

Cleaning & Kashering for Pesach 2018

Preparing Your Pesach Kitchen

The laws of *kashering* kitchens and utensils are very complex. The following is a set of directions designed to take some of the confusion out of your Pesach preparations. Please note that the rules of *kashering* for Passover are more stringent than those of *kashering* during the year, and feel free to call Rabbi Albert or Rabbi Fox with any questions at (510) 482-1147.

Appliances and Surfaces

Gas Cooktop: On a gas range, the cast-iron or metal grates upon which the pots on the range sit may be *kashered* by turning the flame on high for 15 minutes. In order to spread the flame over the entire grate, it is advisable to cover the grates with a *blech*, a piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil, or a pot full of water during the *kashering*. Alternatively, the grates can be placed into a self-cleaning oven during a self-cleaning cycle. The rest of the range (the area between the burners) should be cleaned and covered with a double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil. The burners themselves do not need *kashering* or covering, just cleaning. The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and need not be *kashered*.

Electric cooktop: One need only turn the burners on the high-heat setting for a few minutes in order to *kasher* them, since the burners come to a glow in a few minutes. The remaining cooktop areas should be cleaned thoroughly and covered with a double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil.

Conventional oven: Whether gas or electric, the oven must be completely clean before *kashering*. Oven cleaner may be necessary to remove baked-on grease. (If a caustic type of oven cleaner (such as Easy-Off) was used to clean the oven and some stubborn spots remain after the caustic cleaner has been applied a second time with similar results, the remaining spots may be disregarded.) Once the oven and racks have been cleaned, turn the oven to the broil setting (or highest heat possible) for one hour.

Continuous-cleaning oven: One cannot assume that the oven is clean simply because the manufacturer claims it to be continuously clean. A visual inspection is required. (Since caustic or abrasive oven cleaners (e.g., Easy-Off) cannot be used without destroying the continuous-clean properties of the oven, a non-abrasive, non-caustic, cleaner must be used. Grease spots will usually disappear if the top layer of grease is cleaned with Fantastic and a nylon brush. The oven should then be turned to 450oF for an hour so that the continuous-clean mechanism can work.) The oven should then be *kashered* by turning it to the broil setting for one hour.

Self-cleaning oven: The self-cleaning cycle will clean and *kasher* the oven simultaneously. This is true for convection ovens with a self-cleaning feature as well. The oven need not be carefully cleaned beforehand because everything inside the oven is reduced to ash. The oven door and rubber around the door should, however, be completely clean before beginning the self-clean cycle.

Toaster Ovens: Should not be *kashered* for Pesach.

Broiler: The broiler pan and grill cannot be *kashered* by just turning on the gas or electricity. Since food is cooked directly on the pan or grill, they must be heated to a glow in order to be *kashered* for Pesach. An alternate method is to replace the pan with a new pan and *kasher* the empty broiler cavity by cleaning and setting it to broil for one hour. If one does not intend to use the broiler on Pesach, one may still use the oven, even without *kashering* the broiler, provided that the broiler has been thoroughly cleaned or covered with heavy-duty aluminum foil.

Similarly, other cooktop inserts, such as a griddle or a barbecue broiler, would require being heated to a red glow before usage. (If one has a self-cleaning oven, one convenient method for heating the broiler pan and cooktop inserts to a glow is to put them inside of the oven and leave them in there through a self cleaning cycle. They need not be scrubbed in advance.)

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Microwave Ovens: A microwave whose inside is made of metal may be *kashered* by first cleaning it thoroughly, then placing a container filled with water in the oven and boiling it until the oven fills with steam. A microwave oven whose inside is made of plastic presents a *kashering* problem for Pesach. Fortunately, many do not heat up the oven walls enough to cause a real *kashrut* concern. For a microwave with plastic walls, clean the microwave and do not use it for 24 hours, then boil a cup of water on the highest setting for 10 minutes. Quickly insert your hand and touch the oven ceiling: if it is too hot to touch, then the microwave should not be used for *Pesach*. (If it is absolutely necessary to use the microwave during Pesach, one may line the inner walls with cardboard and then use it.) If it is relatively cool (or even warm), the oven may be used and has just been *kashered*. For all microwave ovens, the revolving glass plate (if you have one) should be covered with saran wrap.

Sinks are generally made from either porcelain/enamel, plastic, stainless steel or granite.

