

Pesach Guidelines

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Food for Pesach

Jews are forbidden from eating *chametz* or products containing *chametz* on Pesach. One should therefore eat only products that are certified Kosher for Passover or at an establishment that is Kosher for Passover (such as the Hillel Dining Hall). A list of Kosher for Passover products can be found in the OU Pesach guide, free copies of which are available in my office or by download at [OU Pesach Guide](#). This guide also has lots of additional useful Pesach information. If you have questions about particular products not found on this list and/or not under OU or other reliable certification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

When specific brands are identified as Kosher for Passover, it does not necessarily mean that all other brands of the same product definitively contain *chametz* - simply that the other brands *cannot* be used without obtaining further information.

As a general rule, therefore, please assume that any product not listed in the guide *cannot* be used without Kosher for Passover certification with the exception of the following: unflavored bottled water, toothpaste, unflavored coffee grounds or unflavored tea, milk (which preferably should be bought before Pesach), raw nuts, non-iodized or sea salt, and fresh fruit and vegetables.

Cooking for/on Pesach

One may not use the same silverware, plates, dishes, or pots/pans on Pesach that one uses during the rest of the year, as they have absorbed the flavor of *chametz* which is forbidden on Pesach. Depending upon what material these utensils are made of, however, they can be "*kashered*" by placing them into a pot of boiling water, which eliminates any absorbed flavor. Items made of metal, such as silverware, can be *kashered* in this manner, but due to certain technical matters, this can be very complicated to do on your own. Lower Merion Synagogue will be providing the opportunity for individuals to *kasher* utensils on an industrial level. Information as to when and where will be forthcoming. Please note that **all items to be *kashered* MUST be clean and not used within the 24 hours prior to *kashering***. Alternatively, one may simply use plastic utensils, especially if it is not for a *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov* meal.

For information on how to clean the rest of your kitchen, please see the end of this document.

Mechirat Chametz

In addition to the prohibition of eating *chametz*, a Jew is also forbidden from owning *chametz* over Pesach. You should therefore remove all products containing *chametz* from your dorm/apartment prior to the holiday. Unopened packaged food can be brought to Hillel where it will be donated to the Ronald McDonald house.

For those who have *chametz* which is impractical to completely dispose of before Pesach, the rabbis set up a system whereby people can sell their *chametz* to a non-Jew beforehand, so that it will not be owned by a Jew during the holiday, and then buy it back afterwards. Since this process too involves a number of *halachic* and legal technicalities, it is generally done through the agency of a rabbi. I am available to become your agent to sell any of your *chametz* and will be around Hillel during the day time with the necessary paperwork. Feel free to email me to set up a time to do the sale.

If you plan on availing yourself of this option to have your *chametz* sold to a non-Jew, all *chametz* products should be placed into a designated closet/cabinet which should be closed and thus inaccessible for the duration of Pesach, as it will belong to the non-Jew.

Please note: No chametz may be eaten after 10:51 am and all chametz must be disposed of by 11:57 am on Monday morning, April 10th, but one should not wait until the last minute. Any arrangements for a sale of chametz must be made well before then.

Shabbat HaGadol

It is customary for the Rabbi to give a special (*derashah*) lecture on the Shabbat before Pesach; this Shabbat is called *Shabbat HaGadol*. The *Shabbat Hagadol Derashah* will take place on the afternoon of *Shabbat, April 8th* at 6:00 in Shotel Dubin.

Erev Pesach Schedule

There are a number of things that must be done on the evening and day before Pesach. They are explained below:

Sunday, April 9th

8:15 PM ***Bedikat Chametz*** (Search for *Chametz*)

As mentioned above, the Torah forbids us not only to eat, but also to own *chametz* on *Pesach*. We must therefore remove any *chametz* from our possession, even if it is presently unknown to us, and one way to accomplish this is by “nullifying” it through “*Bittul Chametz*,” thus rendering any of our *chametz*

ownerless and not technically in our possession. Our *chachamim*, however, further mandated a thorough check of the house on the night before *Pesach* a) in case we will not have not truly nullified and renounced ownership of the *chametz* in our hearts, especially if it is valuable, and b) lest one find and mistakenly eat *chametz* on *Pesach*. This process requires more than just the custom of putting out 10 pieces of bread and finding them. You must actually search through your dorm/apartment for *chametz* in places like coat pockets and drawers near where you eat.

