



## Kasher your Kitchen for Pesach

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*"I'm cleaning out my kitchen, scrubbing every shelf. But I can work and work, but it will do no good, unless I do some on myself!"*

- from a Pesach song by Rabbi Margot Stein

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**Cleaning, or "kashering" for Pesach is a spiritual practice** that also gets you a squeaky clean kitchen! The point is not to work until you are sick, but to lovingly and carefully clean out "chametz" – the leavening that makes everything "puff up with ego."

Here are some **moderately traditional** guidelines on kashering:

### 1. Kashering Appliances, Dishes and Utensils

- ✚ Only dishes and utensils specially reserved for Passover should be used, with the following exceptions.
- ✚ Silverware, knives, forks and spoons made wholly of metal can be kashered by a thorough scouring and immersing in boiling water.
- ✚ Kashering drinking utensils requires only thorough scrubbing before Pesach, or putting them through a dishwasher.
- ✚ Utensils used for baking during the year cannot be used during Passover.
- ✚ Chinaware, enamelware, earthenware, porcelain and plastic cannot be kashered.
- ✚ Pyrex used for baking cannot be kashered. All other Pyrex can be kashered as glassware.
- ✚ Refrigerators should be cleaned and scoured including shelves.
- ✚ Ovens and ranges can be kashered by thoroughly scrubbing and cleaning every part that comes in contact with food. Oven and range should then be heated as hot as possible for a half hour. If there is a broil setting, use it. Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed and cleaned and then put through the self-cleaning cycle. Continuous cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens. (Reb Zalman typically would use lots of "Easy-Off" on the theory that its main ingredient, lye, is like "chemical fire," in lieu of using so much flame or electrical heat.)
- ✚ A microwave oven can be kashered by thorough scrubbing and then placing a glass of water in the oven and running the oven on high for a few minutes until the cavity fills with steam and the water disappears
- ✚ The dishwasher may be kashered for Pesach by thorough scouring, not using the machine for 24 hours, and then running through a full wash cycle.

- ✚ Surfaces: All table tops, shelves and pantry or kitchen surfaces which are used during the year should be thoroughly cleaned and scoured before placing Pesach utensils upon them.
- ✚ 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 for metal utensils). If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be kashered. (All exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned.)
- ✚ Kitchen Sink - A metal sink can be kashered by a thorough cleaning and by pouring boiling water over it. A porcelain sink should be cleaned and a sink rack used.
- ✚ Chametz and Non-Passover Utensils - Non-Passover dishes, pots and Chametz whose ownership has been transferred, should be separated, locked up or covered and marked so as to prevent accidental use.

## **PERMITTED AND FORBIDDEN FOODS**

### **Prohibited foods include the following:**

- ❖ leavened bread, cakes, biscuits, crackers, cereal, coffee with cereal derivatives in them, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, and all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol.
- ❖ Most Ashkenazic authorities have added the following foods (kitniyot) to the above list: rice, corn, millet, legumes (beans, peas; however, string beans are permitted).
- ❖ ! The Conservative Movement has ruled unanimously that peanuts and peanut oil are permissible, as peanuts are not actually legumes.
- ❖ Some Ashkenazic authorities permit, while others forbid the use of legumes in a form other than its natural state, for example, corn sweeteners, corn oil, soy oil. Sephardic authorities permit the use of all of the above.

### **Permitted Foods**

- ❖ The following foods require no kosher le-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; salt (not iodized); pepper, natural spices; frozen fruit juices with no additives; frozen (uncooked) vegetables (for legumes see above); milk, butter, cottage cheese, cream cheese; ripened cheeses such as cheddar (hard), Muenster (semi-soft) and Camembert (soft); frozen (uncooked) fruit (with no additives); baking soda; canned tuna fish packed in water (with or without salt) but with no other additives.
- ❖ The following foods require no kosher le-Pesach label if purchased before or during Pesach: Fresh fruits and vegetables (for legumes see above), eggs, fresh fish and fresh meat.

The following foods require a kosher le-Pesah label if purchased before or during Pesah:

- ❖ All baked products (matzah, cakes, matzah flour, farfel, matzah meal, and 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 Pesah without a kosher le-Pesah label); canned tuna (since tuna, even when packed in water, has often been processed in vegetable broth and/or hydrolyzed protein- however, if it is known that the tuna is packed exclusively in water, without any additional ingredients or additives, it may be purchased without a kosher le-Pesah label before Passover); wine, vinegar\*, liquor, oils; dried fruits; candy; chocolate flavored milk; ice cream; yogurt and soda.

\*Vinegar is created when alcohol is (re)fermented, and the primary concern with vinegar is the source of the alcohol. As the name implies, malt vinegar is made from malt or beer which we've seen is chametz, and therefore malt vinegar is definitely chametz. In contrast, wine vinegar and apple cider vinegar are made from wine and apple cider which aren't chametz. Some white vinegars are not chametz (made from potatoes) and others are...

- ❖ The following processed foods (canned, bottled or frozen), require a kosher le-Pesah label if purchased during Pesah; milk, butter, juices, vegetables, fruit, milk products, spices, coffee, tea, and fish, as well as all foods listed in the previous section.

### **Detergents**

If permitted during the year, powdered and liquid detergents do not require a kosher le- Pesach label.

### **Passover Labels**

No product can be used on Passover unless it is accompanied by a reliable heksher, an endorsement by a Rabbi whose name and location are clearly stated. A label reading simply "For Passover" and adorned with Jewish Symbols is not reliable especially if not integral to the package. Baked products are a particular problem and their preparation by a bakery under Jewish ownership is not a guarantee of kashrut. It is also important to note that Jewish law forbids the purchase of bread immediately after Passover, which has been baked during Passover.