



A Simple Sephardic Passover with the Sephardic Spice Girls

National Webinar Transcript

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Presented by:



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Jessica Jablon: Welcome, everyone. We're so excited to have you join us today for Sharsheret in the Kitchen, "A Simple Sephardic Passover with the Sephardic Spice Girls." I'm Jessica Jablon. I'm the California Program Coordinator at Sharsheret. For those of you who don't know about Sharsheret, we help women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer, as well as those who are at elevated genetic risk through free, confidential, and personalized support and resources. We also provide health education throughout the country. One of our goals during Covid is to make sure that we are offering healthy living and cancer prevention information to you during this time and giving you what support you need. In addition to our virtual services that can be found on our website or by emailing us, you can also access prior webinars on a wide range of cancer related topics, as well as access our calendar of upcoming virtual programs through our website.

Before we begin, a few housekeeping items. Today's webinar is being recorded and will be posted on Sharsheret's website along with the transcript. Participants' names and faces will not be in the recording as long as you remain on mute. If you would like to remain private, you can turn off your video and rename yourself or you can call into the webinar. Instructions are in the chat box now for both options. You may have noticed that all participants were muted upon entry. Please keep yourself on mute throughout the call. If you have questions for Rachel and Sharon, put them in the chat box, either publicly or click on Sharsheret in the chat box to submit a private question, and we will ask them throughout the program. We will send out a follow up email with tips and recommendations from today's webinar with the recording in the next week or so.

We are very excited to continue our Sharsheret in the Kitchen series, an initiative in partnership with Cedar Sinai here in Los Angeles, to empower those of us at risk for breast and ovarian cancer to make healthier diet choices. We've had wonderful guests for this healthier cooking series, and we invite you to check out our prior Sharsheret in the Kitchen webinars on our website at the link in the chat. You should have received the recipes for today's program in advance, but my colleague is putting the link in the chat box now so that you can download it and print it or see it on your screen. We want to thank our generous sponsors, Cedar Sinai, the Cooperative Agreement DP19-1906 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Daiichi Sankyo, GSK and Merck. It is because of their generous support that we have been able to continue to provide our series of webinars throughout the pandemic.

Today, we wanted to let you know about one of our support programs. Our national Peer Support Network connects women who share similar diagnoses and experiences, whether you are at risk for breast or ovarian cancer, are newly diagnosed, or are a cancer survivor, our peer support program might be right for you. You can also share your own experience

by becoming a Sharsheret “Link,” which is what we call our peer supporters, and enjoy the rewarding experience of supporting other women across the country. Our confidential Links connect over the phone and through email and offer invaluable friendship and support. The Peer Support Network is made possible with support from Genentech and the link for more information is in the chat. If you are interested in finding out more about Sharsheret's free, confidential, and personalized services, please email us or visit our website at sharsheret.org. Before we meet the Sephardic Spice Girls, I want to introduce Rita, who will be sharing her story with us.

Rita:

Sorry, had to unmute myself. Thank you for having me today to share my story. Technical problems. One second. I found a lump nursing my new newborn son in the hospital. I was 34 years old with no family history of breast cancer. I didn't think anything of it and wasn't concerned. However, six months later at my follow up appointment, I was asked to have four back to back emergency biopsies. And was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer several days later. I was shocked and felt like my world has come to a screeching halt. As a mom to a three year old and six month old, I only prayed that my babies didn't have to grow up without a mother. I went through a slew of very aggressive surgeries and treatments, including double mastectomies and reconstruction surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation, and hormone suppressant medication. As challenging as the surgeries and treatments were, for me, the most challenging and significant pain was not being a mom to my children.

They were so young and so dependent on me that not being able to hold or care for them physically was much more painful than any surgery or treatment I underwent. At that time, I didn't really know anyone and who had battled breast cancer openly. I come from a Persian Jewish family and in our community, most people don't talk about illness openly, especially breast cancer. In fact, I was encouraged by certain family members to keep my diagnosis secret, but I did the opposite. I spoke about my cancer openly. I shared my journey at a lecture at my daughter's preschool with other young Sephardic moms to educate and destigmatize. I wrote about my journey on blogs to help other young moms prioritize themselves and their health. By doing so, I connected with other Persian women who were battling this disease privately, secretly, with no one to talk to.

In tears, I had one woman tell me that she didn't want her in-laws to know about her diagnosis. Another woman confided in me about her diagnosis and said nobody knows, not even her best friend. I know there are countless other women like them. Cancer is such a personal battle and everyone handles it differently. I don't judge anyone who decides to battle this disease privately, but cancer is such a heavy burden to carry alone. I don't know where I would've been if I had kept it a secret and didn't have my support system. I didn't know about Sharsheret at the time, but I was lucky to have connected with another young mom who had undergone treatment the previous year. For me, seeing someone who had already

been through this and was now on the other side happy and smiling and enjoying life again, brought me so much hope as I went through treatment. She is still a dear friend of mine and on this call today as well. I am here today in hopes of doing the same thing for others.

