

Passover Guidelines
A Manual for You!



Congregation Beth Israel
Of the Palisades

Passover Guidelines

The Torah prohibits the ownership of chametz (leaven) during Pesach, a definition of which is perhaps in order at the outset: Chametz is anything made from wheat, oats, rye, barley or spelt that has risen (been allowed to bake unsupervised for longer than 18 minutes), or that has the potential to be transformed into flour & then baked. Therefore we must assure that we do not possess any chametz in its natural state, any unsupervised, processed foods that may contain even a trace of chametz, & food utensils (pots, plates, cutlery) that have had contact with chametz.

We abide by the Torah's prohibition on ownership of chametz by consuming such products in advance of Passover, by discarding all blatantly chametz foodstuffs (breads, cereals), & finally by arranging for the sale of other chametz (all non-supervised/non-kosher for Passover, processed products whether they contain grain or not, all non-Passover food utensils, & all products whose divestiture would cause us to incur a significant financial loss—liquor, for example) to a non-Jew. The transfer, mekhirat chametz, is accomplished by appointing an agent, usually the rabbi, to handle the sale. At the end of the holiday, the agent arranges for the reversion of ownership of the now-permitted chametz. If ownership of the chametz was not transferred before the holiday, the use of this chametz is prohibited after the holiday as well.

Since the Torah prohibits the eating of chametz during Pesach, & since many common foods contain some mixture of chametz, guidance is necessary when shopping & preparing for Pesach. During the eight days of Pesach, chametz cannot lose its identity in an admixture. Therefore, the minutest amount of chametz renders the whole admixture chametz & its use on Pesach is prohibited. However, during the rest of the year, chametz follows the normal rules of admixture, i.e. it loses its identity in an admixture of one part chametz & sixty parts of non-chametz (batel be-shishim). This affords us the opportunity to differentiate between foods purchased before & during Pesach.

What follows is a general guideline: Prohibited foods include the following: leavened bread, cakes, biscuits, crackers, cereal, coffees containing cereal derivatives, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, & all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol.

Most Ashkenazic authorities have added the following kitniyot to the above list: rice, corn, millet, legumes (beans & peas; however, string beans are permitted). Some Ashkenazic authorities permit, while others forbid, the use of legumes in a form other than their natural state, for example, corn sweeteners, corn oil, soy oil; however, these, too, like all processed foods must bear a kasher I'Pesach label. Consult your rabbi for guidance in the use of these products.

PERMITTED FOODS:

A. The following foods require no kasher I'Pesach label if purchased prior to Pesach: unopened packages or containers of natural coffee without cereal additives (However, be aware that coffees produced by General Foods are not kosher for Passover unless marked KP); sugar, pure tea (not herbal tea); salt (not iodized); pepper; natural spices; frozen fruit juices with no additives; frozen (uncooked) vegetables (for legumes see above); milk.

B. The following foods require no kasher I'Pesach label if purchased before or during Pesach: Fresh fruits & vegetables (for legumes see above), eggs.

C. The following foods require a kasher I'Pesach label whether purchased before or during Pesach: All baked products (matzah, cakes, matzah flour, farfel, matzah meal, & any products containing matzah); canned or bottled fruit juices (These juices are often clarified with kitniyot which are not listed among the ingredients. However, if one knows there are no such agents, the juice may be purchased prior to Pesach without a kasher I'Pesach label); canned tuna; wine; vinegar; liquor; oils; dried fruits; candy; chocolate-flavored milk; ice cream; yogurt & soda; meat; fish.

- D. The following processed foods (canned, bottled or frozen), require a kasher I 'Pesach label if purchased during Pesach: milk, butter, natural juices, processed vegetables, processed fruit, milk products, spices, coffee, tea, meat & fish, as well as all foods listed in Category C.

DETERGENTS: If permitted during the year, powdered & liquid detergents do not require a kasher I 'Pesach label.

