

**Update for 5782:****Dear Friends,**

Over the past two years, we experienced truly different Passover experiences, from the preparations & purchases, to the Seders, and beyond. As Passover approached, each year the CJLS provided updated guidelines for the moment in which we found ourselves--so many uncertainties about food supplies, financial difficulties, and the loss of family & community gatherings as we once knew them.

While much has changed and [being together in person in many forms is resuming](#), we mustn't forget we continue to be in the midst of a devastating pandemic for which many people are still vulnerable to serious health complications. Furthermore, many of our community members are still experiencing hardship--physically, financially, and emotionally. It is also true that the pandemic is in different stages in different places, so while certain communities may still need to more heavily rely on leniencies, others may be ready to return to a more pre-Covid era of Passover preparation.

For these reasons, and our inability to have a clear sense of where we will be in April as preparations for Passover pick up, the leniencies we provided last year will largely remain in place (they are all well within the boundaries of keeping a kosher Passover), and available to those who need them. We will also provide a copy of our typical CJLS Passover guide, as many will also prefer aspiring to something closer to what existed before pandemic times.

Most importantly, we want to remind you of that which we reminded you the last two years: *“As different practices emerge in different communities, let's all remember to treat one another as kindly as possible, reserving judgment for the One imbued with the amount of compassion with which to do it lovingly, always.”*

Some resources the RA/CJLS has provided over the past few years:

Teshuvah on Streaming on Shabbat and Yom Tov by Joshua Heller:

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Streaming%20on%20Shabbat%20and%20Yom%20Tov%20Heller.pdf>

5781 Q&A featuring common Pesah questions (to ask questions this year please contact Rabbi Aaron Alexander (rabbi.alexander@adasisrael.org)):

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/story/qa-pesah-5781>

Additionally, you may find some resources on this page helpful:

Kashering/Cleaning:

This may be one area in which not much has to change, for many households. The directions are laid out in the CJLS Pesah Guide. Cleaning this year, again, may actually be a bit more difficult as many of us have been in our homes living differently than normal. But the general rule is, places must be well-searched and specifically cleaned for *hameitz* only if it's a place for which and in which *hameitz* is normally consumed and cooked. Furthermore, the prohibition of owning & seeing *hameitz* applies specifically to amounts of pure *hameitz* that is at least the size of an olive (*k'zayit*). This is your yearly reminder that dirt is not *hameitz*.

Destruction of *hameitz*/Bi'ur *hameitz* and Bittul *hameitz*/Renouncing of *hameitz*:

It is a mitzvah to search for and destroy *hameitz*. If cleaning is unusually difficult this year due to conditions of isolation, it is well to remember that at the end of that process we renounce "all *hameitz* whether I am aware of it or not." If cleaning is sufficient to protect against obvious contact with *hameitz*, we can rely on the formula of bittul (renunciation).

Sale of *hameitz*:

We have set up an online form for those in North America to appoint Rabbi Mordy Schwartz as the agent for the sale of *hameitz*. Grocery store owners and other businesses that will be open over Pesah should not fill out the form but should email Rabbi Schwartz to arrange for the sale.

We have also set up an online form for those living in Latin America to appoint Rabbi Meir Szames as the agent for the sale of *hameitz*.

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 *hameitz* 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 and aluminum foil placed between the rack and the baking dish. 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 a 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.

Purchasing of Food:

Hierarchy of purchasing: The CJLS [formally permitted](#) Ashkenazim to consume kitniyot in 2015.

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:¹

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, 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.

This year, due to overall Covid limitations and in order to limit individuals having to check multiple stores, if you are unable to find an item below with a Kosher for Passover certification due to COVID-19 then here's what you can do:

1) Food requiring no Kosher for Passover certification no matter when purchased (they are certainly *hameitz*-free):

Baking soda

Pure bicarbonate of soda, without additives

Eggs

Fresh fruits and vegetables (including pre-washed bagged)

Fresh or frozen kosher meat (other than chopped meat)

¹ Two years ago 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 *hameitz*, 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. Since there are still areas that find themselves in distress, we will continue to publish these lists this year as well.