I feel blessed to be here sharing my story with you. My children are now 10 and seven and know their mom's story. They know my cancer journey has helped shape me into the woman I am today. I am a more present mother and wife. I have reprioritized my life because I now know how fragile life can be. My cancer journey gave me the courage to leave a career I built for 10 years in corporate consulting and follow my passion for interior design. My cancer journey gave me the courage to go back to school with two young children and start my interior design studio. My cancer journey gave me the courage to speak about a very taboo topic in my community. This is why I'm incredibly proud to be a Sharsheret peer supporter and love everything that Sharsheret provides.

I'm impressed with how well Jenna and Aimee, my Sharsheret contacts in Los Angeles, understand my Sephardic community and the challenges the cancer patients and survivors face in sharing their stories. They're always willing to speak to those who may want to remain anonymous and still provide them with support and resources. I love that they are allowing people like me to share our stories and connect with other women who need to hear this right now at this moment in time. Thank you so much.

Jessica Jablon:

Thank you, Rita, for sharing your powerful story with us today. Your willingness to share your experience has helped so many women and continues to do so. We're so grateful to have you as part of our Peer Support Network. Thank you for being here today.

If you're interested in becoming a link or potentially finding peer support, please email us at clinical staff at Sharsheret.org or put a note in your evaluation so that we can follow up with you.

The Passover is a holiday about tradition. Every year at our Seders, we recount the same story of the Exodus. We eat specific foods in a specific order and make recipes that may have been passed down from generation to generation. But I know in my family, I always enjoy finding new recipes to enhance our Passover meal, and that's just what we're doing today. We have a jam packed program with four delicious Passover recipes from our special guests, the Sephardic Spice Girls, Sharon Gomperts, and Rachel Sheff. Sharon and Rachel have been friends since high school.

They are passionate about healthy food and happy living. Their goal is to preserve Sephardic and Mizrahi recipes and the Moroccan and Iraqi recipes of their mothers and grandmothers. In their weekly food column in the Los Angeles Jewish Journal, they share recipes, personal anecdotes, and Jewish history. The Sephardic Spice Girls project has grown from collaboration on events for the Sephardic educational center in

Jerusalem. They run community cooking classes challah bakes, and you can follow them on Instagram @Sephardic Spice Girls and on Facebook at Sephardic Spice SEC Food and on their website at SephardicSpiceGirls.com.

Just a quick note, please stay tuned to the end of the webinar and make sure to fill out our evaluation, as we are excited to give away a beautiful Sephardic Spice Girls candle that Rachel and Sharon generously donated to this program. We've been planning this program for months and it's been so wonderful to get to know you both. We are so appreciative of the support you've given Sharsheret over these past several months, even helping to coordinate a Sharsheret community program to educate parents at a school here in Los Angeles. Thank you so much, Rachel and Sharon. Welcome to Sharsheret in the Kitchen and I'll turn it over to you.

Sharon Gomperts: Thank you so much, Rachel. Rita, sorry. Your story was so touching and we're so glad that you are well and thriving and doing what you love to do. That's so important to be passionate about what you do.

Rachel Sheff: Yes. Thank you so much for sharing that with us. It's so important to be open and share our lives with everyone. Thank you, very nice.

Sharon Gomperts: We're excited.

Rachel Sheff: We're excited to be here. We have a lot to go through, but we want to let you know that we're going to give you examples of what we do, but feel free to adjust these recipes. It comes from you, what your palette is, and how comfortable you are in the kitchen. Like you said, we all have our standard Passover recipes, but Sharon I love to lighten things up, change things up. These might be recipes that you kind of acknowledge the stuffed peppers and zucchinis. Normally your mother, your grandmother made them with meat.

Sharon Gomperts: Stuffed cabbage and with meat. There are no rules. That's our message to you, just enjoy. Let's have some healthy cooking time. Okay, let's start with our...

Rachel Sheff: We make an herbacious sauce and this sauce today, we're going to use on fish. Normally, I poach or I oven bake a salmon and I put this sauce on it. I've started making it a little fancier for Friday night dinners with potatoes and leaks and a white fish. This sauce, if you make a big jar of it, the idea is you will use it all week long during Passover or keep it in your fridge. You can serve it with meat. You can serve it with chicken thighs, chicken breasts, alongside your roasts and any fish. Then you can even thin it out and put it into a quinoa salad. It's an amazing sauce.

I'm going to go ahead and start. You're going to use all the herbs that you love. Here I have parsley.

