

The Laws of Erev Pesach:

1. Bedikas (search for the) Chametz:

1. Bedikas Chametz should ideally be done at nightfall on the evening of the fourteenth of Nissan. **This year of 5778 it is Thursday evening March 29 at 8:30 pm.**
2. One should make every effort to start the Bedika at nightfall, which may require you do leave work before nightfall in order to do Bedikas Chometz on time.
3. If you are unable to begin the Bedika at nightfall, do it as soon as possible afterwards.
4. The ideal custom is to daven Ma'ariv at nightfall in Shul and do bedikas Chametz immediately afterwards at home.
5. From **8:00 pm** onwards, one should not be involved in activities which may cause you to lose track of time and miss the ideal time of starting the Bedika at nightfall. These activities include, but are not limited to having a haircut, shaving, bathing, eating bread and cake more than the size of an egg, and sleeping.
6. These restrictions only apply to those people who are required to do Bedikas Chometz.
7. Ideally, the home owner should do the search. However, he may ask others to assist in the search. In extenuating circumstances, he may even ask someone else to do the entire Bedika for him on his behalf.
8. One must do Bedikas Chametz of one's office or business as well on this night. If it is very far away from home, the search can be conducted the night before, or have the Chametz in his office sold with his overall sale of Chametz (if he will not be in the office over Pesach.)
9. The custom is to distribute ten pieces of chametz around the house prior to the search. It is customarily done by the woman of the the house. Whoever puts out the pieces should make a note where they are located, in case any pieces are not found during the search.
10. Each piece should be less than the size of a kezayis. The pieces should ideally be wrapped in a flammable material.
11. One is not required to search the house again to find any of the ten pieces which might not be found during the regular search.
12. Every part of the house must be checked for Chometz. It is not sufficient to simply look for the ten pieces of chometz. Even if many days have already been spent cleaning the house, one must utilize this opportunity to confirm that every part of the house has indeed been thoroughly cleaned and that Chametz has not been brought there since.
13. One must check any area that Chametz may have been brought to during the year. This is especially true for those who have small children.
14. You need not search areas of the house that are being sold to a non-Jew.
15. You may even deliberately avoid checking sections of the house for chometz, and include them in the sale.
16. Before the search, one should put out of children's reach all chametz that is to be sold to a non-Jew or that one yet wishes to eat. Similarly, all chametz found during the search should be put in a safe place until it is burned the next morning.
17. It is customary to use a candle, feather, wooden spoon, and a paper bag for the Bedika.
18. The person conducting the Bedika, makes the blessing of "Asher Kedishanu Bemitzvosav Ve'Tzivanu Al Biur Chametz" before beginning the search. Anyone else assisting, who hears the bracha, should respond Amen.
19. When saying the breach, the person should have in mind that he is starting to fulfill the mitzvah to destroy the Chametz, and will fulfill the Mitzvah the following day.
20. It is forbidden to speak after saying the breach before beginning the search. One must repeat the breach if he spoke in between, unless what he said was related to the search.

21. It is perfectly acceptable to use a flashlight, although many maintain their custom and conduct part or all of the search with a wax candle. In places where a person is hesitant to take a candle (e.g. a clothes closet), a flashlight must be used.
22. The electric house lights may be left on since they assist in the search. If they disturb the effectiveness of the candle or flashlight, they should be turned off.
23. One should recite the nullification of the Chometz at the conclusion of the search. The text is found in any Haggadah.
24. If one forgot to nullify the chametz immediately after the search, he should say the nullification as soon as he remembers.
25. It is crucial for a person to understand what he is saying and recite it in a familiar language. If he does not understand the Aramaic words, he should say the following declaration in English: "All chametz and leaven that is in my possession that I have not seen, that I have not destroyed, and that I do not know about, shall be null and ownerless like the dust of the earth." (Some have the custom to say the nullification three times.)

The Day of Erev Pesach - March 30:

1. One should daven early in order to finish eating and burning chametz by the required time.
2. We omit the prayers of Mizmor Lesodah and Lamnatzeach; in addition to Tachanun which is already not said the entire month of Nissan.
3. Chametz may be eaten **this year of 5778 until 10:47 am.**
4. Any remaining Chametz after this time should be destroyed with the ten pieces of Chametz that were collected during the Bedikas Chametz. If it is too difficult to burn all that chometz, it can be thrown in a public garbage container or put at the curb outside your house.
5. Please remember to empty any garbage bins / vacuum cleaners in your home.
6. There is custom to burn your old Lulav with the Chametz.
7. All Chometz must be burned **this year of 5778 by 12:04 pm.**
8. One makes a second nullification of the Chametz during the burning of the chametz. This too should be done **no later than by 12:04 pm.**
9. This second nullification should be said by everyone living in the home over bar / bas Mitzvah, in case they own any personal items containing Chametz.
10. One should optimally have a haircut or shave **by 1:21 pm.** After that time, only a non-Jew is permitted to cut your hair.
11. One should preferably cut one's nails **by 1:21 pm.**
12. Laundering is forbidden **after 1:21 pm.** If the washing machine started before that time, it may be left to finish the wash.
13. You may put clothes in the dryer, iron clothes, polish shoes, and repair garments all day.
14. It is forbidden to eat Matzo the entire day. This includes children who are old enough to understand the Pesach story.
15. Most opinions forbid you to eat **baked** foods containing matzo meal.
16. You may eat **boiled or fried** foods containing matzo meal.
17. You may not eat kitniyos after the time that you are forbidden to eat Chometz.
18. Foods such as meat, fish, eggs, fruit, and vegetables may be eaten all day. However, after **4:30 pm** one should eat in moderation, in order to eat the matzo in the evening with an appetite.
19. It is a strong custom for men to go to the Mikveh - ideally after **1:21 pm.** But one can go as early as **12:04 pm.**