**Porcelain/enamel* sinks cannot be *kashered* at all. These sinks should be cleaned, not used for twenty-four hours, and completely lined with contact paper or foil. The dishes that are to be washed should not be placed directly into the sink. They should be washed in a *Pesach* dish pan that is placed on a *Pesach* rack. Alternatively, a sink insert can be purchased, allowing for the placement of either milk or meat dishes directly into the sink.

**Plastic* sinks are treated in the same manner as porcelain/enamel sinks on Pesach.

**Stainless steel* sinks can be *kashered* by the following method: clean the sink thoroughly. Hot water should not be used or poured in the sink for 24 hours prior to *kashering*. (It is thus recommended that the hot water shut-off valve under the sink be turned off for this 24-hour period.) *Kashering* is accomplished by pouring boiling water from a *Pesach* kettle/pot over every part of the stainless steel sink, including the drain and the spout of the water faucet. It is likely that the *kashering* kettle will need to be refilled a few times before the *kashering* can be completed.

**Granite* sinks can be *kashered* like stainless steel.

Countertops made of granite may be *kashered* in the same manner as granite sinks. It is also permitted, under certain circumstances, to use an industrial wall-paper steamer, if used carefully so that the very hot steam kashers the surface of the counters. The shul owns one of these, please contact the office if you would like to borrow the steamer (which includes specific instructions.) Formica countertops should be cleaned and covered with a waterproof material. The same goes for tables with synthetic tops. Wood tables can theoretically be *kashered* with boiling water, but the custom is to clean and cover them.

Refrigerators should be washed (shelves, walls and compartments).

Utensils

It is preferred to have utensils reserved for *Pesach* use. If one is unable to use special utensils for *Pesach*, many utensils used throughout the year may be *kashered* for *Pesach*. These include glass utensils that were used strictly for cold food and metal utensils which are not difficult to clean (Sieves, graters and utensils that have parts that are glued together are **not** *kasherable*. Knives with attached handles often cannot be *kashered* for Pesach.)

Please Note: Glassware used for cooking, as well as earthenware, pottery, porcelain, pyrex, arcolac, duralex, corelle and chinaware may not be *kashered*. Plastic utensils are not *kashered* for Pesach. Teflon coated pans and utensils are also non-kasherable.

Glass utensils which came into contact with only cold *chametz* should be cleaned with a cleaning solution and then immersed in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours.

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Utensils

There are two different procedures for *kashering* metal:

Metal utensils which came into contact with heated *chametz* in a medium of water (*i.e.*, utensils in which *chametz* was cooked; pots are a good example) may be *kashered* via the procedure known as *hag'alah*, which involves immersion in boiling water, as explained below.

Metal utensils which came into direct contact with heated *chametz* without the medium of water (*e.g.*, a baking pan, broiler, barbecue or frying pan) may be *kashered* by heating them until they are literally “red-hot,” or by placing them in a self-cleaning oven during the self-clean cycle.

The procedure for *hag'alah* (immersion in boiling water) is as follows:

- 1) A non-Kosher-for-Pesach pot may be used for the purpose of *kashering*, provided that it is thoroughly clean and has not been used for 24 hours. However, the custom is to make the pot Kosher-for-Pesach before using it for *kashering*. This can be accomplished by cleaning the pot, leaving it dormant for 24 hours, filling the pot completely with water, waiting until the water comes to a rolling boil, and gently immersing a rapidly boiling tea kettle into the pot so that it displaces water such that it runs over the top ridge of the pot on all sides at one time. The pot is now *kashered*.
- 2) Metal Utensils that have been used for cooking, serving or eating hot *chometz* may be *kashered* by cleaning them thoroughly, 24 hours and then immersing them one by one in a large pot (which has not been used for *chametz* within the last 24 hours) full of water which maintains a rolling boil when the vessel is immersed.
- 3) The utensils undergoing *kashering* may not touch each other on the way into the pot. In other words, if a set of flatware is being *kashered*, one cannot take all the knives, forks and spoons and put them in the boiling water together. They should be placed into the boiling water one by one.
- 4) The entire utensil does not have to be *kashered* at once; it may be done in parts. If tongs are used to grip the utensil, the utensil will have to be immersed a second time with the tong in a different position so that the boiling water will touch the initially gripped area.
- 5) The process is finalized by rinsing the *kashered* items in cold water.
- 6) Please watch out for utensils that are rusty or difficult to clean properly. Silverware made of two parts (a handle and a blade, for instance) should most often not be *kashered*.