

Date: Pre-Pesach 2021  
To: Students and Visitors to Campus  
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# Memo

Keeping Pesach in college doesn't need to be overly challenging. It can be an inspiring experience of living Jewishly in a broader community. Get ready to answer a lot of questions from curious friends and floormates, Jewish and not.

The Vaad Hoer of St. Louis (OV Kosher) and the Chicago Rabbinical Council publish useful guides for Pesach at <http://www.ovkosher.org> and <https://www.crcweb.org/Pesach2021.php>.

## The Basic Idea

Leavened foods (henceforth, *chametz*) are forbidden to be eaten during the holiday of Pesach. Owning *chametz* is also forbidden. Common forms of *chametz* include bread and baked goods, breakfast cereals, even grain-based drinks such as beer and most hard alcohol. Owing to the complexities of modern food production, *chametz* is often found in many other foods as well.

Most Jews of European descent (aka Ashkenazim) also refrain from eating certain grains and legumes that are similar to *chametz* (including rice, soy, and corn) though these are not actually *chametz*.

## Cleaning for Passover

Prior to the day before the first Seder (because the real Erev Pesach is on Shabbos this year), students must thoroughly inspect any spaces in their control – including common spaces – where their *chametz* may have been brought during the year. Any *chametz* found must be removed or destroyed. This can be accomplished by giving to a friend who is not Jewish or by donating to a food drive. Do not push this off until the day before Pesach!

(Pro tips: Small amounts of *chametz* can be rendered inedible by spraying with detergent. Also, dirt is not necessarily *chametz*.)

Here are some reminders of places to check:

- Your room, including under and around your bed
- Your desk and drawers
- Shake out any crumbs from your keyboard
- Dressers and other storage
- Closets including in clothing pockets
- Backpacks, laptop bags, and luggage
- Locker
- Your car, especially under the seats

Preparing shared kitchens for Passover presents a host of challenges that are beyond the scope of this note, though I am glad to talk you through it on the phone or in person. Suffice it to say that your cooking and eating utensils need to be put away for the holiday and sold with your *chametz* (see below). Some utensils /dishes may

be cleaned thoroughly and Kosherized appropriately. As a college student, your best bet is probably to acquire disposable silverware, plates, and cups for the holiday. If you have a kitchen and intend to cook, you may want to purchase a new frying pan or small pot (under \$10 on Amazon).

## **Selling chametz**

Another way to dispose of *chametz* is to sell it to a person who is not Jewish. After Passover, the *chametz* is repurchased. Items that are sold should be sealed away or covered. Now, for this mechanism to work, a legitimate sale document must be drawn up. It is tricky to this do yourself, so please don't "sell" your toaster to your roommate. Instead, do so online here: [chabadwashu.org/111191](http://chabadwashu.org/111191). (For those who wonder if using the internet is a proper way to sell Chametz, allow me to ask you how you purchased your most recent airplane tickets...)

There is no reason to wait until the last minute to sell your *chametz*. Remember, whatever you sell must be stored away for the duration of the holiday. It isn't yours and you shouldn't steal!

## **Searching for chametz**

A complete check for *chametz* should be performed the night before Pesach. (This year, on Thursday night, March 25, 2021.) The procedure is at [chabadwashu.org/266838](http://chabadwashu.org/266838). Where candles are forbidden you may use a flash light.

## **Travelling for Pesach?**

If you travel away from campus prior to the holiday with the intent to return during the intermediate days of the holiday, then you must clean and search for *chametz*. Even if you travel before the formal time for searching, you should still search before you depart.

If you travel and do not plan to return until after Pesach, then you should simply sell your *chametz* here. You will search (or participate in the search) wherever you will be for the holiday.

## **Shopping reminders**

Packaged or prepared food bought for Pesach should have reliable certification. Food products used on Pesach ought to be from packages not opened or used throughout the year, unless you did not use the open packages with *chametz*. It is best to shop early as occasionally stores run out of certain Pesach items. The Schnucks on Ladue Road (at 170) and Simon Kohn's typically have the widest selection.

Caveat emptor!

- Some Passover-certified food products look quite similar to their non-Passover counterparts. In fact, some Manischewitz brand Matzos (!) are actually not Kosher for Passover!
- Just because something happens to be in a Passover aisle does not mean that it is Kosher for Passover.
- A product that was Kosher last year is not necessarily Kosher this year.
- Some Passover-certified foods are restricted to Jews of Sefardic descent, children, and people who are ill. (E.g. Kitoniot, Matzah Ashira, etc.)
- In the past, the Matzah pizza for sale in the DUC and Bear's Den was neither certified as Kosher for Passover, nor was it Kosher at all! Let's hope that Dining Services terminates this practice...

## **Kosher for Passover food on campus**

**AGAIN in 2021:** The L'Chaim station in Bear's Den will be OPEN for meals during the days of Chol Hamoed, March 30 – April 2.

Kosher for Passover pre-packs should also be available at Paws & Go Market, Millbrook Market, so forth. These meals are certified by the Vaad Hoer of St. Louis. Look for the Passover stickers.