

## The Rabbinical Assembly

# Pesah Guide

This guide is based on the Guide that was prepared for the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards by Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz and accepted by the Committee on December 12, 1984 with a number of changes that reflect subsequent decisions of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards and the ongoing changes in food production. Also, additional material on smoothtop electric ranges, medicines, cosmetics, and toiletries has been added. This document has been prepared by Rabbi Paul Plotkin, Chair of the Kashrut Subcommittee of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, and Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Chair of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

For more information, consult the Summary Index of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards

**Please see the Rabbinical Assembly website for updates on specific items for the 5769 Pesah season.**

February, 2009

One no longer has to live in a large Jewish community in order to have access to products that are certified as kosher for Passover. Many products that are under kashrut supervision all year long are supervised for Passover as well and are available to consumers. These are products that do not contain hametz and therefore do not require a change in ingredients for Passover. In addition, those living far from stores that carry a full array of products that are kosher for Passover can now shop on the internet to order foods that are kosher for Passover and have them shipped to their homes. In addition, there are some general rules that can make it possible to acquire certain items, without Passover certification, before Passover and use them on Passover.

### General Considerations

The Torah prohibits the ownership of *hametz* (leaven) during Pesah. Therefore, we rid our places of residence and business of much of our *hametz* before Pesah and arrange for the sale of any remaining *hametz* (whether we are aware of it or not) to a non-Jew. The transfer, *mekhirat hametz*, is accomplished by appointing an agent, usually the rabbi, to handle the sale. It is valid and legal transfer of ownership. At the end of the holiday, the agent arranges for the reversion of ownership of the now-permitted *hametz*. If ownership of the *hametz* was not transferred before the holiday, the use of this *hametz* is prohibited after the holiday as well (*hametz she-avar alav ha-Pesah*).

Because the Torah prohibits the eating of *hametz* during Pesah, and because many common foods contain some admixture of *hametz*, guidance is necessary when shopping and preparing for Pesah. During the eight days of Pesah, *hametz* cannot lose its identity in an admixture. Therefore, the minutest amount of *hametz* renders the whole admixture *hametz*, and its use on Pesah is prohibited. However, during the rest of the year, *hametz* follows the normal rules of admixture, i.e., it loses its identity in an admixture of one part *hametz* and sixty parts of non-*hametz* (*batel be-shishim*). This affords us the opportunity to differentiate between foods purchased before and during Pesah. So, for example, foods like milk that rarely, if ever, contain *hametz* may be bought before Passover for use on Passover without special certification of their status as being kosher for Passover. Those who wish to be strict need not accept this leniency in their own homes, but they should accept as kosher for Pesah any homes they visit where the practice is to use this leniency, for it is well grounded in Jewish law.

A problem that has arisen with regard to this leniency, however, is the fact that the food industry changes its practices very rapidly, and sometimes items that appear to be clear of *hametz* may in fact contain some *hametz*. Therefore in this Guide we will explain only

the general principles and refer rabbis to the Passover section of the Rabbinical Assembly website for up-to-date information about various foods from year to year.

Moreover, your rabbi should be consulted when any doubt arises. In particular, *Kosher le-Pesah* labels that do not bear the name of a rabbi or one of the recognized symbols of rabbinic supervision, or which are not integral to the package, should not be used without consulting your rabbi.

Prohibited foods include the following: leavened bread, cakes, biscuits, crackers, cereal, coffees containing cereal derivatives, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, and all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol. Most Ashkenazic authorities have added the following foods (*kitniyot*) to the above list: rice, corn, millet, legumes beans and peas; however, string beans are permitted. The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards has passed a rabbinic ruling (a *teshuvah*) that even for Ashkenazim, peanuts and peanut oil are permissible because they were not known, and therefore not banned, by northern European authorities. Some Ashkenazic authorities permit, while others forbid, the use of legumes in a form other than their natural state, for example, corn sweeteners, corn oil, soy oil. Sephardic authorities permit the use of all *kitniyot*. Many vegetarians and others with health needs have asked for permission to eat *kitniyot* on Passover. The CJLS does not have a comprehensive *teshuvah* on *kitniyot* and its derivatives, and therefore each rabbi must rule for his or her own congregants on an individual basis. The Vaad Halakhah (Committee on Jewish Law) affiliated with the Masorti/Conservative Movement in Israel has adopted a *teshuvah* written by Rabbi David Golinkin that may offer some insight, but he does limit his *teshuvah* to the Land of Israel.

