KOSHER without a KITCHEN

Keeping kosher in your family's non-kosher kitchen

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Written by Rabbi Nissan Zibell

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Whether it is a businessman in a hotel during a conference, or an employee eating lunch at their workplace, kosher consumers must sometimes navigate their way in a non-kosher kitchen. This becomes especially difficult when it is a Ba'al/as Teshuvah in his or her parents' home, because there are many sensitive details to take into consideration. The purpose of this booklet is to offer some points of guidance and practical advice to those faced with such challenges.

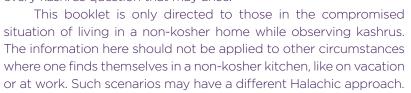


THE HOT REALITY

Although people on an extreme road trip or vacation can survive for a week or so on cold foods like granola bars, tuna cans and protein shakes, it definitely doesn't qualify as a stable lifestyle. It is not practical to live off just cold food out of cans and boxes. Typically, people crave a hot meal. To feel at home, while living at home, a warm meal is going to be a necessity and the cold raw vegetables and hummus aren't going to cut it. For this reason, those becoming kosher while living with their parents are going to have to use their parents' kitchens. It's just not realistic otherwise. This can get difficult, frustrating, and confusing. The goal of this guide is to make things as smooth as possible.

DISCLAIMERS

The purpose of this booklet is solely for informative purposes and for practical advice. One should not use this book to resolve halachic questions. Do not expect to find the solution to every kashrus question that may arise.





This booklet in no way replaces a Rabbi. Any questions regarding your kashrus standards and practices should be discussed with a Local Orthodox Rabbi (LOR) who knows your situation well. As the Mishna in *Pirkei Avos* (1:6) instructed; "make for yourself a *Rav;*" to have a competent Halachic authority (*Rav*) who knows you personally and can relate to your situation, and with whom you consult regarding all matters of *halacha.**

* See Brandon's story about the imoportance of asking a Rabbi, page 45



In addition, one should have a *Mashpia*; a mentor, who knows him or her well, to discuss these nuanced sensitive situations and decisions. It is crucial that one have these two in place in general, and especially before embarking on a journey of keeping Kashrus while living with family in a non-kosher home.

Whatever is mentioned and discussed here does not necessarily apply for Pesach. On Pesach many aspects will be stricter than throughout the year.

BACK TO BASICS

Proper observance of Kashrus, requires a detailed knowledge of the laws of kashrus.

This booklet is not designed to educate the reader about the basics of keeping kosher. One lacking familiari-



ty with the laws of kosher should first educate themselves on the matter. There are many wonderful books out there on the subject. The following are recommended for reading more about kashrut, depending on how advanced you may be in kashrus knowledge:

- 1) Basic: "Kosher for the Clueless but Curious" by Shimon Apisdorf. Available on Amazon
- 2) Basic: "Going Kosher in 30 Days" by Rabbi Zalman Goldstein. Available on Amazon
- 3) Advanced: "The Kosher Kitchen" by Rabbi Binyomin Forst. Published by Artscroll.

Not all things discussed here are the most ideal way to observe kashrus. However, one must live with the reality that they aren't in an ideal situation while sharing their home with others who do not keep kosher, and for this specific situation this is the best way to approach it. These non-ideal standards are ideal for a non-ideal situation.

PLEASANT AND PEACEFUL

Shlomo Hamelech in *Mishlei (3:17)* teaches that the Torah's ways are "Ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peaceful". The bar by

which to measure whether you're having healthy growth in *Yiddishkeit*, is by taking in the change in relationship since your observance has grown. If it is one of pleasure and peace, things are going well. Another of Shlomo Hamelech's teachings *(ibid 3:4)* are as follows: "[one should] find grace and common sense in the eyes of G-D and of man". First and foremost, one must find grace in the eyes of G-D by keeping His commandments, but at the same time one must also take into consideration his or her interactions with others and make sure they are gracious.

Since food holds such a core part of time spent together with family and friends, situations involving shared food can end up sticky and sensitive. It is of paramount importance that you do all you can to assure your family that although your kosher journey may cause you to eat different foods, you will still be a part of these familial get-togethers.*

Make a point to attend every family meal and eat your food along with them. Whenever possible, try to see if you can cook yourself a kosher version of whatever the family is eating. Or better yet, offer to make kosher food for everyone, if that is possible. Create opportunities to bond with your family over food. If there are nice kosher restaurants in the area, eat out together. If you can host a *Shabbos* dinner or throw a kosher BBQ, do so! This gives them the message that you want to bond and aren't distancing yourself.

You and your parents are embarking on a shared journey that will last many years, and it will not always be simple. You must be mindful that your observance of kashrus will impact them both emotionally and physically, and, depending on their reasons for not keeping a kosher home, your observance of kosher may seem bewildering or even frustrating. Of course, it need not be so.



* See Jeff's story about the imoportance of communication, page 45

One isn't just balancing kashrus in a non-kosher kitchen; they must also be keeping the peace at home. When in doubt speak to your LOR and *Mashpia* on how high to set the bar. Family influence or push back will obviously affect the situation. **If done correctly, this new lifestyle may even appeal to your family and inspire them to begin keeping kosher.**

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Speak openly and honestly with your parents, to try and understand what their concerns are. Is the issue based on their feelings that you won't be joining them for meals? Is it about convenience or the



burden of buying new things? The more you can understand their concerns, the better you will be able to deal with the issues at hand. Likewise, the more they understand why eating kosher is important to you, and your motivations behind doing it, hopefully the more accommodating they will be. Make sure they properly understand what kosher means. Vegan or vegetarian won't pass.*

CORE COMMITMENT

It is a big burden for your family if you impose all the new rules and regulations of kashrus on them. Do whatever you can to make sure you carry the kashrus observance load instead of your family.

At the very least offer to do the shopping. If you don't drive, come along with your parents and shop with them. For a non-ko-sher observant person, finding kosher products with a reliable certification can get confusing to say the least. This will also prevent possible frustration caused by your parents coming home with a product bearing a non-reliable *hechsher* or a non-kosher food they thought would be fine.