Nestea (regular and decaffeinated)
Pure black, green, or white tea leaves
Unflavored tea bags
Unflavored regular coffee
Olive oils (and other pure oils)
Whole or gutted fresh kosher fish
Whole or half pecans (not pieces)
Whole (unground) spices and nuts
OU/Star-K Raisins
Kosher wine
Plain butter, either salted or unsalted
Unflavored Seltzer Water, Sparkling Water (without additives)

2) 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 category #1, for which there is a certainty) as to whether an unintentional trace amount of *hameitz* may have found its way into the product. However, if the food item is deemed crucial²³ and one cannot procure a marked KP version of food during the holiday itself, one could purchase said item on Hol-HaMo'ed.

all pure fruit juices
Filletted fish
Frozen fruit (no additives)
Plain cheeses (without added flavor morsels)
Non-iodized salt
Pure white sugar (no additives)
Quinoa (with nothing mixed in)* GF ideal
White milk
Some products sold by Equal Exchange Fair Trade Chocolate⁴
Frozen Vegetables (needs to be checked for possible *hameitz* before cooking)

² This situational & provisional leniency is being provided based on a reasonable assumption by the purchaser that the product was produced before Passover began (production and supply lines generally affirm this in typical supermarket shopping), coupled with any potential *hameitz* being in trace amounts, only. The temporary ruling relies on the principle of a double doubt, *s'feik s'feika*, which asserts that since there is a doubt as to the date of actual production--very likely before Passover but still a bit of uncertainty--as well as a doubt among poskim concerning the principle of nullification's (1/60) application on Passover, a lenient ruling can be made (see first Darkhei Moshe to OH 447, and Mishnah Berurah, 447:2). Needless to say, this is a minority opinion and only in effect from the CJLS is these extenuating circumstances, under the provisions above. .

³ We recognize there could be some ambiguity around words like "necessary" and "crucial" and "important". Should individuals have questions as to whether their particular need justifies this leniency, please first be in touch with your local rabbi. More generally, this category of foods is being provided for those who may run out of something essential after Passover begins, or may have been unable to procure it beforehand for whatever reason, and deem it necessary to have on hand for ongoing important food preparation for the holiday.

⁴ See available options, here: <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/pages/pesach>

Chopped meat

Plain, non-flavored almond milk, rice milk, soy milk, cashew milk.

Non-flavored Cream Cheese with ingredients of milk and cream, salt, stabilizers (xanthan and/or carob bean and/or guar gums)

Non-flavored Yogurt with milk and bacteria, only (which are *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*).

Canned Tuna with just tuna, water or oil, salt, and pyrophosphates

100% maple syrup

100% Agave

Ground Salt and Peppers

Plain (non-Flavored) Decaf Coffee

Year-round supervised plain margarine

Pure Honey

Dried fruit, prunes only without potassium sorbate

Club Soda

3) **Kitniyot:**

Fresh kitniyot: Corn on the cob and fresh beans (like green beans⁵ or lima beans in their pods) may be purchased before and during Passover, that is, 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 *hameitz*, and a few grains of *hameitz* might be mixed in. In any case, one should inspect these to the extent possible before Passover and discard any pieces of *hameitz*. If one could not inspect the rice or dried beans before Passover, one should remove pieces of *hameitz* 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 *hameitz*. Even if one did not inspect the vegetables before Passover, if one can remove pieces of (*hameitz*) found in the package on Passover, the vegetables themselves are permissible.

4) **Requires Kosher for Passover label at any time:**

All baked goods

Farfel

Matzah

⁵ 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.

Any product containing matzah
Matzah flour
Matzah meal
Pesah cakes
All frozen processed foods
Candy
Chocolate milk
Herbal tea
Ice cream
Liquor
Soda
Vinegar
Margarine

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.⁶

It has become quite common for many folks to use food-shopping services in which individuals shop on behalf of others and drop products off at the door. While not inherently problematic for Passover, it is not uncommon for shoppers to substitute similar items for others, grocery stores often mismark products with their own signage, and Kosher sections can be confusing for the inexperienced Passover shopper. This is potentially challenging, such that those who utilize these services specify precisely what it is they prefer in the days before Passover, and certainly during the holiday itself. Some services provide options for flagging “no substitutions”, which should be utilized whenever possible. We also strongly recommend those who use those services to be extra judicious in checking their orders for accuracy at delivery.

