03/09/10 - Haroset for Passover

Just as the Jewish slaves in Egypt under the rule of the Pharaoh, made endless numbers of bricks there are an endless number of haroset recipes. The haroset or the symbolic mortar held the bricks together. Since I was a child coloring in my picture book Haggadah shel Pesach, I always thought the best part of the Seder was making the Hillel sandwiches and spreading the haroset on the matza.

This recipe is my interpretation of what I remember eating at our families Sephardic style Seder. This recipe is dense and muddy like mortar. It consists of dates and other dried fruits cooked into a thick jam consistency. It is a bit of sweetness in an otherwise savory meal designed to remember the saltiness of the afflicted slave's tears and gods kindness.

When I make haroset, I divide it into two containers. I use half for the Seder and the rest for during the week. Keep it refrigerated just to be safe but it does not spoil rapidly and will easily last the whole 8 days.3 cups of pitted Medjool dates, chopped in ½ inch pieces

1 cup dried apricots, chopped in ½ inch pieces

1 cup raisins

1 large green apple (like Granny Smith), peeled, cored, and chopped in ½ inch dice

1/2-3/4 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

2 cups of red wine (I use a Herzog Merlot)

Combine all the ingredients in a heavy bottomed sauce pan. Cook covered on low heat until the apple has turned to mush, all the wine is absorbed, and the dried fruit is disintegrating. Turn the heat off and let the fruit cool in the pan.

After an hour, mash the mix a little bit with a potato masher. You can make this up to a week before Passover. Store the haroset in a glass container with a tight lid.

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