One should try to do the *bedikah* as soon as possible on Sunday evening after 8:15.

Before the search, you make the following *berachah*:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על בעור חמץ

Following the search, recite:

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאיכא ברשותי, דלא חזיתיה ודלא בערתיה, לבטיל ולהוי הפקר כעפרא דארעא

All *chametz* or leaven in my possession that I have not seen, and have not destroyed, shall be nullified and become ownerless, like the dust of the earth

Monday, April 10th

5:06 AM Fast of the firstborn begins. It is customary for all firstborn males to fast on Erev *Pesach*. It is also customary, however, that a *siyum* is made, and the festive nature of that event and the refreshments which follow in celebration serve to obviate the need to fast. There will be a *siyum* after *Shacharit* for all those who wish to join.

10:51 AM **Latest time to eat *chametz***

11:57 PM **Latest time to own *chametz*.** All *chametz* must be disposed of before this time. The prevalent custom is to burn the *chametz* on Erev *Pesach*; Bob Williams will be setting up a garbage can outside Hillel for this purpose. Most of your *chametz* can be disposed of by placing it in a public garbage dumpster. If it is impossible to get to the dumpster, *chametz* can also be left in your regular garbage bags (or cans), but they must be placed outside at the curbt, where it is clear that you have relinquished ownership of the *chametz*. The final, small amount of *chametz* remaining should **then** be taken to be burnt. No blessing is recited, but following the burning, you should say the nullification text below. Even if you will not be burning any *chametz*, this text should be said before 11:51pm.

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאיכא ברשותי, דחזיתיה ודלא חזיתיה, דבערתיה ודלא בערתיה, לבטיל ולהוי הפקר
כעפרא דארעא

All chametz or leaven in my possession that I have seen and that I have not seen, that I have destroyed and that I have not destroyed, shall be nullified and become ownerless, like the dust of the earth.

How to *Kasher* a Kitchen

If you plan on using any part of your kitchen at all over Pesach, you should follow the below steps in preparation. Please note that these are general guidelines only.

ALL KASHERING MUST BE COMPLETED BY THE MORNING OF EREV PESACH.

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. Some recommend that the strainer covering the sink's drain should be replaced. Porcelain sinks cannot be *kashered*.

Kosher for Pesach dishes and other utensils may not be placed into a sink that was not *kashered*; rather, an insert or basin should be placed in the sink, and all dishes should be put in there. It is preferable to have two inserts/basins and grates in the sink, one for meat and one for dairy.

Stovetops

The most common type of stovetop consists of metal grates over an open flame, which is situated on a metal surface. Others have electric coils in the place of an open flame. The method of *kashering* 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 should be turned to its maximum temperature for 20-25 minutes, or the coil until it is completely glowing. For safety reasons, it is suggested not to *kasher* more than one burner at a time. Finally, one should clean the knobs and carefully pour boiling water on all areas between the burners.

Non Self-Cleaning Ovens

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

Self-Cleaning Ovens

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 method of *kashering* may be done even if the oven was not left unused for 24 hours.

Microwaves

It is preferable to replace the glass or plastic 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, but covering or lining the insides is not necessary.

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. 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. For the sake of convenience, though, many people prefer to simply cover all counter areas with heavy duty aluminum foil or contact paper.

Please note that in general, one may not *kasher* utensils made of certain materials (ceramic, cement, glass), items which are not robust enough to withstanding *kashering*, and any utensil that has cracks, nicks or scratches where pieces of food might get stuck.

Chametz She'avar Alav HaPesach

Chametz that was in the possession of a Jew over Pesach, known as *Chametz She'avar Alav HaPesach*, is forbidden to be used even after Pesach. This applies to stores as well. The following local stores are owned by non-Jews and thus present no problem of Chametz She'avar Alav HaPesach: Supreme Supermarket, Kiwi Yogurt. Saxby's, Starbucks, Bon Appetit/Penn Dining, Wawa CVS, Acme and Giant. Fresh Grocer is undergoing a change of management so please stay tuned as to the status of their products. This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Please contact me with questions.

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