

Passover Preparation—2016/5776

Kosher for Passover Food

Foods that must be purchased before and during Passover without a special hekhsher: fresh kosher meat and fish, eggs, fresh fruit, and vegetables.

Foods that may be purchased before noon on the 14th of Nisan without a Passover hekhsher but require one if purchased later include: milk, butter, cottage cheese, non-processed cheeses, pure fruit juices, pure coffee, unflavored pure tea, salt and pure natural spices without additives, sugar, 100% tuna in water and salt with no additives, and frozen vegetables or fruit containing no additives.

All other foods require a hekhsher whether bought before or during Passover. These include processed foods such as baked products, matzah, oils, vinegar, wine, liquor, and candy.

Legumes/Kitiniot

Ashkenazic (of European descent) Jews have a thousand year-old tradition of not eating kitniot on Pesah. This category includes: beans, peas, lentils, rice, millet, sesame seeds, and corn. The reason is that flour that was made out of kitniot could be confused with hametz. Even though the original reason no longer applies, some argue that not eating kitniot is a strong custom that should be maintained. Others argue that eating kitniot should be permitted, especially for vegetarians who deem them vital for health. Some who do not eat kitniot do eat derivatives of kitniot, such as soybean oil.

Removal of Hametz

Change Dishes: Dishes, cookware, and utensils used during the rest of the year are put away in a cabinet that will not be opened during Pesah.

We are not allowed to own hametz during Pesah. Therefore, all leavened grains such as breads, pastas, and any foods that are mixtures of hametz and other food should be given away or sold. Foods that don't contain hametz but contain traces of it (canned or processed foods) should be placed in a cabinet and sold. Legumes, rice, and other types of kitniot are not hametz and need only be placed in a cabinet that will not be opened during Pesah.

Ovens: Self-cleaning ovens can be koshered by running the cleaning cycle. Other ovens, and their sides, racks, and broiling pans should be cleaned with an oven cleaner. Then the oven, with the racks and pans, can be koshered by turning the oven to the highest temperature for half an hour. Microwave pans should be thoroughly cleaned and a glass of water should be heated in it until it boils and a mist fills the inside of the microwave.

Stoves: The grates of the stove should be cleaned thoroughly and then replaced on the burner, which should then be turned on to full heat for an hour. Never leave your home while koshering a stove! The stove top should be opened and cleaned underneath, and the top of the stove

should be thoroughly cleaned underneath.

Refrigerator and Freezer: Clean refrigerator with warm water and detergent, scrubbing bins and any stuck-on food. Defrost and clean the freezer. Some choose to line the racks of the refrigerator with foil or plastic.

Sinks and Counters: Metal sinks should be cleaned and then koshed by pouring boiling water down the sides and into the sink. The water for this and for all other koshing should be boiled in a pot that has not been used in the last 24 hours. Clean the drain carefully. For a non-metal sink, clean it and put in a liner or basin. Counters should be cleaned and covered with foil or contact paper.

Cabinets: Seal up your non-Pesah cabinets with tape; they may not be opened during Pesah. Cabinets that will be used for Pesah should be cleaned thoroughly.

Bedikat hametz, the search for leaven: Conducted on the 14th of Nisan, the evening before the day before Pesah, this symbolic search is the final cleaning of hametz from the household. It is customary, but not necessary, to place 10 pieces of hametz around the house and to search for them with a candle (a flashlight may also be used) with a feather and a wooden spoon with which to collect the found hametz. A blessing is recited that may be found at the beginning of most haggadot. The search is conducted in silence after the blessing is said. The hametz is collected in a bag and burned the next morning. After the search, a declaration is made that any remaining hametz is null and void. This declaration, often found in the haggadah, is also made the next morning at the burning of the hametz.

Selling hametz: Reasoning that it would be a financial hardship to dispose of all hametz, the sages created a legal process of selling hametz so that Jews would not own hametz during Pesah. Each household authorizes a rabbi to sell their hametz to someone who is not Jewish for the duration of Pesah by way of a written contract.

Kashering Dishes and Utensils: Many people have dishes and utensils specifically reserved for Passover use. However, some dishes and utensils may be koshed before the 14th of Nisan after being scoured and set aside for 24 hours. Metal can be koshed by immersion in boiling water. Silverware or small pots may be koshed by placing them in a pot of boiling water. Frying pans cannot be easily koshed; invest in separate ones for Passover. Plastic handles must be removed where food might accumulate. If the handle is welded to the post so that the food cannot accumulate, the post can be koshed together with the handle. Knives with wooden handles cannot be koshed. Porcelain dishes cannot be koshed nor can stoneware or ceramic mugs. Utensils with a nonstick surface such as Teflon can be koshed.

Kashering Glass and Pyrex: Glass may be koshed by simple washing, according to the Sephardic custom. Ashkenazim kasher glass by soaking it in water for 72 hours, changing the water every 24 hours. Pyrex, Corningware, Corelle, and other modern ovenproof ceramics are considered the same as glass.