### **PERMITTED FOODS:**

**A.** The following foods require no *kosher le-Pesah* label *if purchased before or during Pesah*: Fresh fruits and vegetables (for legumes see above), eggs, fresh fish, and fresh meat.

**B.** The following foods require a *kosher le-Pesah* label if purchased before or during Pesah: All baked products (*matzah*, cakes, *matzah* flour, *farfel*, *matzah* meal, and any products containing *matzah*); canned or bottled fruit juices; canned tuna; wine; vinegar; liquor; oils; dried fruits; candy; chocolate flavored milk; ice cream; yogurt and soda.

**DETERGENTS:** If permitted during the year, powdered and liquid detergents do not require a *kosher le-Pesah* label.

### **MEDICINES, COSMETICS, AND TOILETRIES:**

#### *MEDICINES.*

- 1) All pill medications (with or without *hametz* binders) that one swallows are permitted without special rabbinic certification as being kosher for Passover.
- 2) All chewable pills that have *kitniyot* are permitted. If the chewable pills have *hametz* and no substitute is available, ask your rabbi.

- 3) All liquid medications that have *hametz* should not be used. If they contain no *hametz* but do contain *kitniyot*, they are permissible.

*Before discontinuing any medication, consult with your rabbi and physician.*

#### **COSMETICS AND TOILETRIES.**

- 1) All varieties of body soaps, shampoos, and stick deodorants are permitted for use on Pesah regardless of their ingredients.
- 2) All types of ointments, creams, nail polish, hand lotions, eye shadow, eyeliner, mascara, blush, foot and face powders, and ink and paint may be used regardless of their ingredients.
- 3) Colognes, perfumes, hairspray, shaving lotions, and deodorants that have restorable, denatured alcohol should not be used. This applies only to products in a pure liquid state.
- 4) Lipstick that contains *hametz* should not be used.

**KASHERING OF UTENSILS:** The process of kashering utensils depends on how the utensils are used. According to halakhah, leaven can be purged from a utensil by the same process in which it was absorbed in the utensil (*ke-voleo kakh polet*). Therefore, utensils used in cooking are kashered by boiling, those used in broiling are kashered by fire and heat, and those used only for cold food are kashered by rinsing.

**A. EARTHENWARE** (china, pottery, etc.) may not be kashered. However, fine translucent chinaware which has not been used for over a year may be used if scoured and cleaned in hot water.

**B. METAL** (wholly made of metal) **UTENSILS USED IN FIRE** (spit, broiler) must first be thoroughly scrubbed and cleansed and then made hot until it glows. Those used for cooking or eating (silverware, pots) must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned and not used for 24 hours. Then they are completely immersed in boiling water. Metal baking utensils cannot be kashered.

#### **C. GLASSWARE:**

1. *Drinking and serving utensils (plates, serving platters, etc.).* Authorities disagree as to the method for kashering glass utensils used for drinking and eating. One opinion requires soaking in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours. The other opinion requires only that one thoroughly scrub them or put them through a dishwasher.
2. *Glass cookware.* This category includes cookware made of modern materials that are as non-porous as glass, such as pyrex. There is a difference of opinion as to whether glass cookware needs to be koshered or can be. One opinion is that it must be kashered. After thoroughly cleaning it, wait 24 hours. Then, boil water in it that overflows the rim, or immerse it into boiling water. The other opinion is that, only a thorough cleansing is required. Others believe that glass cookware cannot be kashered.
3. *Glass bakeware,* like metal bakeware, cannot be koshered for Passover.

