

Based on the [Rabbinical Assembly Pesach Guide](#)

### **BEDIKAT CHAMEITZ**

At the onset of the night of the 14th of Nisan – **Tuesday, April 4** this year – the traditional search for chameitz takes place. This symbolic search serves as the last chance to unearth any undiscovered pockets of chameitz in your home. The search should take place as soon as possible after nightfall, this year **after 8:05 p.m.**

- It is customary, but not mandatory, to place ten pieces of bread or other “hard core” chameitz around the house.
- A blessing is recited before the search commences. The text for this blessing, and for the declarations mentioned below, can be found in most haggadot.
- After the recitation of the blessing, participants should remain silent until the search begins. Extraneous matters unrelated to the search should not be discussed until the search is complete.
- The search is conducted by candlelight or a flashlight.
- The residents search the house for chameitz and collect it, traditionally with a feather and a spoon.
- After the search, an Aramaic declaration is recited by all members of the household, declaring any chameitz in one’s possession to be null and void. The declaration should be said in English if one does not understand Aramaic.
- The chameitz found during the search should be wrapped carefully and put aside until the next morning.
- It is permissible to eat chameitz after the search until **Wednesday, April 5 at 10:50 a.m.** Since the house will have been cleaned for Pesach, great care should be taken not to get any chameitz scattered around.
- A second Aramaic declaration is made on the morning of Erev Pesach – **Wednesday, April 5** this year – upon disposing of the chameitz. This declaration should be made **no later than 11:54 a.m.** By this point you should have no chameitz in your possession; it should all be either removed from your home, or stored and sold.
- Leavened bread is traditionally and ceremonially burned before Pesach. In the neighborhood of Shaare Zedek, in the past one could have done this at Ohab Zedek on W. 95th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus, or in the alley behind The Jewish Center, on W. 86th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus. But you may discard *chameitz* in the trash if rendered inedible by sprinkling with household cleaner, and then put in household trash, even though the trash may not be collected from one's property until after the holiday begins. Alternatively, you may toss *chameitz* crumbs to the Hudson river. Please note that the latest time to dispose of *chameitz* is **11:54 am on Wednesday, April 5.**



## REMOVAL OF CHAMEITZ

All leavened grains (chameitz b'ayin), such as bread and pasta, and any foods which are mixtures of chameitz and other foodstuffs (ta'arovet chameitz), must be sold, or given away (or thrown away if they are open).

Foods which do not clearly contain chameitz, but may still contain traces of it (such as tuna, canned vegetables, and processed foods) should be placed in a closed cabinet and sold.

Legumes and rice are not chameitz. In Ashkenazic homes, they need only be placed in a cabinet which will not be opened during Pesach to ensure that they are not eaten during Pesach.

The easiest way to clean an **OVEN** is to use Easy Off or another oven cleaner. The sides of the oven, racks, and broiling pans should be thoroughly cleaned. Afterwards, the oven, together with the racks and broiling pans, should be kashered by turning the oven to the highest temperature for half an hour. Use the broil setting if your oven has one. Self-cleaning ovens can be kashered by scrubbing them and then running the cleaning cycle. Read the directions carefully before starting. Continuous cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens.

**MICROWAVE** ovens should be thoroughly cleaned. Then a glass of water should be heated in it until it boils and a mist fills the inside of the microwave (according to some authorities the microwave should remain on until the water disappears; this can sometimes risk breaking the glass, however). A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesach.

The grates of the **STOVE** should be cleaned thoroughly (using oven cleaner if they are very grimy and cannot be adequately cleaned without it), and then replaced on the burner. The burner should then be turned on to full heat for 10 minutes (the grates may also be placed in the oven and kashered simultaneously with it). The stove top should be opened and cleaned underneath. The outside of the oven (door, sides) and the hood need only be cleaned thoroughly. In a self-cleaning oven, the cleaning cycle also kashers the top of the stove. If an oven is not self-cleaning, some kasher the top of the stove with boiling water (carefully), and others cover the top with foil.

