PASSOVER: HOW TO PREPARE

PASSOVER: GETTING RID OF CHAMETZ

PASSOVER: CLEANING

Passover: Preparing for the Search

Clean the house before searching for *chametz*. Mark off the cleaned areas as you work. (This is just a suggestion, not a requirement!)

Passover: What Chametz To Remove

You must remove significant *chametz* when cleaning for *Passover*. But you do not need to remove small crumbs unless they may be inadvertently eaten during *Passover*--if they are on a kitchen counter, a table, etc.

NOTE It is the custom to remove all *chametz* from the house.

Passover: When You Do Not Need To Clean

You do not need to clean your house if you will:

- Leave your house 30 days or more before *Passover*, and
- Will not return to your house until after *Passover* has ended, and
- Have sold your *chametz* before the holiday begins.

PASSOVER: SEARCHING FOR CHAMETZ (BEDIKAT CHAMETZ)

Passover Chametz Search: Who May Search

One member of each house must search for any *chametz* (*bedikat chametz*) on behalf of the entire household. This may be a *man*, woman, or even a minor child, as long as he or she is sufficiently responsible to conduct the search in all of the details.

Passover Chametz Search: When To Search

Search your house for any leavened food or crumbs the night before first *seder* night. If the first *seder* begins Saturday night, you must search for *chametz* on Thursday night.

Passover Chametz Search: Where To Search

You must look for *chametz* (leavened foods) in any place where food might have been carried. If you have small children, you must search your entire house. However, you do not need to search in any place where no food was brought, nor in any closets that will be locked during *Passover* and the leavened food in them sold.

Passover Chametz Search: Whether To Search

If you are staying in someone else's house for *Passover* and the owner is away for the holiday, you must do *bedikat chametz* for the house--even if the owner has not been there for more than 30 days and even if you will not be eating in that house. The same rule applies for any place that you have rented for any part of *Passover* and that does not have a resident owner who has done the *bedika* there.

EXCEPTION If you are staying in a hotel or other accommodation that is thoroughly cleaned before *Passover*, you do not need to do *bedika chametz*.

Passover Chametz Search: Putting Out Chametz To Find

Before beginning the official *chametz* search, put out 10 pieces of *chametz* wrapped to prevent crumbs from falling off.

NOTE The entire procedure of putting out *chametz* is a non-binding custom.

Passover Chametz Search: Which Blessing To Say

Before searching for *chametz*, say the blessing *al bi'ur chametz*.

Passover Chametz Search: How To Search

While the search for *chametz* is traditionally done by candlelight, you may use a flashlight. You should not use a normal room light.

REASON The idea is to use a directional light source, which will highlight any *chametz*.

PASSOVER: NULLIFYING CHAMETZ

Passover: Nullifying Chametz: Which Language for Kol Chamira

The *kol chamira* formula, in Aramaic, is said to nullify any leaven that was missed during the search. If you do not understand the Aramaic, you should also read the translation in English (or whatever your own language is).

Passover: Nullifying Chametz: Who Says Kol Chamira

Everyone at *bedikat chametz*, including guests who will be there for the holiday, says the *kol chamira* formula for nullifying any *chametz* that they own.

NOTE A similar nullification is said the next morning (morning of the day before *Passover*), when the *chametz* from the search is burned.

PASSOVER: BURNING CHAMETZ

Passover: Burning Chametz: What To Do with Chametz

If you own any *chametz*, you must burn some of it in order to fulfill the commandment of burning *chametz:* this is a *mitzva* from the *Torah*!

NOTE If you have too much *chametz* to conveniently burn, you may throw some of the *chametz* into the garbage (but not into your own garbage can, only a public one--where permitted).
You must throw the *chametz* into the garbage **before** you burn the remainder. You may, alternatively, throw the *chametz* into a public area or pond (if permitted by the owner or by law).

Passover: Burning Chametz: Wife Covered by Husband

At the burning of the *chametz* before *Passover*, a wife is covered by her husband's saying *kol chamira* and burning *chametz*, unless she has *chametz* of her own.

Passover: Burning Chametz: Husband Covered by Wife

It is preferable for a husband to say *kol chamira.* However, he is covered by his wife's saying *kol chamira,* as long as he has asked his wife to do so.

