

Passover Laws and Customs - 5783

To see the [Rabbinical Assembly 5783 Pesah guide, click here](#)

Guests

If you or someone you know does not have a place for seder, or if you have an extra seat at your seder, please let me know.

Shabbat HaGadol

The Shabbat before Pesah is called *Shabbat HaGadol*, the Great Shabbat. It is great because we will be discussing Pesah! This year *Shabbat HaGadol* falls on April 1st. This is also our donuts and discussion day, so we will have plenty of time to talk about Pesah..

Ma'ot Hittin (Money for matzah)

It is customary to give special *tzedakah* money in the days before *Pesach* so that no one goes without food for seder and Passover. You can fulfill this mitzvah by contributing to Rabbi Spitzer's discretionary fund and specifying that the donation is for *ma'ot hittin*.

Mechirat Hametz (sale of hametz)

Hametz -- definition: anything made from wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye that does not carry a valid kosher for Passover label. Jews may not eat hametz or own hametz during Passover.

While it is possible to get rid of all *hametz* in our possession, there is an alternative. The rabbi arranges a sale of *hametz* to a gentile. This is a legal sale. A down payment is made on the sale, with the rest due by the end of Passover. Should the gentile buyer not make the balance of the payment by the time Passover is over, then ownership of the *hametz* reverts to the original owners about an hour after the conclusion of the holiday and you can again use your *hametz*. To appoint Rabbi Spitzer to sell your *hametz* [click here](#).

Ta'anit Bekhorot fast of the First Born, Wednesday, April 5th

Those of us who are first-born children (to either of our parents) have not forgotten that God passed over the homes of the Israelites during the last of the ten plagues. Erev seder, the day of seder, is a fast day for first-born children, though it has become customary to attend a *siyyum* that morning and thus to be exempted from the fast. On Friday morning, April 5th, celebrate with a special ceremony of completion of study called a *siyyum* -- and with a *hametz* breakfast! First born children (men and women) who attend the *siyyum* will be exempt from the fast of the first born. Minyan begins at 7:30 am and will be in the chapel. To join via Zoom, [click here](#). This will be also your final opportunity to delegate me to sell your *hametz*.

Bedikat Hametz Search for *hametz* Tuesday night, April 4th

After we have cleaned out our houses, gotten rid of all *hametz* that we possibly can, put the remainder in a special place and sold it, we conduct a special search to make sure that we have not missed any. To ensure that we actually find some during this search, it is customary to hide a few pieces of *hametz* in the house. Make sure you know how many you have hidden, so you can make sure to retrieve them all! I like to use bow-tie noodles, because they leave no crumbs and

burn very well. The search is done by candlelight, in the dark, the night before Pesah, this year Tuesday night, April 4th, with the regular blessing, which can be found in the beginning of most *haggadot* or [here](#).

Bi'ur Hametz burning of the found hametz, Wednesday April 5th.

All remaining *hametz* in our possession should be destroyed on Wednesday morning. You can do this at home or bring it to shul when you come for *minyan* and the *siyyum* on Friday morning. The nullification formula can be found in the beginning of most *haggadot* or [here](#).

Eruv Tavshilin

When *yom tov* falls on a weekday, cooking is permitted, but only to prepare food for that particular day. On Shabbat all cooking is prohibited. But we need to be able to eat on the Shabbat that follows *yom tov*! So what we do is begin the food preparation before *yom tov*, set aside two already cooked foods for shabbat, and then complete the cooking on *yom tov*. On Wednesday, April 5th, before *yom tov* begins, take two prepared foods (often a piece of matzah and a piece of gefilte fish or a hard boiled egg), and set them aside for Shabbat with a verbal declaration that cooking for Shabbat was begun before -- and will be completed on -- *yom tov*. This is called an *eruv tavshilin*.

Leil Ha-Seder (seder night)

Before *yom tov*, leave a flame burning (e.g. yartzheit candle; gas stove burner). Recite two blessings, "*l'hadlik ner shel yom tov*" and "*shehechyanu*" blessing (both nights).

Laws of Yom Tov

The first two and the last two days of Pesah are *yom tov* (*yontif*) days. *Yom tov* is almost like shabbat; there are morning services and no work may be performed with the exception of transferring flame, cooking, and carrying without the benefit of an eruv, (all of which are forbidden on shabbat). A flame should be left on (e.g. yartzheit candle; gas stove burner) so that there will be an existing flame to use for Shabbat candles on Friday night.

Liturgy

Hallel psalms of praise are recited every day of Pesah in joyful celebration of the miraculous exodus from Egypt, full *hallel* the first two days and a slightly shortened *hallel* the rest of the holiday. Musaf is recited every day of Pesah. The Torah is read every day of Pesah. On the 7th day of Pesah the Torah reading is the Song of the Sea, the story of the crossing of the sea. It is customary to read *Shir HaShirim*, the Song of Songs, on Pesah. We will be spreading out the reading of *Shir HaShirim* throughout the holiday, some chapters in Hebrew and some in English. *Yizkor* is recited on the final day of Pesah, this year Thursday April 13th. This will be in person and available on livestream.