Lastly, many of us have already opened products in our homes that are *hameitz*-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 *hameitz* 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).

⁶ 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 *hameitz*-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 *hameitz*, since the amount of 20 parts per million is much more stringent than the halakhic principle of batel b’shishim, nullifying *hameitz* in trace amounts (1 part in 60, about 1.6% or less of the total volume).
- **Oats are the only *hameitz*-grain not necessarily absent in a gluten-free food. Check for oats if you shop GF. (Thanks to Jarod Skoff, ZSRS, for this brief write-up.)**

***A Note on Medications⁷:** Though COVID has disrupted our lives in many ways, it has not affected any questions of the permissibility of medications on Pesah, or during the year. The following is a general guide, however any specific questions should be directed to your rabbi.

All medications that are needed for illnesses and medical conditions that involve possible life-threatening situations are permitted.

Medications that do not involve life-threatening situations are divided into two categories. Those medications, in particular pills which are known remedies in the medical community and are made to be swallowed whole, are permitted, since they are to be considered like a "burnt item" that has lost its relationship to its possible non-kosher origin. Although swallowed, they are considered to be neither food nor (edible) *hameitz*.

However, medications for illnesses or medical conditions that do not involve a life-threatening situation (including vitamins and supplements) that have been formulated to be edible or semi-pleasant to drink can be problematic. This includes soft gelcaps which often contain porcine gelatin and liquid medicines that often contain glycerin and other additives (which can be made from animals). It is recommended that all such over-the-counter items be purchased with *hashgacha* (Kosher certification) before Pesah and state on their packaging that they contain no starch. If this is not possible, then it is preferable to purchase unflavored liquids and hard capsules, also prior to Pesah. If none of these are available, consult your rabbi.

Seder on Saturday night, Motzash

In theory, the ideal time to start Seder is when stars are visible in the sky, "*Tzeit Hakohavim*" (This is also the time when havdalah is said at the end of Shabbat, and is often held to be approximately an hour after the time of candle lighting the night before, though some may assert a slightly earlier time). It is permissible to have the Saturday evening Ma'ariv service early so that participants can be ready to start seder at this time. However, in many locations, following this approach would mean starting after 8:30 PM, making it difficult for many to participate in the seder, and preventing the fulfillment of one of the essential reasons for the seder, teaching the next generation about the Exodus.

For any seder not held on Saturday night, if circumstances warrant, one may start the seder as early as 90 minutes before sundown (about 75 minutes before candle lighting), though it is strongly preferred to carry out at least some part of the Magid telling of the story, and the eating of Matzah and Marror, after dark.

Shabbat presents specific challenges. Since we do not prepare on Shabbat for events taking place after Shabbat, ideally, one would not begin preparing for the Seder, let alone conduct the seder itself until after this time.

⁷ Thanks to Rabbi Steve Kane, who is writing a longer responsum on this topic, for this explanation and expansion from previous Passover guides.

Furthermore, the Seder on Saturday night usually combines the recitation of Havdalah, ending Shabbat, with kiddush, beginning the night of Passover. In addition, it is forbidden to light the Passover candles until Shabbat is over.

The CJLS has proposed the following alternatives for Seder on Saturday night:

Option 1: More technically accurate, but potentially confusing.

A. Begin the Seder as if it were not Saturday night, with regular Kiddush, but SKIP havdalah (the brachot that end "borei meorei haesh" and "hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh")

B. Make sure that you take until at least the end of Shabbat to reach the second cup. At that time, take a break to light Yom Tov candles from a pre-existing flame. (and ideally where they can be seen from the table). After reciting the prayers for the second cup, add the havdalah blessings (the brachot that end "borei meorei haesh" and "hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh")

C. Make sure you have told at least a tiny bit of the Passover story after this time, then continue with the second hand-washing.

Option 2: Defer the first cup until later in the seder (simpler but less preferable)

A. Start with Urechatz (skipping Kiddush) and proceed normally

B. When you reach havdalah time, do candle lighting and kiddush. It is strongly preferred that you take long enough that this happens before you reach the second cup, of course.

For those interested in an expanded explanation of timing vis-a-vis the ending of Shabbat and Seder, as well as options for how to begin Seder early, see:

https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/2011-2020/earlyseder_real_final.pdf