

HELP! I NEVER MADE PESACH BEFORE!

INTRODUCTION

Many of us are making Pesach for the first time. It is a little difficult and daunting but definitely doable. No one says that one must serve gourmet meals. One can buy all foods that are complicated to cook. Otherwise, there is nothing wrong with keeping it simple. I think that the original Pesach in Mitzraim, Egypt, was very simple and minimalist.

First and foremost, cleaning for Pesach. This should NOT be spring cleaning. Clean your house as you normally would. Only clean drawers and closets that are used frequently and that you suspect may have chametz. With children and everyone home, it is harder to clean for Pesach. Let's try our best, but not lose ourselves on the way. Keep in mind that all Chametz will be sold and nullified. There is no need to get alarmed if we find chametz on Pesach. Keep in mind that anything that is not edible is NOT chametz. Now is not the time for heavy scrubbing... (use the time instead to give attention to your loved ones). Empty the toys and wipe down the toybox. Do what you can, do not overdo or get stressed out, and that is more than enough.

What is needed for the week (remember, it's only one week) of Pesach? Each household is different. Look around your kitchen, and note what items (utensils, pots, spices, etc.) you use most year-round. What foods and meals does your family eat most often, and are simple to make? Keep in mind also, smaller meals, like breakfast, and snacks.

Get multi-purpose items (e.g. a pot can double up as a frying pan). Get as little as possible, so as not to be overwhelmed ... Remember: new items will have to be toveled.

If you will be cooking, make a list of all ingredients before shopping. Try to go shopping once for Pesach supplies and closer to the Yom Tov for fruits and vegetables.

UTENSIL IDEAS

- 1 Pot (this can be one of your normal pots that you Kasher (see Kashering sheet) or a new pot that you buy and tovel)
- 1 heat-friendly spoon
- 1 pair of tongs (for koshering)
- 1 flat sautéing spatula
- vegetable peelers
- 1 sharp meat and a few pareve knives (can be kashered if handle is metal or hard plastic)
- 1 seder plate
- 1 bowl or cup for saltwater
- 1 dairy plate per person in your household - or simply use much disposable paper or plastic plates.
- 1 Becher per person (if your regular kiddush cup is metal, you can kasher it)
- 1 cup for Eliyahu
- Optional: A kettle (could be your normal hot water one)
- Optional: A frying pan
- Optional: Cutting boards (can use plates instead), kitchen shears, can opener
- Optional: Pesach immersion blender or food processor
- Optional: Pour-over/french press/whatever you use if you are too fancy for instant coffee
- Optional: -1 set of meat knife/fork/spoon per person in your household plus a couple more for serving (you can kasher your regular ones)
- Optional: -1 set of dairy knife/fork/spoon per person in your household (you can kasher your regular ones)
- Optional: -1 meat plate per person in your household, plus potentially a couple more for serving

SEDER INGREDIENTS

- Shabbat/Yom Tov candles
- Wine or grape juice, enough for 4 cups per person per night.
- Karpas. This can be any food that grows from the earth on which you make the blessing of “Ha’adamah” (e.g. celery, parsley, potato, banana).
- Salt water for dipping
- Six whole handmade Shmura Matzos for the Seder. (You need three per night.)
- One Haggadah per person (You can print one from Sefaria.org, order one online, or borrow one from the shul.
- Maror. This should be romaine lettuce or endive lettuce. Many eat horseradish in addition.
- Haroset. (You can make this at home with a sharp knife by chopping up apples, some kind of sticky dried fruit, nuts, cinnamon and a tiny bit of wine/grape juice. You can also buy pre-made Haroset.)
- Egg for the seder plate (hard boil and then use tongs to roast on your burner)
- Bone for the seder plate roasted on your burner
- Dinner. Many people are accustomed to lavish seder meals. This is not necessary.
- Hard-boiled egg for eating (Yom tov dinner should include at least two cooked foods. Many eat a hard-boiled egg at the start of the meal.)

