

Kashering For Passover

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Kashering - Dishes and Utensils

Sets of dishes, pots and pans, flatware and other necessary utensils should be set aside specifically for Passover use. Certain utensils, such as flatware, metal pots and pans, etc., however, may be made Kosher for Passover use, a process known as *kashering*. Since the laws of kashering are many and varied, you should consult your Orthodox Rabbi if you wish to *kasher* for Passover. Here are some guidelines for handling utensils designated for Passover use:

§ All **new** metal, aluminum and glass vessels and utensils require t'vilat kelim (ritual immersion) in a kosher mikvah (ritual bath).

§ **New** disposable aluminum pans are acceptable for Passover without special certification. Ritual immersion, however, is required if they are to be used more than once, and they do require a bracha like any other metal object.

§ The following may **not** be kashered:

a) China, pottery, earthenware, rubber, non-stick and Teflon and similarly coated pots and pans, plastic dishes, enameled pots, pans and ladles, and utensils with wooden or plastic handles.

b) Utensils or vessels which cannot be thoroughly cleaned, such as those having crevices in which chametz can accumulate, (e.g. bottles with narrow necks, sieves etc.)

c) Dishwashers. (note - The **OU** allows one to kasher a dishwasher, under certain circumstances.)

§ Drinking glasses (**not** plastic) may be kashered for Passover by soaking them in water for three days. The water should be changed every 24 hours.

Note: *This method of kashering does **not** apply to glass ovenware, whiskey glasses, glass dishes in which hot food is served, or bottles used to store beverages that are chametz or that contained vinegar or grain alcohol.*

§ If new, Teflon and similarly coated pots and pans, plastic, Styrofoam, coated paper dishes, serving utensils, glasses, and plastic tablecloths may be used on Passover. Tablecloths must be freshly laundered before Passover; however, no starch should be used.

Kashering - Electric Mixers, Food Processors and Blenders

Since the motor area of electric appliances is often exposed to chametz and can be cleaned only with great difficulty, it is recommended that a special mixer for Passover be used. However, those food processors and blenders that have totally sealed units in their motor area may be used if the bowls and mixers are changed. Please consult your Orthodox Rabbi with questions about your particular brand or type of electric appliance.

Kashering - Ranges and Ovens

Ranges and ovens may be kashered for Passover use, and the process for doing so is as follows:

§ **For ranges:** Thoroughly clean every part of range-tops including scraping residual foods from the surface and catch trays and do not use them for a full 24-hour period. Then, they must be burned at maximum temperature for at least one hour (this applies to electric and gas ranges). Finally, cover knobs, surfaces and catch trays with aluminum foil.

§ **For non-self-cleaning ovens:** Thoroughly clean the interior and exterior surfaces of the oven and do not use it for a full 24-hour period. Then, it must be burned at maximum temperature for at least one hour. Once this process is complete, cover the racks and grates on both sides with aluminum foil (with perforations for air circulation).

§ **For self-cleaning ovens:** When kashering a self-cleaning oven, running a complete self-cleaning cycle with the racks inside the oven is sufficient without waiting 24 hours from the time it is manually cleaned to the time it is kashered. For ovens kashered in this fashion, racks need not be covered.

Great care should be taken not to permit any food to touch the sides, top, or bottom of the oven. During Passover, range-top surfaces should be covered to prevent contact with Passover foods or utensils.

Note: *Oven cleaners acceptable for year-round use may be used for Passover.*

§ Microwave ovens may be used on *Chol Ha-Moed* (not on Shabbat and Yom Tov). To kasher your microwave for Passover, clean the inside thoroughly and do not use the microwave for 24 complete hours. Then, fill a large paper container with water and bring to a boil. The glass tray cannot be kashered. Either a new glass tray should be purchased or paper should be used in its place.

Note: *Some microwaves have a metal grate. Since the grate cannot be lined with aluminum foil, remove the grate from the microwave for the duration of Passover.*

For **convection microwave ovens**, follow the same kashering process as conventional ovens.

Cleaning Refrigerators and Freezers

All parts of refrigerators and freezers must be thoroughly cleaned and washed, including storage bins. (The shelves should be lined with plastic or foil with small perforations to allow for air circulation. - Note – I do not believe this is necessary. R.Y.L.)

Note: All kashering must be completed before the deadline for eating chametz.