NOTE If the wife burns the *chametz*, she should inform her husband at the time she actually burns the *chametz* (she may inform him by phone and does not have to do so in person).

PASSOVER: SELLING CHAMETZ

Passover: Selling Chametz: Different Countries for You and Your Chametz

If you live in one country and go to another country for *Passover*, you must sell your *chametz* so that the *chametz* in each country is sold and re-acquired at the correct time based on where you are located but also on where your *chametz* is. Consult a *rabbi*.

Passover: Selling Chametz: Selling by Mail

Appointing the *rabbi* (if the *rabbi* agrees!) as an agent to sell your *chametz* does not require an acquisition and may be effected through the mail.

Passover: Selling Chametz: Selling Animals and their Food

You must sell dog (or other animal) food, if it contains any *chametz*, for *Passover* to a non-Jew.

NOTE You may sell your dog (or other animal) to a non-Jew for *Passover* (in order to allow the animal to eat *chametz* on *Passover*), but not to the same person to whom you sold the food.

PASSOVER: ACQUIRING CHAMETZ DURING PASSOVER

Passover: Getting Rid of Chametz: Acquiring Chametz during Passover

If you inadvertantly buy *chametz* on Passover, you must burn it.
If *chametz* was brought to you, such as by mail delivery service, DON'T accept it. Consider it as ownerless/ *hefker*. You may not bring it into your house or yard. If it is still there after Passover has ended, you may take it for yourself.

NOTE If you inadvertantly bought *kitniyot* during Passover, just put it away until Passover has ended and then you may eat it.

PASSOVER: KASHERING

Passover: Dishes and Pots

See Passover: Special Pots.
For more details on *kashering* for *Passover* from the Star-K, click here.

NOTE On *Passover*, gender and *chametz* status DO get transferred through a stream of hot liquid back into the pouring container.

Passover: When To Finish Kashering

When *kashering* an oven or utensils for *Passover*, you may *kasher:*

- By *Libun*

  Anytime, including on *chol ha'moed* (but not on *Jewish festivals* or *Shabbat*).

- By *Hag'ala*

  Until one hour before *halachic midday* on *Passover* eve (but *b'di'avad* it is OK until just before sunset of *Passover* eve).

Passover: Kashering Pots and Utensils To Change from Milk to Meat (or vice versa)

You may make certain utensils *kosher* for *Passover* if they were *chametz* or non-*kosher*. For a list of materials that can be *kashered*, see the sections entitled **"Items/Materials that Can Be *Kashered*"** and **"Items/Materials that Cannot Be *Kashered*"** here: Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils (*Kashering*)
.

NOTE You may not change utensils that are already *kosher* directly from *milk* to meat or meat to *milk*. Rather, you must:

- First make the utensil non-*kosher* (or *chametz*), and then
- *Kasher* it.

Once *kashered*, the utensil will usually be neutral/*pareve* as far as gender and you may choose to make it *dairy* or meat.

Passover: Kashering an Oven

To *kasher* an oven for *Passover*:

- Clean it completely, including any hard deposits, and
- Heat the oven for 40 minutes at its highest temperature.

Passover: Kashering an Oven: Cleaning

To determine whether an oven is clean:
If there are black or brown spots, scratch them:

- If the substance crumbles, the spots are OK.
- If the spots do not crumble, consider the oven NOT clean.

NOTE If you use the oven's self-clean cycle, you do not need to remove the hard deposits from the oven before *kashering*.
If the oven is not self-cleaning, you must remove (clean off or burn off) any deposits on the walls, racks, and window. If the stains or deposits do not come off after two cycles of using a strong oven cleaner such as Easy Off, the oven is considered sufficiently clean. **Weaker oven cleaners that do not remove deposits may not be relied on.**

Passover: Kashering an Oven: Temperature

The order of preference for the heat settings is

- Self-cleaning (if possible) on the self-cleaning cycle.
- Next choice is broil or the highest heat setting.

For more details on *kashering* for *Passover*, see
kashrus/kk-passover-*kashering*.htm">http://www.star-k.org/*kashrus*/kk-passover-*kashering*.htm

© Copyright 2026 Richard B. Aiken | www.practicalhalacha.com