## **KASHERING OF APPLIANCES:**

### **A. CONVECTION OVENS.**

#### **1. The Oven Itself.**

- Remove all oven racks.
- Remove fan housing/covering from the back of the oven.
- Spray abrasive cleaner (e.g., Dow Easy Off) on the entire oven, including its walls, oven floor, and fan assembly, and all parts of the door and the door crease if there is any dirt there.
- Spray the doors, including the glass.
- If the back plate cannot be removed, then thoroughly spray the cleaner over and inside the entire fan assembly.
- After all the areas are covered with cleaner; heat the oven to 300 degrees for about 20 minutes.
- Wash the oven with a long handled brush, using cold water and soap, removing all the loose dirt. Take care not to short electrical parts of the oven.
- Reapply cleaner to areas that have a great build up of dirt. Steel wool and scrapers may be required. Baked on dirt and grease must be removed before you can begin to make everything kosher
- After you have examined the oven and have determined that all dirt has been removed, the oven should be turned up to the highest possible setting for one and a half hours with the fan blowing.

#### **2 Oven Racks and Grates.**

There are two ways to kasher:

##### **Stove top method:**

Take the grates or racks and place them on the stove top. This can only be done if the oven top can handle the heat, so in all likelihood it is only a gas stove top that can be used for koshering racks and grates this way. Otherwise the racks and grates need to be heated with a blow torch.

To use the stove top method:

- Wrap the entire stove top with a double layer of foil wrap, covering over the entire stove top with the foil. The shiny side should be facing down in the direction of the stove top. This causes maximum heat.
- Set the burners to a low heat.
- Tightly seal the foil wrap around all the racks and grates, and place them on the stove top.
- Raise the burners to highest setting.
- With long metal pliers, carefully check if *libun* (white-hot heat) has been accomplished. If the metal of the racks and grates is glowing with a red color, then it has been accomplished.
- After half an hour, carefully and from a distance, remove the foil and allow the racks and grates to cool down, and then return them to the oven that is now kosher for Passover.

**Inside the oven method:**

Clean the oven racks very carefully to ensure all food residue and stains are removed. Then put them in the bottom of the oven (not on the tracks) as it is being kashered as per the instructions below.

**D. Regular Ovens.**

Thoroughly clean all surfaces of the oven. This must be followed by *libun kal*. The required heating would be *kash nisraf mebachutz*. Closing the oven and heating it up to 500 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour and a half will suffice.

**E. Self-Cleaning and Continuous Cleaning Ovens.**

Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed and cleaned and then put through the self-cleaning cycle, or the ovens can be cleaned and kashered by running the full self-cleaning cycle.

Continuous cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens.

**F. Stove Tops:**

There are at least 4 types of stove tops:

**Gas Stoves with space between the burners:**

Clean the metal parts above and around the gas area then turn on the heat. If the burner parts can get hot enough to burn straw then that will suffice, if not put them into the hot oven during oven kashering. It may be easier to just clean the burner area then cover the burner with foil inverted side up to heat clean and kasher the burner area. In either case you still need to put foil in the middle area after cleaning.

**Gas stoves that have no open space between the burners (commercial or high end)**

Clean thoroughly to remove all food, then cover whole area with inverted foil and turn on heat. The result is that the entire stove top is kosher and there is no need for foil.

**Electric Coils with open metal between the burners:**

Clean under the electric burner replacing any foil or other catch material. Turn on coils till very hot. Clean open top area and cover in foil. Some pour boiling water over mid area then foil as well. There might be a case for not covering in foil once boiling water has been poured over it, but most cover in foil anyway.

**Smoothtop Electric Ranges:**

Smoothtop electric ranges present a problem. They cannot be covered with foil, nor heated at a high temperature, nor cleaned with an abrasive cleaner. Consult with the manufacturer on how to clean the smoothtop. Then discuss with your rabbi if that method of cleaning is adequate enough to kasher the smoothtop. Some will not be able to be kashered.

