

The Rabbinical Assembly Pesah Guide 2008

This guide was prepared for the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards by Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz. It was accepted by the Committee on December 12, 1984. The last paragraph of the introduction as well as Parts A and C under "Permitted Foods," have been amended to reflect more recent decisions of the Committee affecting the status of peanuts, peanut oil, certain cheeses and canned tuna. Under Ovens and Ranges, additional material on smoothtop electric ranges has been added. For more information, consult the Summary Index of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards

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One no longer has to live in a Jewish community in order to have access to kosher for Passover products. 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 for those living far from stores that carry a full array of kosher for Passover products, shopping on the Internet enables one to order kosher for Passover food and have it shipped to their homes. In cases where it is difficult to get all the necessary products for Passover, there are some general rules that can make it possible to acquire certain items, without Passover certification, before Passover and use it on Passover when all other methods fail. A list of these types of food is attached.

A problem that has arisen is the fact that the food industry has changed very rapidly, and sometimes items that appear to be clear of hametz may in fact contain some hametz. For example, a producer of frozen vegetables may use the same line in the factory to make pasta and vegetables and a therefore a package of frozen vegetables may contain not only traces of hametz, but actual pieces of hametz. While this is theoretically possible, nevertheless the amount of hametz will probably be less than one sixtieth of the total. Additionally if pasta was not on the list of ingredients and still was in the package, the manufacturer could be penalized by the FDA. Nevertheless it is possible. However it would be a case of *miuta*, a minority of the cases, and the normative rule is *ain hosheshim lemi'uta* - we do not take the minority of cases into consideration when making a decision. Therefore, if the product cannot be acquired by mail, phone or Internet, then it is permissible to follow the guidelines below. Those who wish to be strict and not accept this position are free to do so.

Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz

On behalf of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards

The Torah prohibits the ownership of *hametz* (leaven) during Pesah. Therefore, we arrange for the sale of the *hametz* 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*).

Since the Torah prohibits the eating of *hametz* during Pesah, and since 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.

What follows is a general guideline. However, your rabbi should be consulted when any doubt arises. *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 ruled unanimously that peanuts and peanut oil are permissible. 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 of the above. Consult your rabbi for guidance in the use of these products.

PERMITTED FOODS:

- A. The following foods require no *kosher le-Pesah* label if purchased prior to Pesah: unopened packages or containers of natural coffee without cereal additives (However, be aware that coffees produced by General Foods are not kosher for Passover unless marked KP); sugar, pure tea (not herbal tea); salt (not iodized); pepper; natural spices; frozen fruit juices with no additives; frozen (uncooked) vegetables (for legumes see above); milk; butter; cottage cheese; cream cheese; ripened cheeses such as cheddar (hard), muenster (semi-soft) and Camembert (soft); frozen (uncooked) fruit (with no

additives); baking soda.

- B. 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.
- C. 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 (these juices are often clarified with *kitniyot* which are *not* listed among the ingredients. However, if one *knows* there are no such agents, the juice may be purchased prior to Pesah without a *kosher le-Pesah* label); canned tuna (since tuna, even when packed in water, has often been processed in vegetable broth and/or hydrolyzed protein--however, if it is known that the tuna is packed exclusively in water, without any additional ingredients or additives, it may be purchased without a *kosher le-Pesah* label); wine; vinegar; liquor; oils; dried fruits; candy; chocolate flavored milk; ice cream; yogurt and soda.
- D. The following processed foods (canned, bottled or frozen), require a *kosher le-Pesah* label if purchased during Pesah: milk, butter, juices, vegetables, fruit, milk products, spices, coffee, tea, and fish, as well as all foods listed in Category C.

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

MEDICINE: Since *hametz* binders are used in many pills, the following guidelines should be followed: If the medicine is required for life sustaining therapy, it may be used on Pesah. If it is not for life sustaining therapy, some authorities permit, while others prohibit. Consult your rabbi. In all cases, capsules are preferable to pills.

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 poletu*). 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 as hot as possible. Those used for cooking or eating (silverware, pots) must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned and completely immersed in boiling water. Pots should not be used for a period of at least 24 hours between the cleaning and the immersion in boiling water. Metal baking utensils cannot be kashered.
- C. *OVENS AND RANGES:* Every part that comes in contact with food must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned. Then, oven and range should be heated as hot as possible for a half hour. If there is a broil setting, use it. Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed and cleaned and then put through the self-cleaning cycle. Continuous cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens.
- D. *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.
- E. *MICROWAVE OVENS*, which do not cook the 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 the water disappears. A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesah.
- F. *GLASSWARE:* Authorities disagree as to the method for kashering drinking utensils. One opinion requires soaking in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours. The other opinion requires only a thorough scrubbing before Pesah, or putting them through a dishwasher.
 - 1. *Glass Cookware:* There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is to be kashered. One opinion is that it must be kashered. After a thorough cleansing, there should be water boiled in them which will overflow the rim. The other opinion is that only a thorough cleansing is required.
 - 2. *Glass Bakeware*, like metal bakeware, may not be kashered.
- G. *DISHWASHER:* After not using the machine for a period of 24 hours, a full cycle with detergent should be run.
- H. *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.)
- I. *TABLES, CLOSETS AND COUNTERS:* If used with *hametz*, they should be thoroughly cleaned and covered, and then they may be used.
- J. *KITCHEN SINK:* A metal sink can be kashered by thoroughly cleaning 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.
- K. *HAMETZ AND NON-PASSOVER UTENSILS:* Non-Passover dishes, pots and *hametz* whose ownership has been transferred, should be separated, locked up or covered, and marked in order to prevent accidental use.