

# *Kasher L'Pesach* כֹּשֶׁר לְפֶסַח

Rabbi Jon's Guide to Kosher for Passover 5770

During Pesach, we are commanded two things: to eat matzah and also to rid our diets and our homes of *chametz* -- anything leavened made out of wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt. In many ways the command to avoid *chametz* is the larger one. We must eat matzah on the first day, but avoid *chametz* throughout the holiday.

*Chametz* represents what is old and spoiled in our lives and our world. Pesach was a holiday when grain from the last year's harvest would be swept away, and we would begin eating grain that is fresh and new. As the product of fermentation, *chametz* came to represent decay in a metaphorical sense. Chasidic teachings compare *chametz* and matzah to characteristics of our soul. *Chametz* represents arrogance and a self-centered attitude -- being "puffed up", as we say. Flat matzah, by contrast, represents humility, simplicity, and a sense of perspective.

The *halachot* (Jewish laws and paths) regarding what may or may not be eaten on Pesach are meant to help us on the path toward renewal and godliness, and toward increased Jewish commitment. The laws are demanding and for many people daunting! I encourage everyone to view yourself on a ladder, and to consider climbing this year a bit farther than you were on Pesach a year ago. Some of the rungs:

- eating matzah and avoiding bread
- removing all bread, pasta, etc. from the home
- keeping away from obvious *chametz* out of the home
- not eating out during Pesach at non-kosher restaurants other than a plain salad
- reading food labels and avoiding obvious *chametz* ingredients or items manufactured on equipment with wheat
- eating only foods that are Kosher for Passover as described below

The easiest way to observe Pesach is to eat simple and fresh. Indeed, a week spent paying such close attention to our food and where it comes from opens a window on the many choices we face as we eat during the rest of the year.

To adapt a line from the Haggadah: Anyone who adds to their experience of eating for Pesach is deserving of praise!

*Wishing you a zissen (sweet) und kosher Pesach!*

--Rabbi Jon

**Note:** The lists below follow the rulings of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative movement, as I interpret them. Items not on any of the lists below require Kosher for Passover certification. Individual households may choose stricter standards and require Kosher for Passover certification for more products. If you have any questions about food, about the issue of *kitniyot* (legumes), or about making your kitchen and home Kosher for Pesach, contact me at (603) 883-8184 or [rabbi@tba.mv.com](mailto:rabbi@tba.mv.com).

**The following may be purchased before or during Pesach without Kosher for Passover certification, and without any Kosher certification except as noted:** (Explanation: These are items with no *chametz* in them or in their manufacture and processing.)

fresh fruits and vegetables

fresh spices (e.g. mint, basil)

100% pure non-pasteurized fruit juices without any added ingredients, vitamins, minerals, etc.

fresh milk (not extended shelf life milk)

eggs

fresh fish

fresh kosher meat (obviously does require kosher certification)

powdered or liquid detergents; food wraps and foils of all varieties

baking soda

any American-manufactured chocolate cocoa powder (unsweetened for baking) with regular kosher certification on label, as well as Hershey's

extra virgin olive oil

unsweetened frozen fruit

raisins -- Dole, Del Monte, Berkeley and Jensen, Trader Joe's

sugar -- white granulated

salt -- noniodized

Realime and Realemon reconstituted juice

tea:

any unflavored non-decaffeinated -- loose or teabags

Lipton's decaffeinated teabags

coffee:

all ground and whole bean unflavored caffeinated coffee

instant caffeinated coffee: Folgers and Tasters Choice

ground and whole bean unflavored decaffeinated -- Swiss water method only

*For Sephardim or others who eat kitniyot (legumes) during Pesach:*

plain uncooked, unenriched rice

beans and lentils purchased dry

uncooked/unprocessed nuts of any kind

corn, canola, peanut, or soybean oil that has regular kosher certification

**The following may be purchased before Pesach without Kosher for Passover certification, but require a Kosher for Passover label if purchased during the holiday:**

(Explanation: These are items which may have traces of *chametz* in their additives or processing. Before Pesach begins, the *taarovet chametz* or "mixing in of *chametz*" is considered to be *batel b'shishim*, nullified by sixty times its quantity. Once Pesach begins, even trace amounts of *chametz* are forbidden by Jewish law.)

canned tuna packed in water with no other ingredient beside salt

unopened pure dried spices manufactured in the United States -- *but onion or garlic salt or any spice blends require certification before or during Pesach*

hard cheeses (e.g. Cheddar), semi-soft (e.g. Muenster) and soft ripened cheeses (e.g. Camembert) in block but not shredded or grated form *for those who eat cheese without kosher supervision during the year*

cream cheese

cottage cheese

Lactaid milk

soy milk -- Vitasoy San Sui natural or Soy Dream original unenriched --  
*for Sephardim or others who eat kitniyot*

## **Medicines**

Many medicines are made with binders that come from *chametz*. We follow the rule that the preservation of life (*pikkuach nefesh*) is an overriding principle. Medicines necessary for good health should be taken during Pesach. Any medications purchased before Pesach, the *chametz* mixed in them is considered *batel b'shishim*, nullified by sixty times its volume.

## **Peanut Butter and Other Nut Butters**

Those who do eat *kitniyot* (legumes) and also uphold the strictest standard would eat peanut butter, hazelnut butter, etc. on Pesach. There is no kashrut authority in North America that supervises this for Pesach in the Sephardic way. So one could eat nut butters that are completely natural, list no other ingredients on the label, and are not manufactured on equipment shared with wheat. The product should be purchased before Pesach so that any *ta'arovet chametz* (mixture of *chametz*) would be nullified by volume. From the strict standard this would be a leniency since there is no kosher supervision, to be relied on primarily for children or for those whose allergies or medical needs make it particularly difficult to eat during the holiday.