For all practical kashrus purposes and in order for you to not become an annoying micromanaging helicopter child, the cooking should be done by you as much as possible if not completely.

SMART & STRESS-FREE COOKING

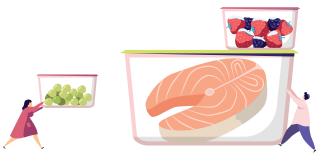
Avoid cooking your food while the kitchen is in use by others preparing non-kosher food. Whether it is late at night, early morning or midday, choose a time while all are out of the kitchen, and you have your space to cook calmly.

Try cooking for a few days at a time. Since you are cooking food double wrapped, as will be discussed below, you can cook fish, chicken, meat and lasagna all at the same time. That's four meals right there! Cook large amounts of rice, quinoa and pasta and then warm it up before eating. Make a big pot of soup and store it in small containers. Heating these pre portioned meals in a microwave is discussed below. Any *pareve* item should ideally be cooked in a *pareve* pot so that it can be consumed with either meat or dairy at a later time.

Avoid recipes that call for long oven times; as your family will not appreciate being kept out of the kitchen for so long. This goes for recipes that call for checking and basting as well. Stick to straightforward, quick and easy recipes. Google is great for this.

Keep calm in moments where family members cause a mishap with your utensils or food. In the worst-case scenario, even if your food or a pot became non-kosher due to a family member's mistake, remember that your relationship with them is so much more valuable and important. Don't let the heat of the matter take you over and jeopardize that. It is integral that you realize that mistakes will happen and you prepare yourself to laugh it off and accept them graciously.

Remember that there is also a biblical commandment to respect and honor your parents. This should also be your priority to observe in the most special way. Keeping kosher should not take away from this special mitzvah in any way.



Treif Transfer

CLASSIC CROSS CONTAMINATION

The biggest existing concern when one is preparing kosher food in a non-kosher kitchen is that there will be cross contamination from the non-kosher to the kosher food. Avoiding this and making sure everything stays kosher can be a daunting task.

Obvious cross contamination occurs when non-kosher food or food residue comes into direct contact with kosher food. When this occurs there are varying solutions that will need to be applied depending on what happened. At times it will be nullified and nothing needs to be done. Other times, a thorough rinse will suffice, or you may need to peel the food or remove an inch worth of it. Many times it can occur that the entire food will become non-kosher. One should consult their Rabbi with all details to figure out what needs to be done in each case.

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HEATED SITUATION

Another type of cross contamination that occurs is a transfer of non-kosher <u>absorbed taste</u> that exists within something e.g. taste absorbed within the walls of a clean pot, within a countertop or within a knife, that gets transmitted into a kosher food or utensil.

In order to avoid cross contamination of absorbed tastes and to be able to recognize when there is a problem, we must first understand how absorbed taste is transmitted *halachically* from one substance to another. In Halacha transfer of taste can only occur if there are <u>two</u> important factors in place.

1) There must be a <u>medium</u> through which taste travels and is transmitted. Taste is usually transmitted through any liquid, fatty residue or food substance, **AND** 2) The food or utensil must be <u>induced</u> to infuse and absorb taste via that medium. The most common condition which induces transmission of taste is heat above the temperature of 110°F (called in *Halacha Yad Soledes Bo*).

HALACHIC TERM

Yad Soledes Bo: Something hot enough that the hand reflexively draws back upon contact due to the uncomfortable heat. This occurs at about 110°F.

Only if this formula is in place will there be a transfer of <u>absorbed taste</u> from one to the other, causing a kashrus problem.

• Medium + Inducing condition = Transfer of taste But if the circumstances are different then:

- Inducing condition Medium = No Transfer
- Medium Inducing condition= No Transfer

So in the above condition of heat being the inducer here are some instances:

- Hot (110°F) kosher pot + Liquid (or other medium) + contact with non-kosher spoon= Transfer of taste from spoon to pot
- Hot (110°F) kosher pot Liquid (or other medium) + contact with non-kosher spoon= No Transfer of taste
- Cold (109°F and lower) kosher pot + cold or warm Liquid (or other medium) + contact with non-kosher spoon= No Transfer of taste

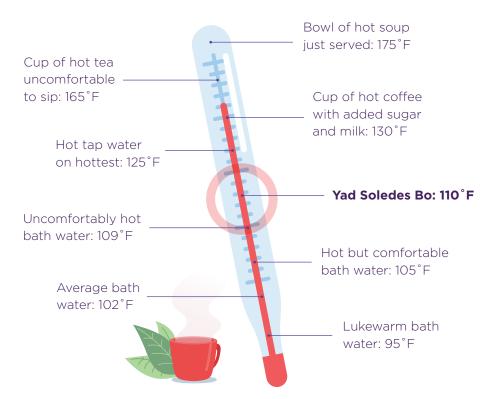
A practical example is if a clean and dry kosher pot which is very hot was put down on a totally clean and dry non-kosher countertop, there is no taste transfer since there was no medium. But if the countertop had some grease or liquid on it, or if the bottom of the pot was wet or greasy, then there is a transfer of taste from the non-kosher countertop to the kosher pot, causing an issue.

Ultimately the food inside the kosher pot also absorbs non-kosher taste since that hot food is the medium which draws out the taste from the walls of the pot. If the pot was not hot enough, even if there was a medium, no transfer occurs from one to the other.

If a cold kosher pot was placed on a greasy non-kosher counter top, no transfer occurred but the kosher pot should be cleaned well with warm water (not 110°F or higher), soap and a rough sponge to remove the residue.

HALACHIC TEMPERATURE GAUGE

Learning random numbers of heat measurements is not the most practical. Here is a gauge that can give a better feel of these temperatures.



IMPORTANT TO NOTE

In this booklet whenever the word "hot" is mentioned, it means Yad soledes bo- the temperature of 110°F or above. Whenever "cold" is mentioned it means 109°F or lower.

STALE TASTES

Once we know how a transfer of taste occurs, one needs to see whether that transferred taste is an actual Kashrus issue. The taste that was transferred may be a rotten taste and be *halachically* permissible. Halacha states that <u>absorbed taste</u> (as opposed to actual residue) becomes spoiled 24 hours after it was absorbed and is not considered non-kosher. The reasoning is since it is spoiled, it isn't considered food anymore and isn't bound to the laws of kashrus.

