

Passover FAQs

PASSOVER 5784 / 2024 FOR BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER

Dear Beth El,

Chag Sameach! It is that time of year again when we start thinking about and planning for Pesach. We hope that the following guide will serve as an updated resource for all of the “usual” questions that arise this time of year: How do I *kasher* my kitchen? What foods require a special Passover *heksher* (*kashrut* label)? If I want to start my seder early, is there an appropriate way to perform the seder out of order? How do I sell my *chametz*? Etc...

In order to assist with questions you may have, if you are reading this electronically and looking for something specific in this guide, you can search for a word or phrase to find it more easily.

CONTENTS

- I. [Ritual Preparations \(pgs. 3-5\)](#)
 - A. *Mechirat Chametz / Sale of Leaven*
 - B. *Bedikat/Biur Chametz / Search for Chametz-Burning of Chametz*
 - C. *Siyyum Bechorim / Fast of the First Born*
 - D. *Maot Chittim / Passover Relief Fund*
- II. [Home Preparations \(pgs. 5-11\)](#)
 - A. Shopping for Passover and Guide to Kosher for Passover Foods
 - B. Cleaning and *Kashering* for Passover
- III. [The Seder \(pgs. 11-13\)](#)
 - A. Timing of the Seder
 - B. Seder when/if Physically Distant
 - C. Resource on How to Lead and Host a Seder
- IV. [After Passover \(pg. 14\)](#)
 - A. When do I get to have *chametz* again?
- V. [Rabbi Schuck's Additional Notes to the Rabbinical Assembly Passover Guide \(pgs. 20-21\)](#)

Mechirat Chametz / Final Sale of Leaven: Monday, April 22nd (After Morning Minyan)

Will there be a communal sale of *chametz* through Beth El this year?

Yes! Cantor Gaby will have open hours for buying *chametz*. Tuesday April 16 from 5pm to 7pm, Wednesday April 17 from 8am to 10am and 3:30pm to 5pm, Thursday April 18 from 9 to 10 and 1pm to 3pm and Friday April 19 from 12:30pm to 2:30pm. ALL CLERGY will be available to purchase your hametz immediately following morning and evening minyan. We encourage you to come in person to sell your *chametz* through an act of acquisition (or *kinyan* in Hebrew). If your health is compromised or you have other reasons why you cannot come in person to sell your *chametz*, please contact Cantor Gaby and she will help you make alternative arrangements.

Bedikat Chametz / The Search for Chametz, Sunday, April 21st After Nightfall

One should search their home for *chametz* on the evening of Erev Pesach by the light of a candle using a wooden spoon and a feather. All *chametz* is then placed in a paper bag, or something similar, and kept aside to be burned the next day. For a complete guide for *bedikat chametz* (search for *chametz*) including its appropriate blessings [click here](#).

If one did not do *bedikat chametz* at night on April 21st, one may perform *bedikat chametz* during the next day (April 22nd) before 10:38 AM. A candle should also be used during the day. It is a custom to not rely on sunlight.

Siyyum Bechorim / Fast of the Firstborn: Monday, April 22nd, 7:00 am

While first-born children are obligated to fast the day before Passover, they may eat if they attend a celebration marking the completion of a significant

study of Torah. Please join Rabbi Sitkin for a *siyyum* upon his completion of hilchot Shabbat in Rambam's Mishneh Torah. While a *minyan* is not necessary for a *siyyum*, it is necessary for the recitation of the accompanying kaddish. The meal eaten afterward is considered a *Se'udat Mitzvah* for the person making the *siyyum*, as well as for all those in attendance. Please join us for our *siyyum* on April 22nd, 2024 after minyan, which begins at 7:00 am. You can sign up for minyan using our minyan app or by contacting Cantor Gaby. You can find the Zoom link to morning minyan [here](#).

***Biur Chametz* / The Burning of *Chametz*: Monday, April 22nd before 11:53 am.**

Take the *chametz* that you set aside during your search and recite the [blessing](#) "*biur chametz*" and then recite the [traditional formula](#) for the nullification of your *chametz*. Then light your *chametz* on fire in a safe place. We will have communal *chametz* burning from 10:00-11:00 am--bring your last bread crumbs to burn in the fire pit in Beth El's parking lot. **Please do not bring full loaves of bread-- just crumbs! This year, the latest time to burn *chametz* is 11:45 am on Monday, April 22nd, 2024.**

Preparing Yom Tov meals

Normally, cooking is allowed on major Jewish holidays but only for consumption on that day. Thus, one would not normally be permitted to cook for Shabbat on Friday if a Yom Tov falls on Friday. **This year, Yom Tov begins on a Monday evening and continues through Wednesday evening. There is no need to make an *Eruv Tavshilin*¹.** Please note that in order to

