



PESACH CLEANING

GUIDE

THE EMOR PROJECT
GATEWAY TO MITZVA OBSERVANCE SERIES

Pesach 5786

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INTRODUCTION

שְׁבַעַת יָמִים שְׂאֹר לֹא יִמָּצָא בְּבֵיתֵיכֶם כִּי | כָּל־אֲכֹל מִחֻמֶּצֶת
וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא הַהוּא מֵעַדֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגֵר וּבְאֶזְרַח הָאָרֶץ:

No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person—whether a stranger or a citizen of the country—shall be cut off from the community of Israel.

On Pesach, it is forbidden to own any *chametz* (leavened product of the five grains), and one must remove all *chametz* from one's possession.

For this reason, many people spend countless hours cleaning for Pesach.

While it is certainly admirable to invest significant time in fulfilling the mitzva of ridding one's house of *chametz*, one need not transform the process into "Spring cleaning."

Moreover, sometimes people spend so much energy cleaning that they cannot celebrate the Pesach Seder properly.

In truth, the obligatory Pesach cleaning (cleaning only to remove *chametz*) can be done within a couple of days, depending on the size of one's house and family.

The general principle is that one must check any room into which one occasionally brings *chametz*.

It is important to note that the language of the Sages is to check (*livdok*), not to clean (*lenakot*).

Checking means to search for pieces of potentially edible *chametz*; dust, dirt, and inedible crumbs are not *chametz*.

That being said, it has become the widespread custom to do a general cleaning before the official checking (*bedika*).

One who wishes to clean more than is required is certainly allowed.

Still, one must ensure that this does not come at the cost of enjoying the Pesach holiday, performing the Seder properly, and our relationship with our families.

Below, we will provide some of the advice of contemporary *poskim* (halakhic decisors) to make Pesach preparation a less stressful experience without going too deeply into the sources or intricate halakhic arguments.

It should also be noted that in cases of great need, such as with those who are very ill, there may be room for additional leniency in how much cleaning is necessary. In such cases, an Orthodox rabbi should be consulted.

KITCHEN & FOOD PREPARATION AREAS

SINK

Sinks made of ceramic or porcelain cannot be *kashered*.

Instead, one must clean the sink well with a cleaning solution and cover it with an insert or racks.

Sinks of stainless steel can be *kashered* as follows: Wait twenty-four hours from the last time hot *chametz* was used in the sink. Then, pour water heated to a rolling boil over the entire surface (making sure not to burn oneself in the process).

For further details, see [🔗](#) and [🔗](#)

FAUCETS

Clean and detach any filters or nozzles.


Then, pour boiling water over the faucet.

STONE & STAINLESS STEEL COUNTERTOPS

If hot *chametz* was in direct contact with them at any point, clean them well with a cleaning solution, wait twenty-four hours from the last time they were in contact with hot *chametz*, and pour boiling water over them.

Alternatively, they can be fully covered so that nothing kosher for Pesach comes in contact with the countertop.

Many have the custom to both pour boiling water and cover.

For more information on these and other types of countertops, see 

GAS BURNERS / STOVETOP

For a gas stovetop, clean the area well with a cleaning solution.

Turn on the burners to the highest flame for about 10 minutes and cover the rest of the surface area with aluminum foil.

The stovetop grates can either be replaced for Pesach, *kashered* by placing them in an oven at 550 degrees Fahrenheit (approximately 280 degrees Celsius) for one hour, or left as they are and avoid eating anything that comes into contact with them.

According to Rav Ovadia Yosef, Sephardim may *kasher* by placing the grates in boiling water.

For an electric stovetop, clean the stovetop surface well and cover with foil. Then turn on the burners until they glow red.

For a glass stovetop, clean the surface area well and do not use for 24 hours. Place an aluminum disk on top of the stove, and use all pots for cooking on top of the disk.

OVEN

For self-clean ovens, remove any visible food and run the complete self-clean cycle with the oven racks inside the oven (note: they can sometimes become discolored from self-cleaning).

For ovens that do not have a self-clean cycle (or if one prefers not to use the self-clean cycle), use oven cleaner to clean all surfaces thoroughly.

Wait 24 hours after the last *chametz* use (according to Rav Ovadia Yosef, there is no requirement to wait) and turn the oven on to its highest temperature with the racks inside for one hour.

Some Ashkenazim cover glass oven doors with aluminum foil.

One should not use oven pans, as they require the highest type of *kashering* (such as a self-clean cycle), which will generally destroy the pan. Special pans purchased for Pesach should be used instead.

If one is not using the oven on Pesach, inspect the oven to ensure there is no *chametz* fitting for a dog's consumption and close the door with tape.

