

What is “Chametz”

Chametz is **yeast, food containing yeast or any food made with any of the five grains that are proscribed (forbidden) during Passover.**

There are five grains which are also “chametz”.

Wheat, Oats, Barley, Rye, Spelt

Orthodox Jews will also not use corn or products containing corn starch or high fructose corn syrup. We DO NOT restrict corn. If you think you want to do this, you will need to get rid of most of your pantry. Corn and corn products are in nearly everything these days. It's a bit much.

The five grains are forbidden because they will interact with natural “wild” yeast in the air when combined with water, those yeast will begin to ferment. These are also the five grains that are traditionally associated with bread baking.

Passover Matzah IS NOT CHAMETZ. Passover matzah, even though it has been made with wheat flour, precautions are taken in its manufacture that prevent the natural yeasts from fermenting and rising. When matzah is made, flour is mixed with boiling water (which kills yeast) and baked within 18 minutes of mixing with the water.

Gluten Free foods might still be chametz. Many Gluten Free foods are still chametz because they may contain GF oats or oat flour. So read the labels.

Baking soda and baking powder are NOT CHAMETZ. These leavening agents are NOT forbidden. Orthodox Jews will use special baking powders that are formulated with potato starch instead of corn starch. It's up to you if you want to spend extra \$ on this. Since we don't restrict corn, I don't buy special baking powder. It is common in Jewish Passover cooking to use baking soda or baking powder with a combination of matzah cake meal and potato starch for baked goods such as muffins or cookies that are acceptable to eat during Passover. Look for recipes online. Commercial Passover mixes for these items are also available.

In the **last week** before Passover, this is when we clean out the kitchen and the cabinets, box up all the chametz that we're storing in the garage for the week, donate **UNOPENED** chametz items to a local food bank (Please, do NOT bring it to shul!!!) Typically, it is only a couple days before Passover that I clean out the toaster and wrap it with plastic wrap and store it in the garage. We clean out the bread machine and wrap it in plastic wrap and store in the garage after the last time I make bread (usually 2-3 weeks before). The **last day** before Passover I clean out the toaster (outside!) wipe it down and wrap it in plastic to store in the garage for the week of Passover. Set aside a couple slices of bread in a plastic bag and thoroughly clean any area of your kitchen that had chametz. Vacuum and mop the floor to remove all bread crumbs. Don't forget the corners!

Bedikat Chametz – The ceremonial search for leaven. Details are included on another page. This is a great opportunity for teaching children about removing leaven (sin) from our lives. It is a ceremonial search for leaven that symbolizes the whole month of spring cleaning you've just done. This is what the couple slices of bread you saved in a plastic bag are for. Break up the bread into decent size pieces (about an inch) and place on a piece of paper towel, 'hidden' in places where the children can find them. Make it a game & have them search for the chametz throughout the kitchen & dining room area (you don't want these to go too far and wide in their dispersal, contaminating the whole house). Have the children carefully gather these up and put them in a paper bag. Traditionally, this is done by candlelight, but I think in the 21st century we might want to break out a small bright flashlight. There is a special blessing said before the search. See additional materials for this text. The next morning, the chametz is burned outside. Use a firepit, or large tin can for this for safety.

Additional information may be found at Hebrew4Christians.com search for "preparing for Passover"