We suggest leaving the burners on until they are bright red and have reached maximal temperature for a few minutes. After they cool down for a while pour boiling water over the glass areas in between burners.

**H. Microwave ovens.**

Microwave ovens, which do not cook food by means of heat, should be cleaned, and then a cup of water should be placed inside. Then the oven should be turned on until most of

the water is boiled. A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesah.

**I. Dishwasher.**

A full cycle with detergent should be run, then the machine should not be used for a period of 24 hours, after which, it should be run with only water set at the highest temperature.

**G. Other Electrical Appliances:**

If the parts that come into contact with *hametz* are removable, they can be kashered in the appropriate way (if metal, follow the rules for metal utensils). If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be kashered. (All exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned.)

**COUNTERTOPS**

There are many types of surface used for countertops. Some can be kashered by cleaning and then pouring boiling water over the surface; others need to be cleaned and then covered. Below is a list of materials for countertops that the Chicago Rabbinical Council affirms may be kashered for Passover. It is important to note that these materials are kasherable, only as long as they are not stained, scratched, or cracked. Surfaces with a synthetic finish also must be cleaned and covered as they may not be kasherable.

<p><b>Common Brands:</b>          Avonite          Buddy Rhodes          Caesar Stone          Cheng Design          Corian          Craftart          Formica          Gibraltar          John Boos          Nevamar          Omega          Pionite          Silestone          Spekva          Staron          Surrell          Swanstone          Wilsonarat          Zodiaq</p>	<p><b>Common Materials:</b>          Acrylic          Granite          Marble          Metals (stainless steel, copper)          Platic laminate          Polyester Base          Quartz resign          Slate          Soapstone          Wood, butcher block</p>
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**TABLES, CLOSETS**

If used with *hametz*, they should be thoroughly cleaned and covered, and then they may be used.

**KITCHEN SINK**

A metal sink can be kashered by thoroughly cleaning it, then leaving it unused for 24 hours, and then pouring boiling water over it. A porcelain sink should be cleaned and a sink rack used. If, however, dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.

**HAMETZ AND NON-PASSOVER UTENSILS**

Non-Passover dishes, pots and *hametz* whose ownership has been transferred to a non-Jew should be separated, locked up or covered, and marked in order to prevent accidental use.

## 2009 List of Passover Concerns for Specific Food Products

What are the concerns regarding buying seemingly pure, non certified Passover friendly products, before Passover for use on Passover? We will list some of the concerns as reported by different supervisory agencies including the OU and Star-K and then provide an up to date listing of products which we consider to be acceptable for Passover use, or where the possibility of kitniyot or chametz being present are small and in any case nullified if bought before Passover. Nonetheless, many people will choose to be stricter on Passover and not eat food that has any chametz in it, even if it is annulled before Passover.

### Coffee & Tea:

There are products on the market that could undergo either Kosher for Passover or non-Kosher for Passover processes. Decaffeination is such an example. Some coffees are decaffeinated through a Swiss water method, a Kosher for Passover decaffeination process. Other companies use ethyl acetate as a decaffeinate. Ethyl acetate could be hametz. It goes without saying that flavored coffees require strict Kosher for Passover certification. Decaffeinated and flavored teas share the same Passover concerns as decaffeinated and flavored coffees.

(See the list below of acceptable OU coffees without certification.)

### Dairy Foods:

Dairy foods are particularly kosher-sensitive due to the prevalence of enzymes, stabilizers, flavors and vitamins which are made from *chametz* and *kitniyot* and are present in most dairy products. Although **plain whole, low-fat and skim milk** (fresh— not long shelf-life) may be purchased before Passover without special certification, it is proper not to purchase it during Passover unless reliably certified for Passover. **All other dairy products** require reliable Passover certification regardless of when they are purchased. For those who accept the CJLS rulings that permit **non hechshered cheeses, gelatin**, etc, since there is no one from any Rabbinic agency that ever visits these plants, and since some products are manufactured in plants that use Passover sensitive ingredients we can not recommend the use of these products on Passover.