DISPOSABLES:

Cutlery, plates, soup bowls, dessert (6 oz) bowls for seder plate, bowls for serving, serving spoons

YOM TOV MUST-HAVES:

- Candles, including any Yahrzeit candles you will need for transferring flames as well as to commemorate Yizkor on the last day of Pesach
- Wine or grape juice for Kiddush at every Yom Tov dinner and lunch (extra for seders)
- Two whole square matzos at every Yom Tov dinner and lunch (extra for seders)
- In order to cook on Friday, April 10th in preparation for Shabbat, you will need to make an Eruv Tavshilin. This requires one piece of Matzo and one cooked item (traditionally, a hardboiled egg).

BASIC FOOD LIST TO BUY:

Matzo/wine/grape juice

Dairy products (cheese, butter, etc)

Produce (potatoes, onions,fruit, vegetables)

Chicken/meat/fish

Basic spices (salt, pepper, garlic)

If cooking: oil, lemon juice/vinegar, tomato sauce, other sauces, etc...

Snacks nosh and sweets

Toothpaste, new toothbrushes, mouthwash

MINIMAL KITCHEN KASHERING

-Clear everything off your countertops

-Cover everything that's not KfP that can't be closed behind cabinet doors (sheets or newspaper and masking tape might be good for this). Tape or label your cabinet doors closed.

-Follow instructions as outlined in koshering mailing:

-Kasher your oven

-Countertops (for pouring boiling water, use either your pot or kettle)

-One or more burners of your stovetop (cover all other burners in foil so you remember not to use them)

-Your sink

-Microwave

-Optional but helpful for warm food on Shabbat and Yom Tov: Cover your normal shabbat warming tray with two sheets of foil.

-Prepare shelves in your fridge by:

-Clearing off everything off the shelf and wiping it down.

-Covering everything else in your fridge by putting in bags.

-Prepare shelves in pantry by wiping them well and cleaning out all crumbs. Or keep your Pesach foods in a box or counter

-Keep all your Pesach food and utensils either on your kashered countertop or on the cleaned shelves in your fridge.

-Sell all the Hametz you have stored away in your kitchen (and wherever you put it)!

CONCLUSION

This probably all feels overwhelming and not especially minimalist. Start out by making yourself a schedule so that you have a plan for:

-when you will make yourself a meal plan and grocery list,

-when you will do the shopping,

-when you will do the kashering and

-when you will do the cooking.

It might help to find a friend who is also going at this the way you are and the two of you can keep your preparations on track with each other. Remember, the Jews have been doing this for a long time-- you got this! Chag Kasher v'Sameach.

PS: If you are reading this document and saying "Okay now I know what food and utensils I need for the Seder but how do I actually run a tiny Seder!?" -- stay tuned. We will be having a Zoom class on how to lead a Seder.

APPENDIX I: WHAT TO EAT

Pesach this year begins Wednesday night, April 8th. The seders are on April 8th and 9th, and Yom Tov flows straight into Shabbat beginning on Friday night April 10th. You then have another two days of Yom Tov beginning on Tuesday night April 14th. Here are a few easy ideas. If you plan all your meals in advance then you will know exactly what you need to acquire and you can minimize your time in stores.

Delicious foods that do not need cooking:

- Matzo with cream cheese
- Matzo with other KfP spreads
- Yogurt
- Cheeses
- Cold cuts
- Tuna/Lox/Herring
- Gefilte Fish
- Salads
- Guacamole
- Pickles
- Olives
- Fruit (& fruit salad)
- Nuts
- Chocolate

Delicious foods you can make with one pot:

- Quinoa
- Cooked vegetables. Steam, boil, or use the bottom of your pot as a frying pan.
- Chicken, boiled, cooked in a stew, or fried using the bottom of the pot as a frying pan.
- Fish, seared or stewed
- Boiled potatoes
- Mashed potatoes
- Matzo brei (using frying pan or bottom of pot as a frying pan)
- Eggs: hard boiled, fried, poached, scrambled, shakshuka etc.
- Soups (either pre-packaged from store or made from scratch)

Delicious foods you can make in the microwave:

- Matzo pizza (include vegetables for fancy)
- Chicken nuggets
- Premade soups