

## Chapter 1: Buying food for Pesach

When buying food for Pesach, it's best to look for non-processed produce not from one of the five grains that are considered chametz. This would be automatically kosher for Passover. Ashkenazim should also avoid things in the legume family, as well as rice & corn. However, the vast majority of fresh fruits and vegetables are completely fine for Passover, Regular Kosher meat and chicken that are non-processed (not made into something else, like Chicken nuggets) are kosher for Passover even if not specifically labeled as such. Processed meats and chicken require Passover certification. Dairy products, such as cheese and yogurt, should generally have a kosher for Passover symbol. You should go to a kosher store, or your local grocery has kosher for Passover dairy products.

## Chapter 2: Your Pesach Kitchen

If you are planning on cleaning and kashering your kitchen and bringing out your kosher for Passover dishes, that is what you should do. Here are some helpful tips:

First off, always remember safety first. To kasher a gas stove, turn on the burners to the highest setting for about one to two hours each. Do only one burner at a time, so as to not overheat the kitchen. If it is an electric stove or a glass top, you only need a few minutes – just until it gets really hot. To kasher your oven, if it's self-clean that uses heat, just run a self-cleaning cycle for at least three hours. Unlike most things, which can't be used for 24 hours before they are kashered, a self-cleaning oven can be used. There are opinions that you can kasher a non-self-cleaning oven just by turning it on high for two or three hours. This is based on the opinion of Rav Ahron Kotler of Lakewood, who allows kashering non-self-cleaning ovens. It's good to not kasher your oven and stovetop at the same time, because it can get too hot.

You can also kasher a sink, especially a stainless steel one (but some also do porcelain). Heat water in a kettle, and when it boils carefully pour the boiling water over the sink and any metal parts connected to it. Then run some cold water over it. You can also use a pot, though a kettle is safer and therefore preferable. Please use towels to protect yourself from the hot water and to help absorb the water that spills outside the sink.

We generally kasher metal and granite stone countertops like we do sinks, by pouring boiling water and then cold water. Another, just as viable, option is to cover the countertops with something like tin foil. In fact, many people prefer this to attempting to kasher the countertops.

Rav Moshe permitted kashering formica, but a word of caution: as soon as you pour the hot water, mop it up right away, so as not to allow it to get underneath the countertop and ruin the glue. While kashering please use towels to ensure you don't burn yourself or get too much hot water on places that don't need kashering.

To kasher your pots, take one that hasn't been used in at least 24 hours and boil water in it. Then you can submerge things in that boiling water, such as utensils and smaller pots. If you have another pot that can't be submerged all at once, you can rotate it, making sure that each part is in the boiling water for 4-5 seconds. Things that are small enough to be completely submerged can be dropped in last. To kasher a big pot, put it in the sink and boil water in another pot. Then pour the boiling water into the pot in the sink, until the water comes up over the sides of the pot.

### Chapter 3: Bedikat Chametz

This year is unusual, because Pesach falls on Saturday night and Sunday. That means that the time we would normally do bedikat chametz (the search for chametz), biur chametz (destroying the chametz), and mechirat chametz (selling the chametz) falls on Friday night and Saturday, when all of these things are forbidden. Therefore, we move these things back to Thursday night and Friday this year. Bedikat chametz should be done on Thursday evening right by nightfall. The custom is to schedule that in your calendar so that you will not be preoccupied with anything else. The laws are as follows:

At nightfall, gather 10 small pieces of bread (please wrap the pieces of bread carefully, so they don't spread crumbs), to be hidden around the house and found during the search, and a candle. Any area of the house that never has any chametz does not need to be checked. Our custom is to look over those areas very lightly. Hold the lit candle and make the blessing before beginning the search – *al biyur chametz*. Blow out the candle after a few minutes, and conduct your search using a flashlight. This is based on Rav Moshe Feinstein, who ruled this way to ensure we can do a proper bedika without the risk of setting a fire. For those who prefer to use a candle, **it is not allowed when checking tight areas, like closets, or under beds and you must use a flashlight in any area of potential danger**. After the search, recite the declaration *kol chamira* to nullify any chametz you missed.

While there is a mitzvah to look for chametz in order to get rid of it, the Talmud also understands this search to have a mystical significance. The verse tells us, “The human soul is G-d's candlelight, in which He searches out all of our inner being.” In other words, we should use the opportunity of looking for the chametz to not only physically search for anywhere it might be hidden, but also to search the inner places in our lives, the cracks that conceal our own yetzer hara, so we can examine ourselves and improve ourselves. This should be one of our intentions as we are searching for chametz.