Sharon Gomperts: Italian flat leaf parsley,

- Rachel Sheff: Cilantro. As you can see, I'm using a big bunch of each. I have dill, a bunch of fresh mint. What I do is I come home from the store and I soak everything. I try to get as many things as I can, as many herbs as I can that are organic. But if not, you're going to take extra care to soak them extra time. Then I have some beautiful basil. You're just going to pop it into your food processor and chop it up.
- Sharon Gomperts: [inaudible 00:13:36] like that, you don't even...
- Rachel Sheff: Yeah. I'm going to add three big cloves of garlic. Again, if you're not into garlic, don't put it in. If you love garlic, add more. I'm going to put in my olive oil and you're making a pesto, basically. But it's not going to have any nuts. I have lemon juice,
- Sharon Gomperts: Fresh squeezed lemon juice, black pepper, some Himalayan pink salt and kosher salt. You mixed.
- Rachel Sheff: I just put Himalayan pink salt. I get really finely ground up one. It's really important because they have a lot of minerals. The more you can use the pink salt, the better it is for you. I'm going to pulse it some more. There's our green sauce. Really, it is super delicious. This is something that you're going to make over and over again. It keeps for a good week in your fridge. Pour it into a mason jar or a Tupperware. There you are. I'm going to take you over to the stove and we're going to start our fish.
- I'll take this with me. We are in a friend's kitchen today.
- Sharon Gomperts: So kind of her to give it to us today.
- Rachel Sheff: Oh, my. Glad I didn't blow up my hair. Okay.
- Sharon Gomperts: Do you need the olive oil?
- Rachel Sheff: Yes, I do. Oh, no, I have it right here.
- Sharon Gomperts: Oh, you have it. Sorry [crosstalk 00:15:13].
- Rachel Sheff: Here's the oil. It's just about a fourth of a cup. I know you all have the recipes or will have the recipes. You're going to start with very finely cut leaks and I love this little kitchen tool. You can get it on Amazon. It's a little mandolin and it's not vicious and scary, like most mandolins. What you'll do is you'll just take the leek like this and you get these beautiful little tiny, thin strips. Once you've grated it all, then soak it in water because you know that leaks hold onto so much dirt. I'm putting in my leaks
- Sharon Gomperts: Leaks are amazing with fish. They have a beautiful, mild, sweet flavor, not as sharp as onions.

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Rachel Sheff: There you go. We're going to let that cook for a little bit. Meanwhile, I'm taking my potatoes. Again, I'm using my mandolin, and you can just thinly slice your potatoes, washed. I like these yellow gold potatoes. You can use the red, you can use whatever you have on hand.

Sharon Gomperts: Yellow is soft and creamy, right?

Rachel Sheff: Yeah. Normally, if we weren't on camera this morning, I would wait a good little, 10 minutes, cover this, let it cook down. I'm going to put a little salt. Then you're just going to start putting your potatoes down. Again, you want to give everything some time to cook, but we're a little pressed for time because we want to share with you so many recipes this morning that will be so useful to you throughout the week so you don't have to keep cooking over and over again. You have things already lined up for the week for lunches or for your dinners.

Sharon Gomperts: Then you're going to put salt on top because potatoes love salt.

Rachel Sheff: Here's my salt and it looks like a lot, but the potatoes need salt. I'm going to put a little pepper. Then I'd like to show you, what I like to use is fresh turmeric. This is a root. They sell it next to the ginger at most markets nowadays. It used to not be so popular. This one's particularly red and crazy beautiful. I'm going to put about half of that.

Sharon Gomperts: Turmeric is just so healthy.

Rachel Sheff: I like to use this little grinder as well, the little grater that I have. These are my every day, go-to kitchen tools that I love, and both from Amazon. I can maybe find a link and put it on Instagram for you ladies. Here I have saffron water, very easy. You take some saffron that you can buy nowadays at Trader Joe's even. It's not as expensive as it used to be. You just steep it in warm water in a bottle, and you keep it in your fridge or on your counter, even. I love to use it in this recipe. I use it in all my Friday night chicken.

Then over here, what I've done is I laid out my fish. I sprinkled the salt on it. What happens is the salt helps all the moisture come out of the fish. You're just going to pat it down to get some of that salt off. Then we're going to start putting down our fish. I would, again, 10 minutes from now when the potatoes and the leaks are a little bit more caramelized, that's when I start putting down the fish. Here we go. I love to make this with sea bass, any kind of whitefish, halibut, sea bass, whitefish, branzino. This happens to be soul because I couldn't find any sea bass or brands that looked nice at the market. You go with what looks fresh and delicious. You can cook this with skin as well. Your fish pieces can have skin on them.

Jessica Jablon: Rachel, how long can the saffron water stay on the counter?

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Rachel Sheff: Oh, weeks, literally weeks. But you're going to use it quicker than that. If you're worried and you don't want to leave it out, put it in your fridge. It's totally fine. I've got preserved lemon. These, we have a little video on our Instagram and on our Facebook showing you how to make them. They're super easy. It's basically salt and lemon juice and lemons. I use it. It gives this an unbelievable flavor.

Jessica Jablon: What if they don't have preserve lemon?

Rachel Sheff: If you don't have... Because it does take a month to two months to preserve...

Sharon Gomperts: They can just squeeze fresh lemon juice.

Rachel Sheff: You're going to squeeze fresh lemon juice. You'll squeeze some lemon juice on there. I'm going to add some white wine. The recipe calls for half a cup of white wine, I believe. You don't have to use the white wine. You can put a little bit more of this saffron water to make it a beautiful color. You're going to turn down the fire and simmer it. Now we'll let it cook and Sharon is going to start doing the stuffed vegetables. Then I'll show you what we do with the green sauce.

