

PREPARING FOR AND CELEBRATING PASSOVER IN YOUR HOME

The term chameitz, or leaven, is applied not only to foods which are to be avoided during Pesach, but also to the dishes and utensils in which foods are prepared or served during the year, which may not be used during Pesach except as described below.

1. FORBIDDEN FOR USE: The following foods are forbidden for use during Pesach: leavened bread, cakes, biscuits and crackers, cereals, coffee substance derived from cereals, wheat, barley, and oats. All liquids which contain ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol are also prohibited.

2. PERMITTED FOODS:

A. REQUIRING NO “KOSHER L'PESACH” LABEL. The following foods are permitted in unopened packages or containers. They require no “Kosher L'Pesach” label: natural coffee, sugar, tea, salt, pepper, and fruits and vegetables (fresh or frozen).

B. IF CERTIFIED FOR PASSOVER USE BY RABBINICAL AUTHORITY. Matzah, matzah flour, Passover noodles, candies, cakes, beverages, canned and processed foods, milk, butter, jams, cheese, jellies, relishes, dried fruits, salad oils, vegetable gelatin, shortenings, vinegar, and wines and liquors are permitted if they are certified by competent rabbinical authority as fit for Passover use. Labels and tags marked “Kosher L'Pesach” are of no value unless they bear a rabbinical signature.

3. ONLY DISHES AND UTENSILS SPECIALLY RESERVED FOR PASSOVER SHOULD BE USED, WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS:

A. Silverware, knives, forks, and spoons made wholly of metal, though used during the year, may be used on Passover if thoroughly scoured and immersed in boiling water. All table glassware is permitted after thorough scouring. Fine translucent chinaware, if not used for a year, is permitted.

B. Metal pots used for cooking purposes only (but not for baking), if made wholly of metal, though used during the year, may be used on Passover if first thoroughly scoured and immersed in boiling water.

C. Utensils used for baking during the year cannot be used during Passover.

D. Earthenware, enamelware, and porcelain utensils used during the year may not be used on Pesach. Any vessel which cannot be thoroughly cleaned should not be used.

E. To prepare a stove or conventional oven for Pesach, first thoroughly scrub and clean all parts. A conventional oven should then be turned on high (550°F) for 40 minutes. For a gas stovetop, place the cleaned burners in the oven while the oven is being kashered. Electric burners should be turned on until they are red-hot.

F. A dishwashing machine may be used for Passover after thoroughly scouring with boiling water. Clean the dishwasher well, especially the filter and the sprayers (by taking them apart). To clean, it's recommended to use a scale remover (instead of regular detergent) and run the machine. Let the dishwasher sit for 24 hours, then run it again on its maximum setting. One who is stringent will run it a second time, to clean it in cold water.

B'DIKAT CHAMEITZ: CEREMONY FOR REMOVING LEAVEN

Because Passover begins on Wednesday evening, April 8, the ceremony of B'dikat Chameitz will take place Tuesday night, April 7. The Biblical injunction “even the first day shall you put away leaven out of your houses” (Exodus 12:15) was interpreted by the Rabbis as referring to the day preceding Passover. To make sure that “there be no leaven in your houses” (Exodus 12:19), the Rabbis instituted a ceremonial search for leavened substances.

As a religious ceremony, B'dikat Chameitz is preceded by the following benediction:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al bi'ur chameitz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has commanded us concerning the removal of leaven.

It is customary to place pieces of leaven in the house so the search will not be in vain. The leaven is gathered with a feather, a wooden spoon, and a candle. When the search is completed, the following Aramaic formula is recited, renouncing ownership of any leaven that may have escaped detection (Children love this ceremony!):

Kol chamira v'chami'a d'ika birshuti, d'lo chazitei ud'lo bi'artei, livtil ul'havi hefker k'afra d'ar'a.

All chameitz and leaven in my possession that I have not seen and have not eliminated shall be nullified and become ownerless, like the dust of the earth.

This declaration can also be said in Hebrew:

כל חמץ ושאר שיש ברשותי, שלא ראיתיו ושלא ביערתיו, יבטל ויהא הפקר כעפר הארץ.

Kol chameitz us'or sheyesh birshuti, shelo r'itiv v'shelo bi'artiv, yivateil viyhei hefker k'afar ha'aretz.

The next morning (Wednesday, April 8) after breakfast, the leaven collected the night before is burned in a ceremony called Blur Chameitz. The same declaration above is recited before 10:06 am, again renouncing ownership of any leaven.

From this moment on no leaven may be eaten until the end of Pesach.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR HOME SEDER

1. Decide well in advance which Haggadah to use and obtain or make enough copies for your participants. Will your seder be oriented toward the young folks around your table? Social justice? Lifting up the stories of women? Fine art? Claymation? There are many Haggadot to choose from—and you can always create your own! (Many wonderful resources for building your own Haggadah are available on the internet. Contact Cantor Vera and Rav Mona for suggestions!)

2. Give out parts ahead of time. Who will lead which songs? Who will read or create an interpretive version of Maggid (the storytelling)? Who has poems to use during Hallel? Who could write a skit for

the kids to act out, and what props will they need? The earlier you let your seder co-creators know, the easier it will be for them to prepare. The same goes for food assignments, if your custom is for participants to help make the meal.

You may want to listen ahead of time **to some of the blessings and songs of Pesach** which Cantor Vera has recorded for our community. They can be found on our Temple website, in the “[Shabbat and Holiday Melodies](http://www.templemanu-el.org/shabbat-and-holiday-melodies.html)” section (<http://www.templemanu-el.org/shabbat-and-holiday-melodies.html>).

3. Serve hors d’oeuvres before you start, and vegetables and dip at the “karpas” portion of the seder! There is no halachic requirement to start a seder hungry. This will help your participants to enjoy moving through the seder you’ve thoughtfully planned, at a thoughtful pace, instead of looking at their watches.

