



CEH Pesach Guide - 2023

Prepared by Rav Natan Freller based on the recommendations of the Rabbinical Assembly, 2023

Topics:

1. Pesach/Passover 101
2. Options for your Keara (Seder Plate)
3. Cleaning/Kashering for elderly/infirm
4. Purchasing of Food



1. Pesach/Passover 101

This is the holiday of Freedom and Liberation. We re-enact the Exodus during the Seder aiming to fulfil the commandment: B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mi-Mitzrayim. "In every generation, a person must view herself/himself as if s/he had gone out of Egypt" (Talmud Pesachim 116b).

Traditionally, outside of Israel, we hold 2 Sedarim, on the 1st and 2nd of the holiday. This is the most known ritual of this chag (holiday). We will have religious services on the first 2 days and the last 2 days as well. On the last day, we add the Yizkor prayer, remembering all those who are no longer in the physical world with us.

We get rid of the Chametz, but what is Chametz? Chametz, or leaven, refers to food prepared from five species of grain (rye, wheat, barley, spelt and oats) that were allowed to leaven (water has been added to them, and the mixture was allowed to stand for more than 18 minutes). Consumption, enjoyment, and even possession of leaven is prohibited during Pesach. For that reason, we remove the leaven from our homes and lives. This is a metaphor for the concept of liberation, in which we should be involved during the days of Pesach. We free ourselves from the Chametz in our lives, in whatever forms they exist in our homes. The process of disposal and search of leaven symbolizes the letting go of old stuff, of the feelings and attitudes we have that can and should be thrown away.

So, what should I do with my Chametz? We start by removing all leavened foods from our homes. We also have to make our homes fit for Pesach, or Kosher lePesach. Although, you don't have to remove everything (Liquor and non-perishable items, for example.) You can set them aside in one place and sell them, so you don't own them, and can't consume it during Pesach. See the link for selling in the e-mail. Check out the guides and videos we put out for more info. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Rav Natan.

2. A few tips to keep in mind when purchasing food for the Seder:

Matzah - One is obligated to avoid hametz throughout Passover, but the obligation to eat matzah is limited to fulfilling the rituals of the first/second night seder alone. Think, basically, about one piece of matzah per person, per seder.

Karpas - Can be any vegetable. Common foods used: boiled potato, parsley or celery.

Maror/Chazeret - Horseradish and Romaine Lettuce are most commonly used. If either is not available (though they should be), people are encouraged to find other bitter, earth-grown, vegetables.

[VEGAN] Egg and Roasted Shankbone on Seder Plate - A roasted beet and rice (if consuming kitniyot) in place of the shankbone and egg. (Talmud Pesachim 114b)

3. Cleaning/Kashering for elderly/infirm:

In these households, if there is an already living-in-home caretaker in place, cleaning and kashering should be carried out, to the extent possible, according to the guidelines which apply to all. In a household where there is no able-bodied caretaker in place, the residents of the household should do their best to remove hametz from every surface that will be used for the preparation or consumption of foods during Passover. These surfaces should be wiped down with all-purpose cleaning materials. If possible, refrigerator shelves should also be wiped down. If the oven will be used during Passover, the walls of the oven should be wiped down.. The self-cleaning function is of course also an option, though some general wiping down should be done first, especially of any grease build up, which is known to be a potential fire-hazard.

For homes in which vessels will not be able to be kashered in the normative manner (due to physical capability or general concerns of danger with heating elements), we recommend designating a few cooking vessels to be used for passover cooking before and during the holiday, to clean them well, and let them sit for 24 hours (or at least overnight). So long as they don't have visible foodstuff caked on, they are acceptable for preparing Passover food. This technique can also be used for cutlery and non-porous dishes as well.

4. Purchasing of Food

Hierarchy of purchasing: As Passover 5780 (2020) approached, due to the unprecedented disruptions in the food supply, the CJLS encouraged everyone to consider putting aside the Ashkenazic custom of eschewing legumes (beans and lentils) corn and rice. Although the state of food supplies and other logistic issues differ from locale to locale as of this writing, the CJLS renews the suggestion that anyone facing continued challenges finding foods appropriate for Passover again consider adopting the guidance of the 2015 teshuvah.

Below are guidelines for following "best practice" under trying circumstances:

Note: Over the past three years some folks noticed what looked like categorical discrepancies between the typical yearly guide and the covid-era guide. Items that would typically be listed as only KP marked, or non-KP-marked but okay for pre-Passover purchase, moved into a more lenient category. And some of you asked why, if we were willing to move it into a more lenient category for the Covid-era--and still consider it safe for Passover--why wouldn't we always keep it in a more lenient category? Those are good questions and we appreciate them. Here's the short answer—there are a number of products for which we are generally confident they are fine for Passover (either no *hametz*, or *1/60 nullified*), but can't be absolutely sure. In normal times we have typically erred on the side of extra caution in the absence of more sufficient knowledge about a particular item. But in times of distress--current times--our confidence is enough to treat the items more expansively, giving more people (if they so choose) the option of purchase.

