

## Stress Free Passover Guide

Dear readers,

We all strive to observe the laws of the Torah to the best of our ability. One of the important rules regarding the holiday, which for some reason has been neglected by the observant community, is ושמחת בהגך – you should rejoice on the holiday. This rule should serve as our guiding light in all of our pre-holiday and holiday activities.

The following Passover guide adheres to this principle. The guide is by no means binding, but rather a tool to empower people and to enable them to truly celebrate Passover without feelings of fear, anxiety, and stress. Those who want to take actions or follow practices which they consider “strict” are welcome to do so, as long as they make sure that no one is harmed in the process, including themselves.

### **Cleaning:**

Spring cleaning can be a fun and an exhilarating activity, but when combined with Passover cleaning it should not become a burden. You could carry on with regular cleaning activities, and be on the lookout for clean, edible Hametz.

In the kitchen, seal the areas where edible Hametz is stored. For koshering dishes, appliances, and surfaces, please refer to the article attached above.

### **Searching for Hametz:**

The thorough cleaning is a major part of the search, so the last stage, searching with flashlights, is purely symbolic. On Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, after sunset, place ten wrapped bread crumbs on a plate, or scatter around the house, if you wish, and search for them. If there are children in the household, this could be a great treasure hunt activity.

### **Selling the Hametz:**

Put all Hametz items in a designated area and mark them clearly. If you wish to leave Hametz in the kitchen cabinets, seal it with tape and add a little Hametz sign. Sell the Hametz with your local rabbi or email me at [rabbiovadia613@gmail.com](mailto:rabbiovadia613@gmail.com) . No need for addresses, just name and contact info (which is basically your email address).

### **Kosher for Passover Products:**

The best resource is the Rabbi Abadi list, which can be found in his website: [www.kashrut.org](http://www.kashrut.org)

Even though some products are marked in the list for Sephardim only, Ashkenazim could use them based on my guidelines in the article about legumes, attached to this post.

### **Rice:**

There is no need to check rice before Passover, unless the rice is bought from open sacks at a bazaar. All rice, including enriched rice, is kosher for Passover.

### **Open bottles and spices:**

There is no need to replace or throw open bottles and spices which are Kosher for Passover. If they are used to pour or sprinkle and a utensil is not put in them, one can continue using them during Passover.

### **Shmurah Matzah:**

As I have previously explained, the so called “regular” matzah perfectly meets the requirements of Shmurah Matzah. Charging more than the price of “regular” Matzah is unethical. On the customer’s side, it is better to buy the cheaper Matzah and give the difference in price to charity.

### **Starting the Seder Early:**

If you would like to start the Seder earlier, calculate the beginning point in a way which will allow you to eat the Matzah about 45 minutes after sunset. This applies to both nights. However, since this year the second night is on Motzai Shabbat, you should not recite בורא מאורי האש at the Kiddush, but later, when Shabbat is over.

### **Telling the Story of the Exodus:**

Leave long discussions and commentaries for the meal. The Haggada is the perfect tool to fulfill the Mitzvah of telling the story. Additions to and expansion of the Haggada should be done in a fun and preferably theatrical way. Use props and have participants, especially children, prepare skits and special songs to enhance the experience of the Haggada.

### **Drinking Four Cups:**

If one does not want to, or cannot drink wine or grape juice, he or she can use the smallest cup permissible, which holds 3.5 fluid ounces, and drink only its majority which is 1.8 fluid ounces. If that is too difficult, they can rely on the person who conducts the Seder.

### **Eating Karpas [celery or other vegetables]:**

You can eat as much Karpas as you want. It is good to have on the table a variety of vegetable appetizers to help quiet the hunger and read the Haggada calmly. Do not worry; no one ever complained that they have no room for Matzah.

### **Missing Parts of the Haggada:**

Whether you are the person who conducts the Seder, or one of the participants, and you have to leave the room for a couple of minutes, please do not make everyone stop and wait for you. Also, if you cannot catch up and recite every word, do not worry. The main thing is that the Haggada is recited together, and the minimal, obligatory reading to fulfil the Mitzvah consists of only three words: פסח, מצה ומרור – Pesah sacrifice, Matzah, and bitter herbs.

### **Matzah, Aphikomen, leisure activities:**

I will discuss the required amount of Matzah and the practice of Aphikomen in future posts, God willing. Other than that, in the following two weeks we will mainly explore issues related to vacation and leisure activities. Please do not hesitate to submit questions, and I will try to answer them in a post or privately.

I do hope that these guidelines will help you relax before and during Passover, as well as enhance the experience of the Haggada.

Shabbat Shalom