

Rabbi Spolter's Pre-Pesach Guide

Pesach Product Guide

On Pesach, the Torah commands us to rid our homes of all chametz. Not only is one forbidden to eat chametz on Pesach – one is not allowed to own it, or even possess chametz belonging to someone else, on Pesach.

What is chametz?

Chametz is any food or drink made from or containing wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt. When any of these grains has come into contact with a liquid for more than eighteen minutes, it is considered *chametz*. Therefore, all grain products or mixtures such as bread, cereals, cakes, cookies, grain alcohol or vinegar, yeast and malts are forbidden for eating, use or ownership for the entire eight-day period. (Note: Included in this list are most types of liquor and whiskey). In addition, Ashkenazi Jews follow the custom to refrain from eating *kitniyot* (legumes) or their derivative foods on Pesach. These include corn, rice, beans, peas, etc. and also corn oil, cornstarch, or any similar food products.

What requires supervision?

Food production is a complicated business. Today's food producers add chemical by-products to even the simplest of foods. For example, in the production of freshly squeezed orange juice, the manufacturer adds an agent to the juice to remove the sediment from it. This agent is a chametz product. Therefore, even the simplest products require proper rabbinical supervision for Pesach consumption. *One cannot just say, "It's just apple juice, so what could be wrong with it?" In today's world, you never know.*

Therefore, most prepared or mass-produced foods require proper rabbinical supervision for Passover use, to ensure that the product did not come in contact with any *chametz* during the production process. Unless specifically listed here or another Pesach guide (such as the OU guide available at the shul), one must assume that every product requires Pesach supervision.

What DOES NOT require specific Pesach supervision?

Please note: for each of these products, the accepted practice is to purchase a new container for use on Pesach (for a complete list, please see the OU Pesach guide available at the shul).

- Isopropyl Alcohol
- Aluminum foil, paper towels, wax paper, Styrofoam, any paper goods (plates, cups, bowls, etc), plastic wrap, sandwich bags
- Baby oil, powder, wipes (without alcohol)
- Baby formula -- Enfamil, Prosobee, Carnation, Similac and Soyolac may be used without special Pesach supervision. They must be used in separate utensils and may not be washed in a Kosher for Pesach sink! (It is preferable not to use Isomil as it contains ascorbic acid, which is chametz.)
- Artificial sweeteners: The following brands may be used: Pure Aspartame (not Equal), Kojel Kosher L' Pesach Sweet N' Good, Leiber's Kosher L'Pesach Sugar Substitute, Sweet N' Low with OUP, Gefen OUP, V.I.P. Master OUP
- Baking soda (NOT baking powder)
- Cocoa (Hershey's or any other 100% pure)
- Chapstick (and Blistex) – use only a new, unflavored stick
- Coffee (instant) – only Folger's and Taster's Choice

- Deodorants: any powder or stick and all Proctor and Gamble
- Detergents: Most Proctor and Gamble
- Eggs: be sure to buy whatever you need for the entire chag before Pesach
- Frozen unprocessed fish
- Fruit: Raw or frozen (unsweetened without syrup or additives. Dried or canned fruit does require supervision.)
- Grains: Flax, hemp and quinoa are not chametz. Check the box or bag before Pesach to remove any extraneous matter.
- Ice
- Juice: 100% pure frozen grapefruit or orange juice without sweeteners, additives, etc.
- Olive oil: Extra virgin
- Oven cleaner: Any with proper year-round *hechssher*
- Raisins: Del Monte, Dole
- Salt: Any non-iodized
- Shoe Polish
- Soap (hand)
- Spices: Any whole, ungrounded (except mustard)
- Sugar: Any brand, white granulated (not powdered)
- Tea: Any brand, pure unflavored tea (not instant or decaffeinated)
- Toiletries: Proctor & Gamble shampoos, toothpaste, deodorants, etc.
- Unflavored seltzer (flavored requires supervision)
- Vegetables: Any fresh vegetables other than those considered *kitniyot* as listed above (Please note: many leafy vegetables contain heavy insect infestation and must be properly washed and cleaned before eating, both on Pesach and year-round)
- Water (any fresh bottled unflavored)

What about the medicine cabinet?

Many products, including cosmetics, mouthwash, deodorant, etc., include alcohol derived from grain products. All cosmetics except for lipstick with grain products as ingredients can be used.

