

Ohev Shalom Passover Tips – 5779 (2019)

Preparation for Pesah (Passover) can feel overwhelming – but it doesn't have to be. The Rabbinical Assembly publishes an annual Pesah Guide to assist in the steps for creating a kosher-for-Passover home in accordance with the principles of Conservative Judaism and its understanding of Jewish Law. This booklet is a summary of the Rabbinical Assembly Pesah Guide.

(www.rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide)

Contact Rabbi Kay with any questions.

The manufacture of kitchen products and food stuffs has changed dramatically, even over the last several years. These pose new challenges for keeping kosher during Passover, a time when we are particularly scrupulous about dietary laws. There is a variety of opinion and interpretation of the laws of Pesah, and no one guide can present them all. Passover celebrates our spiritual and physical liberation, making it a particularly inopportune time to let differences of tradition or interpretation become criticisms or divisions within the Jewish community.

Preparation for Pesah is founded on the Torah's requirement to divest ourselves of any trace of *ḥameitz* (leavening) or anything which has come in contact with it. This includes legal ownership of *ḥameitz*, as well as thorough cleaning any areas where *ḥameitz* may have been. Our ancient Sages understand this diligence as much more than a physical “spring cleaning.” They relate the puffing up of leavening to the puffing up of arrogance and ego in human beings. When we get rid of our physical *ḥameitz*, it reminds us of the need to divest ourselves of spiritual *ḥameitz* as well.

Kashering the Kitchen

The easiest way to prepare your kitchen for Passover is to remove all utensils and dishes used during the year, store them away, and replace them with either dedicated utensils and dishes used only during Passover or with new items. Of course, this may not be practical, so here are the basic rules for kashering pots, pans, dishes, glasses, and utensils for Passover:

Metals

Pots, flatware, and utensils made *entirely* of metal and not used for baking: Do not use for 24 consecutive hours, then clean thoroughly with soap and water. Immerse *completely* in water at a rolling boil. Handles on pots should be removed, if possible, and thoroughly cleaned. For large pots, one section at a time may be immersed, or the water may be allowed to boil over the sides.

Metal bakeware (used in a fire or oven): Scrub thoroughly with soap and water, then subject to fire (typically a blow torch) or put in the oven at highest setting (or during self-cleaning). This process can be dangerous and may damage or discolor some vessels, so take precautions.

Metal kitchen sink: Clean thoroughly, allow 24 hours during which only cold water is used, then carefully pour boiling water over all the surfaces (including the lip). NOTE: Porcelain sinks cannot be kashered – clean thoroughly, then use separate meat and dairy dish racks specifically purchased for Passover.

Glass (includes Pyrex™ and Corning Ware™)

Dishes & cookware: Clean and immerse in boiling water as with metal.

Drinking glasses: Wash thoroughly. Glass dishes which have only been used for cold food may be kashered the same way.

Plastics: If they can sustain immersion in boiling water without melting or staining, they may be kashered by this method.

Ceramic dishes: Cannot be kashered. However, if they have been stored unused for one complete Jewish calendar year, they are considered to be “new” and may be used as such after washing with detergent and hot water.

Cooking Appliances

Ovens and ranges: Thoroughly clean every part that comes in contact with food. Heat the oven or range as hot as possible (ovens for at least one hour, range top until the elements turn red and glow). Do a general cleaning of self-cleaning ovens, then run the self-clean cycle while empty; clean again to remove any ash.

Smooth glass-top electric ranges: Clean the top thoroughly, turn coils to maximum until they glow red hot, then carefully pour boiling water on the cooking surface. (NOTE: Consult your owner’s manual – some of these procedures may void warranties.)

Microwave ovens: *Without* convention option – clean thoroughly, then place an 8-ounce cup of water in the oven and turn it on until $\frac{3}{4}$ of the water is gone. Do NOT heat to dryness, as this may damage the oven. NOTE: Microwave ovens with browning elements cannot be kashered.

Convection ovens: Follow the procedure for regular ovens. Clean thoroughly around the fan.

Other Kitchen Appliances: Dishwashers should be cleaned thoroughly, including around drains and filters. Run a full cycle with detergent (racks in) while empty. Wait 24 hours without using the dishwasher, then run another full cycle while empty (racks in) at the highest heat. NOTE: Dishwashers with porcelain or enamel sides cannot be kashered. **Other appliances** can be kashered *only* if the parts that come in contact with food are metal and removable, in which case they are kashered like other metal cooking utensils.

Foods

Mekhirat Hameitz (Sale of Hameitz) – Since we are not permitted to even have any *hameitz* in our possession during Passover, it is traditional to sell any *hameitz* food and supplies not consumed or given away prior to the holiday. This must be a real and valid sale, so any *hameitz* sold (including non-Passover dishes) must be separated, covered, or locked away to prevent accidental use. The sale is usually handled through one’s rabbi, and a form must be filled out and signed. At the end of the holiday, the rabbi arranges repurchase of the items on behalf of the owners. It is customary at

the time of *Mekhirat Hameitz* to make a contribution for *ma'ot hitim* (literally, “portions of wheat”) to assist those who are in need.

B'dikat Hameitz (Search for Hameitz) – On the night before the first Seder, after cleaning and kashering is completed and all *hameitz* and non-Passover food, dishes, and utensils are put away, we symbolically search those areas where *hameitz* has been prepared and consumed. A formula is recited (found at the beginning of the Haggadah), and the search is done by candlelight. It is customary to carry a feather and wooden spoon to collect any found crumbs. Any *hameitz* found is wrapped in a cloth or paper bag and set aside to be destroyed in the morning.

