

Pesach Kashering: A Casual Guide



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This is a casual guide to kashering your kitchen based on common standards within the Ashkenazic religious Zionist community in Israel. As always, please consult with your own rabbi about their opinions and local practices.

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Getting started

Read the instructions below and make a game plan.

I suggest a plan below to do this all at once, but you can do it in stages or any way you'd like.

- Get your kettle/kumkum boiling – you're going to be needing it.
- Put on comfortable clothes and protective shoes.
- Bring some old, big bath towels to the kitchen.
- Prepare gloves and mitts.
- Cold drinks are a must!

Ready?

Take over control center. Loudly declare your kitchen will have no chametz enter the premises of your cleaning area. No chametz will be washed in hot water in your kitchen from this point on.

If you do all of the below at once, you will be making food now only with your chametz toaster oven, grill, or microwave (which you'll kasher last).

If you've got anything sitting in your sink right now, pour a bit of dishwashing soap on it, or better yet, clean it out first with a lot of soap and *cold* water.

Note: It is definitely better to have waited 24 hours since the last time something was used with hot chametz – particularly when it comes to kashering that involves water (hagalah or pouring) as opposed to fire/heat (libun). The instructions will nonetheless try to cover you, as much as possible, in case you haven't been able to wait 24 hours.

Ovens

Self cleaning ovens

Insert any racks that the manufacturer allows to go into the self-cleaning mode, turn on self-clean mode, and it is kosher once the cycle is fully completed.

This is *libun hamur* so you don't need to clean the racks or oven beforehand.

Feeling like it can't be that easy? So wipe down the inside of the oven door for 15 seconds, and then turn on self-cleaning mode. Now you are done. Move on and say thanks for having a self-cleaning oven!

Regular oven and trays

No self-cleaning oven? No problem.

Clean the oven racks with an appropriate cleaning agent (use gloves!)

Make sure the cleaning agent touches all parts of the rack. How long do you need to do this? Hard to say. The key is to focus on what may look like real substance. 10 minutes? 15 minutes? A bit more? Dunno. But not too much more than that. The key is that you get some cleaning agent on every part of the rack and that you give the particles a good scrub.

Whatever is still on that thing by the time you are done with kashering is very very unedible and has no chametz taste left to it.

If during the year you utilize the same oven for meat or milk (like myself), then you do not need to worry about cleaning the walls.

Clean the glass facing the oven cavity with a cleaning agent. You do not need to remove the glass from the door! That is called "spring cleaning" - in halakhic terms, עבודת פרך.

Turn on the oven and let it burn once it reaches its highest temperature (or certainly higher than you ever use) for 30-40 minutes. (It will take some time to get to this temperature before the clock starts ticking). Done.



Baking trays

In general, the minhag is to assume that an oven baking tray cannot be kashered except through 'libun chamur' (e.g., in a self-cleaning oven), which will harm the tray. The Brody family puts ours away before chag.

If you are stuck without enough oven tray options: clean and kasher as described above. Throughout the holiday, lay down one or two layers of aluminum foil on the baking tray and put the cooking dish within a large aluminum foil pan (i.e. cooking pan goes into aluminum pan which is placed on top of foil that covers the baking tray). The cooking pan should never touch the baking tray.

Stovetops

While the oven is being kashered, let's get started on your stovetop.

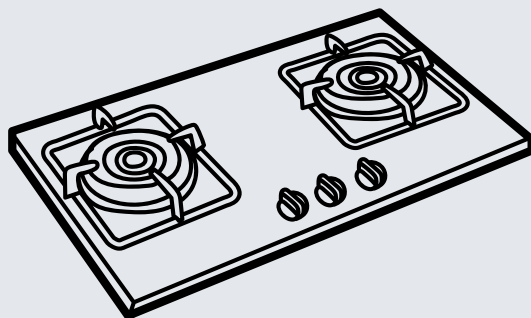
Electric stovetops

- Clean everything well (including the knobs, etc...) with soap or appropriate cleaning agent for a few minutes.
- Turn the burners on a high heat setting until they get to its hottest point for about 15 minutes.
- The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and do not need to be kashered.
- The parts of the stovetop that don't have contact with pots – commit to not eating off the rest of the stovetop if food falls on it over chag (i.e., no 5-second rule!). If the stovetop can handle it, pour boiling water on those parts.

Induction stovetop

I would cover (not kasher) with something like this: <https://thecooktopmat.com/>. You can order similar products in Israel and elsewhere.

You can also use that for an electric stovetop.



Stovetops cont.

