

The Rabbinical Assembly

# תשפ"ו Pesah Guide

The Committee on Jewish Law & Standards (CJLS) Kashrut Subcommittee<sup>1</sup>

Each year, we reenact the Exodus through story, discussion, and song at the *Seder* table, and we restrict our diet to remind ourselves of the slavery of Egypt and the need to redeem ourselves and others again and again. This Guide, prepared by the CJLS Kashrut Subcommittee and approved by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, explains in detail the laws and customs regarding the dietary restrictions of Passover, the rules that remind us each time we eat of Passover's messages for us: namely, that our freedom is holy, woven from courage, defiance against oppression, and the sacred traces of divine guidance pointing us toward redemption.

The commandments of Passover are constructed around six primary biblical prohibitions and obligations—expanded upon by our Sages.

## ***Mitzvot Aseh – To do / obligations:***

- 1) To remove leaven from our homes before Passover begins. (Exod. 12:15)<sup>2</sup>
- 2) To eat Matzah on the first night of Passover. (Exod. 12:18)
- 3) To tell the story of the Exodus on the first night of Passover. (Exod. 13:8)<sup>3</sup>

## ***Mitzvot Lo Ta'aseh – To not do / prohibitions:***

- 1) To not eat *ḥameitz* throughout Passover (Exod. 13:3; 12:20, Deut. 16:3)
- 2) To not see *ḥameitz* in one's possession (Exod. 13:7)

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction adapted from the original by Rabbi Elliot N. Dorff, Chair Emeritus, CJLS. *This Pesah Guide is newly revised & updated from the previously approved version by the CJLS on January 10, 2012. This version was approved by the CJLS on January 24, 2026 by a vote of 20-0-0. Voting in favor: Rabbis Aaron Alexander, Pamela Barmash, Emily Barton, Chaya Bender, Suzanne Brody, Nate Crane, Aviva Fellman, David J. Fine, Amy Levin, Daniel Nevins, Matthew S. Nover, Micah Peltz, Joel Pitkowsky, Avram Israel Reisner, Karen Reiss Medwed, Rachel Safman, Robert Scheinberg, Miriam T. Spitzer, Stewart Vogel, and Raysh Weiss. Voting against: None. Abstaining: None.*

It was prepared by the current Kashrut subcommittee of the CJLS, chaired by Rabbi Aaron Alexander (Rabbis Chaya Bender, Suzanne Brody, Amy Levin, Matthew Nover, Avram Reisner, and Pamela Barmash). We give special thanks to Dr. Joe Regenstein and our newly formed panel of experts in food science for lending expertise on matters of food production to our discussions.

<sup>2</sup> Directions for the disposal of *ḥameitz* can be found at the beginning of nearly every Haggadah. You can also find instructions for pre-cleaning, *bedikat ḥameitz* (checking for leaven), and *bittul ḥameitz* (disposal), here: <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/jewish-law/holidays/pesah/b-dikat-hameitz.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> This is the source for telling the story of the Exodus during the Passover *seder*, held on the first two nights outside of Israel and the first night in Israel.

- 3) To not find *ḥameitz* in one's possession (Exod. 12:19)<sup>4</sup>
- 4) To not benefit from *ḥameitz* (Exod. 13:3, b. *Pesachim* 21b)

In this guide, we will provide the basic information and how-to steps necessary for one to observe the many and complicated food-related laws of Passover. With significant changes in the nature and manufacture of kitchen products and foodstuffs, new policies are required to maintain a kosher for *Pesach* kitchen. There are also many significant differences of opinion amongst rabbis regarding the laws of *Pesach*. We hope it will enable Jews to understand what they may eat on Passover and how to prepare their kitchens for the holiday in ways that are clear and understandable.

*We do not intend this Guide to replace your rabbi's guidance on these matters; on the contrary, any question you have about what is written here or what is missing, you should address to your rabbi.*

At the very beginning of *Mishnah Pesachim* (1:1-2), our Sages warn against the expectation of perfection on Passover—we can't possibly search for *ḥameitz* in every place it might end up—*ein l'davar sof, to this there'd be no end*. So, too, this Guide. We cannot present all of the various approaches, nor can we include rulings on every brand or variation of product.<sup>5</sup> This guide is intended to help families maintain a kosher for *Pesach* home in accordance with the basic principles of Conservative/Masorti Judaism and its understanding of Jewish Law.

One important comment—because Passover involves more dietary strictures than the rest of the year, many Jews become uniquely intense about the rules of the holiday. We honor the ways in which the Jewish community takes its obligations and prohibitions seriously. And, we should be careful not to use these rules to assert our superior piety over others, and observance of Passover should not come at the expense of the values of honoring our parents and treating everyone with respect. In addition, our tradition understands that we observe in the real world. Someone who lives in a neighborhood with a kosher supermarket may observe stringencies that are not possible for someone living in an isolated community, sharing a kitchen with non-observant roommates, or serving in the military. To that end, let's all remember to take our commitment to *derekh eretz*, basic decency, as seriously as we take the specific ritual obligations and prohibitions of this sacred holiday.