Bi'ur Hameitz (Nullification [Burning] of Hameitz) – No *hameitz* is consumed after 9:30 AM on the morning of the day of the first Seder. Any *hameitz* found the night before is combined with a small amount of *hameitz* from this last pre-Passover meal and is burned in a safe, outdoor setting. (NOTE: This procedure changes when Passover begins on a Saturday night, since a fire cannot be lit or a flame transferred on Shabbat.)

Prohibited Foods – Any food containing wheat, barley, oats, spelt, or rye, derivatives of these grains, or foods processed on machinery where these grains have been processed are *hameitz* and may not be eaten on Passover **unless they are certified as kosher for Passover**. Reading labels on processed foods may not be sufficient to avoid *hameitz*, as flavorings or other additives may be derived from *hameitz*. A reliable kosher-for-Passover seal is required.

Kitniyot (legumes, pulses) – Many Ashkenazic and some Sefardic Jews traditionally refrain from beans, corn, millet, peas, rice, and soy during Passover. However, these are NOT *hameitz*. For those who eat *kitniyot* on Pesah, fresh corn and beans may be purchased before and during Pesah; dried *kitniyot* can be purchased bagged or in boxes and then sifted and sorted *before* Pesah; bags of frozen raw *kitniyot* may be purchased *before* Pesah, provided one is certain no shared equipment was used or carefully inspects the contents and discards any pieces of *hameitz*. (See p. 8 of the Rabbinical Assembly Pesah Guide for more details.)

Permitted Foods – (1) anything with a “kosher-for-Passover” seal (*hekhsher*); (2) no *hekhsher* required if purchased BEFORE Passover: pure fruit juices, filleted fish, frozen fruit (no additives), non-iodized salt, pure white sugar (no additives), quinoa, white milk; (3) no *hekhsher* required when purchased before OR during Passover: baking soda, bicarbonate of soda, eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh or frozen kosher meat (other than chopped meat), Nestea (regular or decaffeinated), pure tea leaves (black, green, or white), unflavored tea bags, unflavored regular (with caffeine) coffee, extra-virgin olive oil, whole or gutted fresh fish, whole or half pecans (NOT pieces), whole (NOT ground) spices or nuts.

Products Which ALWAYS Require Kosher for Passover

Hekhsher – all baked goods, all frozen processed foods, candy, canned tuna, cheeses, chocolate milk, decaffeinated coffee or tea, dried fruits, herbal teas, ice cream, liquor, butter, oils, soda, vinegar, wine, yogurt.

Baby Food – Sometimes available with *hekhsher*. Home preparation should be done with kosher-for-Passover ingredients

and utensils. Pure fruit and vegetable (no additives of any kind) commercial baby food that is certified kosher year-round may be used during Passover, as may infant formulas made from soy (even for those who do not eat *kitniyot*, as the custom does not apply to infants). Bottles, nipples, and utensils used for these formulas and foods should be kept away from the general kitchen, and clean-up should be in another sink (e.g., a bathroom).

Medications – Prescription medications are permitted, as are non-prescription pills and capsules; for non-prescription liquids, check with your rabbi. All medications for babies may be used.

Pet Food – If it is not possible to obtain or prepare kosher-for-Passover food for a pet, some authorities allow for including the pet, its food, and its bowls and supplies in the sale of *ḥameitz*. Since the pet does not belong to a Jewish owner, regular pet food may be used (but should be kept away from the general kitchen area, with clean-up in another sink).

Non-Food Items – Detergents, cleaners, wax paper, aluminum products, candles, and anything else which is not a food stuff and which is not eaten may be used during Passover as usual, without a *hekhsher*.

Wheat / Gluten Allergy, Gluten-Free Products – Kosher-for-Passover spelt and oat *matzah* fulfill the obligation of eating *matzah* on the first night of Passover. Products *certified* gluten-free, are almost always by definition *ḥameitz*-free, but may contain non-kosher ingredients. Some Conservative Jews are comfortable purchasing certified gluten-free products that are kosher for year-round use *before* Passover, to use during the holiday.

Soup Kitchens – Jewish volunteers at a non-Jewish soup kitchen may serve *ḥameitz* to non-Jews. They should wear an apron which is disposable or which is left at the soup kitchen and wash their hands thoroughly before leaving, so as not to carry any *ḥameitz* home. Needy Jews should not be fed *ḥameitz* during Passover, rather they should be provided with a kosher-for-Passover meal or invited to a Jewish home.

NOTE: This Year, Passover Begins on Friday Night – When Erev Shabbat and the first night of Passover coincide, a multi-day candle should be lit prior to the beginning of Shabbat and the Festival. Candles are lit at the usual time for Shabbat, with the blessing “*l’hadlik ner shel Shabbat v’Yom Tov*” (“to kindle the light of Shabbat and Festival”). Candles for the second day of Passover are not lit from the pre-existing flame, after Shabbat ends.

The last (8th) night of Passover is also Erev Shabbat. Since cooking is allowed on a Festival day only for that same day, *Eiruv Tavshilin* should be done on Thursday, so that cooking for Shabbat can continue on Friday (7th day of Passover, a Festival day). (See p. 78 in *Siddur Lev Shalem* or a complete Haggadah for instructions on *Eiruv Tavshilin*.) A multi-day candle should be lit on Thursday and used to light Erev Shabbat and Erev Yom Tov candles on Friday evening *before sunset*, again using the blessing “*l’had’lik ner shell Shabbat v’Yom Tov*”.

! חג כשר ושמח – Have a joyful and kosher Passover!