Secure all the chametz you find in a bag, in a safe place. Whatever chametz you're planning to have for breakfast the next day - **as well as for Friday night and Shabbos morning** - should also be kept in a safe place separate from your Passover items. Chametz you're selling should be kept separate as well, so that you don't accidentally use it. We try to keep chametz items secluded in standalone areas, properly secured with tape to remind us not to open those drawers or pantries.

You must do a check of any property you own, including offices or warehouses, and make the *kol chamira* declaration and sell the chametz in those locations. If you are now stuck at home with no access to your office, you can rely on whatever checking you've already done. You make the *kol chamira* declaration for those places and include them in your sale. It is best to do a proper bedika if possible. To avoid problems, consider including in your chametz sale contract the rental of that space for the duration of the holiday to a non-Jew.

### Chapter 4: Biur Chametz

Even though we are allowed to eat chametz all day Friday and on Shabbat until **10:43 AM** Saturday morning, there are several things to be aware of. Generally, we destroy and sell our chametz on the morning of Erev Pesach, but this year that is impossible because Erev Pesach is Shabbat, so we move back the time for selling and burning the chametz to Friday morning. Our custom is to do biur chametz close to the time we would do it on Erev Pesach in a regular year, which this year is **11:50 AM**. But we do

not say the *kol chamira*, the traditional words about making our chametz ownerless, at this time, because we know we will still be eating challah on Shabbat.

When you burn the chametz, make sure to leave out anything that you intend to eat on Friday and Saturday morning. Since it's much easier to have the kitchen and dining room be kosher for Pesach already on Friday, consider ways to eat chametz on Friday and Saturday morning without contaminating the Pesach space. You should keep only a minimal amount of chametz that you will eat for lechem mishna. Just three little challahs or mini pitas, if you want to have a seudah early Saturday morning when you can still eat chametz. The latest time to eat chametz on Saturday morning in New York City is **10:43 AM**. Eat it in a place where you won't get any crumbs on your table, dishes, or countertops. Some people use the porch; others pick a different spot and spread out napkins to catch any crumbs. Have in mind when you make Kiddush & Hamotzi the different areas you will be having your seuda in, in case you use different rooms or the porch for the Hamotzi. It's very important to do this carefully and dispose of the napkins properly. The best way to get rid of extra challah on Shabbat is to give it to a non-Jew and make sure they remove it from your property or to remove it from the property yourself and dispose of it in a garbage outside your home (as long as there is an eruv in your community). At approximately **11:50 AM** on Saturday, you should say the *kol chamira*. Chametz cannot be eaten at seudah shelishit. The easiest thing to do is eat fish, chicken, meat, fruits, or vegetables. According to some gedolim it is ok to eat egg matzah at seudah shelishit, as long as you finish by around 4:30 PM. But because the Ashkenazic custom is not to have egg matzah on Pesach, you would need to put it away before Pesach starts.

#### Chapter 5: When Yom Tov Begins

Because Erev Pesach is on Shabbos, most preparation for the Seder should take place on Thursday and Friday. That means that all food needs to be cooked beforehand, unless it can be cooked on the Seder night after Shabbat ends. If you plan to cook that night, you will probably need to have a 72-hour candle lit before Shabbat that you can use to light the stovetop, assuming you are not leaving it on for Shabbat. If you have an electronic ignition (standard today), check before Shabbat to make sure that you can turn on the stovetop using an actual fire and bypass the electricity. If you have a gas pilot, you can turn it on on Yom Tov, because there is already an existing flame.

Most of the seder plate, other than the romaine lettuce and whatever you are using for karpas, will also need to be prepared before Shabbat. This includes the roasted shankbone, the egg, the charoset, and the maror unless you know how to make it without grinding it.

Candlelighting time on Saturday night is not before 8:15 PM. We make two blessings on the candles: *lehadlik ner shel yom tov*, and *shehecheyanu*.

The seder plate should have the following items: zeroa: usually a chicken neck or a chicken wing that is roasted – either cooked directly on top of the fire or roasted in the oven and then grilled on the fire; egg (some have a custom to wrap it in tinfoil and roast it in the oven); maror: horseradish; charoset: apples, nuts, vinegar, and wine (some people put in strips of kosher for Passover cinnamon bark, to resemble straw. Tosfot says to put in dates, figs, almonds, and pomegranates); karpas: for example, parsley, potato, or radish; and chazeret: romaine lettuce.