**Frozen Fish:** Frozen raw fish that contains any ingredient other than fish (except for water and salt) requires Passover certification.

### Fruits, Dried:

Dried fruits also require Passover certification. Some dried fruits and vegetables are naturally sun-dried without any additives or sulfur dioxide applied to them to prevent discoloration and inhibit bacterial growth. These naturally, sun-dried products would be Kosher for Pesach. However, fruits and vegetables may be dried in drying tunnels, often being treated with oil to facilitate drying or to act as a release agent. Certain sun-dried fruits are also coated with oil. Some dried fruit producers will commonly use rice or oat flour or chemical release agents to coat their cut up fruit pieces to prevent sticking, as they are being packaged. Potassium sorbate is used to standardize the moisture in dried fruit. In the past, potassium sorbate didn't present any Passover kashrut concerns. Recently, potassium sorbate derived from grain products has been imported from China, hence dried fruits require reliable Kosher for Passover certification.

Fortunately a number of nationally distributed brands carry kosher for Passover designations all year long. ( In addition please see below the listing of OU certified raisins that do not require special Passover certification)

### **Fruits and Vegetables, Fresh:**

Can we purchase fresh fruits and vegetables without worrying about the wax coatings used to maintain the freshness of the fresh fruit and vegetables? The Star K research of food grade waxes has shown that soy proteins may be used as a thickener in some waxes. This means that the waxes may contain *kitniyot* derivative. However, since the soy protein would be *batel b'rov*, it is a minor ingredient, which would be permissible on Pesach, and would not pose a problem to supermarket fruits and vegetables. Therefore it is permissible to purchase fresh fruits or vegetables from the supermarket on Pesah, without supervision. Raw peeled uncut carrots in plastic bags are acceptable without certification.

### **Fruits and Vegetables, Frozen:**

Frozen vegetables are washed in water that often contains anti-foaming agents, which are not appropriate for Passover use. Moreover, some companies also pack pasta products on shared packing machinery. Therefore, frozen vegetables require Passover certification. However, these issues are not a concern at facilities that process frozen fruit, which does not require Passover certification. Sweetened frozen fruit pieces could be sweetened with liquid sugar or corn syrup, requiring strict Passover supervision. Plain, frozen, unsweetened fruit pieces are acceptable without special Passover certification.

### **Fruit Juices:**

Like many other products, pure fruit juices, if determined to be a pure juice, could be Kosher for Passover. However, pure juices undergo many different processes to get the best yield from the pressed fruit and clearest color for attractive marketing. Enzymes and clarifying agents are commonly used. These products and the equipment used for processing should be approved Kosher for Passover. *Nevertheless, like milk if purchased before passover, any enzymes or clarification agents would be in such small amounts that they would be annulled.*

### **Honey:**

Some assumed 100% pure products are not as 100% as they appear. Although unlikely, 100% pure honey could be adulterated with corn syrup without detection. And therefore needs to be certified kosher for passover even if purchased before Pesah.

### **Lactaid:**

Lactaid milk is permissible if purchased before Passover

### **Nuts:**

Raw nuts in their shell do not require Passover certification. Shelled nuts that list BHA or BHT (preservatives) in the ingredients require special Passover certification as they are sprayed on the nuts using corn derivatives (*kitniyot*).

### **Quinoa:**

Quinoa is permitted but should be checked before Passover and any foreign substance removed since it may be processed on equipment used for grain.

### **Soy Milk:**

For those who for health reasons (or sephardim ) want or need to drink soy milk the following soy milks do not contain any *chametz* ingredients:

- Vitasoy San Sui Original Natural soy milk:

[www.vitasoyusa.com/ethnic/sansui\\_osd.html](http://www.vitasoyusa.com/ethnic/sansui_osd.html)

- Soy Dream Original un-enriched soy milk:

[www.tastethedream.com/media/SDnutri\\_O.jpg](http://www.tastethedream.com/media/SDnutri_O.jpg)

Anyone for whom it is necessary to consume *kitniyot* may drink these products. However, because we are unable to verify the kosher for Passover status of the equipment on which they are produced, we recommend purchasing these items before Passover, at which point any traces of *chametz* would be *batel* (nullified).