We only use this concept to allow something *Bedieved* (after the fact) but not *Lechatchilah* (initially). Therefore, one is not initially allowed to cook food in a non-kosher clean pot that wasn't used for 24 hours. But post facto if it was done by mistake (or in pressing circumstances) one can eat it, since the pot was clean of any actual residue and the absorbed taste was spoiled.

There is one caveat though, sharp flavored foods like spicy, sour, sharp, bitter or salty foods (called *Davar Charif* in Halachic terms) rejuvenate the absorbed taste and render it edible once again. Thus even post facto (*Bedieved*) if sharp food was cooked in a clean non-kosher pot that was not used in 24 hours, the food is still non-kosher since the sharpness rejuvenated the non-kosher absorbed taste.

TIME WILL TRANSFER

Another way absorbed non-kosher taste can be transmitted is via *Kovush*- bland liquids that sat for a 24-hour time period in a non-kosher vessel. After 24 hours the liquid starts absorbing from the vessel in which it is contained. Sharp liquids and salty liquids can absorb in a shorter period of time



(18 minutes or even 6 minutes according to some). One should consult their Rabbi with specifics if this occurred.

Based on this one would not be able to use a non-kosher container to store food for an extended period of time.

SHARP AWARENESS

Another way absorbed non-kosher taste can be transmitted is via the pressure of a knife or any other sharp utensil where pressure is used. But this can only occur if the knife was used on a sharp tasting food like a spicy, sour, sharp, bitter, or salty food.



So the formula is:

- Clean non-kosher utensil + Pressure + Sharp food = Transfer
- Clean non-kosher utensil + Pressure Sharp food = No transfer
- Clean non-kosher utensil Pressure + Sharp food = No transfer

Based on this formula this would be the result in the following instances.

- A clean non-kosher knife cutting an onion = non-kosher onion
- A clean non-kosher knife cutting an apple = kosher apple
- A clean non-kosher spoon used to scoop onions = kosher onions All this is after the fact or in pressing circumstances (*Bedieved*). But initially (*Lechatchilah*) one should only use a Kosher knife even to cut an apple. See "Sharing the Turf" section.

As mentioned above, absorbed spoiled tastes are rejuvenat-

ed by sharp foods. Therefore if there is ever a transfer of taste it is always fresh and not considered spoiled.

In a non-kosher setting one should never use a pre-cut sharp food since it is considered non-kosher. An onion or any other sharp food cut with a non-kosher clean knife will



become non-kosher and consequently make a kosher knife that cuts it non-kosher. If placed in a blender the blades will become non-kosher.

If you cut a sharp food with a kosher knife make sure to keep that food under watch so that no one else cuts a piece off of it with a non-kosher knife rendering it non-kosher.

Cutting boards or plates used while pressure was applied with sharp foods also transfer taste and absorb.

There are other ways as well with which non-kosher taste can transfer to kosher food. It is beyond the scope of this work to cover that.



Navigating the Kitchen

KOSHER ISLAND

Talk the matter over with your parents and siblings and ask them where the most convenient place for you to store your kosher items is. You'll need a designated cabinet to store your few appliances or whatever else you have. You'll need a shelf on which to store your dry goods; and a designated space in the refrigerator for your perishables. If there is limited space in the kitchen, try finding another place to store your things like the garage, basement, or your bedroom closet.

There are some kitchen appliances and utensils that you'll

be able to share with your parents due to your situation (see "Sharing Turf" section for more on that). Other items won't be as practical. *Kashering* each time won't be practical either (see "Kashering" section).

If your family has some utensils or appliances that they don't need anymore and are ok with them becoming kosher, contact your LOR on how to *kasher* them.



The following are kitchen items and cookware that would enable you to reach stability and convenience in the kitchen; providing you with warm hearty meals beneficial for the body and soul.

Buy:

• A set of 3 pots, large, medium and small that fit into one another for easy storage. Designate the biggest for *pareve* so that you can cook large quantities of food that can be eaten with either meat or dairy. The medium pot can be meat and the smallest one dairy.



HALACHIC NOTE

See Dipping Dilemmas section regarding *toveling*, immersing all these utensils in a *mikvah*. Try buying wood, plastic or silicone utensils when possible; these do not require *tevillah*.

- 3 good knives. One for Meat, *pareve* and dairy. More knives can't hurt.
- Whatever cooking utensils you think you'll need. A ladle, spatula, slotted spatula, skimmer, slotted spoon, cooking spoon, pronged spoon, tongs etc. Buy for Meat, *pareve* and dairy as needed. There are some basic cheap wood, plastic or silicone cooking utensils available.
- 2 or 3 frying pans, one for meat, one for dairy. Having a pareve pan is a plus. You can sauté vegetables in it and then use it for both meat and dairy foods. Although some have a designated fish pan, it isn't a Halachic requirement and isn't something to take on at this point.
- 3 baking trays for meat, *pareve* and dairy. Alternatively you can skip this and only use disposable aluminum pans and trays.
- 3 cutting boards for meat, pareve and dairy. Getting the flexible thin plastic ones helps save space and are easy to store.
- 3 mixing bowls of various sizes, large, medium and small that fit into one another. This will help with storage.
- 1 Blender. A small and powerful blender is a handy kitchen



prep tool useful for making great tasting smoothies, soups, and salad dressings. It's best to keep this *pareve* so only put in hot *pareve* foods and only use it with sharp foods that were cut with a *pareve* knife. If you want to make a dairy smoothie, that's fine, as long as the entire process is cold, including the water used to wash the blender, which shouldn't be 110F or higher.

PRACTICAL TIP

Easily clean a blender by adding warm water (not over *yad soledes bo*, 110F) and a drop of dish soap to the container. Use the pulse feature for a few seconds, pour out the soapy liquid and rinse well.