It is important to note that many products that are plain, unflavored dairy products (like milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, and hard cheeses), frozen fruits and vegetables, packaged legumes, and rice can be purchased with a year-round hekhsher before Passover as a matter of course. **This is not latitude granted during difficult circumstances, this is normative halakhah.** It is only if they are purchased during Passover itself that many of these items need to carry a Kosher for Passover certification.

In general, we tend to be strict on our Passover lists due to the overall complexity of certifying individual items. This year, as with last ones, we continue to rely on our most current knowledge of key food items to lessen the burden we are all feeling, and most importantly, continue to mitigate sending people into potentially dangerous situations--while still being within the normative constructs of Passover Kashrut.

Therefore, if you are unable to find an item below with a Kosher for Passover certification, then here's what you can do:

a) Food requiring no Kosher for Passover certification no matter when purchased (they are certainly hametz-free):

baking soda	pure black, green, or white tea leaves
bicarbonate of soda	unflavored tea bags
eggs	unflavored regular coffee
fresh fruits and vegetables	olive oil (extra-virgin only)
fresh or frozen kosher meat (other than chopped meat)	whole or gutted fresh fish
Nestea (regular and decaffeinated)	whole or half pecans (not pieces)
	whole (unground) spices and nuts

b) The following list of basic foods should be purchased before Passover. The reason for this is that these products present the consumer with a slightly lesser level of certainty (unlike the category #1, for which there is certainty) as to whether an unintentional trace amount of hametz may have found its way into the product.

all pure fruit juices	quinoa (with nothing mixed in)*
filleted fish	white milk
frozen fruit (no additives)	Some products sold by Equal Exchange
non-iodized salt	Fair Trade Chocolate
pure white sugar (no additives)	

Frozen, uncooked vegetables may be processed on shared equipment that uses hametz. It is preferable to purchase those with a Kosher lePesach label. One may, however buy bags of frozen non-hekhshered vegetables 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 hametz. Even if one did not inspect the vegetables before Pesah, if one can remove pieces of hametz found in the package on Pesah, the vegetables themselves are permissible.

*It has come to our attention that there is a possibility of grains being mixed with quinoa if it is not under Pesach supervision. The best option is to purchase quinoa with a Kosher lePesach heksher, if it is available.

Where that is not available, purchase Bolivian or Peruvian quinoa, marked “gluten free” before Pesah. Please make certain that quinoa is the sole ingredient in the final packaging.

c) Kitniyot

Fresh kitniyot: Corn on the cob and fresh beans (like green beans or lima beans in their pods) may be purchased before and during Passover, that is, treated like any other fresh vegetable. Many do not consider green beans to be “kitniyot”, fresh or otherwise. This is certainly an accepted & longstanding practice among communities. This particular addition would be even for those who do treat green beans as kitniyot--i.e., when fresh they should be treated like any other fresh vegetable.

Dried kitniyot (legumes, rice and corn) can be purchased bagged or in boxes and then sifted or sorted before or on Passover. These should ideally not be purchased in bulk from bins because of the concern that the bin might previously have been used for hametz, and a few grains of hametz might be mixed in. In any case, one should inspect these to the extent possible before Passover and discard any pieces of hametz. If one could not inspect the rice or dried beans before Passover, one should remove pieces of hametz found in the package on Passover, discarding those, and the kitniyot themselves remain permissible.

Frozen raw kitniyot (corn, edamame [soy beans], etc.): One may purchase bags of frozen non-hekhshered kitniyot before or during (if necessary) Passover provided that one can either absolutely determine that no shared equipment was used or one is careful to inspect the contents before Passover) and discard any pieces of hametz). Even if one did not inspect the vegetables before Passover, if one can remove pieces of (hametz) found in the package on Passover, the vegetables themselves are permissible.

d) Requires Kosher for Passover label at any time

Products which require reliable Kosher lePesach certification (regular kosher supervision being not sufficient) whether bought before or during Pesah:

all baked goods	decaf coffee
farfel	decaf tea
matzah	dried fruits
any product containing matzah	herbal tea
matzah flour	ice cream
matzah meal	liquor
Pesah cakes	Butter
all frozen processed foods	oils
candy	soda
canned tuna	vinegar
cheeses	wine
chocolate milk	yogurt



Another way to potentially find acceptable foods without a specific Kosher for Passover designation during **pre-Passover shopping**, when the situation demands, is to prefer certified Gluten Free (***and oat free***) products.

Note: Products that are certified gluten-free may be consumed on Passover based on checking for specific ingredients on the product label.

- 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 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 hametz-derived grains in any quantity that would be viable according to Jewish law.
- Furthermore, this eliminates concern over any shared equipment that may have imparted hametz, since the amount of 20 parts per million is much more stringent than the halakhic principle of batel b’shishim, nullifying hametz in trace amounts (1 part in 60, about 1.6% or less of the total volume).

Oats are the only hametz-derived grain not necessarily absent in a gluten-free food. Check for oats if you shop GF.

Lastly, many of us have already opened products in our homes that are *Hametz*-free, but used in the course of normal year-round cooking. If one is able to ascertain with a high level of certainty that no hametz contaminated the opened product (or at worst a negligible amount), it would be reasonable to set it aside for Passover use for this year (especially if procuring a new package presents a potentially dangerous situation one typically avoids, or is financially prohibitive).

You’ve made this far into this guide. Shkoiach!

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