Sharon Gomperts: This is a very traditional Sephardic recipe. My grandmother used to do the grape leaves. Rachel does the grape leaves, stuffed cabbage, onions, but I'm lazy. I want something quick and easy. I'm doing it with tomatoes. I only use this white squash because I find zucchini is bitter. I love this squash. Then I use mini peppers. But if you're just doing it for a few people, you could use a red pepper and you could just cut the top like that, seed it, and that makes it beautiful. You take the top, you take the seeds off, and then you can stuff that. Let's see what else. I'm going to show you how I cut and core my zucchini. I cut it in about three. You want them not too big. The thing about this dish is that it's nice for when you have a bunch of guests because everyone can try every single vegetable.

Rachel Sheff: It's a great side dish. Even for a lunch, you can make it a main meal.

Sharon Gomperts: Yeah, with a good salad. You want to pour it out, leave a little bit at the bottom. I don't like to waste, so I take this and just put it in the dish because it adds a bit of water, the inside of the zucchini. Then you just put it here. You pop in here. Let me tell you about the stuffing.

Jessica Jablon: Sharon.

Sharon Gomperts: Yes?

Jessica Jablon: Somebody had... You kind of broke out there when you were talking about the zucchini and what you prefer.

Sharon Gomperts: Oh, this is sometimes referred to as Mexican squash or white squash. I don't like zucchini because sometimes... I mean I love zucchini, but

sometimes it's bitter and then that's disappointing because your whole dish is kind of ruined. I don't like bitter vegetables. That's why I use this. You hollow it out. Then for the stuffing, you're going to use cooked quinoa. I love to have quinoa in my fridge, especially for Ashkenazi. That can't have rice, like we can on Pesach. Quinoa's wonderful to have. It lasts a good five, six days in the fridge. You're going to take cooked quinoa. You're going to take fresh mint. You're going to take parsley. You're going to chop it really nicely. I'm not like Rachel. I don't use my food processor. My mom thinks I'm crazy because my mom also uses her food processor.

But I love the meditative feeling of chopping my vegetables, of touching my food. It's very tactile. It's relaxing. I don't mind. I take the extra time. I'm going to throw out my stalks. I would say my best kitchen tip is have a trash bowl on hand all the time. You're going to chop your greens really finely. You're going to mix it in. We're going to put some olive oil. We're going to put salt and pepper. Pretend that I already put the salt and pepper and that's that. Then I'm going to put my pecans. As I said, this is very traditional Middle Eastern, but they would do it with ground lamb or ground beef. We've changed it up because there are so many vegans and vegetarians. You don't miss it in this recipe. I made it last week and my family just loved it, really, really enjoyed it.

The pecans and the quinoa give you lots of protein and they taste delicious. Then you're going to stuff each vegetable. Don't stress if the stuffing falls into your dish because it'll just be delicious in the sauce. What's really cute is when you keep the lids of the vegetables like that and you can cover them. I'll show you that. Then I'm going to show you how we make the sauce. It's a little bit of prep, but it's really worthwhile. These vegetables taste even better the next time when you reheat them. If there's leftovers, be really happy about that.

Rachel Sheff: Do you prefer if I bring you the pot to show them how to make the sauce?

Sharon Gomperts: Sure, let's do that. I don't need the heat for that.

Rachel Sheff: Sorry, I'll move out of way.

Sharon Gomperts: Thank you. You're going to put your olive oil. Pretend I'm on fire here. Then you're going to like sauté your garlic a little bit, not too much. You don't want it to burn and get bitter. You're going to do that. You're going to add your tomato sauce.

Rachel Sheff: This is crushed tomatoes.

Sharon Gomperts: Crushed tomatoes.

Rachel Sheff: Little thicker.

Sharon Gomperts: It's delicious. This is a really nice one. The recipe says 14 ounces. Use the 28 ounces. Like I said, I don't like to waste, so I kept the inside of the tomatoes and I'm going to add it to the sauce. I'm going to add lemon juice. You need the juice of one lemon. Beautiful, fresh. I'm going to add paprika. I'm going to add turmeric. My grandmother used sugar, but we're a little tiny bit healthier and we're going to add honey. Honey makes everything delicious and it balances the lemon, the acidity of the lemon, and brings out the yummy flavor of the tomatoes. You're going to just boil that on the fire and then we're going to pour it over the vegetables. Maybe we'll start our next recipe and I'll cook this and then I'll show you how it looks once you poured it over.

Rachel Sheff: Okay. Here, I'll turn on the fire for you so you don't...

Sharon Gomperts: Watch out. We're just going to stir it really well, bring it to a boil. Sorry.

Rachel Sheff: You want the lid?

Sharon Gomperts: We're going to bring it to a boil. Then once it's boiled, we're going to lower it and just let it simmer so all the flavors come out and everything's cooked and delicious. What are you doing next, Rachel?

