

Jesus Feast at Home

Hold a Jesus Feast in your own home! The Jesus Feast should include two components, food (obviously!) and reflection. The food should resemble a meal that people may have eaten during the time of Christ. The reflection should look at one of the meals Scripture tells us Jesus shared with his followers and what can be learned from that meal. Below are found both recipes and reflection suggestions that go along with the *Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes*.

Recipes

From the Market

For Dipping:

Olive Oil with herbs

Honey

Greek Yogurt, plain or with honey

Hummus

Tzatziki

For Eating:

Bread (can use recipes below)

Feta Cheese

Goat Cheese

Olives

Raisins

Cucumbers

Carrots

Grapes

Figs

Dates

Pomegranates

Pistachios

Almonds

Bread (can use recipes below)

Prepare a spread using some or all of the above elements to be eat with hands.

*All of these recipes are taken from *The Food and Feasts of Jesus* by Douglas E. Neel and Joel A. Pugh. We highly recommend this book for anyone wanting to learn more about food in Jesus' time, not just in terms of what would have been eaten by our Lord, but the role food played in people's daily and religious lives at the time. Many more delicious recipes can also be found in this book.

*Mediterranean Grain Bread**

(For a crustier bread, use only water (2 ½ cups) and not milk, do not use butter, and use 3 tablespoons of olive oil instead of 2. Use a grain mix that is made up primarily of whole wheat and barley that is ground to the size of couscous.)

1 tablespoon yeast
1 ½ cup warm water (approx. 110°)
6 cups unbleached flour
1 cup whole grain mix
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoon butter (soft or melted)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 ½ tablespoon honey
1 cup milk

Place the yeast and warm water in the bowl of your mixer. Wait until yeast begins to activate, approximately 15 minutes. It will change color and begin to bubble. Add the flour and the grain mixture. Then add the rest of the ingredients. Add the oil first and use the same tablespoon to measure your honey. The oil will keep the honey from sticking to measuring spoon.

Mix with the dough hook for five minutes. Start on the slowest speed to keep the flour from splashing out of the bowl and then increase the speed to medium slow. Let the dough rest for 15 minutes and then mix for another 5 minutes. The dough should be slightly sticky and springy to the touch. Add flour 1 tablespoon at a time if the dough is too sticky or wat if it is too dry.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for about 30 seconds. Place in an oiled bowl and cover with a cotton kitchen towel or oiled plastic wrap. If your KitchenAid bowl is large enough, you can leave the dough in the bowl to rise. Punch down and knead by turning the machine on low for 1 minute. Let rise until it has doubled in size, about 1 hour at 80° (1 ½ hours at 65°).

After rising, turn out the dough onto the floured surface again, punch down with your fingers to allow the gases to escape and knead for about 1 minute. Form the dough into 4 loaves about 6-8 inches in diameter and 1-1 ½ inches thick in the center. Lightly spray baking sheets with cooking oil and place the loaves on the sheets. Cover with the floured towel and let rise for another hour. After 40 minutes, preheat the oven to 400°. Cook your bread on a rack in the center of the oven for 20-25 minutes.

Remove bread and let it cool on a rack for at least 2 hours. Makes 4 small loaves.

*Flat Bread (Pita)**

1 tablespoon yeast

1 ¾ cup water, approximately 110°

4 2/3 cups all-purpose unbleached flour

1 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoon olive oil

Place the yeast and warm water in the bowl of your mixer. Wait until yeast begins to activate, approximately 15 minutes. It will change color and begin to bubble. Add the flour to the yeast mixture. Then add the rest of the ingredients.

Mix with the dough hook for 5 minutes. Start on the slowest speed to keep the flour from splashing out of the bowl and then increase the speed to medium slow. Let the dough rest for 15 minutes and then mix for another 5 minutes. The dough should be slightly sticky and spring to the touch. Add flour 1 tablespoon at a time if the dough is too sticky or water if it is too dry.