Gas stovetop

- Remove the grates and scrub them down with a cleaning agent for a few minutes and let them soak in soapy cold water for a few minutes.
- In the meantime, clean the rest of the surface with a cleaning agent.
- Turn the burners on the highest temperature (without the grates) for 5 minutes to kasher the burner cap.

You should kasher the grates through 'libun kal.'

- The easiest way, if your grates can handle it, is to put them in a pre-heated oven at 215 degrees Celsius for 20 minutes (You don't want to do this when you are kashering the oven because that will be a higher temperature).
- If not possible, put the grates back on the stovetop and heat all burners (along with the caps) at their highest temperature for 30-40 minutes. Carefully nudge or move the grates during this process so that the fire heat will hit all of parts of the grates, including the edges.

The kitchen will be hot at this point. Make sure to have good oven mitts, cold water, and good air circulation in the room, and be around to supervise.

Countertops

(Granite, Caesarstone, and other kasherable materials)

While you're waiting for the oven to finish, let's kasher a countertop to give you some workspace.

Pre-game warmup

- Get your towels and kettle ready. Pick one of your countertops to do your initial work from, again preferably one that you have not used for hot chametz for the last 24 hours. If it's located between the oven and the stovetop, that's most convenient, but whatever works best for you.
- Clean down the entire countertop with a decent cleaning agent.
- Check to make sure no obvious gunk is stuck anywhere on the surface. The goal is to a) make sure there is no actual chametz around, and b) that you've touched each spot with a cleaning agent (could just be soap here).

We want to do this systematically, beginning the process with the areas on your counter most likely to have had hot chametz placed on it (e.g., think about where you sometimes put a hot soup pot directly down on the counter or spill on it.)

Most obvious locations: Around the most convenient places to work – the nearest edges, next to the stovetop, where you roll dough, where you place your cholent crockpot, etc...

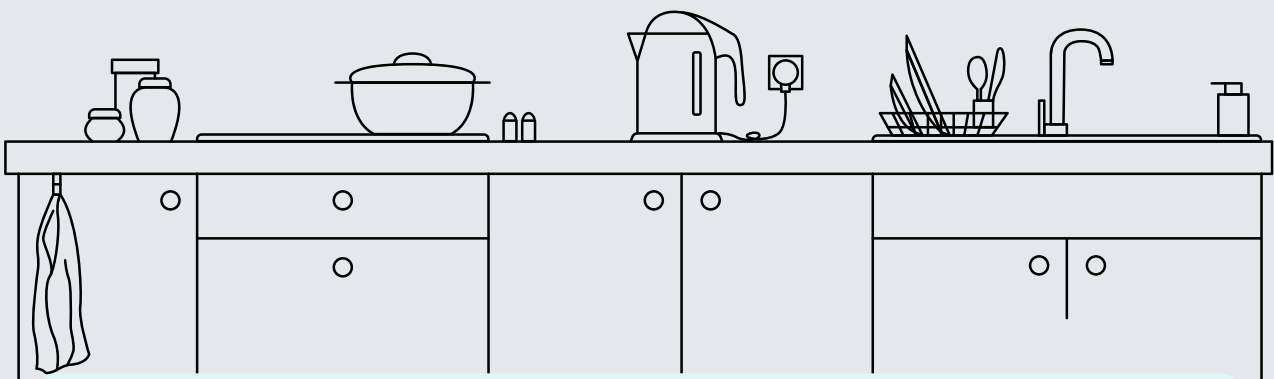
You know best how you use your kitchen.

Countertops cont.

(Granite, Caesarstone, and other kasherable materials)

Game time

- Pour boiling water (max temp) from a kettle onto every spot on the countertop. (If you can't hit the far back corners, don't sweat it. No hot chametz landed there either.)
- Wipe up the counter (and floor, so you don't slip) with the towels.
- While you refill your water, dry the next areas of the countertop in-between kashering pours. You want each area to have hot water directly poured on it.
- You can do this process, when convenient and closer to chag, on your kitchen table and on metal/granite trivets.



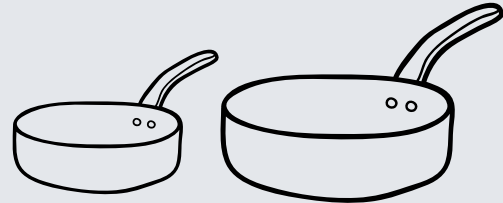
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Kitchenware

Larger pots

By now, your oven will be done. Let's kasher some of your big metal cooking pots.

There are two ways to kasher pots.



The Libun way

- a) Place each part of the pot or cover over the stovetop flame
- b) More convenient, place it for 5-10 minutes into a preheated oven to 215c (assuming the pot is oven-safe. Check online or test with a small pot first). Remove the pot with caution!

