

FYI: The Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis (OVKosher) and the Chicago Rabbinical Council publish helpful guides at [www.ovkosher.org](http://www.ovkosher.org) and [www.crckosher.org/pesach](http://www.crckosher.org/pesach).

Date: March, 2025  
 To: Students and Visitors to Campus  
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# Pre-Passover Memo 2025

Keeping Pesach in college doesn't have to be complicated. It can be meaningful, help you connect with your Jewish identity, and demonstrate your commitment to living Jewishly as a member of the broader community. Here's a memo with an overview and answers to common questions. I'm happy to discuss further.

## The Basic Idea

*Chametz* is forbidden during the Pesach holiday. Thus, any product made with wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt that has come into contact with water and been allowed to ferment and "rise" is prohibited.

Common forms of *chametz* include bread, baked goods, and breakfast cereals; many alcoholic beverages are also *chametz*, as they are produced from fermented grain. Due to the complexities of modern food production, almost all prepared or packaged foods contain *chametz*, except those specially certified as Kosher for Passover.

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

## Cleaning for Passover

Before Erev Pesach, 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. You can accomplish this by gifting it to a non-Jewish friend, donating it to a food drive, or selling it formally (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 inside clothing pockets
- Shake out crumbs from your keyboard
- Backpacks, laptop bags, bike bags, and luggage
- Your car, especially under the seats

Pro tips:

- *Chametz* must be edible, at least to a dog. Dirt is not *chametz*.
- You can make small amounts of *chametz* inedible by spraying it with soap.
- Disposable dishes and silverware are your friend.

Preparing kitchens for cooking on Passover is beyond the scope of this note, though I would be glad to discuss it in person. Generally speaking, most of your cooking and eating utensils (e.g. sandwich makers, reusable water bottles) are *chametz*, and must be put away for the holiday and sold. Some utensils/dishes

can be cleaned thoroughly and then kosherized. Refrigerators should be wiped clean. The procedure for koshering a microwave is at [chabadwashu.org/1745](http://chabadwashu.org/1745).

## Selling *chametz*

Another way to dispose of *chametz* is to sell it to a person who isn't Jewish. A legitimate sale document must be drawn up for this mechanism to work. It is tricky to do this yourself, so please don't "sell" your toaster to your roommate. After Passover, the *chametz* is repurchased. Items that are sold should be sealed away or covered.

Sell your *chametz* online here: [chabadwashu.org/111191](http://chabadwashu.org/111191). I am also glad to help you sell your *chametz* using the traditional procedure (document, signature and *kinyan*). Please message me to get this scheduled.

Do not wait until the last minute to sell your *chametz*. Remember, whatever you sell must be stored away for the holiday. It isn't yours, and you shouldn't steal!

## Searching for *chametz*

You should do a complete check for *chametz* on the night before Pesach (this year, because the holiday begins on Saturday night, search on Thursday night, April 10, 2025). The procedure and blessing is at [chabadwashu.org/266838](http://chabadwashu.org/266838). If candles are forbidden in your dorm, then you may use a flashlight.

## Travelling for Pesach?

If you travel away from campus before the holiday with the intent to return during the days of *chol hamoed*, then you must clean and search for *chametz* in your campus dwelling. If you leave before the formal time for searching, you still search before you depart, but omit the blessing.

However, if you travel and do not plan to return until after Pesach, then you should sell your *chametz*. Then, search for *chametz* (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 should be from packages not opened or used throughout the year, unless you are confident that 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) typically has the widest selection.

- Some Passover-certified food products look quite similar to their non-Passover counterparts. In fact, some Manischewitz Matzos (!) are 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 permitted only to Jews of Sephardic descent, children, and people who are ill (e.g. legumes and egg *Matzah*).

## Kosher for Passover food on campus

We expect WashU Dining to offer many meal options certified by the Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis at the L'Chaim station in Bear's Den. Please check with WashU Dining Services for confirmation and scheduling.

Kosher for Passover pre-packaged meals should also be available at Paws & Go Market, Millbrook Market, and so forth. Look for the Passover stickers with the OVK symbol of the Vaad Hoeir.

- Note: Matzah pizza was sold at the DUC and Bear's Den in past years. It was not Kosher for Passover, nor was it Kosher at all!