Remove and place in a large bowl. Cover with a kitchen towel or plastic wrap and allow to rise until double in size, approximately 1 hour. Punch down the dough, cover, and allow to rise a second time. After the second rise, turn out on a floured surface and knead for approximately 20 second. Divide the dough into 10 to 12 balls and cover with the kitchen towel or greased plastic wrap. Allow until doubled, and additional hour.

Place a pizza stone, over bricks, or a thick baking pan in the oven. Preheat to the highest temperature, usually 500°. Roll out each ball of dough on a floured surface until it is 7 to 8 inches in diameter. Using a pizza peel or the back of another baking sheet dusted with flour, slide several pitas onto the baking surface. In several minutes they will puff and then begin to brown. Take out of the oven and stack on a cloth kitchen towel. Fold the towel over the top of the pitas or cover with another towel so that bread continues to steam as it cools. Makes 10 to 12 pieces of flat bread.

*Lentil and Chickpea Soup**

¼ cup olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely minced
2 cups cooked chickpeas, or 1 ½ (15 ounce) cans, rinsed
1 cup dried green lentils, rinsed 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
4 cups chicken stock
4 cups water
½ teaspoons ground cumin
½ teaspoons ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground mustard seed
2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
¼ teaspoon ground pepper
1 bay leaf

To cook dried chickpeas: cover 1 cup of chickpeas with water and soak overnight drain the chickpeas and place in 4-quart pot. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer. Add a bay leaf and parsley stems for additional flavor. Simmer for 1 hour and drain.

In a large soup pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté. When translucent, add the garlic and sauté for 30 seconds, or until translucent. Then add the chickpeas, lentils, stock, and water. Bring to boil and then return to a simmer. Add the rest of the ingredients and continue to simmer for several hours. Remove the bay leaf. Adjust seasonings and serve.

*Baked Tilapia with Two Sauces**

(You can serve this dish with one or both sauces. First century diners would have broken off pieces of the fish and then dipped them in one of the two dips.)

Fish:

- 4 to 6 tilapia fillets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoons pepper
- 1-2 teaspoons Middle Easter Sumac

Yogurt Sauce:

- 1 cup grated cucumber, drained, and dried with towels
- 1 garlic clove, minced and then mashed with the side of a knife
- 1 cup yogurt
- ½ teaspoon dill
- ½ teaspoon salt, or to taste

Parsley Sauce:

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 cup parsley
- Juice and zest from 1 lemon
- 3 tablespoons bottle capers
- ½ teaspoons salt or to taste

Fish- Preheat the oven to 375°. Use a little of the oil and grease the bottom of a large baking pan. Rub the fillets with the rest of the oil and place in the pan. Squeeze the lemon over the over the fillets and then sprinkle with the salt, pepper, and sumac. Cover the pan with a lid or with aluminum foil. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the fillets flake easily with a fork.

Yogurt Sauce- Peel the grate the cucumber. Put the cucumber in a strainer and press to remove liquid. Then remove and pat dry with a kitchen town or paper towels. Add all the ingredients including the cucumber to a bowl and mix. Can be covered and refrigerated. Stir before serving.

Parsley Sauce- Place the garlic in the bowl of a food processor and then process until minced, scraping down the sides when necessary. Add the parsley, lemon juice, and zest. Process until the parsley is finely chopped. Remove and add the capers and salt.

*Wedding Cake**

(This recipe is a version of a wedding cake described by Cato. Cato lived in the century before Jesus and wrote about farming and wine making. He also gave examples of how foods were prepared, including this sweet cake.)

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour

1 cup ricotta cheese

1 egg, beaten

1 tablespoon olive oil

½ cup and 1 tablespoon honey, divided use

Fresh bay leaves

Preheat the oven to 400°. Sift the flour. Place the cheese in the mixer and beat on low for 20 seconds. Add the flour, egg, olive oil and 1 tablespoon honey and then mix until combined but still soft.

