

While this year is a specific case due to current circumstances, the following basic guidelines about Kosher for Passover food may apply in any observance of Passover, this year and in subsequent years. Many of the stringencies of Passover that we are used to placing upon ourselves are unnecessary, and in fact can ruin the joy of the holiday or are a violation of the Torah's commandment *bal tosif*, not adding obligations which the Torah does not command.

While many Jews think that they must keep the customs of their parents and grandparents, despite the fact that they might be unnecessary restrictions, I invite you to consider the following recommendations as falling under the category of *hora'at sha'ah*, instructions for this moment in time, when Jewish practice allows for normal rules to be altered for the current pressing need.

To review, Jews are forbidden from eating, owning, or deriving benefit from *ḥametz* during Passover. *Ḥametz* results when any of the five grains (wheat, oat, barley, spelt, and rye) have been mixed with water for more than 18 minutes without having been placed in an oven for baking. *Ḥametz* also applies to products that have any amount of *ḥametz* in them.

There are numerous items that do not require any "Kosher for Passover" certification or label. Any item that is kosher all year round, that is made with no *ḥametz*, and is processed on machines used only for that item and nothing else, may be used with no special Passover supervision. Included in this (not exhaustive) list are: fresh fruits and vegetables; frozen fruit and vegetables; pure fruit juice; eggs, fresh or frozen kosher meats, fresh or frozen fish, milk, butter, cheese, salt, pepper, and other spices, unflavored teas and coffee, extra virgin olive oil, baking soda, raw nuts, and quinoa. Please make sure to purchase these items before Passover. If you have any questions about an item, please reach out to the Rabbi.

Kitniyot

Kitniyot are roughly defined as legumes (beans, corn, rice, soy, peas, mustard, millet, and others). Ashkenazi Jews have had a centuries old custom to refrain from eating kitniyot on Passover. However, the circumstances of our present time may allow for the suspending of this custom, if food supply chains are impacted. Regardless, in recent years, the Conservative Movement has permitted the consumption of kitniyot on Passover, even under normal circumstances. There is a good argument to be made that eating kitniyot has no Halakhic basis, and is based on false presumptions. Eating kitniyot is also a necessity for Jews who are gluten sensitive or celiac. On a personal note, I have been eating kitniyot for several years, and it has certainly made Passover less of a burden, and more enjoyable.

If you wish to continue refraining from eating kitniyot, please note that kitniyot does not disqualify other Kosher for Passover food, if they happen to come in contact. Ashkenazi authorities hold that Kosher for Passover food that comes in contact with small amounts of kitniyot is still Kosher for Passover. This is also the case with derivatives of kitniyot like corn oil and corn syrup. If these derivatives constitute less than half of the volume of the total amount, those foods/beverages are still kosher for Passover. (So, you really don't need Kosher for Passover Coca-Cola, even if it does taste better!) The Conservative Movement also holds that peanuts and green beans are not kitniyot. By extension, peanuts, natural peanut butter, and peanut oil may be purchased before Passover without a Kosher for Passover certification, provided there are no traces of *ḥametz*. Please purchase all fresh, dry, frozen, or canned kitniyot before Passover.

If you have any questions about your Passover food preparation or purchases, please feel free to be in touch.