MEDICINE: Since hametz binders are used in many pills, the following guidelines should be followed: If the medicine is required for life-sustaining therapy, it may be used on Pesach. If it is not for life sustaining therapy, some authorities permit, while others prohibit. Consult your rabbi. In all cases, capsules are preferable to pills.

KASHERING OF UTENSILS: The process of kashering utensils depends on how the utensils are used. According to halakhah, leaven can be purged from a utensil by the same process in which it was absorbed in the utensil—but only if the utensil can be kashered, as some utensils cannot be kashered. Therefore, utensils used in cooking are kashered by boiling, those used in broiling are kashered by fire & heat, & those used only for cold food are kashered by rinsing.

- A. **EARTHENWARE** (china, pottery, etc.) may not be kashered. However, fine translucent chinaware which has not been used for over a year may be used if scoured & cleaned in hot water.
- B. **METAL** (only if wholly made of metal) **UTENSILS USED IN FIRE** (spit, broiler) must first be thoroughly scrubbed & cleansed & then made as hot as possible. Those used for cooking or eating (silverware, pots) must be thoroughly scrubbed & cleaned & completely immersed in boiling water. Pots should not be used for a period of at least 24 hours between the cleaning & the immersion in boiling water.
- C. **METAL** baking utensils cannot be kashered.
- D. **OVENS & RANGES:** Every part that comes in contact with food must be thoroughly scrubbed & cleaned. Then, oven & range should be heated as hot as possible for a half hour. If there is a broil setting, use it. Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed & cleaned & then put through the self-cleaning cycle. Continuous cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens.

MICROWAVE OVENS, which do not cook the food by means of heat, should be cleaned, & then a cup of water should be placed inside. Then the oven should be turned on until the water disappears. A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesach.

- E. **GLASSWARE:** Authorities disagree as to the method for kashering drinking utensils. One opinion requires soaking in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours. The other opinion requires only a thorough scrubbing before Pesach, or putting them through a dishwasher.
- F. **GLASS COOKWARE:** There is a difference of opinion as to whether it may be kashered. One opinion is that it must be kashered. After a thorough cleansing, there should be water boiled in them which will overflow the rim. The other opinion is that only thorough cleansing is required.
- G. **LASS BAKEWARE,** like metal bakeware, may not be kashered.
- H. **DISHWASHER:** After not using the machine for a period of 24 hours, run a full cycle with detergent.
- I. **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES:** If the parts that come into contact with chametz are removable, they can be kashered in the appropriate way (if metal, follow the rules (or metal utensils). If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be kashered. (All exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned.)
- J. **TABLES, CLOSETS & COUNTERS, REFRIGERATORS & FREEZERS:** If used with chametz, they should be thoroughly cleaned & covered, & then they may be used.

- K. KITCHEN SINK: A metal sink can be kashered by thoroughly cleaning & then pouring boiling water over it. A porcelain sink should be cleaned & a sink rack used. If, however, dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.
- L. HAMETZ Non-Passover utensils & hametz whose ownership has been transferred, should be separated, locked up or covered, & marked in order to prevent accidental use. The entire home (offices & cars, too) should be cleaned to remove any accidental presence of hametz, & this may be the origin of spring cleaning. When it comes to cleaning the kitchen, it is most practical to first clean out & cover the cabinets shelves (after which you place your kosher I 'Pesach foods & utensils Won them) then to clean the refrigerator & microwave, the ovens, range & dishwasher, the sink & countertops, & finally the floor.

It is customary to provide tzedakah in advance of Passover (ma'ot hittim - "money for wheat") in recognition of the increased burden incurred by those who can least afford the additional expenses entailed in preparing for this holiday.

It is also customary to include some tzedakah along with your Sale of Chametz form both to help defray the cost of incentivizing someone to purchase the chametz, & also to provide additional funds for the needy for Passover.

Bedikat Hametz the search for chametz takes place on Tuesday, April 4th. By this time the entire house should be ready & the search is more symbolic than actual. To make sure that the blessing is not said in vain, a few pieces of bread or crackers are placed throughout the home on napkins before the search is begun.