### **Spices:**

Spices could contain spice oils or anti-caking agents that may or may not be Passover approved. Spice blends that just list pure species in their ingredient declaration would also share the same concerns. Pure spices and spice blends could be made on equipment that was used for non-Pesach or non-Kosher spice blends with minimal cleaning between productions. With the advent of Chinese trade, more and more raw ingredients are appearing on the domestic scene from Mainland China. Today, Chinese garlic and onion powder are competing with their domestic counterparts. Since Chinese spices are more pungent than their American counterparts they may be modified. It has been alleged that modification can be made by blending the spice with flour and anti-caking agents. Therefore, pure spices and spice blends require Passover supervision even if purchased before Passover.

### **Splenda**

While the OU does certify Splenda for year-round use. Splenda is not certified Kosher for Passover as it contains *kitniyot*. There is an industrial kosher for Passover Splenda, **but it is not available for consumers.**

### **Vegetables, Fresh Peeled or Value Added**

Peeled potatoes, carrots, and celery in plastic pails, or in plastic bags, are fresh, clean, and seemingly free of Kosher for Passover concerns. Save one: In retarding browning, i.e. oxidation, so that the vegetables retain their fresh appearance, some companies use metabisulfites, which are Kosher for Pesach, other companies use citric acid, which would require Kosher for Passover certification. Companies packing their produce in vacuum packed barrier bags use citric acid in the wash water. These concerns must be clarified before purchasing pre-peeled produce. Often calling the company's consumer information number will provide the information whether citric acid is used.

### **Vegetables, Canned:**

Canned vegetables packed in water and salt would also appear to have minimal kashrut concerns. That is true if the canning company only produces vegetables in salt and water. Many companies use the same equipment for saltwater brine as well as sauces and soups that may contain tomato, cheese, meat or hametz. Canned vegetables require reliable Kosher for Passover certification.

**Wine:**

Please note that not all kosher wines are certified for Passover use. Some wines, certified and otherwise, are made with flavorings and colorings to improve the bouquet and the color. Some of these wines do contain *kitniyot*, and therefore are not marked for Passover use. But the vast majority of certified wines are , and do not contain *chametz* or *kitniyot* flavors or sweeteners. Please be sure to check wine labels carefully before purchasing.

The following list contains OU certified products in the following categories are acceptable as Kosher for Passover even without any special Passover markings: Go to <http://www.oukosher.org/pdf/grayfinal.pdf> For a complete list.

all OU certified inedibles (aluminium foil and pans, candles, cleansers, detergents, paper and plastic goods, polishes, and scouring pads)

### **Baking Soda**

### **Bottled water**

**Cocoa powder:** Hershey's Chocolate Cocoa Powder

**Coffee:** Ground and whole bean regular unflavored coffee: ( not caffeine )  
Folgers Regular coffee and Taster's choice regular coffee are acceptable without special certification. Coffee "singles" are a mix of regular and instant coffee, and therefore, require Passover certification.

**Juice, Orange and Frozen Juice Concentrate:** Sunkist, Florida Gold, Shoprite, Pathmark, Old South, King Kullen, Wegman's,

**Juice:** Realime, and Realemon , reconstituted juice.

### **Olive Oil, Extra Virgin**

**Raisins:** Some of the most widely available include;  
Albertson's, Berkley and Jensen, Del Monte- Natural and Golden , Dole, Krasdale, Jewel, Food Lion, Winn Dixie, Trader Joe's, Shoprite, Ralph's, Publix, Price Chopper, Kroger

**Salad:** all Star -K certified salads are kosher for Passover without special certification. Dole Very Veggie contains peas and is kitniyot.

### **Salt , non iodized**

**Seltzers, unflavored:** all unflavored seltzers are acceptable.

**Sugar** , white granulated only

**Tea,** instant and tea bags unflavored, Lipton decaf