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<sup>4</sup> For both not seeing/encountering and/or not finding *ḥameitz* during Passover, the rabbis determined that for “possession” to occur, a minimum amount of at least a *kezayit* [a piece about the size of an olive] must be present.

<sup>5</sup> For those interested, the OU & CRC provides a detailed list of food products by brand that they approve, or reject, based on their own supervision and understanding of Passover *kashrut*. Their determinations may be different from what we ourselves might rule, but their lists can still be helpful for those looking for quick answers or product lists by brand. Those lists are found here: [OU 2025 PassoverGuide.pdf](https://ou.org/2025-PassoverGuide.pdf) – <https://crcbethdin.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/cRc-Pesach-Guiprohibitionsde-2025.pdf>

## Preparing the Home/Cleaning before Passover

Before fulfilling the obligation of *bedikat ḥameitz* (see footnote 2), and to avoid the prohibitions of not owning/seeing/finding *ḥameitz* during *Pesah*, clean and remove *ḥameitz* from areas within our domains in which it might likely be found. Special attention ought to be given to areas in which dining, cooking, serving, and food storage occur. So, an office or vehicle in which one frequently eats does require attention, while a clothing closet or bathroom probably does not. Nor is one responsible for clearing *ḥameitz* from public spaces to which one has access or for which one has responsibility.

### *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, *ke-vol'o kakh pol'to*. This principle operates on the basis of the quality or intensity of how the items absorb food.

- Things used solely for cold food can be *kashered* by rinsing since no substance has been absorbed by the dish or glass.
- Items & utensils used with hot food, or cooked on a stove with a liquid medium, need a stronger level of action, namely, expelling the traces of food into boiling water, called *bag'alah*, or pouring boiling water over them, termed *iruy*.
- The most intense form of purging is *libbun gamur* (*heavy burning*)—directly on a fire or in an oven at its self-cleaning mode, which burns away absorbed food.
- There is also a less intense form of using fire, *libbun kal* (*light burning—placing items in an oven at 500 degrees or more for 45-60 minutes*), which can be used as a substitute for *bag'alah*.

## ***Kashering Specific Appliances and Utensils***

### **Metals**

To *kasher* **pots, silverware, and cooking 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 (*hag'alab*). For pots and pans, clean handles thoroughly. If the handle can be removed, do so for an even more thorough cleaning. To effect *hag'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 to 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 boiling water. This can be done through *hag'alab* (immersion) or *iruy* (pouring).<sup>6</sup> Following this *kashering* process, the custom is to rinse each utensil in cold water.

**Frying pans**—all stainless steel or Teflon-coated—should be treated like other cooking pots when *kashering* for Passover. Wash extremely well, let sit for 24 hours, and then perform *hag'alab* or *libbun kal*.

**Metal bakeware used in a fire or in an oven** must first be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned and then must be subjected to either direct fire (with a blow torch) or an oven on self-cleaning mode, both variations of *libbun gamur*.<sup>7</sup> This is a complicated and a potentially dangerous procedure and may result in discoloration or warping of the metal being purged. This may result in a reluctance to submit the vessel to the required temperature.<sup>8</sup> Exercise caution when performing any kind of *libbun*.

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<sup>6</sup> One useful technique: *After one kashers* the sink (see below), place silverware/items in the sink (all at once, spread out, not touching one another) and bring your hot-water kettle to a boil. Then pour over them.

<sup>7</sup> Bakeware/Roasting Vessels absorb food directly into the pans with no liquid medium, and therefore require this high level of *kashering-libbun gamur*. Since there are differing opinions on whether or not the addition of greasers into baking count as “liquid medium”—which might require a less intense form of *kashering*—if one is unsure about which method to utilize for your cookware item, check with your local rabbi for the community custom’s method of *kashering* different baking dishes. (See *Hazon Ovadia*, p. 134)

<sup>8</sup> Of course there is nothing inherently wrong with using a warped pan on *Pesah*. The fear is that the possibility of ruining the pan will cause the owner not to subject the pan to the appropriate heat to effect *kashering*. We thus also recommend simply purchasing some new pans specifically for *Pesah*.

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.<sup>9</sup>

According to most authorities, **porcelain sinks** cannot be *kashered*, but should be thoroughly cleaned. Then, dedicated Passover dish basins and dish racks must be used, one each for dairy and meat. For those for whom this isn't possible or practical, a few rabbinic authorities rule that sinks made of porous materials like porcelain can be *kashered* by *iruy*, preferably three separate times, and that is sufficient.<sup>10</sup>

## Glass

**Drinking glasses** or glass dishes used only for cold foods are *kashered* by a simple rinsing. Some follow the custom of soaking them for 72 hours as for glass dishes.