CRC's Guidelines to Kashering Counter tops and Stovetops for Pesach

Introduction: Today, new products are constantly being introduced to make the kitchen a more friendly work environment. As a general rule, once you kasher your countertop it may be used as is and would not need to be covered. In the cases that one cannot kasher the countertop, they must be covered with a material that is not porous and will not easily rip or tear. (Some people have the custom to kasher and to also cover their counter tops).

What Counter tops Can Be Kashered?

As the laws of kashering are complex, one must see to it that a person versed in the laws of kashering will oversee the process in its entirety to ensure all the laws have been carefully followed. The cRc therefore recommends that one should always cover their counter tops unless they are sure that it was indeed properly kashered.

There are many countertop materials available in the home market today with the most common one being **plastic laminate**, manufactured by laminating a hard, plastic material onto a thin piece of wood. Because of this process there are seams formed where the two pieces meet, creating the potential for collecting chometz in that area throughout the year.

Some other popular brands of counter tops available are **Formica, Pionite, Wilsonart and Nevamar**. There is a difference of opinion in Halacha whether one may kasher a material not mentioned in the Torah. Since plastic and many of the materials listed in this article are not listed in the Torah, Halachic authorities debate whether they can be kashered. Rabbi Gedalia Dov Schwartz, Av Beis Din of the cRc, is of the opinion that plastic may be kashered for Pesach. **However, if it is a type of plastic that might become ruined during the kashering process, then kashering is not permitted, as the Rabbis were afraid that one may not kasher properly due to fear of ruining the countertop.**

There is another countertop material that is made to look like stone, but it is actually an **acrylic** and therefore easy to maintain. Some popular brands are **Corian, Staron, Swanstone, Gibraltar, and Surrell**. **Avonite** makes a similar polyester-based product. Theoretically these may be kashered. However, this material is likely to scratch and stain. If that happens, kashering will not help, and the countertop would have to be covered.

Butcher block, or wood surfaces are becoming once again increasingly popular. In the past wood countertops, tables and cutting boards were very common. However, it was thought that because of the porous nature of wood, they were highly susceptible to bacteria contamination. Today it has been proven that the natural enzymes in wood actually kill the bacteria, and therefore wood is becoming a popular option in the kitchen. The wood used for these products is covered with an oil at the factory, usually tung oil, and should be continuously treated in the home to prevent drying. Wood may be kashered for Pesach, but one needs to be careful that there are no cracks in the wood that could trap chometz. If there are cracks, the counter would need to be covered. In a butcher shop, it was the practice to sand down the wood surface for kashering. However, this cannot be done in the home because it would ruin the surface. Some of the popular wood brands on the market are **John Boos, Craftart, Spekva and Omega**.

Today, natural stone such as **granite, marble, limestone, soapstone, slate, and onyx** are commonly found in the kitchen. While they are natural and beautiful, they are very porous and need to be treated with a water-based sealant to help keep out the bacteria and keep the stone from staining. There are also **concrete** counter tops available. These are exactly what as they sound – concrete tops formed to the shape of the area to be covered. All of these may be kashered for Pesach. However, one must make sure that the top is not finished with a synthetic, which itself would also need to be of a kasherable material.

Another material used for counter tops is **quartz resin**, a man - made material made to look like granite or marble. It is different than natural stone in that it is not porous. Therefore, the surface does not need to be sealed. Some common brands are **Cambria, Silestone, Zodiaq and Caesar Stone**. These may be kashered for Pesach.

There are also **glass, ceramic and porcelain** counter tops available, with porous grout between each tile. There are also other materials used for countertops, with caulking used to hold down the counter top, or as a seam to seal two pieces together. **These counter tops may not be kashered for Pesach and must be covered.**

While not used as often in a home, **stainless steel, copper and zinc** are also available. These may all be kashered for Pesach.

Can Stovetops Be Kashered?

Stovetops are available in various materials. The most common is a metal grate over an open flame or electric burner, which is situated on a porcelainized metal, stainless steel or glass. A metal flat top or a metal grate over an open flame is also available. This is used primarily as a grill for an indoor BBQ. The grates and burners may be kashered, while the tops need to be covered.

There is also a **glass** surface available. The two most popular brands are **Corning and Ceran**. The cRc policy is that these can be kashered by leaving all four burners on for an hour. The area between the burners should then be covered with aluminum foil. However, please check with the manufacturer, as this may cause damage to the glass on some stove tops. If this area cannot be covered, then it must be thoroughly cleaned.

There can always be unique situations which might arise in one's own home. When in doubt, contact your local Orthodox Rabbi. Special thanks to Rick Glickman of Dream Kitchens for his help in our research.