Medicine tablets, caplets, capsules or unflavored liquids can be assumed to be kosher for Passover. This is true for vitamins as well. All major painkillers and non-liquid cold medications are OK. If one is aware that a particular pill contains chametz and a substitute is readily available, one should take the substitute instead. Some popular products that contain chametz include Claritin RediTabs, Clarinex Reditabs, and Lactaid Tablets. One need not check popular lists of medicines and toiletries to determine the Pesach status of each pill or capsule, as they are inedible and permitted from the letter of the law. Flavored cold and cough syrups and elixirs must be checked. Triaminic Cold Syrup and expectorant (with and without codeine) may be used, as well as Benadryl Liquid (for those long car trips). Comtrex liquid, Orabase B Gel and Kaopectate products definitely contain chametz and should not be used. Laxatives should be checked, as many are unacceptable. Powdered Metamucil is OK. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Milk and dairy products:

All dairy products (cheeses, butter, creams, etc.) require proper supervision for Pesach use. However, regular milk (without Passover certification) may be purchased for use on Pesach as long as it is purchased before the onset of the holiday. If you want to buy milk during Pesach, it must have Passover certification. Lactaid can be purchased before Pesach, but pills and drops may not be used on Pesach.

Pet food

Most pet foods contain *chametz* and cannot be used on Pesach, because we can neither have *chametz* in our possession, nor derive any tangible benefit from it. Substitute food should be used. In addition, make sure that the pet food does not contain a mixture of milk and meat, which is prohibited all year round.

Kashering your kitchen

To adhere to the requirements of Pesach, separate sets of dishes, flatware, pots and pans and the like should be set aside specifically for Pesach use. Yet, certain utensils, such as flatware, metal pots and pans, etc, may be kashered for Pesach even if they have been used with *chametz* during the year. This year, we will again have a community kashering here at YIOP on Sunday, April 4th between 9am and 11am. You must leave any utensils that you wish to kasher unused for 24 hours before they are kashered. The following utensils CANNOT be kashered:

1. China, pottery, earthenware, Teflon, enamel and similarly coated ware, plastic dishes, or any utensil with a wooden or plastic handle that cannot be removed.
2. Oven glassware (e.g. Pyrex, Melmax, and Corningware)
3. Utensils or vessels which cannot be thoroughly cleaned, such as those having crevices in which *chametz* can accumulate.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at the shul.

Inside the kitchen

Sinks and Counters: Pesach dishes and foods may not come in contact with surfaces that one normally uses when cooking *chametz* throughout the year. Therefore, one must either *kasher* or cover completely the sink and counter area in the kitchen. A stainless steel sink is *kashered* by thoroughly cleaning the sink on all sides, and in all crevices. Then, after leaving the sink unused for 24 hours, scalding hot water should be poured on all exposed areas of the sink. The same procedure can be used for Vendura, Avonite and Corian countertops. Formica counters should be cleaned completely and covered. Enamel sinks cannot be *kashered*, and must be covered with a sink liner. In addition, special dish racks, sink racks and wash basins should be used, and the inside drain in the sink should be changed.

Mixers, Food Processors and Blenders: One should not use these utensils if they have been used with *chametz*, as they cannot be kashered.

Ranges and Ovens: Before kashering, every part of the range and oven must be thoroughly cleaned and left unused for 24 hours. They must be then burned at the maximum temperature for one hour. If the oven has a self-clean cycle, run the cycle. One need not line the racks of the oven, but take care not to put any food in direct contact (without a pot) with any racks or walls of the oven. In addition, the range top should be covered with foil. An important note: It is extremely difficult to kasher a smooth-top range for Pesach without damaging the range. I do not recommend attempting to kasher these ranges, and for that reason I also do not recommend purchasing smooth-top ranges for year-round use. Should you have any questions, please contact me to discuss the issue. In addition, make sure to line the oven hood over the stove with foil to cover any possible dripping from condensed steam back into your Pesach cooking.

Microwave ovens: One can kasher a microwave by cleaning it completely, and boiling a glass bowl full of water in it, for 10 minutes. The glass tray cannot be kashered. Either cover it completely with Saran Wrap, or cut a piece of cardboard to size as a substitute.

Refrigerators and Freezers: All parts of refrigerators and freezers must be thoroughly cleaned and washed, including storage bins. The shelves do not have to be lined. If you do line the shelves, be

sure to perforate the lining to allow for air circulation. Otherwise, your food will spoil. Also, you do not have to take apart any pieces of the refrigerator when cleaning.

Important Note: All kashering must be concluded before Monday April 5.

Schedule For Pesach Preparation:

Mechiras Chametz – Selling of the Chametz:

On Pesach, the Torah prohibits us from eating, seeing or owning any chametz for the duration of the holiday. Therefore, the Torah commands us to destroy any chametz in our possession on the day before Pesach.

Yet, sometimes destroying all of our chametz can be quite prohibitive. Therefore, to avoid violation of the Torah prohibition, we sell that chametz to a non-Jew before Pesach. It is best to destroy and consume as much of your chametz as possible before Pesach. (Finish that half-eaten box of Cheerios before Pesach.) It is not appropriate to buy chametz items before Pesach with the intention of selling them over the chag.