Rachel Sheff: I'm going to make something called Matbucha, which is a tomato sauce with peppers that you eat as a dip, a salad on Friday nights. You serve it with all your salads. It's part of the Moroccan salad dips that everybody is so into these days. Go ahead put it on the burner. Growing up, this was basically our ketchup. We didn't eat ketchup, we ate Matbucha. You're going to start with some olive oil and you notice we use a lot of olive oil and avocado oil. Those are my two basics all the time because they're just the healthiest oils you can find out there right now. Again, you're going to use... In this recipe, my mother used to peel and dice and drain all the tomatoes and it took hours and hours. We're using chopped tomatoes or whole tomatoes that you've cut up, drain the liquid. I keep the liquid on the side because sometimes this gets...

Sharon Gomperts: These are both kosher for Passover, just so you know.

Rachel Sheff: You're putting in your chopped tomatoes and you are going to add a lot of garlic. Now, this is something that you're going to cook for a very long time. It stays on the fire four to five hours. It's also called the "Salade Cuite," which is cooked salad. What happens is it caramelizes your onions and your peppers and everything gets so intense that it has just a beautiful, tomato-y delicious taste. It's incredible on matzah as well. The only spice you're going to use is paprika and salt. Here, I've charred some peppers in my oven. I put 500 degrees. This is what they're going to look like. You put them in a bag, you peel them so they steam, and you peel them. After you've simmered this for about three hours, it's going to be really rich and you have to be nearby.

You can't just leave it and go away. You have to come back every half hour, give it a stir on the bottom, make sure nothing's sticking, and then we're going to add... I'm going to use my hands, it has too much liquid, the charred green peppers. It's okay if you have little pieces of skin that are left over. It's okay if you have the little chars left over on there, gives it a really nice flavor and a nice look. You're adding your peppers and then you let it cook some more, another hour, let's say. Then you come back, you put in your paprika and your salt, and you let it cook another half hour, and then you're done. When you're done, it's going to look like this.

This is our "Salade Cuite." You see the dark color. It's completely transformed the tomatoes and the peppers. It's like a jam, basically. It tastes like a jam. It's so, so delicious. Why do I love this so much? Because not only is it delicious with your matzah and your challah and whatever you're going to serve, your other salads, but let's say... Make a lot, follow my recipe. Make a lot of it, put it in the fridge. Tomorrow, take some, warm it up, crack some eggs. You have a Shakshuka. The next day, you go, "Oh my God, what am I going to make for dinner?" Take it, warm it up, drop some fish in it, and you've got a beautiful fish dish. It's really versatile.

Sharon Gomperts: Versatile. The cooked tomatoes and the cooked peppers, you can't get anything healthier than that. The spices, we need to use more spices and paprika and turmeric. There's spices that we don't even think. You just throw it on everything.

Rachel Sheff: Right. Some people like spice. You can add a jalapeno in there with pepper flakes, harissa.

Sharon Gomperts: You always use the little cans of fire roasted chili peppers.

Rachel Sheff: Right. I love those. I get them at Trader Joe's. You can dump a little bit in there. If you feel like you don't really know how to roast peppers, you don't want to mess around with it, no problem. Chop up your peppers. At the end, the last hour, put them in there and let them cook. They'll cook an hour or two and they get soft and delicious.

All right, we're doing great. Let's go check the fish.

Jessica Jablon: There were a couple of questions that came in about the sauce for the fish.

Rachel Sheff: [inaudible 00:32:24]. Oh, this fish.

Jessica Jablon: The herbalicious sauce. Somebody asked if you omit white wine, what to use instead?

Rachel Sheff: Oh, absolutely. Just water. Just put a little water so it doesn't stick and it creates a sauce and add a little bit more of your saffron water.

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- Jessica Jablon: Then somebody else had asked if somebody's a vegetarian, what else would you recommend using the sauce on?
- Rachel Sheff: You can definitely put it into a quinoa salad. You can put it in a kale salad.
- Sharon Gomperts: It would be delicious over grilled vegetables.
- Rachel Sheff: Yeah, definitely. You can grill eggplants, peppers, asparagus. You just drizzle it on there, awesome. Pasta if it's not Passover, you can definitely do that. This is how I serve it. I drizzle it on top of the fish.
- Sharon Gomperts: The colors are just so vibrant, the yellows and the greens.
- Rachel Sheff: There you are. Again, this fish, you can also put it in an oven safe dish, put everything out in there, drizzle the water, the wine, everything, and put the green sauce and bake it. You can bake it in the oven and it's delicious and it looks amazing. There's that. Your tomato sauce?
- Sharon Gomperts: Let's see. I think this tomato sauce is looking good. Let's give it a little stir and we're going to throw this over the veggies and then you're going to just spoon it over so the vegetables are covered. Just bake it in the oven. It's just so delicious. If you have any other vegetables that you love, you could stuff those as well. My grandmother used to stuff beets and potatoes and whatever she had.
- Rachel Sheff: Onions. Onions are always good.
- Sharon Gomperts: Onions are delicious. When you do the onions, you kind of have to boil them a little bit so that they're soft so that you can hollow them out. But you just do that and stick it in the oven. It's really easy. We're good. [inaudible 00:34:41]
- Rachel Sheff: All right. I just wanted to show you my preserved lemons. Here they are. It's sort of like a pickle, basically, very salty, but really great for your gut, just like eating any preserved or pickled vegetable. Not only do I use it in my fish, I love to use it, of course, in olive chicken, Moroccan olive chicken. I use it in sauces and salads. I'll make an Israeli salad and I chop up little pieces of lemon and it just gives it that amazing vibrant taste.
- Sharon Gomperts: Right now, all the lemons are ripe. If you have too many lemons, if you're lucky enough to have a lemon tree, this is an excellent way to use them up.
- Rachel Sheff: You can look up on our website how to make it. Then you just keep it in your fridge. People have them in there for up to a year, basically. The softer they get, the more amazing they are. Wow. We're going to make these delicious little almond cookies for you. They are very versatile. You can add any kind of flavoring that you like to them, basically. We recommend cardamom, cinnamon, rose water, orange flour water, almond extract, whatever your kids like.

