

Date: Pre-Pesach 2023
To: Students and Visitors to Campus
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Pre-Pesach Memo

Keeping Pesach in college does not need to be overly challenging. It can be an inspiring experience of living Jewishly as a member of the broader community. I am glad to answer any questions that you may have. This short memo has some basic information and answers to questions that have come up in the past.

The Vaad Hoer of St. Louis (OVKosher) and the Chicago Rabbinical Council publish useful guides for Pesach at <https://ovkosher.org/pesach2023> and <https://consumer.crc kosher.org/pesach-2023>.

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 and breakfast cereals; *chametz* also includes grain-based drinks such as beer and most hard alcohol. Owing to the complexities of modern food production, many other foods contain *chametz* as well.

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

Cleaning for Passover

Prior to the day before Passover, students must thoroughly inspect any spaces in their control – including common spaces – where *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, by donating to a food drive, or by selling it in a formal manner (see below).

Here are some reminders of places to check and clean:

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

Pro tips:

- Dirt is not necessarily *chametz*.
- Small amounts of *chametz* can be rendered inedible by spraying with detergent.

Preparing kitchens for Passover presents several 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 likely 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.

- Reminder: Your most commonly used dish may be a reusable water bottle. These are hard to kosherize, so it is simplest to sell with your *chametz*.

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 do this yourself, so please don't "sell" your toaster to your roommate. Instead, do so online here: 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...)

Do not 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, Tuesday night, April 4th, 2023). The procedure is at 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 days of *chol hamoed* then you must clean and search for *chametz*. 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.

Kosher for Passover food on campus

AGAIN in 2023: WashU Dining is offering many meal options certified by the Vaad Hoer of St. Louis. The L'Chaim station in Bear's Den will be OPEN for meals. Please check with WashU Dining Services for the schedule.

Kosher for Passover pre-packaged meals should also be available at Paws & Go Market, Millbrook Market, and so forth. Vaad Hoer of St. Louis certifies these meals. Look for the Passover stickers.

- In some past years, there was Matzah pizza for sale in the DUC and Bear's Den. It was neither certified as Kosher for Passover, nor was it Kosher at all!

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 Kohns typically have the widest selection.

Caveat emptor!

- Just because something happens to be in a Passover aisle does not mean that it is Kosher for Passover.
- Some Passover-certified food products look quite similar to their non-Passover counterparts. In fact, some Manischewitz brand Matzos (!) are not 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*, *egg Matzah*, etc.)