**Glass dishes** used for eating and serving hot foods are treated differently in different communities. A widely accepted practice within our communities is to treat glassware as non-porous and therefore requires them to undergo simply washing/rinsing the clean dishes. Some require the additional practice of soaking them for 72 hours, changing water every 24 hours. Some rule that glass dishes used for eating and serving hot dishes are to be treated like any metal dish, i.e., *kashering* is effected by cleaning and immersing in boiling water (*bag'alab*).<sup>11</sup> Others rule glassware is not *kasherable* and should be put away for the holiday.

**Glass cookware** is treated like a metal pot for *kashering* (see paragraph on metal, above). The issues regarding glass bakeware are more complex. Some authorities allow it to be *kashered* and others do not. In 1990, The CJLS passed a *teshuvah* on glass bakeware written by Rabbi Kassel Abelson that permits *kashering* of such bakeware.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The sink may be used during the 24 hour waiting period provided that no hot water is used during that time. This alternative is doable **only** if care is taken that any water used is not hot enough to cause our hand to feel pain (*yad soledet bo*).

<sup>10</sup> See *Hazon Ovadia* (R' Ovadia Yosef), *Pesah*, p. 151.

<sup>11</sup> See *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim*, 451:25-26, and the *Mishnah Berurah*, note #156 for all of these positions. Though each of these positions clearly have historical basis and legal weight, most in our communities hold by the *Mehaber's* position, namely, glass isn't porous and requires no *kashering*, just washing / rinsing.

<sup>12</sup> [The teshuvah is available](#) on the Rabbinical Assembly website.

## Plastics

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

## Ceramic Dishes

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

## Cooking Appliances

For **ovens and ranges**, every part that might come in contact with food or splatter must be thoroughly cleaned.<sup>13</sup> This includes the walls and the top and bottom of the oven. After waiting 24 hours an oven or range should be heated as hot as possible. An oven should be heated at maximum heat for an hour; a range top should be turned on high for at least 15 minutes.<sup>14</sup> Then parts of the range top around the elements can be *kashered* with *iruy* (pouring boiling water over the area).<sup>15</sup>

After a general and careful cleaning, self-cleaning ovens are put through the full cleaning cycle while empty.<sup>16</sup> 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 *libbun* and *iruy* – pouring boiling water over the surface of the range top. First, clean the top thoroughly, **and then leave it unused for 24 hours**. Then turn the coils on maximum heat until they are red hot (*libbun*). Shut off the elements and then carefully pour boiling water on the surface area over and around the burners (*bag'alab*). The range top may now be used for cooking. One can also use a

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<sup>13</sup> For best results regarding cleaning, apply industrial soap, then add heat, then wipe/wash/scrub down.

<sup>14</sup> One may also place the washed stovetop grates (if removable & non-electric) inside the oven upon the racks and be *kashered* together with the oven.

<sup>15</sup> If for some reason *iruy* isn't possible, one can cover the areas around the range tops with aluminum foil, though it is important to check with the manufacturer before doing so.

<sup>16</sup> The racks, however, are left in the oven during the full cleaning cycle.

steam cleaner (that reaches a boiling temperature) to *kasher* a glass stovetop, going over the surface twice, carefully.

**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 the following manner:

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.<sup>17</sup>
  - 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

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<sup>17</sup> Alternatively, some recommend taking an empty pot and wetting the outside bottom of it, then heating until the water evaporates. Induction stovetops can also be *kashered* with a steam-cleaner, as per above.

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 *kashered*; 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. **Air Fryers**, if possible to fully clean, are also treated like ovens.

## 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**.<sup>18</sup>

**Other electrical appliances** can be *kashered* if the parts that come in contact with *ḥameitz* 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, like toaster ovens, be used strictly for *Pesah*, thus avoiding the difficulty of *kashering* these appliances.

**Coffee makers** that are used year-round with only unflavored coffee (regular or decaf) do not need to be *kashered*. Coffee makers that are used with flavored coffee, or anything else one

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<sup>18</sup> For more information about *kashering* dishwashers please see: "[On the Kashrut of Dishwashers](#)" by Rabbi Loel M. Weiss.



might brew in it, need to be *kashered*. This applies for drip coffee machines or Keurig-style coffee brewers (including Nespresso). Clean all parts well and let sit for 24 hours. Then remove the filter holder and perform either *hag'alah* or *iruy*. Then use the machine to brew plain coffee (or just run hot water through). A french press can be *kashered* by washing the glass, and doing *hag'alah* or *iruy* on the metal elements. An Aeropress can be *kashered* via *hag'alah* or *iruy*.

**Refrigerators and freezers** should be thoroughly cleaned but require no *kashering*.

**Dining room/kitchen tables** (surfaces primarily used for eating) should also be cleaned well, but require no *kashering*.<sup>19</sup> Some have the custom of using designated Passover tablecloths throughout the holiday.