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Sharon Gomperts: Vanilla, whatever you have on hand that's kosher for Passover. You need to with the egg whites, you have to be careful not to get the yolks in there. You put them in a clean bowl. Then you whisk them really well so they get a bit fluffy, a little bit fluffier than this. This is a fun project to do with your kids. If you have little kids at home, they can definitely help you with this.

Rachel Sheff: Absolutely.

Sharon Gomperts: Rachel's a major fan of coconut sugar.

Rachel Sheff: I am. I'm a big baker. My family is. We're Moroccan. We have super sweet tooth, all Moroccans do because we are a big community of bakers. But a few years back, my parents have diabetes. My niece is allergic to sugar. A lot of things came up and then I kept reading about all the benefits of honey, not agave so much anymore, but maple syrup and coconut sugar. This recipe, we thought we would sub the white sugar, processed sugar, for coconut sugar. It gives it just a beautiful color as well. Putting in my coconut sugar and coconut sugar has a little bit of a maple taste. It's really nice in recipes that you would think. This also gives it a nice color. I'm going to add a little bit of cinnamon.

Sharon Gomperts: We didn't crush our cardamom, but this is what it looks like whole. Then you can crush it. Cardamom gives an amazing menthol, eucalyptus flavor. In Middle Eastern cooking, in Indian cooking, my grandmother used it in her Shabbat Tabit, which was chicken and rice. She used to put it in her tea with mint. It's just excellent for digestion. It's just a very subtle flavor.

Rachel Sheff: Here's our almond flour. Actually, this is a cookie that I make all year long. I sometimes add chocolate chips to it. You can add raisins to it. It's not necessarily just for Passover. I mean, we all know now how popular almond flour is.

Jessica Jablon: Someone is asking if you could use Passover cake flour for this, I guess instead of the almond flour.

Rachel Sheff: Well it's more of a macaroon, but I don't see why not. I just don't know about the measurements, how they would differ.

Sharon Gomperts: Probably very similar.

Rachel Sheff: We're putting three cups of almond flour.

Sharon Gomperts: You're going to add the orange blossom water.

Rachel Sheff: Right. We decided a profile we like. We made some of these yesterday and we ate a bunch of them, with cinnamon and orange blossom water. I'm putting one table spoon because it's pretty strong stuff. Here's a spatula if you want.

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Sharon Gomperts: Yeah. Uh oh.

Jessica Jablon: Do you use black or green cardamom and can you explain the difference?

Sharon Gomperts: Inside the pod is black. I didn't know that there is black cardamom. Green cardamom, the cardamom that I've seen is always green, but there's black pods. The little seeds inside are black. Maybe that's the confusion. Hope that answers that question.

Rachel Sheff: Did you say that you have it with tea? It's so delicious in tea.

Sharon Gomperts: Yes, with tea. What else do we put it in? In baking, it's delicious.

Rachel Sheff: We've been friends since we were in high school and I used to go to Sharon's house and have tea and I just loved it and I never knew what it was. They would say, "It's Hale." I'd say, "Hell? What is that?" That's what they call it.

Sharon Gomperts: In Arabic, it's Hale. But Rachel also came to my house, well my parents' house at the time, and we had an orange tree. She stood there plucking all the little white blossoms. I'm like, "What are you doing?" She's like, "I'm going to make tea for my parents." I'm like, "Oh, I don't know you put flowers in tea."

Rachel Sheff: Yes.

Sharon Gomperts: That's the wonderful thing about our collaboration is we really learn a lot from each other.

Rachel Sheff: I think like Sephardics, we really use our backyard, our plants, the mint that's growing all over my backyard. I rarely buy mint. If someone I know has a lemon or orange tree, I'm there picking the blossom.

Sharon Gomperts: She's also there picking my little kumquats off my tree.

Rachel Sheff: I like to make jam with kumquats. It's fun. Mediterranean diet is very fruit and vegetable intense. We are using a little ice cream scooper to scoop up our dough.

Sharon Gomperts: Don't worry if they're not perfect.

Rachel Sheff: Right.

Sharon Gomperts: They come out cute when you make them. Well maybe I'm taking that a little too far. Then when you put your almonds in, you're going to flatten it.