Besides being less messy, libul kal is also effective for kashering if you are not able to fully clean some of the difficult spots, like on the rims or edges. I suggest to kasher your largest serving pot first in the oven (e.g., what you use for chicken soup). It should be generally clean, but because you are doing "libun kal," you don't have to worry about it being perfectly clean or that it may have been used over the past 24 hours. Repeat this process with your other big pots and pot covers as desired.

Without Libun

Do Hagalah: fill the pot with water all the way to the top, add some dishwashing soap, bring it to a boil, and let it boil over the sides. Sometimes the overflow is done by placing an object into the pot in order to force the water to overflow. This can be a bit messy but works well. As mentioned before, best if this hasn't been used beforehand with anything hot for 24 hours.

Kitchenware cont.

Small pots and pot covers

To kasher your small pots and pot covers: put them into a larger boiling pot (again, with a lot of real bubbles and some dishwashing soap).

The pots don't all have to go in at once – you can turn it from side to side to get it all in, but every part of the pot or cover needs to get immersed in the water.

Microwave

- Clean well with a cleaning agent, including inside doors, roof of microwave, etc...
- Clean and remove the glass turntable.
- After 24 hours (since the last time it was used), fill a hot water cup (microwave-safe!) and warm it in the microwave so that the chamber fills with steam. It's hard to say how long that takes. Let's try for 7 minutes. You want to make sure that the water doesn't fully boil out.
- Take a second cup (or reuse the first if still feels stable) and place it in a different spot. Boil it in the microwave for the same amount of time.

Glass turntable in microwave

Options:

- Cover in saranwrap over chag.
- Do hagalah (i.e., dunk in water) three times (following here the position of Rav Melamed and Rav Knohl, even for Ashkeanzim) and place a paper towel on the glass plate before using over chag. Or do both (hagalah and then saranwrap).
- Just put away for the chag. The Brody minhag is to put it away, and then not find it for a week after chag.

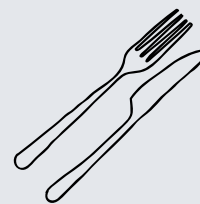
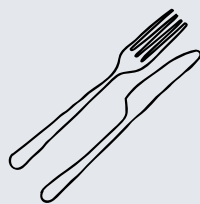
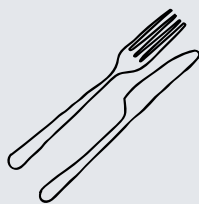
Kitchenware cont.

Silverware

Drink another glass of water! Once your largest pot is koshered, fill it up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way with water.

- Boil the water on the strongest burner until there are real bubbles. (While that's boiling, continue to put more big pots and pans in the libun kal process of the oven).
- Once there are real bubbles in the hagalah soup pot, add some dishwashing soap (in case you have used any of your silverware in the last 24 hours with hot chametz).
- Make sure your silverware is generally clean, but remember that discoloration is not chametz.
- Place your silverware into the boiling pot for 3 seconds. You can drop and pick up with tongs, but easiest to use a makeshift net (from a soup net or a potato sack). You can do several pieces of silverware at a time, but the water needs to touch all parts of the silverware, so make sure to shake for a second while it's in the pot.
- If you have a large serving spoon that can't fit at once, you can dip each side consecutively (like we suggested for a pot cover or other item that needs hagalah).

Kasher utensils (serving spoons, silverware, etc...) to your content. The minhag in Israel is to also kasher plastic utensils.



Kitchenware cont.

Plastic utensils

Israelis in the religious Zionist community kasher these (following many poskim). This helps with a lot of products. My impression is that American poskim are more open to this today as well, but consult with your rabbi. Follow the same cleaning rules for plastic silverware and place them into your boiling hagalah pot, as discussed below (do not put them in the oven!!).

Sinks

- Clear any grime on the sides
- Clean well with cleaning agent, including the drain cover (again, stains or discoloration are not chametz!)
- Pour boiling water over all of it as well as the faucet and the (removed) drain cover. (If your sink is a material that can't be kashered, I'd still do this process, but then also utilize a rack and tub over the chag.)

Dishwashers

1. Open the dishwasher door and give it a decent cleaning on the edges with some soap. Make sure there are no visible food particles on the bottom of the machine.
2. Clean out the filter thoroughly (you should remove it and rinse it down well with soap).
3. Clean the dishwasher well. Easiest way: run the dishwasher empty on its hottest and longest cycle with a dishwasher tablet or liquid. (If you have a "dishwasher cleaning agent", go for it). Afterward, check to make sure that the plastic racks and the dishwasher walls look clean, which they should.
4. Wait 24 hours from the last time it had actual food/chametz in it.
5. Run it again on its hottest and longest cycle (with detergent) and it is now kosher le-pesach.