- Some mugs.
- Buy a cheap but decent dish set and some basic metal cutlery. This will help provide you with a sense of dignity.
- Basic bread toaster or toaster oven if possible. One can't live with stale bread.
 - Crock pot for some great slow cooked meals and *cholent*, of course.
 - Instant pot- This can be a huge game changer. It offers a wide variety of features and can do anything from cooking rice to soup to steaming vegetables. It also cooks food faster (70%!) than other ways to cook and it's all done in one pot.
 - Gallon size and sandwich size resealable plastic bags. These are great for mixing salads, marinating meats, and storing all types of things.



- 3-in-1 grilled cheese, waffle and panini press maker. Pretty compact and can add a lot to your breakfast or lunch.
- 6 cork pot coasters (also known as pot holders). Cheap and highly necessary. Each one of these is like a safe island amidst raging lava. Put these coasters down on any <u>clean</u> non-kosher surface.
- 3 spoon coasters (also known as spoon rests). One for Meat, *pareve* and dairy. Buy the cheap silicone ones. There's nothing more frustrating than stirring a pot and then having no safe place to put down your spoon. Create a safe haven for your cooking spoon or utensil by placing a spoon rest close to where you are cooking.
- Oven mitts. Since they get pretty dirty with food residue you want to get kosher ones. Get at least a pair each for meat and dairy. *Pareve* is a plus if you think it's needed. The mini silicone ones are cheap and easy to store.
- Lots of half size aluminum foil pans and covers.
- Lots of full size aluminum foil pans and covers.

PRACTICAL TIP

Go to a big club store like Costco, Restaurant Depot Sam's, BJ's, or the like to buy aluminum foil pans in bulk. It's 10 times cheaper than buying them at local stores.

HALACHIC NOTE

Regarding disposable pans requiring *tevillah* if being used twice, see the "Dipping Dilemmas" section.

- Food storage containers. It is helpful to cook ahead of time and store the food in containers. "See Smart and Stress-Free Cooking" section above.
- Strainer. If only using for *pareve* then only one is needed.

There are some collapsible silicone strainers, available anywhere.

• BBQ grill- If you have an outdoor area, having a small grill can help change things up, keep you out of the kitchen and have a delicious meal like grilled veggies, corn on the cob and some steak. No one would say no to that. Better yet, throw a kosher, family BBQ and spend quality time bonding and eating.

PRACTICAL TIP

If you are buying expensive cooking ware, buy easily *kasherable* things like metal cookware that aren't coated in Teflon or ceramic. Avoid pans with plastic or rubber handles. Get pots with metal covers (not glass). If it's cheap, buy anything, but be ready to throw it out in case it becomes *treif*.

PRACTICAL TIP

All items that you buy should look different than the ones being used by your family to avoid mix ups.

- Mini folding table. Create a kosher island. If there is the space, it may make things easier to have a small 1.5' x 4' folding table that becomes your kosher counter space while cooking.
- Classy disposables. If you'll be making a kosher Shabbat dinner or the like, get nice classy disposable *plasticware*, cutlery and serving ware. It will make a big difference.
- 2 sink racks. See "Dishwashing" section.
- Plastic basin. See "Dishwashing" section.



KITCHEN IS LAVA!

Navigating the non-kosher kitchen can feel like you're playing an intense game of the floor is lava, except in this case everything in the kitchen is lava. There are 2 materials that have unique superpowers and can save you from the hottest lava. Namely, plastic food wrap (also known as saran wrap or cling wrap) and aluminum foil. Equipped with these you can do magic.

PRACTICAL TIP

Go to a big club store like Costco, Sam's BJ's Restaurant Depot or the like and aet the biagest possible rolls of plastic wrap and aluminum foil. The last thing you want is for the roll to run out when vou really need it. In addition, you want to be able to use it liberally without worrying.

PRACTICAL TIP

Buy the widest size possible (18-24 inches recommended). You want wide and easy coverage. Foodservice ones are usually widest. This width can only be found in a large club store. Amazon sells 24" rolls of aluminum foil and plastic wrap though the price is lower in club stores mentioned above.

Only get the most heavy-duty durable kind, a small tear can lead to big disasters.

KASHERING

We are not going to cover *kashering* and all its details since most times it isn't practical to routinely Kasher. Anything being koshered with water, needs a 24 hour down time. This isn't practical when the equipment is shared and needs to be used by others at home. *Kashering* an oven with self-clean too often can damage the oven and its racks. *Kashering* the oven by cleaning it till it's spotless and putting it on the highest temperature for two hours isn't a practical routine either.

When your family is ready to make a permanent change to Kosher, contact your LOR on how to go about *Kashering* the house.

Therefore, it's better to focus on how to use the non-kosher kitchen as it is without *Kashering* much. This is the most practical approach. Imagine telling your family they cannot use the microwave for 24 hours since you'll need to *kasher* it before you warm up some food. That probably would not go over well.

Below is a brief explanation on each area in the kitchen and its applicable way to use it in a kosher manner. Things that aren't practical to *kasher* nor use in their non-kosher state should be bought new and kept for only kosher use. These things were covered in the "Kosher Island" section.



COUNTERTOPS

Non-kosher countertops that are clean can be used for cold things, like holding a cold pot or dish or food that is directly touching the countertop. An exception would be cutting sharp food directly on it. See "Sharp Awareness" section.

One should refrain from placing a hot pot or utensil on a non-kosher countertop. As mentioned earlier in the "*Treif* Transfer" section, if the pot was dry and the counter was clean and dry, there is no transfer of taste that occurs. Nevertheless, one can save lots of headache by sticking to a rule of not placing anything hot directly on the counter top.

If one can work out with their family to Kasher a small area and keep it kosher, that can be ideal, but not always practical. Having a small folding table that you open while cooking can help, see "Kosher Island" section for more on that.

Practically speaking, having several pot and spoon coasters can help a lot. See "Kosher Island" section for more on that.

Another option can be to cover the counters before working. First you want to clean the counter well. Then you need to dry it, because the moisture can be a conduit to transfer the non-kosher absorbed taste into your counter cover, and then you'll be left with a non-kosher counter cover covering a non-kosher counter. Doesn't sound too helpful. Then you can cover the counter, either with a heat proof mat (silicone or the like) or with simple heavy-duty foil. One layer is fine. If covering with something that can rip, like foil, two layers are better.



