

HOW TO MAKE YOUR KITCHEN KOSHER-FOR-PASSOVER, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT A RABBI



Safety Warning:
Kashering Involves High Heat!

By Rabbi Eli Gersten

One of the most daunting preparations we make for Pesach is *kashering*, a process to prepare *chametz* utensils for Pesach use. As with all areas of halachah, those who are unsure of how to apply the rules of *kashering* to their situation should consult an Orthodox rabbi.

The Torah (Bamidbar 31:23) requires *kashering* utensils acquired from a non-Jew, as they are presumed to have been used in non-kosher cooking (and will have absorbed non-kosher flavor). Since *chametz* on Pesach is also forbidden, the Talmud applies the laws of *kashering* to *chametz* as well. There are four basic methods of *kashering*. The prescribed method depends on the utensil and how it was used.

LIBUN GAMUR (BURNING)

Utensils used directly in the fire (e.g. BBQ grate), must be *kashered* by placing them into fire. This process has the effect of burning away any absorbed taste. To qualify as a complete *libun*, metal must be heated until it glows. A self-clean cycle of an oven (approx. 850°F) also qualifies as *libun*. There is no need to wait 24 hours before *libun*, though it is advised. There is no need to scrub the utensil before performing *libun*, since the fire will burn off residue, but some cleaning is advised.

HAGALAH (BOILING)

Utensils that were used to cook non-kosher liquid can be *kashered* with *hagalah* (boiling in water). To prepare the utensil for *hagalah*, the utensil must be thoroughly cleaned. Only utensils that can be scrubbed clean should be *kashered*. Items that have

narrow cracks, crevices, deep scratches or other areas that cannot be cleaned, cannot be *kashered* for Pesach. The following, for example, cannot be *kashered* for Pesach: pots with rolled lips, bottles with narrow necks, filters, colanders, knives (or other utensils) where food can get trapped between the blade and handle. After cleaning, the utensils should then be left idle for 24 hours. To *kasher*, every part of the utensil must make contact with boiling water. This process can be done in parts. For example, a large spoon can be immersed into a pot of boiling water for 10 seconds, turned over and then the remainder immersed. When the utensil is removed from the boiling water, it should be rinsed off in cold water. While strictly speaking these utensils may be *kashered* in a clean non-Pesach pot that was not used for 24 hours, the *minhag*, however, is to *kasher* the pot first, by boiling water in the pot and discarding.

IRUY KLI RISHON (POURED BOILING WATER)

If the utensil only came in contact with hot liquid being poured on it (*iruy*), it can be *kashered* in the same manner. If the utensil came in contact with hot *chametz* solids, then one should *kasher* by pouring boiling water accompanied by an *even melubenet*, a heated stone. For example, if hot pasta fell into a sink, stones should be heated on the stove, and moved around the surface of the sink while boiling water is poured over them. In this way, the water will remain boiling on the surface of the sink. The stones may need to be reheated several times, since they cool down quickly. In all other aspects the process is identical to *hagalah*.

LIBUN KAL (LIGHT BURNING)

In certain cases, *libun kal* is sufficient. This can be accomplished by heating in an oven at 550° F for one hour. This method of *kashering* can be used in place of *hagalah*. It is also used when the need for *libun* is only an added stringency.

NOT EVERY MATERIAL CAN BE KASHERED.

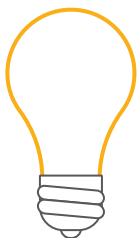
Ceramic, such as china, and enamel coated pots cannot be *kashered*. It is the custom of Ashkenazim not to *kasher* glass as well. Some *poskim* do not permit *kashering* plastic or other synthetic materials for Pesach; however, the opinion of the OU rabbanim is that it may be *kashered*, if there is a need. Ask your rabbi for guidance. Composite stone (e.g. quartz counters) which is made mostly of stone, but is held together with resin, can be *kashered*. As a rule, materials such as metal, wood, stone, natural rubber, and fabric can be *kashered*. ■

SOME HELPFUL TIPS:

It is recommended that one not wait until *erev yom tov* to run the self-cleaning cycle to *kasher* an oven, as this is known to be hard on the oven and repairs may be required.

Some newer self-cleaning ovens employ Aqualift technology that cleans at low heat; they should be considered like non-self-cleaning ovens (see The Modern Kitchen on page 52 for details).

Please note that *kashering* may discolor oven racks and stovetop burners. If racks have rubber wheels, the wheels may melt. Replacement racks for Pesach should be ordered well in advance of the holiday.

**KASHERING CHECKLIST:****LIBUN GAMUR**

- Surface must be heated to a dry temperature of approximately 850°F (i.e. self-cleaning oven) or until it begins to glow.

HAGALAH

- Surface should be completely cleaned with hot water and unused for 24 hours.
- Surface should be completely clean and dry.
- The utensil should be completely submerged in a pot of boiling water.
- Cold water should be poured over surface.

IRUY KLI RISHON

- Surface should be completely cleaned with hot water and unused for 24 hours.
- Surface should be completely clean and dry.
- Boiling water should be poured directly over all surfaces followed by cold water poured over the entire surface.

LIBUN KAL

- Surface should be completely cleaned with hot water and unused for 24 hours.
- Surface should be completely clean and dry.
- Surface should be heated to a dry temperature of 550° F (i.e. oven) for a minimum of one hour.