

How to Kasher a kitchen

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Sinks

Stainless steel or Corian sinks may be kashered by cleaning them thoroughly, leaving them unused for 24 hours, and then carefully pouring boiling water from a kettle over all surfaces of the sink and faucet. The strainer covering the sink's drain should be replaced.

Porcelain sinks cannot be kashered.

Kosher dishes and other utensils may not be placed in a sink that was not kashered; rather, an insert or basin must be placed in the sink, and all dishes should be put into that insert. It is worthwhile to have two basins or grates on the sink for meat and milk.

Stovetops

The most common type of stovetop is a metal grate over an open flame, which is situated on a metal surface. Others have electric coils in the place of an open flame. The kashering of all of these stovetops is similar. All parts of the stovetop should be thoroughly cleaned, including scraping residual food from the surface and catch-tray, and not used for 24 hours. Then the fire or coil should be turned to its maximum temperature for 20-25 minutes. For safety reasons, do not kasher more than one burner at a time. Finally, clean the knobs, and purge all areas between the burners with boiling water.

Non self-cleaning oven

The interior and exterior surfaces of the oven must be thoroughly cleaned and oven should not be used for full 24 hours. To kasher, turn on oven to its highest temperature for one hour. The oven racks should be cleaned thoroughly and left in the oven during this process.

Using oven for meat and milk:

Many authorities allow one oven to be used for meat and milk (separately, of course). Allow the oven to completely cool down and all residue has been cleaned off. It is recommended that you always cover one type of food when cooking. For example, if the oven is mainly used for meat, the dairy dish should be covered when being cooked.

Self-cleaning oven

A complete self-clean cycle should be run with the racks inside the oven, and then the oven may be used without covering the racks. This kashering may be done even if the oven was not left unused for 24 hours. If the racks are not inside the oven while the self-clean cycle is run, the racks should be kashered separately.

Oven Broiler

Some ovens have a separate broiler pan. The broiler pan and grill cannot be kashered by just turning on the gas or electricity. Since food is cooked directly on the pan or grill, they must be heated to a glow by being placed into a self-cleaning oven. An alternative

method is to replace the pan with a new pan and Kasher the empty broiler cavity by cleaning and setting it to broil for 1 hour.

Microwave

It is preferable to replace the glass plate before kashering begins. To kasher the appliance itself, the microwave must be thoroughly cleaned and not used for 24 hours. Then, a cup of water should be boiled in the chamber for an extended amount of time, until the chamber fills with steam. If a microwave has a metal grate, it should be kashered in a pot of boiling hot water.

Refrigerators and Freezers

All parts of refrigerators and freezers must be thoroughly cleaned and washed, including storage bins.

Countertops

The procedure for kashering a countertop is to clean it thoroughly, not use it for 24 hours, and then carefully pour boiling water on all surfaces. Once the countertop is kashered, it may be used without being covered. One may not kasher utensils made of certain materials (ceramic, cement, glass), materials which are not robust enough to withstand kashering, and any utensil that has cracks, nicks or scratches where pieces of food might get stuck. Many kitchens use natural stone such as granite, marble, limestone, soapstone, slate, and onyx for countertops. All of these may be kashered regardless of which sealant is used to coat the stone.

Dishwashers

Porcelain and enamel dishwashers cannot be kashered. Stainless steel dishwashers may be kashered. It is necessary to contact the company to know what material is behind the plastic lining. These dishwashers must be thoroughly cleaned first, especially the food trap. To kasher, wait 24 hours since the last usage and then run the dishwasher empty but with soap on its hottest setting. Do not kasher for Pesach use.

Tevillas keilim:

- Any utensil used for- food preparation or consumption requires tevillah in a kasher tevillah mikvah.
- Metal or glass items require tevillah with a beracha.
- Ceramic, plastic, rubber or wood items don't require tevillah.
- China (i.e. glazed ceramic) requires tevillali without a beracha.
- There can be no foreign substances on the item including dirt, rust, stickers or gum.
- The entire item must be fully submerged in the mikveh at one time.

If you have any questions about any of the above (or anything else), feel free to contact Rabbi Taubes at ytaubes@pennhillel.org