STOVETOP

The 4 common stovetop types in home kitchens are: gas, electric, glass top and induction. Each type has its own considerations and depending on the stove top there are various methods to Kasher it. Equally applicable to all stovetops is that the stove top should be carefully cleaned before *kashering*.

There are two areas on a stovetop, 1) the actual burner area where the pot is placed on to cook and 2) The areas between the burners. One does not have to *kasher* all burners on the stovetop to use it for kosher. *Kashering* just the ones you will be using is fine.

• Gas stovetop: No need to wait 24 hours before kashering

since the job is being done with fire, not water. After cleaning well, leave the grates on and turn on the flame/s on full blast for 15 minutes. This will only Kasher the grates in the burner area.

• Electric exposed coil stove top: No need to wait 24 hours before *kashering* since the job is being done with fire, not water. After cleaning well, make sure the catch trays don't have obvious food or residue in them. It is best to cover the catch trays with some foil. Then turn on the burners, let them get red hot, and then keep them at red heat for 5 minutes. This will only Kasher the coil on which the pot goes.

• Electric smooth glass covered stovetop: No need to wait 24 hours before *kashering* since the job is being done with fire, not water. After cleaning well, turn on the burner/s to the highest setting, let them get red hot, and then keep them at red heat for 25 minutes. At that point only the circular burner area is kosher. Make sure your pot stays in that area.

An alternative for a glass stovetop is not to *kasher* it at all, and instead place all pots onto metal discs so that the pots have no contact with the stovetop. These metal discs can be found on Amazon, and are called Stainless steel heat diffuser discs. Make sure they are large enough for your pots. Also, make sure that it says it can be used with all stovetops (not just induction, but also gas, electric...) and that it can handle heat.

Another option is to buy a high heat resistant grill mat and place it on the glass stovetop after cleaning it well. Make sure it says on it that it can handle 600°F heat. One should buy 2 sets of these discs or mats for meat and milk.

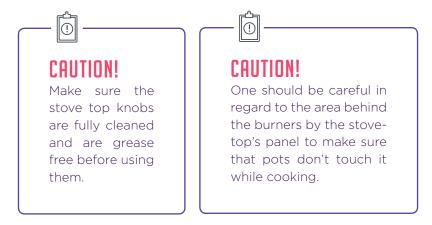
• Induction (Glass Cooktop With Electromagnetic Elements): An induction cooktop can either be *kashered* with boiling water or one can buy an induction interface disc. This disc would serve as a barrier



between the non-kosher surface and your pot. Using boiling water to *kasher* would require a 24 hour wait beforehand, which isn't practical when you are sharing the kitchen with others.

One should purchase two sets of induction interface discs – one set for meat and one set for dairy.

The rest of the stovetop surface is only *kasherable* if it's uncoated stainless steel. The coated ones are coated with enamel and pose an issue to *Kasher*. The glass or ceramic ones may also be an issue to *kasher*. Ask your LOR about it. Either way, even if it is stainless steel, the practical way to *kasher* it would be by pouring boiling water on it. However, since water is being used to *kasher*, 24 hours of non use would be required beforehand. This isn't practical as discussed. The good news is that there is no need to *kasher* the area between the burners. One just needs to make sure that nothing is placed there during the cooking process.



If there is noticeable food residue on the underside of the stove's hood, it should be wiped down. With steam and heat it can start melting and drip into your food.

Even when the hood is clean, if the hood is very close to the stove top it can be an issue if the steam is hot when it reaches the hood. It can absorb taste from that area and drip back into the pot.

Generally, this isn't a concern since the hood is far above the cooking pots and the steam dissipates and cools before reaching the hood. However, if the hood is unusually low or one cooks in unusually large pots, the pots may be in closer proximity to the hood. In such a case, one should place larger pots on the front burners, which are not usually beneath the hood. If the hood is vented and has a fan, one should turn on the fan.

If one feels that this is too complicated and they don't want to go through this process, they can buy individual electric burners, one for dairy and one for meat.

PRACTICAL TIP

Buy a powerful burner like Waring or Cuisinart brand that has 1500 watts or higher. Although it is more expensive, it will save you lots of time and aggravation. The cheap ones can take close to an hour to boil a pot of water for pasta.

HALACHIC NOTE

One may have pots of dairy and meat cooking at the same time on the stovetop provided that there is no splattering or mixing (including steam) from one to the other. Since it is difficult to meet the required conditions, it is not advisable to cook meat and dairy at the same time.

OVEN

As mentioned earlier *kashering* isn't the most practical due to wait time or frequency of self-clean being damaging.

In addition, to *kasher* an oven without self-cleaning it must be sparkling clean on the inside. It's hard to clean an oven really thoroughly, especially if doing this regularly. To *kasher* an oven, you have to make sure





there are no bits of food or crumbs on the inside at all. This includes the walls and ceiling, the racks, the door, and the hinges, as well. If there is any residue that is difficult to remove, it must be evaluated. Is

it a mere discoloration? Is it an intangible spot? If so it poses no problem. Does the rust have substance to it? Then it must be removed. All this may take lots of oven cleaner and heavy scrubbing. Again, not the most practical...

If you can't do this or couldn't be bothered to do this, you can still use the oven to cook things, it just gets a little more complicated. There are theoretically three challenges that non-kosher ovens pose for the kosher consumer.

The first of these is the residue on the racks. The second issue is *Rei'cha*, aromas. These aromas may come from the non-kosher food residue on the racks or the oven floor. Under certain conditions, aromas from non-kosher food will render kosher food impermissible. The third issue is *Zei'ah*, vapor or steam. Within certain parameters, vapors wafting off of kosher foods in a non-kosher oven can lead to the kosher food becoming forbidden.

How are these three challenges met?

To heat food in a dirty non-kosher conventional oven, wrap the food in two layers of aluminum foil that fully cover and surround the food. These two layers should be made up of two separate pieces of aluminum foil, it can't merely be one big piece of foil wrapped around twice. The foil wrap will keep the vapor sealed inside, it will block outside aromas and vapors, and it will

protect the kosher food from the rack's non-kosher residue. In order to properly prevent possible condensation from getting through the ends of the foil, one should ensure that the seams of the foil finish on the sides so that the top is a solid piece with no place for something to drip in through a slit formed by the foils seams.

