

THE KOSHER NEXUS PASSOVER FAQ - UPDATED 5783

This guide grew out of the UTJ's Passover Hot Line- the first 1-800 number established for Passover questions. This is a fairly complete representation of all the questions we have received over the years. We hope that this guide will add to your observance of Pesah, and that it will make your life easier as you prepare for the holiday. Chag Kasher V'sameach to everyone!

I. FOOD:

WHAT ABOUT OAT AND SPELT MATZAHs? There are kosher for Passover Oat and Spelt Matzahs.

DAIRY

DOES HARD (AGED) CHEESE NEED PASSOVER CERTIFICATION IF IT IS BOUGHT BEFORE PESAH? Yes.

DOES KOSHER BUTTER NEED PESAH CERTIFICATION IF BOUGHT BEFORE PESAH? No.

CAN I USE AN UNOPENED BOTTLE OF ORGANIC MAPLE SYRUP? Yes.

DO COTTAGE CHEESE AND CHEESES IN GENERAL NEED PASSOVER CERTIFICATION? Yes. Careful consumers should only buy Kosher for Passover cheeses- hard and soft!

IS THERE A KP NON-DAIRY CREAMER? Yes, it is made by Kineret.

IS THERE A LOW FAT KP CHEESE? Yes.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

MAY ALL FROZEN VEGETABLES BE USED FOR PESAH? No, not at all. It used to be that frozen veggies were quite good for Pesah, but that has ceased to be the case due to the fact that most vegetable processors now cook all manner of hametz in the same retorts in which the vegetables are cooked. (Yes, even frozen veggies are subject to some cooking.) So, frozen vegetables need Pesah certification.

MAY WE EAT CORN? Sephardim eat corn on Pesah.

MAY I USE PEELED BABY CARROTS? Some people say no out of a fear that the anti-oxidants used may be hametz. Obviously, the situation can change from year to year. Until now, there has been no problem with peeled carrots. In fact, over a ten year period, we have found no problems with this product.

ARE WE PERMITTED TO EAT STRINGBEANS? According to the ReMA (Rabbi Moses Isserles), yes, we may. Not every rabbi accepts that stance. Our stance here at the Kosher Nexus is that we may eat them.

MAY WE EAT SWEET POTATOES ON PASSOVER? Canned ones would need Pesah certification. Fresh ones would be fine.

CAN I USE CANNED PINEAPPLE WITHOUT PESAH HASHGACHA ON PESAH? Some people feel that canned pineapple in its own sauce only (i.e., not in syrup) is acceptable for Passover. Even though we agree, we suggest, that you might want to buy certified KP canned pineapple.

DOES APPLESAUCE NEED PASSOVER CERTIFICATION? Yes.

GRAINS

IS QUINOA KOSHER FOR PESAH? Yes. It needs no Passover certification. If you want to be certain beyond all certainties, buy it before Pesah. Stories about possible wheat being present in quinoa were fabrications.

DOES CEREAL NEED PASSOVER CERTIFICATION? Absolutely! There are now a number of fairly expensive cereals on the market for Pesah.

BEVERAGES: SODA, COFFEE, ALCOHOL

WHAT ABOUT SODAS? Soda needs Passover hashgacha. One thing you should know is that often times the label on the soda will say "corn syrup" even though the cap of the soda says KP. There are no kosher for Passover sodas that contain corn syrup. They simply don't change the label for Passover, hence the KP on the cap. Please also note that flavored Seltzer needs Passover hashgacha. Plain, unflavored seltzer is automatically Kosher for Pesah.

IS THERE KOSHER FOR PASSOVER RUM? We have never seen any.

DOES COFFEE NEED PASSOVER CERTIFICATION? All **regular** GROUND coffee is acceptable for Passover.

DOES DECAF TEA OR DECAF COFFEE NEED PASSOVER HASHGACHA? Yes. Lipton Decaf tea is fine for Passover with no special certification

IS THERE AN ORGANIC WINE FOR PASSOVER? Yes, it is made by Kedem Wine.

ARE THERE KOSHER FOR PASSOVER WHISKEYS? Not many. There are some kosher for Passover vodkas, bourbons, one tequila, and some liqueurs. Check for hashgacha.

IS THERE KP BRANDY? Yes, among others who make it, Kedem makes some. Brandy must have KP certification.

SNACKS AND DESSERTS

WHAT ABOUT NUTS? Nuts must be raw, not colored, with no additives and no BHA. Other than that, they need Pesah certification.

MAY WE EAT PEANUTS ON PASSOVER? According to the late Rabbi Moses Feinstein (OBM), we may eat peanuts on Passover. Many have twisted his words, but, simply put, he allowed it unless there is a community wide custom not to eat them.

IS THERE KOSHER FOR PASSOVER PEANUT BUTTER? Yes. It is made Shneider's.

WHAT ABOUT POPCORN? Most Ashkenazim would not eat popcorn on Pesah. Sephardim can, and it needs Pesah certification.

WHAT ABOUT COCOA? Hershey's Pure Cocoa needs no special certification for Passover. Just open a new tin/box.

