

## Passover Cleaning Guide

**Banish Bedroom Bread:** Do you occasionally eat in your bedrooms? (No judgment!) Starting 10 days before Passover, put a stop to this. Rally the troops for a furniture shuffle, sweep-a-thon, and mop party to kick off our cleaning spree. Now the bedrooms are done!

**Bread-Free Zone:** As we approach the big day, let's play a game of "Shrinking Bread Zone." Each day, we'll mark less territory for bread until it disappears completely by the 14th day at sunset.

**Dining Room Dash:** Ready your brooms and sponges! In under an hour, we'll have the dining room clean as a whistle (don't forget the chairs).

**Pre-Bedikat Chametz Bash:** The day before our chametz hunt, let's give our floors some love—just a good ol' sweep and mop. Don't forget to vacuum the carpets and give the vacuum bag a toss!

**Kitchen Cleanup Carnival:** Make it as fun as you can, and definitely *don't* do it alone!

Here's our five-day plan:

- Day 1: Drawer Dance! Focus on the drawers below the countertop as they're easy crumb collectors. Pull 'em out, clean 'em out, put 'em back in!
- Day 2: Pantry Parade! Empty completely, deep clean, and restock the pantry with Passover-approved food. Anything that can't be put back goes in an "eat it fast/give it away" box.
- Day 3: Fridge Fandango! Give it a deep clean and toss or separate anything not Passover-approved.
- Day 4: Freezer Fiesta! Repeat the process and wave goodbye to any frozen chametz. As sunset (14th) approaches, any leftover leaven should be tossed in the fire!
- Day 5: Appliance Arcade: You've already cleaned the fridge and freezer. Now finish up with the oven, microwave, and toaster\*.

*\*Stubborn toaster crumbs? Box it up and store it in the garage or shed for the week. Or toss it and treat yourself to a new one after the feast!*

**Remember:** Passover prep is about more than cleaning our homes—it's about celebrating freedom! Let's focus on cleaning our hearts first and foremost so we can truly be free to enjoy the seder and everything Passover week stands for. Throughout the week, you likely will find some hidden leaven somewhere in your home (and in your heart). Toss it out, and thank God for His forgiveness that is so readily available to us!

## What is leaven?

Remember, when the commandment to keep Passover was first given, there was no such thing as jarred yeast, yeast extract, baking powder, etc. In ancient times, people used fermentation, not store bought yeast, to make bread rise. This process was probably very similar to how we make sourdough bread today. They mixed flour with water and left it out for a while, letting tiny organisms called yeast grow in the dough. This made the bread puff up and become soft and fluffy. To the ancient Israelites, anything that made bread rise was considered leaven.

This understanding of ancient leaven makes the standard Jewish ruling on chametz make a lot of sense: According to Chabad.org, "any food product made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt that has come into contact with water and been allowed to ferment and rise is chametz."

Now, where we can get into a tricky, gray area is, "how long does it have to sit to be considered leavened?" Do we throw out any grain products that we did not make ourselves or purchase as "Kosher for Passover"? Perhaps. Your family may certainly choose to do so. There's nothing wrong with attempting to keep the feast *perfectly*, just as long as you understand that you're going to fail (that's not only okay, it's a large part of the point).

In my home (and we're amateurs, mind you), we throw out the following:

Yeast and mixes containing yeast

Nutritional Yeast

Things already puffed or leavened with either yeast or baking powder

Grain products that are fermented (like beer)

Sourdough starter

We keep:

Kombucha (as it contains no grain)

Wine (for the same reason)

Baking powder

Mixes that contain baking powder (i.e. cornbread mix)

Products containing only yeast extract and not yeast

You may choose to continue cooking with baking powder during Passover. The reason my family chooses not to do this is that we want to do our best to set Passover week (Passover and Unleavened Bread) apart from our regular lives. If the food we are eating during the week resembles the food we eat regularly, this tends to blur the line.