Many have the custom to begin the seder by reciting the order of what we are about to do: Kadesh, urchatz, karpas....

Kadesh – make kiddush

Urchatz – wash hands

Karpas – eat karpas

Yachatz – break the middle matzah

Magid – recite the story of the Haggadah

Rachtzah – wash hands

Motzi matzah – make the bracha and eat the matza

Maror – eat the bitter herbs

Korech – eat matza and maror sandwich

Shulchan orech – eat dinner

Tzafun – eat the afikomen

Barech – blessing after the meal

Hallel – recite the hallel

Nirtzah – conclude the seder and ask G-d to accept our prayers

The seder should begin at approximately 8:15 PM or slightly later if time is needed to prepare after Shabbos.

For each of the four cups of wine, use a cup approximately 4 ounces and try to drink a little more than half the cup. You should use wine, but if somebody is sick and can't drink wine then grape juice is permitted. If possible, that person should mix some wine into their grape juice or use low-alcohol wine instead. All kosher wine is kosher for Passover.

Begin the seder by making kiddush, including the havdala and the *shehecheyanu* blessing. Recline on the left side, even if you are a lefty, while drinking the first cup. Our minhag is to stand for kiddush, though some people sit. Wash your hands for the karpas, then dip the karpas in salt water, make a *ha'adama* blessing, and eat it. Some recline for the karpas and some do not. Split the middle matza and put away the bigger half for the afikomen. Leave the matza uncovered, lift the broken matza, and begin the recitation of magid, the story of the Haggadah, with the proclamation *ha lachma anya* – this is the bread of our affliction, let anyone who needs come and eat. It sounds like an open invitation for anyone to come to the seder, but it has a deep spiritual meaning: if someone is searching for spiritual nourishment, the matza in the seder will provide insight. Then push aside or cover the seder plate, fill the second cup of wine, which we won't be drinking for a while, and begin the *ma nishtana*. Traditionally the youngest member of the household asks the *ma nishtana* questions. If it's a one-person seder, that one person asks the questions to Hashem.

After the questions have been asked, we begin the answer by telling a little bit of our history. We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but G-d took us out with a mighty hand. If He hadn't, we and our children would still be slaves. The beginning and the end of the Haggadah have the same theme: we would still be enslaved if not for the redemption of Passover. Now we are no longer subjugated, and we can make ourselves free not just from a physical pharaoh, but from things like addiction and anxiety. These are things we need to work on freeing ourselves from this year even more than usual, so let us look at the story of the Exodus and find meaning for our own circumstances.

Many people have the custom to take wine out of the cup by dipping a finger into the cup at the words *dam, va'eish, v'simros ashan*, as well as the ten plagues and the acronym *detzach adash be'achav*. Others have the custom of pouring a bit of wine out at these words. Then we refill the cup and continue with *dayenu*. We mention Rabban Gamliel, who said you need to mention three things – pesach, matza, and maror – on the night of the seder. We conclude this part of magid by saying that in every generation we must show ourselves as if we personally left Egypt; you should experience it as if you personally are going free, and you must show and feel that you are free. Then we say the beginning of hallel, then lift the cup of wine and make another blessing, about the uniqueness of the night, concluding with a *hagafen* blessing. Sit for this one, then recline and drink.

Wash your hands again and make the blessing *al netilat yadayim*. Dry your hands and make two brachot: *hamotzi*, and *al achilat matza*. Then eat matza from the top two matzas. You should have at least half a piece of shmura matza. The Zohar calls this the bread of faith. Then make the blessing on maror, take some horseradish and romaine, dip it in the charoset, and eat. Next comes korech, the Hillel sandwich of matza, maror, and charoset, along with the declaration that this sandwich is *zecher lemikdash keHillel* – in remembrance of what Hillel used to do in the Temple. Then we have dinner, starting with an egg dipped in salt water. After dinner, eat the afikomen. Pour the third cup of wine, say *birkat hamazon*, and drink the wine. Then open the door for Elijah and say the passage *shphoch chamatcha al hagoyim*, then go back to your seat and say the rest of hallel. Finally, drink the fourth cup of wine and conclude the seder with nirtzah. We say *leshana haba'ah b'yerushalayim* and sing a few special songs.

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