

Bread

In the old days, before yeast was readily available at markets, many households kept some alive in a crock stored somewhere warm in the kitchen. The yeast was tended by adding flour and water as needed. A bit of it leavened each batch of bread dough. Eventually bacteria would get into leaven, which made it stink to high heaven. What's worse, contaminated leaven failed to make the bread rise. So it got thrown out and some was borrowed from a neighbor to start fresh. At Passover, the Jewish people make a communal ritual of this new beginning by tossing out the old leaven and by eating unleavened bread until new yeast develops.

For Christians, the action of fresh yeast is an emblem of the Resurrection and a sign of the life-giving Spirit. Saint Paul told the Corinthians to throw out the old yeast so that the new—the Gospel— could raise them up.

With your companions (a word that means "those we break bread with"), celebrate the season with Easter breads, perhaps with a babka, brioche, lambropsomo (Greek *shining bread*), hot cross buns or colomba di Pasqua (Italian Easter dove). These can be savory symbols of the Bread of Life, the Risen Christ, who is made known to us in the breaking of the bread.

