

The Laws of Passover

Chapter one: Chametz and Matza

Passover Preparations: Removing Chametz

When G-d told the Jews it was time to leave Egypt, they left right away, without waiting even for a moment! They put their raw dough in sacks on their backs and immediately set out, without giving the dough any time to rise. The hot desert sun baked the dough on their backs into cracker-like bread, and to remember this, every year on Passover, we eat matzah, a hard, flat bread made from a dough of only flour and water which has not been allowed to rise.

We also make sure not to eat- or even own- any chametz during the 8 days of the holiday.

What is chametz? It is “leaven,” any food that’s made of grain and water that have been allowed to rise. Bread, cereal, cake, cookies, pizza and pasta are all examples of chametz.

Cleaning for Chametz

Before Passover begins, we prepare by cleaning our homes of all chametz.

Selling Chametz

If we have any items of chametz we can still use after Passover, we pack that food away and give permission to a Rabbi to sell that chametz to a non-Jew until after Passover. (Click [HERE](#) to sell your chametz; this can be done any time until April 7, 2020 8:00pm)

Searching for Chametz

The night before Passover, to make sure there is no chametz that can be seen around the house, we do a chametz search. This is done by tightly wrapping 10 pieces of bread so that no crumbs can escape, and then hiding those 10 pieces throughout the house. (Don’t forget where you put them!) Before starting the

search, a blessing is made: Baruch Ata A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu Melech HaOlam Asher Kidshanu B'Mitzvotav V'Tzivanu Al Bi-yur Chametz. (Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us about the removal of chametz.) Next, take a candle, a feather, a paper bag and a wooden spoon. With adult supervision, use the candle to help search the house. Use the feather to sweep each piece of chametz into the spoon, and then place it into the paper bag.

When you have all 10 pieces in the bag, along with any other chametz you may find, carefully tie it up and put it aside to be burned the next morning.

Burning the Chametz

The morning before Passover begins, we take the bag of chametz from the night before and burn it before midday. (Only an adult should do the burning.)

A Lesson to Learn from Chametz and Matzah

Chametz, because it's dough that rises and gets puffy, is like someone who shows off and brags. Matzah, because it's flat and low, is like someone who is humble and doesn't think he or she is better than others. During Passover, when we stay far away from chametz and eat lots of matzah, it's a reminder to us to be humble and not hold ourselves higher than others.