Seder for Rosh HaShana - סדר ראש השנה

On the first night of rosh Hashana, it is customary for many families to hold a “Seder” in honor of the new year.

Tapuach B’Dvash - תפוח בדבש - Apple and Honey

“Blessed are you Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, Who created the fruit of trees”

“May it be your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that you renew for us a good and sweet new year”

Tamar - תמר - Date

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our enemies meet their end”

Rimon - רימון - Pomegranate

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, May we produce as many good deeds as a pomegranate has seeds”

Rubiya -Rubyia - Black eyed peas

“Blessed are you Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the ground”

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our merits grow abundant”

Krisha - כרישה - Leek

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our enemies be cut off”

Selek - סלק - Beet

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our enemies and those who hate us vanish”

Kara - קרה - Squash

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that the evil decree against us be torn apart, and our merit be read out before you”

Rosh Dag - ראש דג - Fish Head

“May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that we be the head, and not the tail”
Did you know?

- Eating apple and honey hasn’t been around forever...during the time of the prophets Ezra and Nechemia, as the torah portion was being read on Rosh Hashana, Am Yisrael began to weep. As this happened, Ezra commanded them to eat some sweet honey- as a reminder of sweet times and a sweet year. Only many years later, in France, did the famous apple- honey combo come to be.
- Foods that are customarily avoided on Rosh Hashana- anything sour, black coffee and nuts. Why nuts? They can cause phlegm, which will make blowing the shofar a bit difficult.
- In Morocco it was customary to eat couscous or sesame seeds as one of the simanim, to symbolize many merits in the year ahead.
- In Southern France it was customary to eat white or light colored foods- grapes, light figs and a sheep’s head (instead of a fish head), to symbolize a year of purity.
- In North Africa it is customary to eat garlic as one of the simanim.
- On the second night of Rosh Hashana, it is customary to bring a new fruit to the table, so that we can say the bracha of “Shehechiyanu” again. For this very reason, the Israeli markets stock up on dragon fruit, which is only sold around the time of Rosh Hashana!

Food for thought

- When we conduct the Rosh Hashana seder with the simanim, we say blessings that send ill wishes to our enemies. Is this a moral thing to do?
- Does it make a difference if we use regular honey or silan (date honey) to dip our apples into?
- What differences are there between the Jewish new year and the secular new year?
- We eat a fish head to symbolize that we should be at the head and not at the tail. Should we be at the “head”? Is it really a bad thing to be at the “tail”?
- Are we aloud to add our own simanim to the Seder? Or would it be considered making up our own mitzvot and brachot?

Just for fun...

- Run an alternative Simanim Seder- each person at the table needs to bless the new year according to something on the table aside from the regular simanim (a cup, a vase of flowers, meatballs, etc.)
- A pomegranate is said to contain 613 seeds, the same amount as the number of mitzvot in the Torah. Start counting!
- Each person at the table must tell a Rosh Hashana memory that they have
- Have all the people at the table sing “dip the apple in the honey” in rounds at the table. See how long you can last.