## Work Surfaces

Many **countertop surfaces** can be *kashered* simply by a thorough cleaning, a 24-hour wait and *iruy*—pouring boiling water over them. The potential effectiveness of *iruy* depends on the material of which the counter was made.

**Tables and counters primarily used for cooking/baking**<sup>20</sup> that cannot be *kashered* should be thoroughly cleaned and covered for *Pesah*. While cleaning to rid the surface of *ḥameitz* is of primary importance, the covering serves as both an extra barrier against *ḥameitz* and a reminder to all that only items that are kosher for Passover should be placed here. The coverings can be contact paper, regular paper, foil or cloth that does not contain *ḥameitz* (e.g. been starched with *ḥameitz* starch).<sup>21</sup>

- Plastic laminates, limestone, soapstone, granite, marble, glass, Corian, Staron, Ceasarstone, Swanstone, Surell and Avonite surfaces can be *kashered* by *iruy*.
- Wood is also *kashered* by *iruy*.
- Ceramic, cement or porcelain counter tops cannot be *kashered* by *iruy*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Dining tables extensions and/or moving parts should be removed for cleaning, paying special attention to areas in which *ḥameitz* might be trapped.

<sup>20</sup> This would include surfaces on which doughs are formed, kneaded, and rolled out.

<sup>21</sup> Keep in mind that pouring hot water on countertops may inadvertently cause damage to the floor when the water runs off the counter, so putting towels down beforehand is an option. The alternative is simply to clean the counters and cover them. As sensitive Jews, however, we must be aware of the mitzvah of *bal tashbit* – not wasting resources) such that a covering that is thrown away after *Pesah* is wasteful. A plastic covering that is affixed to the counter, removed after *Pesah*, cleaned and stored for the future use would be one way to be sensitive to this mitzvah.

<sup>22</sup> For various reasons, it is not always possible to cover all countertop areas well. If one has the above-mentioned countertops upon which hot food is rarely (or never) placed, these can be cleaned well with soap and then left to sit for 24

## Foods

The Torah prohibits the ownership of *ḥameitz* (flour, food or drink made from the prohibited species of leavened grain: wheat, oats, barley, rye or spelt) during *Pesah*.<sup>23</sup> Ideally we burn or remove all *ḥameitz* from our premises. In some cases, however, this would cause prohibitive financial loss. Therefore, we may arrange for the sale of the *ḥameitz* to a non-Jew and its repurchase after *Pesah*. One can also accomplish removing all *ḥameitz* by making donations to a local food pantry or non-profit.

***Mekhirat ḥameitz* – the sale of *ḥameitz*** is accomplished by appointing an agent, usually one's rabbi to handle the sale. This must be considered a valid and legal transfer of ownership and thus the items sold must be separated and stored away from all other foods and supplies. This means that *ḥameitz* foods which have been sold as part of the selling of one's *ḥameitz* should be separated, covered or locked away to prevent accidental use. At the end of the holiday, the agent arranges to repurchase the *ḥameitz* on behalf of the owner, since the *ḥameitz* at that time is again permitted. One must wait until one is sure the repurchase has been done. If ownership of the *ḥameitz* was not transferred before the holiday, the use of any such *ḥameitz* remains prohibited after the holiday (*ḥameitz she-avar alav ha-Pesah*) and any such products should be given away to a non-Jewish food pantry. Consult your local rabbi/synagogue to arrange for the selling of your *ḥameitz*.

## Prohibited Foods

Since the Torah prohibits the eating of *ḥameitz* during *Pesah*, and since many common foods contain some *ḥameitz*, guidance is necessary when shopping and preparing for *Pesah*. Foods that are made with **wheat, barley, oats, spelt** or **rye** (grains that can become *ḥameitz* or derivatives of these grains) must be certified kosher for *Pesah*. This includes foods produced from the above-mentioned grains like pasta, cakes, breads, crackers, grain-based alcohol and

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hours. For those who do use these surfaces for hot foods and/or bread/pasta baking, they should also be cleaned well, left untouched for 24 hours, and then *iruy* (pouring boiling water) can be performed 3 separate times, as per our instruction above regarding porcelain sinks.

<sup>23</sup> Technically one of the prohibited grains becomes *ḥameitz* when, during processing, it comes in contact with a leavening agent for more than 18 minutes. Thus, *matzah*, while made from wheat, is not *ḥameitz*, for in the processing no leavening agent comes in contact with it for more than the specified time before it is baked. *Matzah sh'murah* is made from wheat that has not come in contact with a leavening agent (this could include water) from the time it is harvested, not simply from the time it is processed. (The additional care taken to keep the wheat free from leavening agents from the farm is, in part, the reason for its higher price.)

more.<sup>24</sup> *It is also important to check that all matzah purchased for use on Passover is certified specifically as kosher for Passover.*