In an **ELECTRIC COOKTOP**, one only needs to turn the burners on the high heat setting for a few minutes to kasher them, since the burners come to a glow in a few minutes. The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and need not be kashered. The remaining cooktop areas should be covered. The knobs with which the gas or electricity is turned on should be cleaned. No other process is necessary to kasher the knobs.

Smooth, **GLASS TOP ELECTRIC RANGES** require kashering by (ליבון) libbun and (ערוי) iruy – pouring boiling water over the surface of the range top. First, clean the top thoroughly, then turn the coils on maximum heat until they are red hot. Then carefully pour boiling water on the surface area over and around the burners. The range top may now be used for cooking.

The **REFRIGERATOR** should be thoroughly cleaned with warm water and soap. **FREEZERS** should be both defrosted and cleaned. Self defrosting freezers need not be defrosted, but they must be cleaned thoroughly. The racks or shelves do not need to be covered, but if you wish to use foil or wax paper, pierce it so as to allow air to circulate in the refrigerator.

Metal **SINKS** should be thoroughly cleaned and then kashered by pouring boiling water over all of the metal surfaces, including the sides. The water for this and all other kashering should be boiled in

a pot that has not been used in the last 24 hours. Remember to clean the drain carefully. If you have a porcelain sink, clean it and put in a sink rack or dish basin that is only used on Pesach. If dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.

**COUNTERS AND TABLES** made from certain materials can be kashered by pouring boiling water over the surface. Otherwise, counters and tables should be cleaned and then covered with foil, contact paper, a tablecloth, or a similar covering: this is the case if they are not made of “kasherable” materials; if they are stained, scratched, or cracked; or if they have a synthetic finish.

The following common materials for countertops may be kashered for Pesach: Acrylic, Granite, Marble, Metals (stainless steel, copper), Plastic laminate, Polyester Base, Quartz resin, Slate, Soapstone, Wood, butcher block. The following common brands of countertops may be kashered for Pesach: Avonite, Buddy Rhodes, Caesar Stone, Cheng Design, Corian, Craftart, Formica, Gibraltar, John Boos, Nevamar, Omega, Pionite, Silestone, Spekva, Staron, Surrell, Swanstone, Wilsonart, Zodiaq.

**DISHWASHERS** can be kashered by running a cycle, with detergent, after cleaning thoroughly and not using the dishwasher for 24 hours.

If all parts of **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES** that come into contact with chameitz are removable, they can be kashered by cleaning them thoroughly and then completely immersing them in boiling water. If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be kashered. For those appliances which can be kashered, all exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned.

**CABINETS** that will be used during Pesach should be cleaned thoroughly. Chameitz which is to be sold should be placed in a cabinet that is labeled and taped shut. This cabinet may not be opened during Pesach.

The kitchen **FLOOR** should be cleaned and any stuck-on food should be removed. Other floors should be swept or vacuumed.

**METAL POTS, PANS, SILVERWARE & HARD PLASTIC:** Kashering of utensils should be completed before the 14th of Nisan. Metal can be kashered by cleaning it, waiting 24 hours, and then immersing it completely in a pot of boiling water. Therefore, silverware and small pots can be kashered by placing them in a pot of boiling water. Large pots (that will not fit into another pot) can be kashered by cleaning them, waiting 24 hours, boiling water in them, and then, while they are still boiling, adding a heated rock so that a little water runs over the sides of the pot.

Hard plastic can be kashered by cleaning it and immersing it in boiling water. Plastic handles that are attached to pots pose a potential problem. The plastic can be kashered but the handle must be removed in order to properly clean the spot where it is attached to the pot. This is very important, as food tends to accumulate there. If the handle is welded to the pot, so that foods cannot accumulate, the pot can be kashered together with the handle.

Neither frying pans nor metal baking utensils can be kashered reasonably; invest in separate ones for Pesach.

According to Ashkenazic authorities, porcelain/earthenware **DISHES** cannot be kashered, nor can stoneware or ceramic mugs. Some authorities rule that very fine china can be kashered if it has not been used for over a year.