IS THERE KOSHER FOR PASSOVER VANILLA? Yes, but it must have special Passover certification.

DOES HONEY NEED KP CERTIFICATION? Pure honey with no additives needs no Passover certification. Beware of any honey produced in China. We do not recommend honey from China at any time!

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS KP RICE CAKES OR CORN CAKES? Yes.

ADDITIVES

IS THERE A KOSHER FOR PESAH CORN STARCH? We have never seen one.

DOES ARTIFICIAL SWEETENER NEED HASHGACHA FOR PESAH? Generally speaking, yes, it does. Plain saccharin tabs need no hashgacha.

DOES APPLE CIDER VINEGAR NEED PESAH CERTIFICATION? Yes.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF VINEGAR? Unless it is certified kosher for Passover, it isn't!

ARE JALAPENOS IN THE CAN OR JAR KP? They would need Passover certification.

WHAT SPICES ARE KP? In general, spices need Passover certification because of the ways in which spices are dried, cured, and produced. In addition, some spices are sprayed with a Hametz spray to make them dry better and more quickly. Hence, spices need certification. Some years, there are spices that are acceptable without special Passover certification. When that is the case, we shall make the information available to you.

OILS

WHAT IS THE STORY WITH EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL? It doesn't need special Passover certification. (only true of 100% extra virgin oil that is already labelled kosher.)

IS CANOLA OIL KP? It certainly can be.

WHAT ABOUT SAFFLOWER OIL? It needs P certification. Look for Hollywood brand in the regular oil department of your supermarket. It often hides there!

MISCELLANEOUS

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF GUAR GUM, CAROB BEAN GUM, AND CARRAGENUM? They need Passover certification.

IS FLAX SEED KOSHER FOR PASSOVER? Yes- in all forms: raw, dry, or bleached.

IS METAMUCIL KOSHER FOR PESAH? The unflavored kind is acceptable. The capsules are fine, too.

FOODWARE

DOES ALUMINUM FOIL NEED P CERTIFICATION? No. (Actually, it never needs certification.)

DOES WAX PAPER NEED P CERTIFICATION? No. Most authorities hold that it does not need Passover certification.

II. KASHERING:

FOODWARE

ITEMS YOU CANNOT KASHER FOR PASSOVER: There are a number of items that cannot be made kosher for Pesah. They include the following: Any plates or bowls made of stoneware, bone china, porcelain or various clays are all porous and cannot be kashered. (Most china is a combination of various clays.) Baking pans cannot be made Kosher for Pesah.

DOES THE MIKVEH MAKE DISHES KOSHER FOR PASSOVER? No, it does not.

HOW DO I KASHER SILVERWARE? After not using the silverware for at least 24 hours, immerse it piece by piece in boiling water. Use a net bag to make it easier. Heavy duty rubber gloves are helpful, too.

HOW DO I KASHER GLASSWARE? There are three ways. One way (and we do not suggest you do this) is to immerse it in boiling water. Sephardim simply wash glass to make it kosher for Pesah. Many Ashkenazim follow the Sefardi custom. The other is to do the three-day dunk. Fill a large tub or basin with water from the tap. Hot, cold, tepid- it matters not. Put the glassware into the tub of water and make sure that it is totally immersed. After 24 hours, drain the water and refill. After another 24 hours, drain and refill. After another 24 hours, drain the water, and you are done. Among commentaries, the Terumat Hadeshen stands out for not allowing glass to be koshered at all. In Israel, more and more Ashkenazi rabbis are calling for simple washing.

HOW DO I KASHER CORNINGWARE? First of all, note that Corning BAKE ware may NOT be kashered for Pesah. In general, the rule regarding Corningware is: If it has been used for heating/cooking foods, then it has to be kashered in heat over 750 degrees. If it has NOT been used to heat/cook foods, it can be kashered by either the three-day dunk or by boiling.

OVENS & STOVES

HOW DO I KASHER A SELF-CLEANING OVEN? Turn on the self-cleaning cycle. Go drink some coffee and come back in four hours. Voila!

HOW DO I KASHER THE OVEN IF IT'S NOT SELF-CLEANING? Minutely and fastidiously scrub and then scrub some more until the inside shines. Take out the racks and scrub them until they shine again. Put the racks back in the oven and put the oven on broil for one hour. The bottom line is: do the best job you can do.

HOW DO I KASHER A CONTINUOUS CLEANING OVEN? The only way to do this kind of oven is just the same way we clean any regular oven. Care should be taken, however, as many continuous cleaning ovens can be ruined by caustic cleansers. Check with the manufacturer's instructions, first.

HOW DO I KASHER A MICROWAVE OVEN? Remove the inside tray and clean it separately. If the tray is made of glass, run through the dishwasher and it can be used for Passover. If it is not a glass tray, use a new one for the Holiday. Clean the inside of the microwave thoroughly. Once clean, put a bowl of water inside the oven. Nuke the water until it boils and the interior of the oven is covered with condensation. Then move the bowl and nuke again. When the interior is thoroughly wet, the unit is kosher for Pesah.

