Add the celery root and the fennel. Add the lemon juice, sugar, turmeric and salt, and simmer slowly with a lid on the pan. Add a splash of water if necessary. Cook until the vegetables are tender but not mushy, about 7 minutes.
3. Cool and then season again with salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle with parsley. Balance the seasoning of the salt and lemon juice. Serve at room temperature with matzo on the side. Recline while eating.

Yield: About 6 servings