Generally, an item that is kosher all year round, that is made with no *ḥameitz*, and is processed on machines used only for that item and nothing else (such as unflavored pure coffee) may be used with no special *Pesah* supervision. Food ingredients and production techniques change regularly, though, and relying on the *kashrut* of a product for *Pesah* without a Passover *hekhsher* may sometimes change, and is often challenging to determine.<sup>25</sup>

### ***A Note on the Food Lists in This Guide***

*As you enter into the “prohibited/permitted” foods section of this guide, a few caveats to keep in mind. The Torah’s prohibition on ḥameitz is in many cases more stringent than other prohibited foods, forbidding ḥameitz on Passover itself in even the smallest amount. Therefore, there is a long-standing custom among a wide variety of Passover-observant communities to shop even more carefully for Passover than other times of the year.*

*This guide functions more like a Legal Code than Responsa Literature. It will offer general guidelines for the purchase and/or preparation of food before and during the holiday. It is certainly not exhaustive, and cannot list every commercial possibility—there’s just too much variation in the industry to blanket permit or prohibit all food-types. And this can sometimes be confusing because two different brands of the same general product-type might receive different rulings. Or, a product in one processed form may contain ingredients that the same product doesn’t contain in a different processed form.*

*As noted in the introduction, full-time Kashrut Supervision agencies that have mashgiḥim on the ground offer far more detailed brand lists, if also more strict than we ourselves might be in interpreting the stringencies of Passover halakhah (see footnote 5 for those links).*

*That being said, we as a CJLS Kashrut Subcommittee also function in the Responsa realm—if there are specific products for which you may have a question, we try to be as responsive as possible and permit or prohibit on a case-by-case basis. For those who would like further guidance, you may email: [rabbi.alexander@adasisrael.org](mailto:rabbi.alexander@adasisrael.org).*

<sup>24</sup> See below for how certified Gluten Free foods fit into this paradigm.

<sup>25</sup> A longer discussion of these issues is contained in the paper entitled, “[Supervision of Passover Food](#),” by Rabbi Paul Plotkin, an official position of the CJLS.

**A note on *Kitniyot*:** In the fall of 2015, the CJLS approved two responsa which permit the consumption of *kitniyot*<sup>26</sup> for Ashkenazim.<sup>27</sup> Some individuals, communities, and institutions may utilize this new ruling, while others will choose not to do so. Both decisions are equally legitimate and *derekh erez* should be the guiding value with which we hold our communal and interpersonal conversations around this topic. We encourage all decision-making parties to be transparent in their policies and menus, as well as sensitive to the spiritual and dietary needs of others.<sup>28</sup>

**A note on Gluten-Free:** One way to potentially find acceptable foods without a specific Kosher for Passover designation during **pre-Passover** shopping is to prefer certified Gluten Free (**and oat-free—check labels**) products. In an effort to definitively alert consumers to the presence of wheat gluten in packaged foods, the FDA mandates that any product including the words “gluten-free,” “no gluten,” “free of gluten,” or “without gluten” must contain less than

<sup>26</sup> beans, corn, millet, peas, rice, soy, and some other plant based foods like mustard, buckwheat and sesame seeds

<sup>27</sup> To fully understand their positions, which differ in their argumentation, please see:

David Golinkin, "[Rice, beans and kitniyot on Pesah - are they really forbidden?](#)" OH 453:1.2015a

Amy Levin and Avram Israel Reisner, "[A Teshuvah Permitting Ashkenazim to Eat Kitniyot on Pesah](#)" OH 453:1.2015b

<sup>28</sup> For those who do avail themselves of this ruling, it is important to note the following **specific** guidance, **cited in the p'sak halakhah of the responsum by Rabbis Amy Levin and Avram Reisner:**

- 1) Fresh corn on the cob and fresh beans (like lima beans in their pods) may be purchased before and during *Pesah*, that is, treated like any other fresh vegetable.
- 2) Dried *kitniyot* (legumes, rice and corn) can be purchased bagged or in boxes and then sifted or sorted before *Pesah*. These should ideally not be purchased in bulk from bins because of the concern that the bin might previously have been used for *hameitz*, and a few grains of *hameitz* might be mixed in. In any case, one should inspect these before *Pesah* and discard any pieces of *hameitz*. If one did not inspect the rice or dried beans before *Pesah*, one should remove pieces of *hameitz* found in the package on *Pesah*, discarding those, and the *kitniyot* themselves remain permissible.
- 3) *Kitniyot* in cans may only be purchased with *Pesah* certification since the canning process has certain related *hameitz* concerns, and may be purchased on *Pesah*.
- 4) Frozen raw *kitniyot* (corn, edamame [soy beans], etc.): One may purchase bags of frozen non-*bekhsbered* *kitniyot* before *Pesah* provided that one can either absolutely determine that no shared equipment was used or one is careful to inspect the contents before *Pesah* and discard any pieces of *hameitz*. Even if one did not inspect the vegetables before *Pesah*, if one can remove pieces of (*hameitz*) found in the package on *Pesah*, the vegetables themselves are permissible.
- 5) Processed *kitniyot* foods, including many products which include tofu, although containing no listed *hameitz*, continue to require *Pesah* certification due to the possibility of admixtures of *hameitz* during production. See below for more specific notes, both on the purchase of gluten free items in general, as well as plain (*kitniyot*-based) plain tofu.
- 6) Even those who continue to observe the Ashkenazic custom of eschewing *kitniyot* during *Pesah*: they may eat from *Pesah* dishes, utensils and cooking vessels that have come into contact with *kitniyot*, and they may consume *kitniyot* derivatives like oil that have a **KP *bekhsber***.