Although the non-kosher residue may render the outer layer of foil non-kosher, the absence of a



liquid in-between the layers ensures that this forbidden outer layer will neither compromise the kosher status of the inner layer nor of the food inside as discussed earlier at length. It is therefore integral that there is no leaking moisture between the two layers.



Although one is double covering it is advisable that all noticeable pieces of food be removed from the spot where the kosher food will rest.

Do these double layers need to be airtight?

The wrappings do not have to be airtight; rather, the food should be covered on all sides in a manner that (a) does not allow it to come in contact with the racks of the oven, (b) does not allow any of the condensation that forms on the ceiling of the oven to drip into the food and (c) it prevents non-kosher aromas from reaching the food. It makes no difference if the wrapped food is a liquid or a solid.

The use of the term "double wrapped" is not literal here. Rather there should be 2 layers between the food and the oven. As such, a disposable foil tray covered with a cover of foil counts as one layer and all that is needed is an additional layer above all this. If any of the layers burst, consult your LOR.

When using this method one can cook kosher food even with non-kosher food cooking in the oven at the same time. In addition you can cook meat and dairy or meat and fish dishes at the same time if they are wrapped like this.



Cooking everything double wrapped does deprive you of some good crispy or browned chicken or the like. One trick to accomplish that is by using a culinary torch to give your food that final browning and crispy touch. Although this sounds exotic, it is available for purchase online.

Baking cookies or challah and the like isn't so practical when double wrapped. Therefore a solution for dry foods that have no gravy and have liquid oozing out of them, is to do a semi koshering to the oven and that will suffice.

Semi Koshering is accomplished by cleaning the oven of any actual food remnants and obvious fatty residue. Then one turns the oven on the highest for 45 minutes. Once that's done, one can place a piece of heavy duty foil onto the oven rack and place the pan into the oven as is without covering it. This only works for cooking <u>dry foods</u> without any gravy or any liquids oozing out of the food.



HALACHIC NOTE

When double wrapping food, the two layers should be made up of two separate pieces of aluminum foil or plastic wrap, it can't merely be one big piece wrapped around twice.

MICROWAVE

A microwave needs 24 hours downtime before *kashering* and that is not practical.

Therefore, one needs to use the double wrapped method as mentioned earlier by the oven just this time with plastic wrap that fully covers and surrounds the food (unless you insist on using aluminum



foil and want to make things real exciting at home; and get a free fireworks show). This can also be accomplished by using two Ziploc bags or two plastic or paper shopping bags.

See above for the double wrapping method mentioned by the oven section. All those details apply equally here.



FRIDGE AND FREEZER

To keep things safe, it is best to have a designated area for all your kosher items so that there isn't any cross contamination or confusion. Try to keep your items on the highest shelf so that in case of drips or spills of non-kosher food, you won't be affected. Make sure the shelf you're putting your food on is clean from any non-kosher residue.

A hot pot or container should not be placed in a non-kosher fridge until it has cooled down and isn't *Yad Soledes Bo* anymore.

SINK

Having a non-kosher sink can be a challenge in many ways, especially when it comes to draining foods with hot liquids or washing your dishes. See "Dishwashing" section below for details on dishwashing.

When it comes to draining, use a full size aluminum foil pan placed on your covered counter area (or mini table) as your sink. Place your colander in that and drain into the pan.

Washing pasta with cold water



may also be an issue due to the heat and steam rising from the sink into the pasta. Therefore, this should also be done in the foil pan. Once the water in the pan has cooled, it can be poured down the sink.

TABLE

As mentioned above regarding a countertop, if it's clean, it can be used for cold things, whether the food is directly touching the table or you're placing a cold pot or dish there.

One should refrain from placing a



hot pot or utensil on a non-kosher Table. Although we mentioned earlier in the "Treif Transfer" section if the pot/utensil was dry and the counter was clean and dry, there is no transfer of taste that occurs. Nevertheless, it's always best to avoid it. You can place it on a placemat or the like. If a fresh tablecloth was placed on the table, that's considered covered enough for a dry hot plate/ pot to be placed on it. But in case of a spill or other moisture it may be an issue since the material is permeable. For a pot that's hot it's always recommended to use a proper non-permeable layer like a pot coaster. When placing a hot dish like a plate or bowl down, a clean tablecloth is fine.

Sharing the Turf SHARED UTENSILS

Although you may have your own safe island of kosher things, there are items you can share with your family.

If a non-kosher utensil is cleaned well, it may be used in a non-ideal situation with cold non-sharp kosher food. Finding oneself in non-kosher home isn't an ideal situation and one can use clean non-kosher utensils for cold use when needed.

Any dishes or cutlery that are non-kosher should not be used for hot products or for sharp foods.

Some permissable examples are:

- Eating cereal with clean spoon and bowl
- Drinking any cold drink with a clean cup
- Using a dish to place cut fruit on
- Using a blender or food processor to process cold <u>non-sharp</u> foods.
- Measuring oil or the like in clean measuring cups or spoons.

• A knife should only be used for cold non-sharp food items after being washed well with soap and scrubbed with steel wool or another abrasive material.

Here is a list of appliances that you can use only after investigating the matter:

- Keurig machine- It may not be used unless one can ascertain that it is being used for coffee only. Even if used with flavors that aren't kosher certified, it doesn't make the machine non-kosher. There are Keurig K cups that have soups containing non-kosher meat which can also be dispensed. There can be non-kosher hot cocoa cups or non *Chalav Yisrael* K cups used. One needs to ask if these were ever used and investigate the matter. One can *kasher* the machine but it first needs a 24 hour down time. It may be worth convincing your family to wait 24 hours and henceforth only use kosher coffee in the machine. Ask your LOR how to *kasher* it.
- Hot Water from an urn, Pump Pot, Instant Hot Water In general, if they look clean, these are permissible. If one witnessed a family member submerging the spout into non-kosher food, the urn should not be used. In many cases, however, one does not actually witness this but is concerned that it is a possibility. In those cases, one should assess the likelihood of this happening. If the spout is far enough away from the tabletop/ countertop to the point that it would be unnecessary to bring the bowl up to the



spout, one should simply wipe the outside of the spout and run a little water through it before filling a cup and then it can be used. If the spout is so close to the tabletop that a bowl would not fit easily without touching the spout, one should not use the urn.