**GLASS** dishes used for eating and serving hot foods are to be treated like any dish used for eating and serving hot food. Kashering is effected by cleaning and immersing in boiling water (הגעלה hag'alah). **GLASS COOKWARE** is treated like a metal pot for kashering (see paragraph on metal, above). The issues regarding **GLASS BAKEWARE** are complex. Some authorities allow it to be kashered and others do not. **DRINKING GLASSES** or **GLASS DISHES** used only for cold foods may be kashered by a simple rinsing. Some follow the custom of soaking them for three days.

**DISHTOWELS, TABLECLOTHS, POTHOLDERS** need only be laundered. Separate ones are not needed for Pesach.

**ON-PASSOVER UTENSILS** (dishes, pots, etc) – just like chameitz whose ownership has been transferred – should be separated, locked up, or covered, and marked in order to prevent accidental use.



**Prohibited foods** include the following: leavened bread, cakes, biscuits, crackers, cereal, coffees containing cereal derivatives, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, and all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol. Remember that egg matzah is not kosher for Pesach.

Not everything you consume on Pesach needs a KP (kosher for Passover) hekhsher! The following foods may be purchased **before the 14th of Nisan without a special hekhsher for Pesach, but require one if purchased later**: Milk (including Lactaid), pure fruit juices (with no additives whatsoever), pure coffee (regular, naturally decaffeinated, with no cereal additives), unflavored pure tea, salt (not iodized), pepper, and sugar. [More detailed lists can be found [here](#) and [here](#); note that they are of Sefardi origin.]

**The following foods may be purchased before and during Pesach without a special hekhsher** (certification) for Pesach: Fresh meat and fish, eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables, raw nuts in their shells. (Raw peeled uncut carrots, potatoes, and celery in plastic bags may be purchased only if citric acid is not used as an oxidation retardant)

The following foods require a special **hekhsher whether purchased before or during Pesach**: all baked products and matzah products (e.g. matzah, cakes, matzah flour, farfel, matzah meal, and any other products containing matzah); chocolate milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt, and all other dairy products other than plain milk; honey; oils; vinegar; wine; liquor; pure spices or spice blends (since processing may involve additional ingredients); canned tuna or other fish; frozen raw fish that contains any ingredient other than fish, water, and salt; candy; dried fruit and nuts (since the drying, preserving, and packaging processes often involve additional ingredients); soda; frozen and canned fruits and vegetables; canned, bottled, or frozen fruit juices (since these juices are often clarified with kitniyot that are not listed on the label). In other words, all processed foods require a special hekhsher. Note that Splenda is kosher for year-round use but not for Pesach.

**Kitniyot**: Rice, corn, millet, and legumes are not chameitz and they need not be removed from the home. There is, however, a long-standing Ashkenazic custom not to eat them on Pesach. In the fall of 2015 the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly passed two responsa [[here](#) and [here](#)] which permit the consumption of kitniyot for Ashkenazim. If refraining from kitniyot, it is best to put them away in a separate location so as not to accidentally eat them on Pesach. Beans and peas are kitniyot, but string beans are not. Quinoa is permitted but should be checked before Pesach and any foreign substance removed, since it may be processed on equipment used for grain. Regarding peanuts, the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, with significant classical support, has ruled that peanuts do not fall in the category of kitniyot; still, many Ashkenazim do not eat them during Pesach. Regarding derivatives of legumes (e.g. soybean oil, corn sweetener, etc.), some authorities permit consumption while others forbid it. Sephardic authorities permit the use of all of the above.

**Non-food items**: It is not necessary to throw away or sell items such as soap, shampoo, lotion, nail polish, stick deodorant, powder, and make-up; they may be used on Pesach. The following products should not be used if they are in liquid form: cologne, perfume, hairspray, shaving cream, and deodorants that contain restorable, denatured alcohol. Lipstick that contains chameitz should not be used. One should use a new toothbrush and tube of toothpaste. If permitted during the rest of the year, powdered and liquid detergents do not require Pesach certification.