20 parts per million of glutinous wheat, spelt, barley, or rye. This eliminates the possibility of a gluten-free packaged food containing 4 of the 5 *ḥameitz*-derived grains in any quantity that would be relevant according to Jewish law. Furthermore, this eliminates concern over any shared equipment that may have imparted *ḥameitz*, since the amount of 20 parts per million is much more stringent than the halakhic principle of *batel b'shishim*, nullifying *ḥameitz* in trace amounts (1 part in 60, about 1.6% or less of the total volume). **Oats are the only *ḥameitz*-grain not necessarily absent in a gluten-free food, therefore, check carefully to ensure oats are not listed as an ingredient. Check for oats if you shop GF.**

## Food that Always Require Passover Certification

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all baked goods (including)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- farfel</li> <li>- <i>matzah</i></li> <li>- any product containing <i>matzah</i></li> <li>- <i>matzah</i> flour</li> <li>- <i>matzah</i> meal</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <i>Pesah</i> cakes</li> <li>- all frozen processed/cooked foods</li> <li>- candy</li> <li>- all cheeses with any type of flavoring or other additive</li> <li>- chocolate and flavored dairy products</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- decaf coffee</li> <li>- decaf tea</li> <li>- herbal tea, flavored tea</li> <li>- ice cream</li> <li>- liquor<sup>29</sup></li> <li>- flavored-infused cooking oils</li> <li>- soda &amp; flavored seltzers</li> <li>- vinegar</li> <li>- confectioners' sugar</li> <li>- refined brown sugar</li> <li>- dried dates<sup>30</sup></li> <li>- wine</li> </ul> |
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<sup>29</sup> Though, it's not impossible to find certain liquors, like a few 100% Agave Tequilas, which could be permitted on a case-by-case basis. The general prohibition stands, but specific questions about particular products/brands may be sent to our committee.

<sup>30</sup> Dried dates are commonly dusted with oat flour to prevent sticking.

## Food that Never Requires Passover Certification (KP *bekhsber*)<sup>31</sup>

- baking soda
- bicarbonate of soda, without additives
- fresh or frozen (unprocessed) kosher meat<sup>32</sup>
- pure black, green, or white teas
- all 100% leaf teas with no added ingredients
- single-ingredient, unsweetened instant iced tea
- unflavored tea bags
- unflavored regular coffee & decaf *that use swiss-water or supercritical CO2 methods*<sup>33</sup>
- eggs
- fresh fruits and vegetables (including pre-washed, bagged)
- unflavored extra-virgin olive oil
- whole or gutted fresh or frozen kosher fish
- whole nuts
- whole spices
- unflavored seltzer/sparkling water
- non-iodized salt
- plain water (tap, bottled, boxed, etc...)
- pure cocoa powder and pure cacao nibs

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<sup>31</sup> In other words, whether bought before or during Passover—no KP necessary.

<sup>32</sup> This includes unprocessed ground meats (no added fillers or spices), like kosher beef or turkey.

<sup>33</sup> This information is not difficult to obtain online. Brands that use these methods to decaffeinate their beans will offer that information.

## **Food that Does Not Require Passover Certification if Purchased before Passover**

During Passover, no amount of *ḥameitz* can be considered too small to “count”—any amount is forbidden. Before *Pesah*, *ḥameitz* can be nullified in an amount sixty times greater than itself. Since the *Pesah* time-enacted commandments haven’t yet kicked in, the stringency of forbidden “in any amount” can’t begin. This means that if you can be reasonably sure that:

- *Ḥameitz* isn’t used in a product and
- if it was, it would be less than a ratio of 1:60. (*batel b’shishim*),

you can buy the product before *Pesah* and eat it ON *Pesah*. The essential legal question is whether or not *ḥameitz* is subject to the laws of “returning and reawakening,” *ḥozer ve-neiyyur*. In other words, does the onset of *Pesah* reawaken the trace amounts of *ḥameitz* such that they would be subject to the laws of forbidden “in any amount”?