Regarding the steam rising from the bowl, for various halachic reasons, the spout remains kosher. In such a case, one need only wipe the outside of the spout and dispense some hot water that should be discarded and then take hot water or coffee for use.

Here is a list of appliances that you can use without needing any investigation:

- Can opener after cleaning it from any obvious residue.
- Peeler after cleaning it from any obvious residue.
- Electric Hot water kettle. If they look clean around the spout area they are fine. These are only used for hot water. There is no concern of them being washed with non-ko-sher things. The way they are usually used they don't come close enough to food where rising steam would affect
- Basic coffee machine. Even if used with flavors that aren't kosher certified, it doesn't make the machine non-kosher. A Keurig is a little different, see above.
- Coffee urn If the urn is used exclusively for coffee then one may drink coffee from it.
- Clean dish towels.

them.

• Paper goods- As long as it is clean from any residue. Extra attention needs to be given if

cutlery is brought back from meals and placed into the container.

Water cooler

There is no issue eating at the same table as family or friends that are eating non-kosher. During a fully kosher meal shared by two people, one eating meat and the other eating dairy, a placemat or reminder is needed. This is not necessary when one is eating kosher and another member is eating non-kosher, as there is no concern that one will eat the non-kosher food.

SHARED FOODS

Foods you can share with your family:

- Opened bottles of drinks that have their original contents in them.
- Opened packages of kosher food that do not require cutting and seem to be clean.



- Anything non- sharp that was cut while cold can be eaten after washing it well. If one can ascertain that a clean knife and cutting board was used, then no washing is needed. If the knife and cutting board just came out of a drawer, it can be safely assumed to be clean and it's fine.
- Open box of cereal with original content with a kosher symbol.
- Open bags of chips, cookies, crackers with a kosher symbol with original content.
- Anything that wasn't cut or handled with a dirty knife or cutlery.

Avoid using:

• Spices. They are usually handled with greasy hands that have non-kosher residue on the container. In addition, if they are added to food while it is steaming the non-kosher steam gets absorbed in the spices. Sometimes the top of the container may touch food and actually get some non-kosher residue in it.



- Condiments. Same concern as spices.
- Peanut butter, jelly, mayonnaise, hummus or any container that a dirty non-kosher knife could have been used for, causing cross contamination of the food in the jar.

PRACTICAL TIP

Buying mini portion controlled packets of ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce, hummus, guacamole etc. may be a good solution to avoid the possible cross contamination discussed.

HARMFUL SPIRITS

Food directly touched (as opposed to a container of food) by a Jew who hasn't washed *Negel Vasser*, gets contaminated with a harmful spirit. Most Halachic authorities hold that post facto the food can be eaten. If it is possible to wash the food without it getting ruined one should wash it first three times with water. If washing would ruin the food, it can be eaten the way it is. If the person washed their hands out of hygiene, and not ritually, before touching it, the food doesn't have to be washed.

DIPPING DILEMMAS

The issue of un-immersed utensils can be easier to manage under certain circumstances, but in different circumstances, may actually be more difficult. If the utensils are not owned by Jews, there is no need to immerse them. If the utensils are owned by Jews, there is a mitzvah to immerse them and a prohibition against using them until they are immersed. This mitzvah and this prohibition depend on what they are made of and how they are used.

There are, however, some well-predicated emergency measures within the halachic system, elucidated by the only people qualified to promulgate such leniencies: our sages. For example, *Rav* Moshe Feinstein asserted that in a time of great need, an un-immersed utensil may be used if the food in question could theoretically be eaten without the utensil. For example, common decency and manners require one to eat steak on a plate. In theory, however, it is possible to eat steak without a plate.

On the other hand, there is no way to eat soup without a receptacle. Following *Rav* Feinstein, a person could use the steak-plate in a time of great need but not the soup-bowl.

Other Halachic authorities maintain that a glass utensil may be used if it is very, very necessary to do so, even if it is un-immersed.

CAUTION! It should be stressed that these leniencies apply only to the issue of immersion and not to the issue of kashrus.

Some authorities will allow use of non-immersed vessels in a time of extreme need or if it will cause conflict and strife. Contact your LOR for guidance in the matter.

A simple solution is to locate a local Kosher *mikvah* or natural body that qualifies for immersing vessels and offer to do it on behalf of your family. You may need help and guidance from a LOR to make sure you are using a kosher *mikvah*.

What materials require *tevillah*, immersion in a *mikvah*?

Mideorayso: On a biblical level, all metal utensils require *tevillah*. Many hold that aluminum isn't included in the biblical obligation.

Miderabanan: Rabbinically glass is also required to be immersed. Many hold that aluminum isn't included in the biblical obligation and that it is Rabbinically required.

Minhag: A specific custom. Many have a custom to immerse glazed earthenware since the glazing may be from glass. *Rav* Moshe Feinstein maintained that the typical piece



of glazed earthenware does not require immersion. That would include China, mugs and the like.

Chumrah: Stringency to immerse although not obligated. Some hold that plastic, rubber and similar materials should be immersed. Most authorities rule that plastic utensils do not require immersion.

No requirement at all- Paper, wood, stone and other materials not listed above do not require *tevillah*.

One can rely on the opinion that plastic doesn't require *tevillah* as well as the opinion that glazed earthenware doesn't. Based on that only metal or glass utensils need immersing.

There is a myth out there that one can use a utensil one time without *tevillah*. This has no source and is not allowed. A one time use utensil i.e. a disposable utensil, does not require *tevillah* since it doesn't have the status of a utensil.

Therefore aluminum foil pans don't require *tevillah*. If one decides to use an aluminum pan more than once some require it to be immersed. Some hold that it doesn't need immersion. One can rely on the latter opinion when needed.

Immersing electrical appliances may worry your family. Speak to a Rabbi about if you should do so.

