

## How much do we need?

### Meal of consolation for 50 (a sample menu)

Salt and pepper  
Coffee: regular and decaf  
Sugar and cream  
Ice  
Soda pop  
Water  
Bread - 2 loaves: light rye and pumpernickel  
Bagels - 4 dozen  
Lettuce salad - 2 large salad bowls, assorted vegetables included  
Carrot and raisin salad  
Pasta salad  
Veggie tray with dip  
Cheese tray  
Hard-boiled eggs - 2 or 3 dozen  
Tuna salad - 2 kinds each made with several cans of tuna  
Egg salad made with 2 dozen eggs  
Lox, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, cream cheese  
Noodle kugel - 2 or 3 large (9" x 13" pan)  
Fruit - 2 foil pans of assorted cut up fruit  
Sweets such as coffeecakes, cookies, bars and brownies.

### Additional dinners

It is nice if additional meals can be organized for the family. They often think that they don't or won't need them, but they do. Bringing over frozen meals for "whenever" is truly appreciated.

# Preparing a *Se'udat Havra'ah* Meal of Consolation

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The shivah period begins after the interment with a simple meal, the *se'udat havra'ah*, the meal of consolation. This meal, traditionally provided by family and friends for the mourners, is not meant to be a social gathering following the funeral. Since it is a time to rest and contemplate the day's events, only family and closest of friends should attend. A party-like atmosphere should not be allowed to develop.

The menu for this meal traditionally includes hard-boiled eggs, a symbol of life, and round food, such as lentils, which symbolize the turning of the wheel of life, with its ups and downs. Neither meat nor wine, two symbols of joy, should be served at this meal.

Mourners **are not obligated** to have food or drink available for those who come to visit.

From *Death and Mourning Customs* by Rabbi Paul Drazen  
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## Remember

No one is prepared for a death in the family. Respect the family's privacy and overlook and keep confidential the state of kitchen cupboards, drawers and the overall cleanliness of the house. Especially during a period of illness, such issues are rarely paramount in a family's thoughts. You would want the same respect shown to you in similar circumstances.

## Set up and Clean up

As preparations are made, be sure to keep in mind special dietary issues, both medical and *kashrut*.

- Paper and pen available to record "who brings what".
- Pitcher of water, bowl, paper towels and trash container outside front door for washing hands.
- If needed, a sign on front door requesting that guests remove their shoes as/before entering.
- If necessary because of weather conditions, place towels or plastic near front door for shoes and boots or use bed sheets (secure to floor with tape) over rugs/carpet to protect rugs and entry floors from snow and salt.

- Signs indicating "regular" and "decaf" coffee.
- Beverages, meal and sweets served buffet style.
- Since the meal is primarily for the family, be sure the family is seated first. Consider placing a "Reserved for Family" sign on dining room table so that family has a place to sit together. At some homes, the hosts put plates together and serve the family.
- Friends (with the assistance of paid help, if desired) should do all the preparation and clean up so that the bereaved family does not have to take care of these details.

## Supplies

In addition to the foods that are baked, made or purchased by various friends, the following should be on hand:

salt, pepper  
sugar and cream  
coffee makers  
coffee (regular & decaf)  
soda pop / ice  
doilies  
paper towels for outside and kitchen  
aluminum foil  
guest towels for bathrooms  
plastic wrap  
serving utensils and platters  
dish towels  
garbage bags  
foil pans  
masking tape to hold doilies and plates in place  
plates: dinner and dessert  
napkins: lunch and cocktail  
plasticware: knives, forks and spoons  
cups for hot and cold beverages  
trash container for outside