¹ In a year when making an *eruv Tavshilin* is needed, one takes a piece of matzah together with a hard boiled egg, or a piece of cooked fish/meat to be used on Shabbat. While holding them, one says: *ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על מצות ערוב* *Baruch Atah A-donai E-loheinu Melekh HaOlam Asher Kid'd'shanu B'Mitzvotav V'tzivanu Al Mitzvat Eruv*. One then continues with the following aramaic phrase: *בדין עירובא יהא שרא לנא למפא ולבשלא ולאטמנא ולאדלקא שרגא ולמעבד כל צרכנא מיומא טבא לשבתא לנו ולכל ישראל הדרים בעיר הזאת yehei shrei lana l'mei'fei ul'va'shala ul'atmana ul'adlaka shraga ul'me'bod kol tzarkhana me'yoma tava l'shab'b'ta, lanu ul'chol yisrael had'darim ba'ir hazot.*

cook on the second day of Pesach, one must use a pre-existing flame that was lit before the holiday began.

***Maot Chittim* / Passover Relief Fund**

This Passover relief fund helps individuals who need financial assistance here and abroad celebrate the holiday. Money from the fund also provides youth scholarships to educational Jewish Summer Camps and Israel Programs. [Please click here to donate here.](#)

Preparing for Passover:

Shopping for Passover

For some suggestions of where to get food for Passover click [here](#).

May I eat *kitniyot* (legumes such as rice, beans, corn, peas, and lentils) if I am Ashkenazi?

A few years ago, when the CJLS ruled that eating *kitniyot* was permissible during Passover, the Beth El clergy team encouraged our community to maintain the traditional Ashkenazi custom to refrain from eating *kitniyot* even if it is *halachically* permissible to eat it (we did say that it makes sense for Ashkenazi Jews on a restricted diet to add rice, beans, and lentils to one's diet on Passover).

We still recommend upholding the long-held custom of refraining from *kitniyot* on Pesach. For a more thorough explanation of what types of *kitniyot* are acceptable and what kinds are not, please consult the CJLS Passover guide [here](#).

****It is important to remember that *kitniyot*, while traditionally not eaten on Passover, is NOT *chametz*. There is no prohibition against owning *kitniyot*

or having it accessible in one's home during Passover and one need not throw it away or give it away prior to Pesach.****

Is there a kosher for Pesach food pantry?

There is a kosher food pantry through both the [Bronx Jewish Community Council](#) and [HOPE Community Services](#). They should have Kosher for Passover food for those who need it. The BJCC hours are: Monday - Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and HOPE's hours are: Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. For more information about the BJCC food pantry, please contact David Edelstein, the Program Director for the Food Pantry and Community Services, at dedelstein@bjcconline.org. For more information about the HOPE food pantry, please contact Anya Di Salvo, the Pantry Director, at (914)-636-4010

Can I buy food now even though my house is not yet cleaned for Pesach?

Yes, Kosher for Passover food may be purchased, remain sealed, and then stored in a separate location away from all other food. To avoid confusion, Kosher for Passover food that needs to be stored in the refrigerator should be stored on their own shelves that were cleaned thoroughly for Passover and then marked FOR PASSOVER USE ONLY.

Certain items MUST be purchased before Passover in order to be consumed throughout Passover. Please see the next item on this FAQ for a complete list.

What Food/Non-Food items DO NOT REQUIRE a Kosher for Passover *Heksher* (certification)?

- **Non-food:** aluminum products • ammonia • baby oil • bleach • candles • contact paper • charcoal • coffee filters • fabric softener • isopropyl alcohol • laundry and dish detergent • oven cleaner • paper bags • paper plates

(with no starch coating) • plastic cutlery • plastic wrap • polish • powder and ointment • sanitizers • scouring pads • stain remover • water with no additives • wax paper

- **If purchased BEFORE Passover:** all pure fruit juices • fileted fish • frozen fruit (no additives) • non-iodized salt • pure white sugar (no additives) • quinoa (with nothing mixed in)² • white milk • Some products sold by Equal Exchange Fair Trade Chocolate
- **Can be purchased DURING Passover:** baking soda • bicarbonate of soda • fresh fruits and vegetables • fresh or frozen kosher meat (other than chopped meat) • Nestea (regular and decaffeinated) • pure black, green, or white tea leaves • unflavored tea bags • unflavored regular coffee • olive oil (extra-virgin only) • whole or gutted fresh fish • whole or half pecans (not pieces) • whole (unground) spices and nuts

How do I clean my home for Pesach?

Passover is known as *Chag HaKasher*, the holiday of Kashrut. The Torah is very clear about the need to rid our home of any chametz, so much so that we aren't even permitted to *see* chametz during Passover. For this reason, we are very *machmir* (stringent) about cleaning and scrubbing for Passover, and this takes many hours of preparation.

