

KASHERING THE KITCHEN

It is customary (and easiest) to remove the utensils and dishes that are used during the year, replacing them with either new utensils or utensils used year to year only for Pesah. This is clearly not possible for major appliances and may not even be possible for dishes and utensils.

There is a process for *kashering* many, but not all, kitchen items thus making them kosher for Pesah:

The general principle used in *kashering* is that the way the utensil absorbs food is the way it can be purged of that food, **כבולעו כך פולטו** (*Ke-volo kach pol'to*). This principle operates on the basis of the quality or intensity of how the items absorb food. Things used for cold food can be *kashered* by rinsing since no substance has been absorbed by the dish or glass. Items used on a stove absorb the food and thus need a stronger level of action namely expelling the food into boiling water, called **הגעלה** (*bag'alab*). The most intense form of usage is directly on a fire or in an oven and these utensils require the most intense method of *kashering*, namely **ליבון** (*libbun*), which burns away absorbed food.

Kashering Specific Appliances and Utensils

METALS

To *kasher* **pots, silverware, and utensils wholly of metal not used for baking**, thoroughly clean the item with soap and water, then, following a strict 24 hour waiting period during which they are not used, immerse the item in water that is at a rolling boil (**הגעלה** – *bag'alab*). For pots and pans, clean handles thoroughly. If the handle can be removed, do so for an even more thorough cleaning. To effect **הגעלה** (*bag'alab*), the item must be completely exposed to the boiling water. Pots and pans are either immersed in a larger pot of boiling water (may be done one section at a time) or filled with water brought to a rolling boil and then a heated stone is dropped into the pot such that the boiling water overflows to cover the sides of the pot. A safer alternative might be let the water boil over the sides of the pot. In the case of silverware every part of each piece must be exposed to the water at a rolling boil. Following this **הגעלה** (*bag'alab*) process, each utensil is rinsed in cold water.

Metal bakeware used in a fire or in an oven must first be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned and then must be subjected to direct fire or an oven at its maximum setting. Thus using a blow torch or putting it in an oven during self-cleaning are two ways to accomplish this purging (**ליבון** – *libbun*). This is a complicated and a potentially dangerous procedure and may result in discoloration or warping of the metal being purged. Exercise caution when performing **ליבון** (*libbun*). Metal baking pans and sheets require **ליבון** (*libbun*) at very high temperatures which may warp the vessel. This may result in a reluctance to submit the vessel to the required temperature.⁴

A **metal kitchen sink** can be *kashered* by thoroughly cleaning and scrubbing the sink (especially the garbage catch), letting 24 hours pass during which only cold water is used, and then carefully pouring boiling water

over all the surfaces of the sink starting with the bottom first and working up towards the top including the lip.⁵ A porcelain sink cannot be *kashered*, but should be thoroughly cleaned, then Pesah dish basins and dish racks must be used, one each for dairy and meat.

GLASS

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 *bag'alah*).⁶

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.⁷

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.⁸

PLASTICS

Heavy duty plastics including dishes, cutlery or serving items, providing they can withstand very hot water and do not permanently stain, may be *kashered* by הגעלה (*bag'alah*). If there is some doubt as to whether particular items can be *kashered*, consult your rabbi. ⁹

CERAMIC DISHES

Ceramic dishes (earthenware, stoneware, china, pottery, etc) cannot be *kashered*. However fine china that was put away clean and that has not been used for over one Jewish calendar year may be used after thorough detergent and hot water washing. The china is then considered *pareve* and may be designated for meat or dairy use.

COOKING APPLIANCES

For **ovens and ranges**, every part that comes in contact with food must be thoroughly cleaned. This includes the walls and the top and bottom of the oven. Then the oven or range should be heated as hot as possible. The oven should be heated at maximum heat for an hour; the range top until the elements turn red and glow. Then parts of the range top around the elements that can be covered should be covered, (usually with aluminum foil). After a general and careful cleaning, self cleaning ovens are put through the full cleaning cycle while empty.¹⁰ Following this process, the oven should be again cleaned to remove any ash. If the oven was very dirty to start, two cycles may be needed to assure a thorough cleaning.

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, **and then leave it untouched for 24 hours**. Then turn the coils on maximum heat until they are red hot. Shut off the elements and then carefully pour boiling water on the surface area over and around the burners. The range top may now be used for cooking.

Induction stovetops only generate heat when a pot with the appropriate composition of metals is placed on the surface, therefore the method traditionally used for kashering stovetops needs to be slightly adjusted.