DISHWASHING

Kashering the sink or dishwasher every time you need to wash dishes isn't in any way practical. Therefore, one must make due with what they have.

A dishwasher is out of the question since it uses hot water. Double covering the dishes unfortunately won't help you in this situation. You need to resort to washing in the sink.



Halachically as long as the water isn't 110 F or higher it isn't hot enough to transfer absorbed taste. Hence if one first washes the non-kosher sink very well, they can use warm water that feels comfortable to the hand to wash their kosher dishes. It is better to have two sink racks, one for meat and one for dairy, that you place at the bottom of the sink so that your dishes are sitting on that and not the direct non-kosher sink.



If something was accidentally washed with non-kosher dishes there are many factors that can change the halachic ruling. One should ask their LOR. If it was hand washed without gloves, one can safely assume the water wasn't hot enough to transfer taste. In such a case the dishes should be washed again with soap and warm water and then they can be used.

A separate sponge should be used to wash kosher dishes. In addition, one should have a separate sponge for milk, meat and *pareve*. If one doesn't have access to a sponge, and only has a non-ko-sher one available, it can be used once it is rinsed and soap is added to it. It should only be used with water that is not *Yad Soledes Bo*.

PRACTICAL TIP

Wash your dishes as soon as they are dirty and the dirt is fresh. This prevents the dirt from drying up and settling in ultimately saving you lots of elbow grease and making it a smooth cleaning experience.

TRUST

Kosher food and utensils should not be left unsealed for long periods of time or overnight in an insecure environment where others who do not keep kosher have access. Rather, it should be sealed in a manner that is easily determinable in the event that the bag or food or utensil has been used or was tampered with.

Usually only those that keep kosher are trusted in such matters. One living with non-observant parents or family is faced with a dilemma. Do they need to lock everything up? Can they trust their family to not touch anything?

In such situations there is room to trust family members. In times of need, *Rav* Moshe Feinstein permits one to rely upon the word of a non-observant Jew, provided that you know this person is honest by nature and definitely would not intentionally lie. Confirm these details with your LOR.

Although you trust them, if something seems off, ask the necessary questions and get to the bottom of it. Be in touch with your LOR.

Similarly, if a parent tells their child a certain item was kosher with a reliable certification and that they got rid of the packaging, as mentioned one can trust their word and eat it if they are honest by nature.

One does not want to give their parents the impression that they are suspecting them and don't trust them, that wouldn't be healthy for the relationship.



TALK KOSHER

Interestingly, a great lesson can be taken from the only time the word "Kosher" is mentioned in *Tanach*. In the *Megillah*, Esther uses the phrase, "V'Kasheir HaDavar," meaning, "and the matter is fitting". This phrase can also be understood as, "and the word is kosher." As much as we have to be careful with what goes into our mouth we need to be careful with what leaves our mouth I.e. speaking kosher words.

When dealing with parents in challenging situations, it's crucial for us to remember that our words to them must be kosher. In all families, disagreements may come up, and firm resolve may be required, but one should always avoid speaking disrespectfully or in a condescending way to parents. As an observant Jew you must always keep in mind: when you speak in a kosher way, you increase the Honor of G-d and make a Kiddush Hashem.





PRACTICAL LESSONS



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Don't surprise your parents about your undertaking of kashrus observance. If it is a decision you took on during summer camp or over a Shabbaton, make sure to inform them before you get home. You don't want to be welcomed home with your favorite non-kosher dinner, and only then spill the beans. That wouldn't go well.

Explain to your parents the basics of keeping kosher and what it will entail. Your parents may get the wrong idea of what it means and attempt to cook for you. Vegan or vegetarian food will not make a meal kosher. If this isn't clearly explained, it can lead to awkward situations.

Meet Anna, whose story illustrates the importance of clear and effective communication with parents about her new kosher lifestyle. And Jeff, whose commitment to making his own kosher food brought his family closer together.



When Anna decided she wanted to keep kosher, she sat down with her mom and explained it to her. Anna thought the conversation went well and her mom seemed pretty open to the whole thing and even offered to buy her the foods and materials she needed to begin. The next day when Anna came home, there was a beautiful hot meal waiting on the table. Her mom had misunderstood what kosher meant and had actually made an entire vegan meal for Anna and the family to eat together to celebrate Anna's recent decision. Explaining that she couldn't partake of the dinner took lots of sensitivity and still left her mom feeling a little frustrated. Anna realized she needed to communicate exactly what kosher meant a lot better, and her mom was appreciative for the clarity.

When Jeff first began to keep kosher as a senior in high school, his family wasn't so into it and pretty much regarded the whole thing as some passing faze. Dinner wasn't a family time, his mom would usually pick something up from the nearest takeout place and everyone would eat whenever they were done their after school activity. It stressed out Jeff's mother that she couldn't get anything for him. Jeff began making easy dinners for his family and would invite everyone to sit together and eat. The family loved the new bonding time, and soon the family was much warmer about his religious observance, and when he eventually moved out they joked that they still missed his dinners.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

If something goes wrong, ask! Your LOR can help you navigate sticky situations. You might be surprised how easily many issues can be resolved.



Brandon liked preparing dinner for the entire upcoming week on Sunday. He had a big pot of pepper-steak simmering on the fire when he accidentally mistook a non-kosher spoon in the kitchen for one of his own and used it to stir and taste the food. When he realized what happened Brandon was completely beside himself. This was enough for four meals, and he was sure he had made the whole thing non-kosher. Passing by and seeing him so upset it was actually his mother who suggested that Brandon call the Rabbi for help in the matter. To his surprise the Rabbi clarified a few pointers and told him that the food was still fine to eat! Brandon was relieved and grateful for the reminder from his mom on the importance of checking with a Rabbi instead of deciding things himself.

In honor of the wedding of Aharon Nechemya ben Elka Frayda to Shoshana Yehudis bas Shimanei Faigel.

May they be blessed with success, health, wealth, nachas, happiness, peace, and a home filled with Yiddishe, Chassidishe warmth that the Rebbe will be comfortable in.





Questions? Comments? Please reach out to us at kashrusbeintheknow@gmail.com