Cabinets that will not be used for Passover need not be cleaned. Close them and tape them shut and do not open them again until after Passover. This can be the majority of your cabinets and storage space in your kitchen. They will be sold to a Gentile when you sell your *chametz*. Only the cabinets that will be used on Passover need to be cleaned. Whatever crumbs of *chametz* remain in those cabinets will become nullified by the formula we recite when we burn our *chametz*.

² Since there is a possibility that grain (from one of the five species: wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats) could be mixed in with the quinoa it is proper to buy quinoa with a Kosher for Passover *hechsher* when it can be found.

Clean surface areas to the best of your ability making sure no *chametz* can be seen and rely on the traditional [formulation](#) that we recite when we burn our *chametz* on the morning of April 5th to nullify the remainder of your *chametz*.

You can find detailed instructions for cleaning using the CJLS *Pesach* guide [here](#).

How do I *kasher* my kitchen and utensils for Passover?

Generally speaking, one should not cook for Pesach before his / her / their kitchen has been fully *kashered* for Pesach. Once you are able to *kasher* your entire kitchen and cooking equipment, you can find instructions for doing so [here](#).

As a quick reminder, the main principle in *kashering* dishes and utensils for *Pesach* is “כבולעו כך פולטו-*k’volo kach polto*” “[*The way utensils absorb [food] is how it can be purged [of food]*”. There are three main ways to *kasher* utensils/cooking surfaces: heating an object with fire until it glows red (*libbun*), immersion in boiling water (*hag’alah*), and pouring boiling water over surfaces (*irui*). Please see Rabbi Schuck’s additional comments about *kashering* for Passover at the end of this document.

Here is a list of the most common kitchen utensils and the way one can *kasher* them. (Kitchen items should sit unused for 24 hours before you begin *kashering*)

- *Hag’alah*: Metal pots, metal silverware, glass cookware³, heavy duty plastic that can withstand high temperatures
- *Libbun*: Metal cooking sheets/bakeware used in a fire or oven
- Rinsing: Glassware
- Cannot be *kashered* for Pesach: Glass bakeware, ceramics, microwaves with a browning element

³ See Rabbi Schuck’s notes below

- Ovens and convection ovens: clean thoroughly and put on a self-cleaning cycle
- Non-convection microwaves (without a browning element): thorough cleaning, plus heating an 8 oz. cup of water until most of the water disappears

For those who do not have access to a blow torch, which can heat metal pans hot enough to glow red, placing cooking pans into a self-cleaning oven during its cleaning cycle is sufficient to *kasher* pans for Pesach. However, this process often warps pans that are not sturdy enough to withstand the heat. If you are worried about the financial burden associated with potentially warping your pans, you can always use disposable aluminum foil pans.

The Hadar Institute has a series of instructional videos by Rabbi Ethan Tucker that are a useful resource on how to *kasher* one's home for Passover. You can access those videos on youtube [here](#).

See notes about *Keilim Mikvah* (to *kasher* cookware) below.

Do I have to clean my car?

Yes, one should clean any space in which there may be *chametz*. Once you remove all *chametz* from your vehicles, whatever remains will be nullified when you recite the [nullification formulation](#).

I have food in my office. Can I sell that *chametz* with the *chametz* in my house?

Yes. Write the exact address of your office space and its precise location in addition to your home when you fill out the form for selling your *chametz*.

What kind of programs are Beth El offering before Pesach?

Please join us for our Shabbat Scholar in Residence next weekend, April 12th-13th with Dr. Masua Sagiv. You can register for the Friday dinner [here](#).

Keilim Mikvah:

Will the *Keilim Mikvah* remain open erev Pesach?

Taking one's dishes to the *mikvah* before Passover only applies to personally crafted dishes and utensils purchased directly from a seller known or suspected of idolatrous practices. In our day, dishes do not require *mikvah* immersion. See the CJS teshuvah on *Tevilat Keilim* [here](#).

Passover Seders

May I begin Passover early?

Yes, one may begin Passover, like any Yom Tov or Shabbat, early (before the official time for candle lighting). For a comprehensive analysis of starting the seder early, with its many complications and considerations, please consult Rabbi Joshua Heller's teshuva [here](#).

Seder Guests:

How can I have a seder if I live alone or if I am unable to join others for a seder?

We understand that being alone for *Sedarim* is challenging to contemplate. You might enjoy the opportunity to pull out multiple *Haggadot* and engage in a comparison of different versions. Or [make your own Haggadah](#) to enhance your experience and add variety. If you are up for it, you could send questions about the seder to different people in your life in advance of Pesach and have them mail or email you their answers for you to read at

your seder. For an additional resource about spending Passover alone please see [this guide](#). If you do not have a seder to attend and would like to be matched with another Beth El member, please send Rabbi Sitkin an email at zsitkin@bethelnr.org. While we cannot guarantee a match for you, we will do our best to find you a seder to join. Please let Rabbi Sitkin know if you would like us to help find you a seder by March 26th if possible.