The tempered glass surface of an induction stovetop should be kashered in four steps:

1. Thoroughly clean the surface. Not just with a damp sponge, but with a cleaning agent designed specifically for the purpose of cleaning tempered glass stovetops. If necessary, manufacturer's instructions for removing food stuck to the surface by using a razor blade should be followed.
2. There are two types of induction stovetops:
 - a. **For induction stovetops with discrete burner areas:** Completely clean hameitz pots that work on your induction stovetop and that match as closely as possible the maximum radius of each burner area. Leave the clean pots and the clean induction stovetop untouched for 24 hours. When the 24 hours have elapsed, partially* fill the prepared pots with water and place on their size-matching burners. Turn up the temperature to the maximum for each burner until the water in each pot is vigorously boiling. This will generate enough heat to kasher each burner area. Turn off each burner as it reaches this maximum temperature.
 - b. **For induction stovetops in which the entire surface is available as a burner surface:** Completely clean one or more metal square or rectangular baking pans made of a metal that works on your induction stovetop. Leave the clean pans and the clean stovetop untouched for 24 hours. When the 24 hours have elapsed, partially fill the baking pan/s with water. Think about the surface of your stovetop like a grid. Place your prepared pan/s starting at one corner of your induction stovetop surface and turn up the temperature to the maximum until the water in each pan is vigorously boiling. This will generate enough heat to kasher the area under the pan. Turn off the stovetop. Wait for the pan/s to cool. Shift the pan/s to the next contiguous area of the grid of your stovetop and repeat the heating-to-boiling process as many times as necessary until you have kashered the entire area of the stovetop.
3. When cool, thoroughly douse the entire surface with boiling water and then dry with a clean cloth.

*Partially filling the pots with water will protect the pots from burning when placed on the induction burners. If it is your desire to kasher these pots for Pesah, simply fill them to the brim, proceed to bring the pots to a boil as described above and allow the boiling water to spill over the brim of the pots. The pots and the stovetop burners are now all simultaneously koshered, however this method does not kasher baking pans.

Microwave ovens that have no convection option should be thoroughly cleaned. Then an 8 ounce cup of water is placed inside and the oven is turned on until the water almost disappears (at least 6 of the 8 ounces is gone). The cup should be moved midway through the process so that the area under the cup is exposed to the steam. Heating to complete dryness may damage the oven. A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be *kashered*.

Convection ovens are *kashered* like regular ovens. Make sure that during the cleaning phase you clean thoroughly around the fan.

ADDITIONAL KITCHEN APPLIANCES

A **dishwasher** needs to be cleaned as thoroughly as possible including the inside area around the drainage and filters. After 24 hours of not being used the dishwasher is again run empty (with racks in), with soap in the dispenser and in the main dishwasher, and set on the highest heat for the purpose of *kashering*. If the sides of the dishwasher are made of enamel or porcelain, the dishwasher cannot be *kashered* for Pesah.¹¹

Other electrical appliances can be *kashered* if the parts that come in contact with **חמץ** (*hameitz*) are metal and are removable, in which case they may be *kashered* like all other metal cooking utensils. If the parts are not removable, the appliances cannot be *kashered*. We recommend whenever possible that small appliances be used that are strictly for Pesah, thus avoiding the difficulty of *kashering* these appliances.

WORK SURFACES

Tables, closets, and counters should be thoroughly cleaned and covered for Pesah. The coverings can be contact paper, regular paper, foil or cloth that does not contain **חמץ** (*hameitz*) (e.g. been starched with *hameitz* starch). Note that the covering material should be made of material that is not easily torn.

Many **counter top surfaces** can be *kashered* simply by a thorough cleaning, a 24 hour wait and **ערוי** (*iruy* – pouring boiling water over them). To have **ערוי** (*iruy*) be effective for *kashering*, the surface must have no hairline cracks, nicks or scratches that can be seen with the naked eye.

- Plastic laminates, limestone, soapstone, granite, marble, glass, Corian, Staron, Ceasarstone, Swanstone, Surell and Avonite surfaces can be *kashered* by **ערוי** (*iruy*).
- Wood without scratches is also *kashered* by **ערוי** (*iruy*).
- Ceramic, cement or porcelain counter tops cannot be *kashered* by **ערוי** (*iruy*).

The potential effectiveness of **ערוי** (*iruy*) depends on the material of which the counter was made. A full list of counter materials that can be *kashered* (according to their decisors) may be found on the website of the Chicago Rabbinical Council (CRC).¹² Refrigerators and freezers should be thoroughly cleaned with detergent. If there are places where food can be stuck (e.g. cracks or difficult corners to reach), these areas should be covered.