The overarching opinion is no, *ḥameitz* does not return and reawaken. As long as the mixture occurs before Passover, the *ḥameitz* is nullified.<sup>34</sup>

**Therefore, there are a number of foods that can be purchased before Passover that haven’t received special Passover supervision.**

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<sup>34</sup> See *Tur/Shulḥan Arukh, Orach Ḥayyim*, 447:4

## Here are some of those foods:<sup>35</sup>

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all pure fruit juices</li> <li>- filleted kosher fish</li> <li>- plain cheeses<sup>36</sup> (including plain cream cheese and cottage cheese)</li> <li>- frozen fruit</li> <li>- salt<sup>37</sup></li> <li>- plain butter, salted or unsalted</li> <li>- pure white sugar</li> <li>- unrefined/raw brown sugar</li> <li>- date sugar</li> <li>- quinoa (with nothing mixed in)<sup>38</sup></li> <li>- white milk, including plain cow's milk (not chocolate or flavored cow's milk) as well as non-flavored almond or cashew milk<sup>39</sup></li> <li>- plain yogurt (regular &amp; greek)<sup>40</sup></li> <li>- almond milk yogurt</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- some products sold by Equal Exchange Fair Trade Chocolate<sup>41</sup></li> <li>- canned tuna/salmon with just water or oil, salt, and pyrophosphates</li> <li>- 100% maple syrup</li> <li>- 100% agave</li> <li>- year-round, <i>bekhshered</i>, smoked salmon (nova) with only salt, sugar, sodium nitrate as additives</li> <li>- raisins &amp; other dried fruits (except dates)<sup>42</sup></li> <li>- pure honey</li> <li>- single ingredient cooking oils (vegetable, grape-seed, olive)</li> <li>- frozen vegetables<sup>43</sup></li> <li>- plain certified Gluten Free tofu (for <i>kitniyot</i> eaters)<sup>44</sup></li> </ul> |
|---|--|

<sup>35</sup> As stated above regarding Gluten Free—anytime one is buying products before the onset of Passover, if a Gluten Free certified brand is available, this is preferable due to the extra layer of attention manufacturers might give to avoiding mistakes.

<sup>36</sup> See the [1985 teshuvah by Rabbi Kassel Abelson](#) for more information.

<sup>37</sup> Iodized salt *may* be processed with kitniyot, but this wouldn't be any concern for those who consume kitniyot on Passover due to its small quantity being nullified.

<sup>38</sup> Some years ago it came to our attention that there is a possibility of grains being mixed with **quinoa** if it is not under *Pesah* supervision. After doing research, we have made our ruling based on the following understanding: Quinoa is gluten free and is not *kitniyot*. Quinoa is grown at 12,000 plus foot elevations in regions of Bolivia and Peru. It is grown in very arid conditions which will not support the growth of *hameitz* producing grains. Thus, there is no possibility of field contamination from such grains. In addition, the FDA has proposed a standard for any packaging marked "gluten-free" which will further guarantee that the product does not contain any gluten bearing grains. If, when the package is opened, you find that foreign grain is present, these foreign bodies should be discarded and the quinoa may be used on *Pesah*. The very safest option is to purchase quinoa with a *Pesah bekhsheer*, if it is available. Quinoa with spices or any other ingredients would also need KP certification.

<sup>39</sup> For those who consume *kitniyot*, plain rice & soy milks are also acceptable

<sup>40</sup> Reduced fat yogurts sometimes have added ingredients to improve texture/flavor after fat content is removed. Thus, as a general guideline, they require Passover supervision. Individual brands may be permitted—case by case upon request—on the basis of investigation by our *kashrut* subcommittee.

<sup>41</sup> [Equal Exchange Kosher-for-Passover Chocolate](#)

<sup>42</sup> Unsweetened dried fruits go through the least processing. Sweetened dried fruits will say what kind of sweetener is used so those who avoid *kitniyot* will know if corn syrup is used. When purchasing dried fruits before Passover, prefer a certified Gluten Free designated brand. Check labels for any possible oat contamination. Though unlikely with fruits other than dates, it is not impossible. Companies will offer this information upon request.

<sup>43</sup> **Frozen, uncooked vegetables** may be processed on shared equipment that uses *hameitz*. It should be checked for unlikely, but possible mistakes before cooking. For those who want to be extra careful, it is preferable, when possible, to purchase those with a Kosher for Passover certification.

<sup>44</sup> It is possible that some tofu brands, even with their GF designation, may have oats present during processing. We recommend that anybody who buys tofu before Passover without special Passover certification first check for a brand that also stringently avoids oats. This can be done by contacting the manufacturer of the brand you normally use and simply asking the question.



**Baby food** with a Passover *bekhshe* is sometimes available. Of course, home preparation of baby food, using *kasher l'Pesah* utensils and kitchen items is always possible. Pure vegetable prepared baby food that is *kasher* the year-round is acceptable for *Pesah*. For those who do not use *kitniyot*, the use of *kitniyot* for babies is still acceptable. Thus infant formula products that are *kasher* year round are acceptable for *Pesah*.