Seder Leading Resources:

- [This article](#) has some overarching guiding points to facilitating a seder

What do I need to have in my house to do a seder?

Minimum requirements: Wine/grape juice, *maror* (horseradish or other bitter herbs), *karpas* (potato, parsley, or some other green/root vegetable), shank bone, *matzah*, *charoset*, saltwater, *Haggadah* (but a simple retelling of the story of our journey from shame to praise is sufficient)

There is a disagreement of two sages that serve as the basis of the *Maggid* (ritual retelling of the Exodus narrative) section of the seder. According to Shmuel we begin with, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord our God brought us out” and the story ends with our redemption from Egypt. According to Rav we begin with “our ancestors were idolaters and they made their way to Egypt where we became enslaved” and we end with the ritual of the *bikkurim* (the first fruits) that we brought to the Temple when we entered the land of Israel. Out of respect for both sages, we tell both stories.

Is there a place I can borrow *Haggadot*?

There are several online *Haggadot* that are available for printing free of charge, which can be found using a Google search. Additionally,

www.Haggadot.com is one website that allows you to download a pre-made *Haggadah* or create your own.

After Pesach:

When will my *chametz* be bought back by the community?

Approximately 1 hour after Yom Tov ends. There will be no X post this year.

Rabbi Schuck's Notes to the RA Passover Guide:

Baking Pans: In the section on *Kashering* of Kitchen Appliances and Utensils, the Guide notes that metal baking pans and sheets require *libbun* at very high temperatures which may warp the vessel. In my experience, metal baking pans can rarely be cleaned well enough to *kasher* them for *Pesach*. I do not recommend *kashering* baking pans and sheets for *Pesach*.

Electric Ranges: The Guide says that "Smooth, glass top electric ranges require *kashering* by *libbun* and *irui* (pouring boiling water over the surface of the range top)," and then offers instructions on how to do this. In my experience, the *irui* process they recommend can be harmful to glass topped ranges. I suggest/cleaning the stovetop thoroughly using special products intended for use on these ranges and then heat as hot as possible for 40 minutes.

Glass Bakeware: The Guide says that "Issues regarding glass bakeware are complex." I do not recommend *kashering* glass (Pyrex, etc.) bakeware or cookware for *Pesach*.

Dishwasher: In the past, most authorities said that porcelain or plastic lined dishwashers could not be *kashered*. Recently, several authorities including the OU have said that these appliances can be *kashered*. Those who chose to *kasher* their metal, porcelain or plastic-lined dishwashers using the method suggested in the Guide (or the slightly different procedures suggested in other places,) can rely on the authorities who permit this. Those who chose not to *kasher* their dishwashers also have authorities on which they can rely.

Refrigerators: Refrigerators and freezers should be defrosted, cleaned and scoured. Include all walls, shelves and baskets. Some people cover shelves with shelf paper or foil during *Pesach*, and though this custom often “feels significant,” it is unnecessary if you thoroughly clean it with detergent. If there are places where food can get stuck, then you should cover that area. (If you do use foil to cover all of your shelves, make sure to allow for good air circulation by punching holes in the paper or foil. If you don’t, the thermostat will be inaccurate and the motor may run constantly and kill the refrigerator).

Dishtowels and tablecloths can be *kashered* by washing with soap.

Quinoa: Regarding Quinoa, the Guide says: Where a specially marked kosher for Passover quinoa “is not available, purchase Bolivian or Peruvian quinoa, marked “gluten free” before *Pesach*. Please make certain that quinoa is the sole ingredient in the final packaging.”

The situation is a bit more complex than this. For starters, according to the FDA website, not all things labeled gluten free are without oats. The website states, "Do oats have to be certified as gluten-free to be labeled gluten-free?"

No. However, as with any other non-gluten-containing grain, oats that are labeled gluten-free must contain less than 20 ppm gluten." In other words, something can be labeled gluten free but have oats in them, and if cooked in water on Passover, that would be *chametz*.

In addition to this, I did some research in calling some companies that sell quinoa and learned that some of the quinoa is stored with grains covering the quinoa as a way to keep the quinoa dry after it is shipped here in the US from Bolivia. In such a case, depending on the quantity, I am not certain that it would be *batel b’sheesheem* (annulled if 1/60 or less) if bought before Passover.

My conclusion is that unless the package of quinoa is marked Kosher for Passover (and there is quinoa marked KP), I would not use it during Passover.