

# Fast, Easy Recipes to Beat the Yom Kippur Rush

By Linda Morel

New York (JTA) — It's a scramble every year, but Jews somehow manage to beat the clock getting dinner to the table on Yom Kippur eve — the most hurried meal on the holiday calendar.

It isn't easy to conclude the evening meal with enough leeway to arrive at synagogue for the Kol Nidre service, which ushers in this most solemn holiday.

The challenge is finding the time to pull together a meal that is nourishing and light, exalted but not extravagant, yet effortless. It's even more difficult when Yom Kippur lands in the middle of the work week, as it does this year.

"One Yom Kippur I left the office early, raced home and hurled dinner on the table for my daughter and a couple of friends," recalls Pamela Vassil, the director of marketing and communications at Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. "I inhaled my food in order to arrive at my shul for the 6 PM service and get a seat up front."

"But I ate so quickly, everything sat in my esophagus. It never had a chance to digest. I spent the entire night worried that I'd get sick."

Wendy Moss, a style and wardrobe consultant in Manhattan, says she used to invite other families who belong to her synagogue.

"But by the time I got to services, I was out of breath and couldn't relax," she says.

Moss now cooks only for her immediate family.

Reducing the rush is part of the pre-Yom Kippur experience. Some plan the menu the day after Rosh Hashanah. It's advisable to select uncomplicated recipes requiring few steps. Plain fare is in line with the serious nature of this holiday.

The pre-fast menu requires special attention. For example, recipes should be low in salt to avoid causing undue thirst on Yom Kippur when drinking anything, including water, is forbidden.

"I do a lot of cooking and freezing in advance," says Rita Paszament, a travel agent in Little Silver, NJ. "Since my family expects the same menu every year, preparing for this meal is like falling off a log."

As an appetizer, Paszament offers a choice of chopped liver or gefilte fish, which she buys pre-made.

"The dessert is certainly store-bought, too," she says. "I always serve cinnamon babka, which they all love."

While purchasing prepared foods is convenient, it can have its down side with the long lines, short tempers, incorrect orders and high prices. Often it's less stressful to make your family's favorites at home. Nothing is more nurturing before fasting than the smell of chicken soup and baking apples wafting from the kitchen.

"I do all the cooking myself," Moss says. "I find it better that way, especially if I plan ahead and stay organized."

She roasts a chicken — it's tradi-

tional and easy to make.

"I gave up on Cornish hens," Moss says. "They have to be stuffed. It's an extra step."

She suggests that one place to cut corners is serving fresh fruit for dessert.

Hours before the sun sets on Yom Kippur eve, Paszament defrosts the chicken soup and the potted beef she prepared days earlier. Before serving she adds finishing touches such as freshly chopped vegetables.

To save time, Paszament sets the dining-room table the night before and washes pots and utensils before dinner time.

"Having a warming drawer has been a blessing," she says, explaining that the feature in her oven maintains the temperature of hot foods without drying them out.

"My family knows we start eating at 5 PM on erev Yom Kippur," she says.

As in most households, her kitchen clean-up is the final hurdle.

"Everyone helps clear the table, course by course," Paszament says.

Observant families refrain from performing any manual labor after sunset, when the holiday begins. Many Jews eat dinner extra early so they can quickly wrap leftovers and wash the dishes before leaving for synagogue.

"In past years, I've run out and left the dishes in the sink," Moss says. "If at all possible, I recommend hiring help to clean up the kitchen. That's the most important thing I've figured out."

Guests have their own stress.

"I keep looking at my watch, wondering if we'll get out on time," Vassil says.

The resourceful find a comfortable solution to the dilemma.

"One year I went to a restaurant a block from my shul," Vassil recalls. "At first I felt guilty about the decision, but I got over that when I saw people from my synagogue sitting at other tables."

Now she makes a reservation for every Yom Kippur eve.

"I have a leisurely dinner, including a cup of coffee, something I never had time for when I prepared dinner at home," Vassil says.

But Moss, like many, prefers a traditional home-cooked meal before starting the 24-hour fast. While she calls herself a perfectionist at heart, Moss has become more realistic.

"I keep the menu simple," she says. "I don't prepare anything elaborate. Entertaining in my usual style just got too crazy on Yom Kippur eve."

"It's liberating to know on this one night a year, you don't have to prepare a fancy meal," Vassil says. "The point is to eat without pressure, to arrive at shul in a peaceful state of mind, in time to get a good seat."

The following menu by Linda Morel can be prepared in 90 minutes. Three of the recipes can share the oven, maximizing time. Start with the squash, which takes the longest time, followed by the

apples and the chicken. While those three items are baking, prepare the potatoes. All four dishes should be ready about the same time.

Better still, prepare the recipes a day or two ahead. They can be reheated in 15 minutes.

The recipes are low sodium in deference to the fast.

## Maple Glazed Acorn Squash

Prep time: 10 min.

Cooking time: 75 min.

### Ingredients:

No-stick, vegetable spray  
4 sm. butternut squash  
4 T. pure maple syrup, preferably Grade A

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 10" x 15" ovenproof pan with no-stick spray. Cut squash in half lengthwise, parallel to its ridges. With a spoon, scrape out pits and fibers; discard. Place the 8 halves in the prepared baking pan. Drizzle each half with maple syrup. Bake for 75 min., or till edges brown and flesh is soft when pierced with a fork. Serve immediately. Yield: 8 servings

## Cranberry Baked Apples

Prep time: 10 min.

Cooking time: 60 min.

### Ingredients:

No-stick, vegetable spray  
8 sm. baking apples (Cortland, Gala, Fuji or any apple recommended for baking — except Granny Smith)  
2 c. cranberry juice, more if needed  
2/3 c. golden raisins

(Continued on next page)



After 6 years with Prudential Realty, we have chosen to change our affiliation to Allen Tate Realtors, the largest real estate firm in the Charlotte region. We feel Allen Tate Realtors can help us better serve our clients for all their real estate needs. Thanks again for all the support you have given us. If we can serve you in the future, please call us anytime.

Our new office is located at:  
Allen Tate Realtors  
Blakeney Professional Park  
10250 Rea Road  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28277

**MICKEY GOLD**  
704-779-5859  
mickeyau@aol.com

**RICHARD ROSKIND**  
704-905-6175  
rcrokind@aol.com

[www.GoldRoskindHomes.com](http://www.GoldRoskindHomes.com)