MICROWAVE

Clean well with a cleaning solution, and do not use for twenty-four hours. (The regular glass tray should be removed and replaced with a surface that is kosher for Pesach).

Fill a cup with water and microwave on high for ten minutes. Then repeat the procedure in a different spot. Cover the interior glass window.

It is recommended to use sealed or covered containers over Pesach. However, they do not need to be airtight.

FRIDGE / FREEZER

Remove all food items and wipe down with a sponge and cleaning solution. Some customarily cover the shelves.

While one must clean the fridge, it should be a manageable amount of work if it was already relatively clean beforehand. The freezer should be thawed and cleaned.

Only particularly expensive *chametz*, such as certain valuable frozen items, should be left in one's fridge or freezer over Pesach.

Any such items must be wrapped in several layers, clearly labeled "*chametz*," separated from the Pesach foods by a partition, and included in the sale of *chametz*.

ELECTRIC HOTPLATE

Clean well with a cleaning solution. Wait twenty-four hours from the last use with *chametz* and turn it on for an hour.

Cover with aluminum foil while considering safety concerns and not covering too thickly.

Some try to purchase a hot plate to be used only on Pesach.

FOOD PANTRY/CABINETS

If one does not plan to use the cabinets on Pesach, they can be checked for edible *chametz* and then closed off.

If one intends to use the cabinets on Pesach, first remove all the food items and then clean the cabinet with a sponge and cleaning solution.

Ensure that the cleaning solution penetrates all areas of the cabinet and comes in contact with all potential crumbs.

Some people line their cabinets with contact paper or similar material before placing their Pesach items inside.

POTS, PANS, AND SILVERWEAR

Any items that will not be used on Pesach should be stored in a closed area and marked as not for Pesach use.

If the utensils may contain *chametz*, they should be included in the sale of *chametz*.

Many people have separate sets of dishes and silverware for Pesach use. If one wishes to use *chametz* utensils instead, they must be *kashered*.

Guidelines for *kashering* can be found [here](#) (one may also need to consult a local orthodox rabbinic authority).

DISH TOWELS

If one does not have special dish towels for Pesach, one may launder the regular dish towels and inspect them to ensure no food remains on them.

DINING AREA

TABLETOPS

Clean with a cleaning solution and cover with at least one layer.

As a precaution, it is recommended to cover with two layers, one of which should be made of water-resistant material, like plastic.

TABLECLOTHS

Strictly speaking, it is sufficient to launder them before Pesach.

However, many use special Pesach tablecloths.

One may iron these with the same iron used during the rest of the year.

CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

FLOORS

Since modern homes do not have dirt floors with deep cracks, it is enough to sweep and wash them with any kind of cleaning solution.

If there are cracks in the flooring, there is no need to check them as long as the cleaning solution penetrates the cracks.

STORAGE AREAS

CLOTHES CLOSETS

If there is a chance of finding *chametz*, check for pieces of *chametz*, such as crackers or Cheerios.

If one will most likely not find *chametz*, one does not have to clean the closet.

The same applies to attics, garages, shelves, etc.

PERSONAL ITEMS

CLOTHING, BLANKETS, & BEDDING

One should launder all bedding before Pesach.

PANTS & COAT POCKETS

If one does not put *chametz* in one's pockets, there is no need to check them.

If *chametz* is occasionally placed into pockets, one should check each pocket for pieces of edible *chametz*.

If food may be placed there on Pesach (particularly relevant to children), one should launder the garment or ensure the food is covered somehow.

BOOKS

Books frequently placed on the table with food, such as *bentchers* and *siddurim*, should be stored with the *chametz* utensils and included in the sale of *chametz*.

Other books that are not frequently placed on the table with food do not need to be checked, but one should not place them on the table while eating or next to food.

If the book has been checked for *chametz*, one may bring it to the table.

TOYS

If there may be edible *chametz* on or with them, they must be cleaned and the *chametz* removed.

If the *chametz* cannot be removed, one may render it inedible using a cleaning solution.

There is no need to scrape off the toys.

According to the opinion of Rav Ovadia Yosef, there is no need to clean toys for small crumbs or *chametz* stuck on them (if they are less than the size of a *kezayit*, which is approximately 26 grams).

Nevertheless, the toys should not be brought to the table on Pesach lest the crumbs fall off onto food.

CAR

If one sometimes brings *chametz* into the car, one must also clean the car.

It may be easiest to bring it to a car wash that will do a thorough job, but one can also vacuum all surfaces that may contain crumbs and wipe them with some form of compatible cleaning solution that will render any pieces of *chametz* inedible.

DENTURES

Dentures should be cleaned well so they are free of *chametz*.

It is also advisable to pour boiling water heated in a kettle or the like over them.