Grease a baking sheet. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and then shape into cakes, approximately ¾ inch thick. Place a bay leaf on the baking sheet and the cake on top of it. Tightly cove the baking sheet with aluminum foil and then bake for 30 to 35 minutes until beginning to brown, removing the foil for the final 5 minutes. Remove from the oven and form a cross on each cake with a knife. Pour the honey on the cakes and allow to sit for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove the bay leaves and serve.

Dried Fruit Pastries

(Use any dried fruit that you wish. As a timesaver, you can use pie dough from the freezer section of your market instead of this dough.)

Crust:

2 ½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 cup butter, cut into small pieces
1 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons water
1 egg
1 teaspoon white vinegar

Filling:

1 cup dried apricots
1 cup dates
4 teaspoons honey
2 teaspoons Madeira wine

Crust- In a mixing bowl, mix together the flour, butter, and salt, cutting in the butter with a fork. In a separate bowl, combine the water, egg, and vinegar, beating slightly with a fork. Add these ingredients to the flour and mix, kneading very briefly. You can cover and refrigerate the dough.

The Filling- One variety at a time, process the dried fruit in a food processor and place in separate bowls. Add half the honey and wine to each and stir to combine.

Preheat the oven to 350°. On a floured surface, roll out the dough. Cut with a biscuit cutter. Punch all over the round with a fork, then add 1-2 tablespoons of the filling; fold the dough over the rounds. Place on an oiled cookie sheet and bake in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until beginning to brown. Cool before eating.
Serves 6 to 8.

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Reflection

Scripture passage:

Have one member of the family read the below Biblical passage.

- Read Luke 9:10-17

Questions for discussion:

Use the below questions to have a discussion regarding the passage. Both the introduction and the question should be read. Guidance for the where the discussion leader should steer the discussion if it gets stuck are provided in parentheses but should not be read aloud.

- Aside from the Resurrection, this feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle that is recorded in each of the 4 Gospels (in addition to the passage just read, it can also be found in Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, and John 6:1-14). What is it about this miracle that you think makes it important? (A variety of answers could be given here. Affirm and expanded on any reasonable answers given.)
- The 12 Apostles are worried that there will not be enough food for everyone in the crowd so they turn to Jesus. Jesus ensures that everyone has what they need. When you are worried about something, do you turn to Jesus? Why or why not? Can you think of a time that you prayed about something you were worried about and God took care of you? Share your experience with others.
(Whenever we are worried about something, we should take that worry to God in prayer. We can trust that God wants to give us what we need.)
- Jesus tells the Apostles to feed the crowded with the food they have. They are not sure that the food they have will be enough but they give it all to Him and He feeds everybody with their 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Have you ever thought that what you had to offer to God was not enough or felt that God was asking you to do something you could not do?
(God can do great things when we trust Him completely. We should offer Him everything, including ourselves, without worrying about whether it is enough. If God has asked us to do something for Him, we can know that He will help make it happen.)
- Scripture tells us that Jesus took the loaves and fishes, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the crowd. Does this remind you of anything? Why do you think this might be important?
(Jesus will repeat this pattern at the Last Supper and this pattern is present in the Mass. It shows us how we should pattern our lives. Take- Receive the gifts God has given us. Bless- Thank God for the gifts we have been given and use them for holiness. Break- Make sacrifices for the good of others. Give- Share God's gifts, goodness, and love with others.)

Prayer:

Conclude your reflection with the following prayer.

God of our hopes and dreams,
we are empty, and long to be filled;
we are hungry, and long to be fed;
we are lost, and long to be found.

Gather us into your love,
and pick up the pieces of our lives,
just as Jesus gathered up the fragments
of the five loaves and two fish
that remained after feeding the five thousand.

Call us anew to eat our fill
and to find our true nourishment in Jesus,
the bread of heaven.

Amen