**Medicines:** All pill medications that are swallowed (with or without chameitz binders) are permitted without a special Pesach certification. All chewable pills that contain kitniyot are permitted. If chewable pills contain chameitz and no substitute is available, ideally one should continue using only those medicines which a physician considers essential to one's health. All liquid medications that contain chameitz should be avoided. Liquid medications that contain kitniyot are permissible. In general, consult with your doctor before discontinuing any medication.

**If you will be away over Pesach** (and are leaving fewer than 30 days before the beginning of the holiday), you should clean your apartment, perform bedikat chameitz, and sell any remaining chameitz. You need not kasher anything in your kitchen.

**Mechirat chameitz (sale of chameitz)** All chameitz which are not being disposed of must be sold. You need not have completed the cleaning of your apartment in order to sign the document (shtar harsha'ah) that Shaare Zedek has provided. The document empowers Ashira Konigsburg to serve as your agent to sell your chameitz, and can be signed well in advance of Pesach. You should not list anyone other than yourself on the document without their express knowledge and agreement. Nor should you list anyone living outside of the Continental United States or Canada. Ashira Konigsburg will re-purchase the sold chameitz shortly after Pesach ends; one should not partake of these items until one hour after the end of Pesach (**i.e. 9:30 pm on Thursday, April 13**)

It is customary to contribute **Ma'ot Chittin** – literally “money for wheat” – to a communal fund (known as the Matzah Fund at Shaare Zedek) before Pesach to make it possible for everyone to celebrate a kosher Pesach regardless of their financial situation. Often, contributions are made upon appointing someone to be your agent for the sale of your chameitz.

## **Activities prohibited on Shabbat & permitted on Yom Tov** (holidays)

- Cooking for Yom Tov itself is permitted; one may not cook on one day of Yom Tov for the next.
- **Eruv Tavshilin:** Cooking on Yom Tov is permitted for the needs of the day itself; however, when Shabbat starts right after Yom Tov, the rabbis permitted cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbat provided that preparations for Shabbat are begun before the holiday. This is accomplished through an eruv tavshilin – before Pesach starts, take a piece of matzah and a cooked food (typically a hard-boiled egg), hold them, and recite the following:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על מצות ערוב

**Barukh ata adonai, eloheinu melek ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al mitzvat eruv.**

**(Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the precept of eruv)**

בהדיו ערובא יהא שרא לנא למפא ולבשלא ולאטמנא ולאדלקא שרגא ולמעבד כל צרכנא מיומא טבא לשבתא לנו ולכל ישראל הדרים בעיר הזאת.

**(With this eruv may we be permitted to bake, cook, keep warm, kindle fire, prepare and do anything necessary on the holiday for Shabbat, for ourselves and for all Jews who live in this city.)**

Set the eruv foods aside to be eaten on Shabbat. Cooking for Shabbat has now begun, and may be continued during Pesach. (If you forgot to make an eruv before Pesach begins, you can rely on those made by others in your area, but ideally you should make your own.)

- Although one may cook on Yom Tov, one may not ignite a fire on Yom Tov. This is prohibited under the category of *molid*, creating something new. Therefore, if one has a gas stove that is ignited electrically (this is the “click, click, click” sound) one should leave a low flame throughout Yom Tov if one is intending to cook. Please use appropriate safety measures if you choose to leave a flame on throughout Yom Tov. Many people leave a pot of water over the flame at all times when they are not using it for cooking, so that there is never an unattended open flame. In the case of gas stoves with pilot lights, one may turn on a burner on Yom Tov. There is debate, however, as to whether one may extinguish such a burner on Yom Tov.
- Electric ranges raise the question of the use of electricity on Yom Tov in general. Those halakhists who permit the use of electricity on Shabbat permit it on Yom Tov as well. There are some halakhists who permit the use of electricity on Yom Tov though they forbid it on Shabbat. Others are equally stringent about the use of electricity on Yom Tov.
- Besides cooking, the other activity prohibited on Shabbat and permitted on Yom Tov is carrying in, from, and to the public domain. One may only carry what is needed for Yom Tov itself and one may not carry items that are *muktzeh*, i.e. objects not appropriate for Yom Tov use (e.g. a radio) or for general use (e.g. a stone).

*Chag kasher v' Sameach!*