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Rachel Sheff: I got some peeled almonds. You're just going to push it down and that's it. You can put anything you want on top. You don't have to put anything on top.

Sharon Gomperts: But they're cute with the almonds. It makes them festive.

Rachel Sheff: Yeah, exactly.

Sharon Gomperts: Extra protein, guys.

Rachel Sheff: These are homemade.

Jessica Jablon: Someone is asking what you would sub for the cardamom during Passover for us Ashkenazis.

Rachel Sheff: You use cinnamon.

Sharon Gomperts: Cinnamon, vanilla, lemon juice would be delicious.

Rachel Sheff: Can you use cloves?

Sharon Gomperts: Whatever spices you have on hand that are kosher for Passover or no spices, it's fine.

Rachel Sheff: I buy something called pumpkin spice for Thanksgiving and I always have it for the whole year.

Sharon Gomperts: But Ashkenazim...

Rachel Sheff: You can't use pumpkin spice?

Sharon Gomperts: I don't know if they can. It's fine. You'll manage with lemon, vanilla, cinnamon. It'll be delicious. Just whatever.

Rachel Sheff: These waters. Are these kosher for Passover? They're kosher. I just don't know.

Jessica Jablon: Well my colleague said that she Googled it and they suggest lemongrass as a substitute.

Sharon Gomperts: Yeah, that would be delicious.

Rachel Sheff: But I think it's a basic... You can use your basic nutmeg, cinnamon, clove kind of thing.

Sharon Gomperts: Yeah. Whatever sweet spices that you have on hand, you could definitely do.

Rachel Sheff: You can use coconut, almond extract. Is that okay? You can use that.

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Sharon Gomperts: Yeah. The thing that we've learned, I mean we were cooking way before we ever did Sephardic Spice Girls. But what we've learned is not to be intimidated by recipes, to feel free to adapt a recipe, like Rachel said, to your palette, to your tastes. But just throw in as many vegetables, as many herbs, as many spices because it's just health giving and nutritious.

Rachel Sheff: Right. Recently, I was on a pretty severe autoimmune diet protocol because I was trying to figure out what I am allergic to. I have a lot of inflammation in my body. The first thing the doctor told me is olive oil, avocado oil. No seed oil, no canola oil, no vegetable oils just because those are the cleanest oils you're going to get. Also, of course, to cut down on sugar. Yesterday, it was my first bite of a cookie and I just was in heaven. This is totally a delicious cookie.

Sharon Gomperts: Show them what the finished product looks like. That's what they look like 10 to 12 minutes. The coconut, I think, needed a little bit more baking time, the coconut sugar.

Rachel Sheff: Oh yes. Coconut sugar will probably need a little longer than if you had white. They're kind of like crunchy on the outside, crispy on the outside and chewy on the inside and so delicious.

Sharon Gomperts: Thank you. [inaudible 00:44:18]. That's us.

Rachel Sheff: Please ask us some questions.

Jessica Jablon: A question came in about which pots and pans you like to use.

Rachel Sheff: I love cast iron. Cast iron always gives everything a nice wonderful color and flavor. You can get cast iron pans for \$20. Lodge is my favorite brand. I love... My Cuisinart pans are beautiful. Like that fish, I can actually bring it to the table in that pan.

Sharon Gomperts: I use Le Creuset, and same as Rachel.

Rachel Sheff: Yeah.

Jessica Jablon: We got a question that came in during registration. People were asking what your favorite low calorie snacks were. Kind of off topic, but I thought, "Well, we have a few minutes."

Sharon Gomperts: No. Low calorie snacks, apples, celery, carrots.

Rachel Sheff: I love fennel. I chop up fennel all the time, keep it in the fridge. My kids love it.

Sharon Gomperts: Jicama is amazing, yummy for the crunch.

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- Rachel Sheff: But a nice snack that gives you protein and kind of holds you over is some nuts, a handful of nuts.
- Sharon Gomperts: Almonds and a date. I keep a bag of almonds and walnuts and dates in my handbag. Whenever I'm hungry, why pay for the packaging of a power bar? You could just have that. It's full of iron and full of protein and delicious. It gives you just that energy boost that you need.
- Rachel Sheff: That is my most go-to dessert at night if I'm feeling like I really need something. I'll have one date and I stuff it with walnuts or almonds. I love it.
- Sharon Gomperts: Dates with peanut butter are delicious too. That's the thing about... I found in my family, the traditional Iraqi desserts are dried fruits, dried apricots, all the dried fruits, all the nuts, pistachios. If you live in Los Angeles, you know how the Persians eat. The Iraqis eat similarly in terms of the cucumbers as a snack. The more fresh fruit and vegetables you have, the better in my opinion.
- Jessica Jablon: We just got another question. What temperature do you suggest cooking the fish if you make it in the oven and for how long?
- Rachel Sheff: Sure. 350, preheat it, put it in at 350, and I would keep an eye on it. But I think depending on how thick your fish is, 15, 20 minutes should be enough if it's a white fish. If you're doing a salmon, a side of salmon, it's different. I would cover it, cook it for awhile, maybe 15 minutes, then uncover it. Then another 10 minutes to make sure it cooks through.
- Jessica Jablon: Amazing. Well I'm so impressed we got through all four recipes in very little time.
- Rachel Sheff: We told you.
- Jessica Jablon: This is true. Thank you so much for being here. We loved having you and I hope everybody will check out your social media. I know you had a recipe up. Was it yesterday? Your charoset recipe, which looked amazing also.
- Rachel Sheff: We have a bunch of Pesach, Passover recipes up right now.
- Sharon Gomperts: We just posted stuffed artichokes that are actually made with ground meat. It's so funny because somebody else had an evening yesterday. One of the things they said was, "Don't use any potato starch during during Pesach." I was looking it up. In little amounts, potato starch... because I put that in our recipe because it makes the meat really light and fluffy.
- Rachel Sheff: We were trying to make it gluten free as well. Instead of matzah meal in the meat, in the ground beef, we used the potato starch and it was so fluffy and delicious. It thickened the sauce. If you don't want red meat, of