4. Provoke questions, and welcome questions. Our whole seder is an unusual feast beautifully designed to elicit the question from our children, “why do we do these strange things tonight?” in order to enthusiastically involve them (and us) in telling the story of our Jewish passage from g’nut, degradation, to shevach, dignity and joyful praise. Every question is an opportunity for us to tell that story in a new way.

5. Embrace the messiness. A seder table involves a prolonged feast, a main dish that’s made to crumble, and at least four cups of liquid per person. Your house probably won’t look the same at the end of the evening as it did in the beginning. That’s okay. The seder itself might also not go exactly the way you planned it. That’s great! That means that you and your guests were able to experience the Haggadah in a new way, a way that raised unexpected questions for you. Chag sameiach!

THE SEDER TABLE should be set as beautifully as possible with flowers, fine silverware, and sparkling linen in addition to lighted candles over which a blessing should be recited.

On the table, there is a decorative plate which contains the symbols of Pesach: the marror, the bitter herb, which leaves the bitter taste of slavery on our mouths; the charoset, the mixture of apple, nuts, and wine, reminiscent of the mortar used in the work of slave labor in olden days when the Jews made bricks for Pharaoh; the roasted egg, recalling the special sacrifice offered in the Temple on all holidays; the roasted lamb bone, which stands for the paschal lamb our ancestors ate this night each year before the destruction of our Temple; and the parsley and salt water. The parsley, eaten to indicate that Pesach is a spring festival, is dipped in salt water to remind us of the tears of the Hebrew slaves. Many families choose to add extra foods to the seder plate, symbolizing elements of our Jewish community whose struggles for freedom and inclusion we want to lift up as part of the Passover story. We place an orange, for the LGBTQIAA community. We place a tomato, for worker justice. Is there a new story, and its symbol, that you want to add to your Pesach plate this year?

THE AFIKOMAN is another symbol of Passover. Early in the service, the middle matzah of the three that are on a plate covered by a napkin is broken in two. One portion is wrapped in a napkin and is hidden until the meal is finished. This portion is known as the afikoman. The custom of hiding the afikoman developed from a desire to keep children who are at the seder alert until the conclusion. A prize is given to the child who later finds the afikoman. (You can give a prize to all the children recognizing their hard work in looking for the afikoman.)

THE FOUR QUESTIONS, which are asked by the youngest child (or all the children), are called *Mah Nishtanah*, the first two Hebrew words of the questions. The narrative of the Haggadah is the reply.

THE CUP OF ELIJAH is kept filled with wine on the table in anticipation of the coming of Elijah, who is pictured as the herald of the great Messianic era when all people will accept God's rule. During the service, each person drinks four cups of wine, symbolizing the four-fold promise of redemption which God pledged to Israel.

HALLEIL: Throughout the seder, we recite certain Psalms of David. Because they are psalms of praise, we speak of them as *Halleil*, which is the Hebrew word for praise. These psalms are regarded as the oldest portion of our Haggadah ritual.

The seder is an occasion of joyous family reunion. A little effort on your part will bring you the satisfaction of knowing that you have created an inspiring event in your child's life which will remain a happy memory.

PASSOVER ANNOUNCEMENTS

MA'OT CHITTIM: The custom of donating money to a Ma'ot Chittim Fund immediately before Passover is an ancient one. *Ma'ot Chittim* means "portions of wheat," referring to wheat needed to bake matzah. Since during Passover Jews may not eat bread or products that ferment, a special fund is established to assist the poor in purchasing Passover necessities. Please consider helping those not as fortunate as you are and send your contribution Yad Chessed, an organization which supports Jewish individuals and families in need. Checks should be made out to "Yad Chessed."

M'CHIRAT CHAMEITZ: It is customary before Passover to free ourselves of leaven in our homes via M'chirat Chameitz, the selling of the leaven. Cantor Broekhuysen will be pleased to assist in the process. Please call her at the Temple office or fill in the written agreement on the next page and mail it to Cantor Broekhuysen with a contribution to buy back the leaven after Passover. Chameitz should be sold by the morning of Wednesday, April 8. Please return this form by Monday, April 6.

PROJECT MAZON: In addition to selling your chameitz, you may wish to donate this food to those who are hungry in the community. If you can bring whatever food items you have to the Temple office by noon on Tuesday, April 7, we will deliver it to a local organization for distribution to the needy. A monetary contribution can also be made to MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. (Temple Emanu-El is a supporting congregation of MAZON.) For an envelope, please call the Temple office.

SHARE YOUR PASSOVER SEDER: Passover has traditionally been a time when families, relatives, and non-relatives join together in celebration of the Passover seder. Many small families band together for the seder. Single individuals, like college students who are away from home, or others who have no family, need to be invited to a seder. Please call the Temple office to express your desire to be invited to a seder, or to express your desire to invite another family or individual to your seder. The Temple staff will serve as sensitive and careful Passover seder matchmakers.

Authorization for the Selling of Chameitz

I authorize Cantor Vera Broekhuysen to sell my chameitz to someone who is not Jewish in the community, so that new ownership takes effect at 11:14 am on Wednesday, April 8. I also agree to buy back my chameitz at the end of Passover; this purchase shall take effect at 8:28 pm (one hour after sundown) on Thursday, April 16.

Enclosed is my contribution to tz'dakah (charity) for \$ _____.

Signature

Primary Home Address:

Additional Home Address:

If you own more than two homes, please write any additional home addresses in the space below.

Please complete and return this form with a check for any amount made out to "Yad Chessed."

Mail to:
Cantor Vera Broekhuysen
Temple Emanu-El
514 Main Street
Haverhill, MA 01830