HOW DO I KASHER A GLASS TOP RANGE? If it is Corning, Halogen, Radiant, or Ceran: turn on the heat until the top is hot enough to do "libun kal," i.e., it is hot enough to ignite a piece of tissue placed on it when the unit is turned off.

HOW DO I KASHER THE TRIVETS ON THE STOVE TOP? Clean them very carefully. Put them back on the stove top and turn on the gas or the electric on highest setting for twenty (some say 30) minutes.

DISHWASHERS & TABLE TOPS

HOW DO I KASHER THE DISHWASHER? There are different opinions about this. “Everyone” says first to scrub and wash out the interior and racks. Some feel that the racks cannot be made kosher for Pesah, so they say to put in new ones (or racks used only for Pesah.). Others say to clean the racks very carefully and then put them in the machine while you run two koshering cycles. Others say one cycle. Some say that rubber can be made KP. Some do not accept that.

Halachically, all that is needed, however, is to clean the interior and the racks, and run a full cycle with soap and then you can use the dishwasher on Pesah.

HOW DO I KASHER A GRANITE TOP COUNTER? Use boiling water. Pour it all over the counter. Mop the floor.

CAN LUCITE BE MADE KOSHER FOR PASSOVER? There are two opinions: one says yes, the other says no. We are of the opinion that because Lucite is hard plastic, it can be made kosher for Pesah by immersion in boiling water.

MISCELLANEOUS

HOW DO I KASHER MY YEAR ‘ROUND BLECH? Ashkenazi custom is to use a strictly Kosher for Passover blech.

HOW DO I KASHER A HAND-HELD (NOT ELECTRIC) CAN OPENER? First clean it well. Don’t use it for 24 hours. Immerse it in boiling water.

HOW DO I KASHER MY DENTURES FOR PASSOVER? Although the temptation to say gargle with boiling water is strong, the truth is just clean them. Some people do pour boiling water over the dentures- but put them in the sink or in a cup first! We do not recommend using boiling water on your dentures. Just clean them carefully.

BAKING PANS CANNOT BE MADE KOSHER FOR PESAH.

III. MEDICINES / COSMETICS / CLEANERS:

MEDICINES

Check the various lists. The bottom line regarding meds is that many people have a custom to not use pills containing hametz unless there is no acceptable alternative. Many people believe that if it is a pill that is swallowed, it need not be kosher for Passover. We concur. We do note, though, that all insulins and all heart meds (as of now) are kosher for Passover. Please note that elixirs are always chametz and are NOT acceptable on Passover.

COSMETICS

As this is a generalized listing, it is not possible for us to list cosmetics here. We do, however, believe that there is almost never an issue with cosmetics.

CLEANERS

ARE SCOTCHBRIGHT PADS KOSHER FOR PASSOVER? Yes

IS COMET KOSHER FOR PASSOVER Yes.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF O-U CERTIFIED CLEANING LIQUIDS? They are all kosher for Passover.

MISCELLANEOUS

I WILL BE AWAY FOR PESAH, WHEN DO I DO BEDIKAT HAMETZ? Just before you leave home.

IS THERE A RESOURCE FOR VEGETARIANS? Indeed, there is. The best collection of Kosher for Passover recipes (including veggie) can be found at: www.kosher4passover.com/recipes.htm

IV. THE FINAL WORD:

Here at the UTJ, we are always available to answer your Kashruth questions- at Pesah time and all year around, too. Feel free to email your questions to kosher4passover@gmail.com

This is an edited monograph originally written by Rabbi Jeffrey Rappoport.

KOSHER L'PESAH FOODS

Purchasing Kosher for Pesah foods takes some thought and planning. Many products that you use every day cannot be used for Pesah. Most items require special certification for Pesah. The list below will help you in determining which products do and do not need special Pesah certification.

The following items do NOT require special certification for Pesah:

Bicarbonate of soda
Cocoa (Hershey's Pure) - just open a new container
Isocal
Ensure and Sostocal
Frozen juices without added vitamin C
Unsweetend, natural frozen fruits - not in any syrup
Fresh fish
Fresh fruits and vegetables (NOT frozen)
Raw nuts
Ipecac
Domino Brownulated and Domino Brown Sugar
Plain, unflavored seltzer
100% extra virgin oil that is already labelled kosher.

The following products REQUIRE certification for Pesah use:

Baking powder
Butter (when purchased during Pesah)
Margarine
Canned fruits and vegetables
Frozen vegetables
Chewing gum
Salt
Tuna
Frozen vegetables
Frozen fruit with any additives
Cider vinegar
Cooking oil
Chocolate
Honey

Miscellaneous

Herbal Teas require Pesah certification.
Liquid Sweet and Low is OK to use for Pesah.

There is powdered Sweet and Low (in packets) that is kosher for Pesah, in specially marked packages from Israel. The American kind is not certified for Pesah.

Cottonseed oil needs only to be marked kosher for it to be used for Pesah. Also, Extra Virgin Olive Oil that is certified kosher needs no other certification.

Many caffeine-free teas are actually hamets – beware!