course, you can sub turkey or chicken meat, ground chicken breast. If you really don't want any of that, well just make the quinoa stuffing.

Sharon Gomperts: We have some. I don't know if I mentioned, you have this quinoa stuff. Say you have this stuffing left over, just add olive oil and fresh lemon juice. You want to put cranberries in there, tomatoes, whatever vegetables you have on hand, chop them in. This stuffing will make a fabulous salad. Like I said, keep the quinoa in your fridge, make it with... Heat it up, put some baby spinach over it, poach an egg and put the egg over the quinoa and the spinach and you've got the most delicious...

Rachel Sheff: Some Matbucha sauce on top.

Jessica Jablon: I love it. You can use all the different recipes in so many different ways. I love how versatile everything is. Thank you so much. Follow the Sephardic Spice Girls on social media, check out their website. We will be sharing all of the information and tips that you learned today in a follow up email with the recording. Special thanks again to Rita for sharing her story with us this morning. Please take a moment to fill out the brief evaluation survey that's linked in the chat. As I mentioned, we are giving away one beautiful Sephardic Spice Girls candle. If you're interested, please fill out the evaluation to enter the giveaway. Evaluations really do inform our future programming. Thank you so much for taking a minute to fill it out.

Rachel Sheff: Thanks for joining us. Thank you for having us.

Jessica Jablon: Please never forget that our social workers and genetic counselor are here for you and your loved ones. Sharsheret provides emotional support, mental health counseling, and other programs designed to help navigate you through the cancer experience. All are free, completely private one on one. Our number is 866-474-2774. You can also email us at clinical staff at Sharsheret.org.

Finally, I want to share a couple of the exciting webinars we have planned over the next few weeks. This Friday, April 8th, at 9:30 AM Pacific, 12:30 Eastern, join us for our third annual Unseder. We'll share deliciously unique matzah recipes you can add to your celebration, traditions you can bring to your Seder table, and discuss how matzah can change its form when it comes together with other ingredients, similar to how we can change our perspective when we have the support we need.

Finally, save the date for our next Sharsheret in the Kitchen, cooking with the Cuban Ruben, Jennifer Stempel, who will be sharing some flavorful Cuban made healthy recipes on Wednesday, May 11th, at 5:00 PM Pacific, 8:00 PM Eastern. Also, the first 100 registrants will be mailed a special gift. Be sure to sign up. Please check out our website regularly to see what topics are coming up. The link is in the chat and you can also access the recordings and transcripts of all of our past webinars on our website. From all of us at Sharsheret, thank you so much for joining us today. We wish you a happy and meaningful Passover.

About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for “chain”, is a national non-profit organization, improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

With four offices (California, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), Sharsheret serves 150,000 women, families, health care professionals, community leaders, and students, in all 50 states. Sharsheret creates a safe community for women facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer and their families at every stage of life and at every stage of cancer - from before diagnosis, during treatment and into the survivorship years. While our expertise is focused on young women and Jewish families, more than 15% of those we serve are not Jewish. All Sharsheret programs serve all women and men.

As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret’s Executive Director chairs the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, Sharsheret works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and participates in psychosocial research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers, including Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Sharsheret is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for four consecutive years.

Sharsheret offers the following national programs:

The Link Program

- Peer Support Network, connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer one-on-one with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences
- Embrace™, supporting women living with advanced breast cancer • Genetics for Life®, addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer
- Thriving Again®, providing individualized support, education, and survivorship plans for young breast cancer survivors • Busy Box®, for young parents facing breast cancer
- Best Face Forward®, addressing the cosmetic side effects of treatment
- Family Focus®, providing resources and support for caregivers and family members
- Ovarian Cancer Program, tailored resources and support for young Jewish women and families facing ovarian cancer • Sharsheret Supports™, developing local support groups and programs

Education and Outreach Programs

- Health Care Symposia, on issues unique to younger women facing breast cancer
- Sharsheret on Campus, outreach and education to students on campus
- Sharsheret Educational Resource Booklet Series, culturally-relevant publications for Jewish women and their families and healthcare Professionals

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call or see your physician or other health care provider promptly. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read here.

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