Kitchenware cont.

Kettle/Kumkum

If you just use it for water, you might not need to kasher it. But I know some feel otherwise (because you use vinegars to clean it, or maybe when you pour water on food there will be stuff that splats back onto and into the kettle), and it's literally the easiest thing to kasher: fill to the top, boil it over, pour out, and done.



Shabbat Urn מיחם מים

Again, in theory, you do not need to kasher it. If you descale by boiling vinegar or something else, then clean with soap or some other agent, and then boil water in it and pour out.

Urn Cover

Some people warm up chametz food (like challah) directly on top of it during the course of the year. If so, you can either replace the cover with a home-made aluminum foil cover, or better yet, do hagalah with the cover.

You do not need to kasher Tammi4 or Mei Eden water cooler spouts. (Same rule for foreign brands). Ditto for Sodastream machine. If you use flavors in their bottles, clean out with dishwashing soap. No hot chametz was ever used in them.

Kitchenware cont.

Metal plata (Electric warming tray)

Clean your plata well with soap or a cleaning agent.

Pro tip: to clean these well, heat it up for several minutes, let it cool, and while it is still warm but touchable, clean it with your soapy rag. It will clean much more efficiently.

- After you've cleaned it well, now heat it (again) for, say, 30-45 minutes (i.e., till it sits at its highest temperature for a bit).
- On chag, lightly place one or two pieces of aluminium foil under any pot.
- For safety reasons, do not tightly wrap your plata all around in aluminum foil!

Warming drawers

- Clean well with soap or cleaning agent.
- Heat it at its highest temperature for 45 minutes.
- Over Pesach, lightly place one or two pieces of aluminum foil under any pot that you heat in the drawer.

(Yes, I know this is a bit novel, but I have an written teshuva from Rav Yat"z Rimon as well as affirmation from Rav Carmel that this is good procedure).

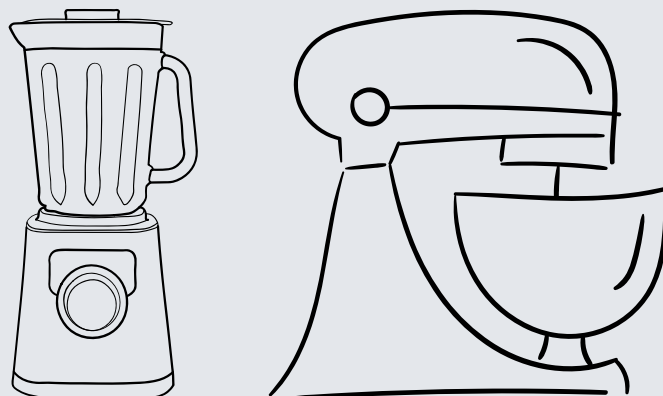
Kitchenware cont.

Blender

A blender that is used to grate, chop, and dice foods: if it was used with cold foods, it is kashered with a good rinsing and soap. If there are grooves, make sure to clean them well (like with steel wool). If the appliance was used with hot hametz foods (or sharp *charif* foods), all of the parts that touched hot foods should be kashered by means of hagala. Again, if you kasher plastic, this works.

Mixmaster

This really depends on how well you can clean it. If you can get out the dough and flour from the inside (using toothpicks, etc...), it's possible to kasher. We've made ours sparkle, but it's not always possible, or worth the time and effort. If you can do that level of cleanliness, then you just need to do hagalah on the parts and pieces.



Kitchenware cont.

Coffee pod machines

You don't need to kasher if your all-year round pods are kosher le-pesach (check online).

If you're not sure, and haven't used a certified problematic chametz pod within the last 24 hours, clean out tray, wipe down, run a cycle or two or three without a pod until the water comes out clean.

Keurig Coffee Maker

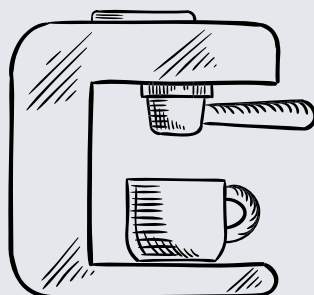
Clean the coffee maker and do not use for 24 hours.

Remove the K-cup holder and perform hagalah (boiling in water) or iruy (pouring boiling water over it) on the K-cup holder.

Run a Kosher for Passover K-cup in the machine. (This will kasher the top pin.)

Milk frothers

If you've only used them for milk, they don't need to be kashered. Just clean with soap. If you've used with chametz, like a cocoa, then do hagalah on the frother (not the electric base!). (This is on the assumption that you kasher plastic, as discussed above).



חג כשר ושמח!

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