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# Getting Your Home Ready for Pesach

## Healthy Cleaning - A Survival Guide on Pesach Preparations

Getting ready for the holiday of Pesach? Well, as every woman knows, it is a task that requires planning, time, patience and a lot of stamina. But getting your home ready and making it kosher for Pesach can be a little easier with some tips and the right information.

### Where Do I Start?

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A  
good cleaning session starts with a peaceful mind and the ambition to do the job. Pick out some music to inspire you and plan a reward for yourself for afterwards. Motivate!

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Don't  
take on more than what is reasonable. Plan to do one room in two days. Sure, you could probably do it in one, but burnout is guaranteed even for the young. Think of how many rooms you have to do! Plan ahead and pace yourself.

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Plan  
all your cleaning supplies. Make sure you have the right tools and they are ergonomic. If not, you will pay later in frustration and confusion.

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Make  
sure you have the right cleaners - pick more natural cleansers, such as Mrs. Meyers. These are natural as well as aroma-therapeutic. These natural scents will uplift you as you clean and keep your health in tact. Many cleaners have harmful bi-products and vapors. Think geranium, lemon verbena or lavender. Or use any other natural cleanser that you have at home and think about adding 15 drops of your favorite essential oil to give it a boost.

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Start  
with upper rooms, or less-chametz filled rooms. Work your way up to the big ones.

You'll be glad you did. Save the kitchen for the last 2 days.

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Remember,  
this is a bigger picture. Yes, the goal  
is to get the chametz, but also to freshen your home, rid the house of clutter  
and dust, and bring new life to your surroundings. It is work, but well worth the effort.

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If  
you consider what you own a gift, you will treasure it. The Hebrew for "I have" is "Yesh Li" which  
literally means: there is to me. What  
you own is to you - take care of it and take the time yearly at least to either  
pass it along if it isn't being used, or freshen it up.

THE OBLIGATION TO GET RID OF CHAMETZ - Couches and Pant Legs, Car seats and Drawers....(sung to the  
tune of "Favorite Things")

In  
cleaning for Passover, we are first and foremost fulfilling the mitzvah of biur  
chametz -- getting rid of chametz. Biur chametz is actually  
quite an easy mitzvah in terms of physical exertion. The Torah says: "tashbisu  
se'or mibateichem" -- make all your sour dough rest. The Torah  
commandment is that you can possess all the chametz you want, but in your mind  
it must be dust -- ownerless and valueless.

Now  
obviously we are dealing with something subtle and vague. What goes on in your  
mind, no one knows except you and G-d. It's quite easy to think you have  
considered everything "null and void," when in truth you can't wait  
for Passover to be over so you can partake of all those goodies!

So the  
Sages instituted a requirement to physically destroy chametz. This mitzvah is  
known as bedikat chametz. The Sages say it is not enough to emotionally  
write the chametz off as "dust"; you must actually search out any  
chametz you can find -- and physically destroy it.

WHAT ARE WE SEARCHING FOR?

What kind of chametz do we have to  
get rid of? And what is "chametz" anyway?

The Torah says: Lo yera'eh

lecha chametz, velo year'eh lecha se'or bechol gevulecha - "neither chametz nor se'or shall be visible to you in all your boundaries."

To review the three categories:

1) Chametz is food made of fermented grain.

2) Se'or is non-edible sourdough, which has the power to ferment other dough.

3) "Garbage" is something that is either incapable of fermenting other dough, or so totally non-edible that a dog wouldn't eat it.

We are also looking for something that is more than a kezayit (olive size - like an olive) -- regardless of whether you would consider it food or not. If it's less than a kezayit of non-edible chametz, you don't have to get rid of it because you consider it dirt. Also, if it's something even a dog wouldn't eat, then even more than a kezayit is not problematic.

## KASHER - THE DEFINITION

This term will be used over and over. Here's how it goes:

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If the item to be kashered was used in cooking or with hot chametz, it must be boiled in hot water for 15 seconds and then placed immediately in cold water. Water in water.

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If the item to be kashered was used with "fire" (hot oven, stove), then it must be "fired" using a blow torch and getting it nearly red-hot to remove chametz. Fire in fire.

## DISHES, UTENSILS, AND THE OPTION OF GOING "PESACH-DIK"

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Dishes  
used during the year, whether for meat or dairy, cannot be used for Pesach. Either use paper plates, or consider purchasing dishes that will be used solely for Pesach .

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The  
same goes for the silverware. You may, however, kasher all your silverware (no plastic or wood may be attached) and use it.

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Purchasing  
Pesach only dishes and utensils ensures you have what you need every year - tuck it away in a sealed, non-chametz place and use it once a year for peace of mind.

## BOIL YOUR UTENSILS, FIRE YOUR PANS, AND SCRUB!

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Any  
metal utensils can be kashered (provided no plastic or wood attached) and used for Pesach.

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All  
pans and pots must be fired (use a blow torch) and must become very hot to remove chametz.

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Scrub  
other items thoroughly in the kitchen that are not metal.

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Pyrex  
may not be used for Pesach - purchase extra Pyrex for Pesach only for your cooking.

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Regular  
glass bowls and items need to be cleaned but can be used - we follow Sephardic minhag on this.

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Plastic,  
rubber and silicone utensils, Teflon  
pans and all other non-metal items must be stored away during Pesach in a closet. They are non-usable.

## KASHER YOUR SINK

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If  
your sink is metal, you may kasher it for Pesach - boiling water all over it first, then cold water.

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If  
your sink is porcelain, you may not wash dishes directly in it, no matter how much you scrub it. Porcelain and ceramic may not be kashered and therefore any washing must be done in a separate Pesach-only wash basin. Be sure not to touch any of your Pesach items to your sink.

## KASHER YOUR COUNTER

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If  
you have a granite countertop, you are able to kasher it.

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If  
you have a formica or ceramic countertop, clean it as best and you can, but do not place any food directly on the counter during Pesach. There really is no way to kasher these types of counters.

## KASHER YOUR KIDDUSH CUP AND CANDLESTICKS

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If  
you want to use your Kiddush cup on Passover, you must kasher it. The same applies to candlesticks if they've been brought to the table.

## SALE OF CHAMETZ

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The prevailing custom is not to sell real edible chametz like bread, crackers, etc. The exception is when getting rid of it will involve a hardship -- i.e. you've got a large quantity of it, it's difficult to obtain, or it's expensive. Certainly

you can include a half-bottle of scotch in the sale. Otherwise, you can give the food away to a non-Jewish acquaintance. Some cities specifically host food drives for poor people in the days before Passover.

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But what about

food that's not "real" chametz -- i.e. a can of tuna fish that's not labeled "Kosher for Passover," or food that was cooked in a chametz pot? These things you can put away in a cabinet and sell them. Taping the cabinet closed is only necessary if out of habit you may open it on Passover. By the way, even chametz of a non-Jew must be put away and covered.

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The rabbi will have forms to sell your chametz - stay posted!

#### WHAT ITEMS ARE CHAMETZ?

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Anything that contains wheat, oat, barley, rye or spelt. Period. Any form, any derivative - yes, even those salad dressings and condiments. Check them!

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Any grain alcohol - check those vanilla flavorings!

#### WHAT ITEMS ARE OK?

Because we keep Sephardic minchag regarding certain foods during Pesach, there are a number of things which are termed as ok in our community:

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Baking soda is OK for Pesach.

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Baking powder with a Pesach symbol is OK.

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Items with  
corn syrup.

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You may eat  
legumes and beans and rice..

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Sugar and salt  
is ok.

Have a happy and kosher Passover -- and an easy cleaning!