## Non-Food Items

Any detergents, cleaners, etc. which are not food stuff and which are not eaten may be used for *Pesah* with no *bekhshe*d supervision. This would include, but not be limited to:

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| - Aluminum products        | - Paper bags                            |
| - Ammonia                  | - Paper plates (with no starch coating) |
| - Baby oil                 | - Plastic cutlery                       |
| - Bleach                   | - Plastic wrap                          |
| - Candles                  | - Polish                                |
| - Contact paper            | - Powder and ointment                   |
| - Charcoal                 | - Sanitizers                            |
| - Coffee filters           | - Scouring pads                         |
| - Fabric softener          | - Stain remover                         |
| - Isopropyl alcohol        | - Soap/Shampoo                          |
| - Laundry & dish detergent | - Toothpaste                            |
| - Oven cleaner             | - Wax paper                             |

## Medications

**All medications** that are needed for illnesses and medical conditions that involve possible life-threatening situations are permitted.

Medications that do not involve life-threatening situations are divided into two categories. Those medications, in particular pills which are known remedies in the medical community and are made to be swallowed whole, are permitted, since they are to be considered like a "burnt item" that has lost its relationship to its possible non-kosher origin. Although swallowed, they are considered to be neither food nor (edible) *hameitz*.

However, medications for illnesses or medical conditions that do not involve a life-threatening situation (including vitamins and supplements) that have been formulated to be edible or

semi-pleasant to drink can be problematic. This includes soft gelcaps which often contain porcine gelatin and liquid medicines that often contain glycerin and other additives (which can be made from animals). **It is recommended that all such over-the-counter items be purchased with *hashgahah* (Kosher certification) before Pesah and state on their packaging that they contain no starch.** If this is not possible, then it is preferable to purchase unflavored liquids and hard capsules, also prior to *Pesah*. If none of these are available, consult your rabbi.

**All prescription or non-prescription drugs** in the form of topical medications, including creams, lotions, ointments, foams, gels, drops, patches and inhalants as well as non-chewable tablets and injections may be owned, used and consumed on Passover, even if they contain *hameitz* or *kitniyot* (for those who maintain this custom), since they are inedible. This covers most medicines used by adults. All medications for babies may be used.

## Pet Foods

The prohibition against *hameitz* during *Pesah* includes not owning, not seeing and not benefitting from *hameitz*. Therefore, we are not allowed to own or make use of *hameitz* during *Pesah*, even that which is exclusively for our animals' consumption.

The most appropriate way to take care of your pet during *Pesah* may be a function of what kind of animal/s you own. We provide three different systems for feeding your pet during *Pesah*, in descending order of desirability:

- 1) Identify and switch your pet to a *hameitz*-free diet before *Pesah* (and perhaps permanently). This is a particularly easy solution for **dogs and cats**. In recent years, there has been a trend toward eliminating gluten from dog and cat foods in recognition of the fact that their digestive tracts were not designed for these foods to begin with. There are many brands and grades of kibbles, frozen or refrigerated raw or fresh and canned dog and cat foods that use fillers like rice, lentils or beans instead of wheat. You do still need to read labels carefully, as oats may appear as a filler in some of these foods. **Snakes and spiders** eat prey, not plant matter, so they are *hameitz*-free year-round. For other animals (**turtles, gerbils and hamsters, ferrets, fish, frogs, lizards and birds**) there are *hameitz*-free options available, although they may be harder to track down and acquire. Consult with your veterinarian about quality *hameitz*-free foods that may be appropriate for your pet and also the best way to transition your pet to that new food. Please note that even Jews of Ashkenazic descent who prefer to observe the more

stringent custom of forgoing *kitniyot* (legumes and rice) during *Pesah*, are not prohibited from owning, seeing or benefitting from *kitniyot*. There is no need for a Kosher for Passover *hekhsher* [certification] on commercially prepared foods for your pets, but it is your responsibility to read the labels carefully before making your purchase.

- 2) If your larger pet has a condition that requires a special diet that must include *ḥameitz*, or if you have smaller and more transportable animals, you have the option of asking non-Jewish friends to take in your animal for the week of *Pesah*. Thus your pet does not have to adjust to a new diet and there is still no *ḥameitz* in your possession.
- 3) Some authorities allow for the pet to be sold along with the *ḥameitz* and, since the pet does not belong to the Jewish owner, the pet eats its normal diet. Note that the document of sale must include the pet as well as the *ḥameitz*. If you have these pet foods in your home, be careful to keep them away from the general kitchen area. Washing of pet utensils should be done out of the kitchen area (e.g. a bathroom sink). This is the least satisfactory option and is included in this Guide as a last resort measure: unlike the *ḥameitz* you are selling before *Pesah*, which is then stored out of sight and is inaccessible to you during *Pesah* (since it doesn't belong to you), this last option involves your actively seeing and handling that *ḥameitz* on, at least, a daily basis.

### חסל סידור פסח כהלכתו

This Passover Guide is complete, in accordance with its *halakhah*