If you have chametz that you would like to sell for Pesach, please see me after davening any time after April 3rd. If you cannot come after davening, please call me in my office (248-967-3652) to schedule an appointment.

Hechsher keilim (Kashering of utensils)

For those who wish to kasher their silverware and/or pots for Pesach, we will again be offering you that opportunity. On Sunday, April 4th from 9am – 11am the kitchen will be available for kashering. While we welcome non-members to utilize this service we ask that they make a voluntary donation to cover the cost of this valuable service. **All items to be kashered MUST be clean and not used for 24 hours before kashering.**

Chametz food drive

This year, we will be running our first pre-Pesach food drive. While halachah permits the sale of chametz to prevent great financial loss, it's best for us to rid our homes of any small items that we cannot finish before Pesach. This year, instead of discarding it, donate it! YIOP will collect food for Yad Ezra. Please drop off any non-perishable, unopened packages of food for distribution to the poor. Food can be left in the cans in the shul entrance from Monday March 29th until early in the morning on Sunday the 4th.

Destroying (*biur*) chametz:

Halachah teaches us that we must destroy our chametz in two fundamental ways: physical destruction (*ביעור*) and verbal annulment (*ביטול*). We destroy chametz physically by burning it, eating it, or performing any other action to it that renders it unfit for canine consumption. Through verbal annulment – *ביטול* – we denounce ownership of any chametz that we might have missed in our exhaustive cleaning and searching before Pesach. We recite the *ביטול* twice (just to be sure). During the first *ביטול*, said immediately after the *בדיקה*, we denounce ownership of any chametz we are not aware of. During the second *ביטול*, usually recited after burning the chametz, but recited this year Shabbos morning, we denounce all chametz in our possession, whether we are aware of it or not.

Remember: The *ביטול המץ* is a legal declaration, and must be understood! If one doesn't understand the Aramaic, she should recite it in a language she does understand. *ביעור* – physical destruction – takes place in two distinct stages: searching for chametz (*בדיקה*) on the evening before Pesach and the actual burning of chametz on the day before Pesach.

I have found the actual burning of the chametz to be one of the most dangerous aspects of the Pesach preparation routine. So, instead of waiting for (God forbid) a terrible accident to occur, **YIOP will offer a communal chametz burning on erev Pesach, Monday, April 5th from 11am – 12pm.** Please be on time. Thanks to fireman Jerry Eizen for arranging the controlled burn.

Pre-Pesach Timeline

Shabbos HaGadol – Shabbos April 3rd

The Shabbos HaGadol Derasha for this year is will take place on Shabbos, April 3, 2004. This year I will discuss: “Learning to Take Things as They Come.” Minchah will take place at 6:35pm, followed by a family Shalosh Seudos and the drashah, which begins at around 7:55pm.

Sunday, April 4th

בדיקת חמץ – Bedikas Chametz – The Search for Chametz. Begin the search immediately after 8:01pm. The search for chametz should be an earnest attempt to find any chametz you might have missed in your cleaning. Don’t just find the obvious piece of bread that you hid and move on. Make sure to look in closets, bookshelves, coat pockets, couch cushions, and anywhere else you might have inadvertently left chametz. If you have children, look everywhere. While in earlier times our ancestors used a candle and feather, I recommend using a flashlight (the feather is purely optional). In addition to the candle presenting a dangerous fire hazard, you can do a better inspection with a good flashlight. During the search, (following the brachah) one may speak about issues relating to the search, but should not engage in otherwise unrelated conversation.

After the search: keep any chametz that you find and any other chametz that you plan on eating in a safe place. Get rid of all other chametz, and put away all chametz utensils.

Monday April 5th

תענית בכורים -- Fast of the Firstborn – All bechorim – firstborn males – are required to fast on the day of Erev Pesach to commemorate the salvation of the firstborn males in Egypt. Yet, if one partakes in a seudat mitzvah, (celebratory meal), he is exempt from fasting. This year, I will again (G-d willing) make a siyyim and enjoy a brief seudas mitzvah after morning minyan, which begins at 6:45am. If you’re a first-born and don’t want to be hungry on erev Pesach, I invite you to join us. The latest time to eat any chametz is 11:26am. Burn all chametz before 12:31pm.

Final Checklist – After everything else, don’t forget to:

- Check your medicine cabinet for all questionable items
- Thoroughly clean children-oriented areas, including playpens, high chairs, and toy boxes
- Make sure that your pets are not fed with chametz during Pesach
- Check all pockets (especially coats and jackets) where there might be any food or crumbs
- Carefully clean the garage and all areas of the car, including the glove compartment and behind and between seats
- Check all drawers, cabinets, etc. in one’s office to ensure that all chametz has been removed
- Have a wonderful, Kosher and happy Pesach!