

Dear Friends,

It is with joy and anticipation that we prepare as a synagogue community for the festival of Passover. Through festive meals, retelling the story of our liberation, singing, and celebrating, this holiday comes alive for us and our families. In order to prepare your home and heart for Passover, please consult this guide. For more detailed information, please see the Rabbinical Assembly's Passover Guide at: www.rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide

I am also available for any questions that may arise during your Passover cleaning, preparation, and shopping. You may call me at any time at 240-687-7218. Wishing you and your loved ones a *hag kasher ve'sameah*, a kosher and joyful Passover...



Rabbi Adam Raskin

**View and Print the Hametz Agreement Form:
www.HarShalom.org/Hametz**

FAQs

What is hametz?

The word חֶמֶץ is translated as "leavened bread." This refers to foods prepared from any of five different types of grain (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye) that has been allowed to rise. Ashkenazic custom adds rice, millet, corn, and legumes (referred to as '*kitniyot*') to this list. In November 2015, the Rabbinical Assembly's committee on Jewish law and standards voted that the prohibition on *kitniyot* for Ashkenazic Jews is no longer necessary. Please note that not all Ashkenazic Jews or Conservative Jews have adapted this standard.

Why must we do such extensive cleaning in preparation for Passover?

The Torah prohibits Jews from consuming, owning, or deriving benefit from hametz. Before Passover begins, we engage in a thorough cleaning of our homes, offices, and cars to remove any traces of hametz. While it is preferable to consume or donate excess hametz foods prior to Passover, this is not always possible or economically feasible. In response, Rabbi Raskin will arrange a sale of hametz products to a non-Jew in the community, who will "own" these items throughout the duration of Passover. All hametz products, dishes, silverware, and pots that will remain in your home during Passover must be placed in cabinets or closets that remain closed and sealed throughout the week of Passover.

What is the Siyyum Ha'Bekhorim?

It is a *mitzvah* for firstborn Jews to fast on the day before Passover in remembrance of being spared the fate of the firstborn Egyptians. However, firstborns may be exempt from this fast if they participate in the celebration of a *siyyum* (the completion of a significant amount of Torah study). Every week, a dedicated group has been studying a complete tractate of the *Mishnah* in preparation for the *siyyum*. Even if you have not participated in this study group previously, you are encouraged to join us for morning minyan at **6:45 AM on Wednesday, April 8th**, followed by the *siyyum* and breakfast.

What foods require Rabbinic certification during Passover?

Matzah, noodles, candies, cakes, beverages, canned and processed foods, processed cheeses, jam, jelly, relishes, wines, liquors, salad oils/dressings, vegetable gelatin, shortenings, vinegar.

Are there foods that do not require special labeling?

If unopened and purchased before Passover begins, the following products require no special certification: pure natural coffee, sugar (not confectioners or powdered), pure brown sugar, saccharin, tea, salt, pepper, frozen vegetables (without additives), frozen fruit juices (without additives), vegetables (string beans are permitted), honey, 100% pure safflower or soy bean oil, nuts (except legumes if you do not eat *kitniyot*), baking soda, detergents and scouring powders.

If purchased before or during Passover, the following products require no special certification: fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, fresh fish and meat.

If purchased during Passover, the following products require certification: all processed foods (canned, frozen, or bottled dairy products, juices).

Can any dishes or utensils be used during Passover?

It is preferable to have special dishes and cookware reserved exclusively for Passover use.

Certain items, however, can be *kashered* for use during Passover. Earthenware, enamelware, or porcelain utensils used during the rest of the year may not be *kashered* or used during Passover.

What is Bedikat Hametz?

After our homes have been thoroughly cleaned for Passover, and hametz items are stored away, it is traditional to perform a 'search' by candle light, feather, and spoon symbolizing that all visible hametz has been removed. **Note:** this is a fun, memorable ritual for children to participate in; it is traditional to place a few crumbs to be 'found' during the search. On the night before Passover, following the search, we recite the following formula renouncing our connection to any hametz:

כָּל חֲמֵצָא וְחֲמֵעָא דְאִפְא בְּרִשׁוּתִי דְחֲמִתָּהּ דְּבַעֲרָתָהּ וּדְלָא בַּעֲרָתָהּ לְבִטְיֵל
וְלִהְיוּ הַפֶּקֶר כְּעֶפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

*Kol hamirah va-hami'ah d'ika vir'shuti da-hamitei d'vi-artei u'd-la vi-artei
liv'til v'lehevei hefker ke-afra de-ar'ah.*

All manner of leaven in my possession which I have not
seen or not removed is hereby annulled
and considered as the dust of the earth.

What is Biyyur Hametz?

On the morning before Passover we burn the hametz found during the search on the previous night. If completing at home, this must be done by 11:59 AM on Wednesday, April 8th. The latest time to consume hametz on Wednesday, April 8th, is 10:59 AM.