Fast of the First - born:

1. First - borns are required to fast on Erev Pesach. The fast begins at **5:50 am.**

2. The first-born son of either the father or the mother fasts. First - born girls do not fast. A first-born son after a miscarriage, and a first-born son of a Kohen or Levi is required to fast. A first - born son born by caesarean section should optimally fast.
3. A father should fast instead of his first-born son who is under Bar Mitzvah.
4. A first-born who finds it difficult to fast is permitted to join a Seudas mitzvah, such as a bris, pidyan haben, or siyum. It has become universal custom for first - borns to attend a siyum. After attending the Seudas Mitzva, they are not required to fast the rest of the day.
5. If possible, the first-born should eat enough food at the Siyum in order to make an after - beracha.
6. If the first-born attended the siyum, but was not able to eat at the siyum, he may break his fast at home or somewhere else.
7. A mourner (after Shiva) may attend a siyum.
8. If a first-born is not able to attend a siyum, he should, ideally, fast all day. However, if he has a headache or does not feel well, he may break his fast. Similarly, if fasting will prevent him from properly fulfilling his mitzvos at the Seder night, he need not fast. However, he should limit himself to just a small amount of food.

Preparations for the Seder:

1. All preparations for the Seder should be made before Yom Tov in order for the Seder to start on time.
2. If using horseradish for Maror, it should be grated on Erev Yom Tov and kept closed in a container until the Seder. If using lettuce, it should be checked for insects before the Seder.
3. If you forgot to grate the horseradish before Yom Tov, if Pesach is on a weekday, one may grate it in an unusual way. Either one should hold the grater upside-down while grating onto a plate, or one may hold the grater in the usual way but grate the horseradish onto a cloth or tabletop.
4. If Pesach is on Shabbos, it is forbidden to grate even in an unusual way. The horseradish should be cut into small pieces with a knife just before the meal begins. The pieces should not be very small and certainly not chopped finely.
5. Roast a piece of meat for the Ze'roa before Yom Tov. If you forgot to roast the meat before Yom Tov, it may be roasted in the evening. Care must be taken to ensure it is eaten during the following day of Yom Tov. If the Seder is on Shabbos, you may not roast it at night.
6. The main custom is to roast the egg for the Seder plate, although hard boiled egg is also suitable. Some boil it and then roast it partially. The custom is to leave the egg in its shell while being placed on the seder plate, and then be eaten during the Seder meal.
7. Charoses should be prepared before Yom Tov. If you forgot to prepare it before Yom tov, you may prepare it in the usual way if the Seder is on Yom Tov. If the Seder is on Shabbos, you would have to make the following changes: 1) The fruits should be cut into pieces with a knife. The pieces should not be very small and certainly not chopped, 2) The wine should be put first into the mixing bowl, and the cut fruits added to it, 3) The ingredients should be mixed with one's finger and not with a spoon or fork.
8. A kittel should be prepared to be worn by the person who leads the Seder. Some have the custom that all married men wear a kittel. A mourner does not wear kittel.
9. The table should be covered with a white tablecloth. One should place the most exquisite items of silver, etc. that he possesses onto the Seder table.
10. Seating arrangements and preparations for reclining should be arranged before Yom Tov.
11. Some have a custom to adorn the table with fragrant flowers.
12. Open all bottles of wine / grape juice, and boxes of wine before Yom Tov.

13. Rinse all wine cups.
14. Place the Seder Plate with all its necessary items, a bowl of salt water, wine, grape juice, wine cups, Haggadas on the table.
15. Prepare the cup of Eliyahu
16. Prepare nuts and treats to give to children before kiddush and during the seder.
17. Make an Eruv Tavshilin when necessary.
18. Everyone should take a nap in the afternoon / early evening.
19. Light Yahrzeit (memorial) candle before traditional candle lighting. (in order to have a fire from which to light on the second day of Yom Tov)
20. Women can light candles after **6:23 pm** if they wish to accept the Shabbos / Yom Tov early. Traditional candle lighting time is **7:24 pm**. However, the candles may be lit after that time from a pre-existing flame when the Seder is on a weekday. On Friday night, you may not light after **7:24 pm**.

SEDER PREPARATIONS - CHECKLIST:

1. Shank bone should be roasted.
2. Egg should be prepared.
3. Vegetable for Karpas should be prepared.
4. Lettuce or Romaine lettuce should be checked/prepared.
5. Horseradish should be ground and placed in a sealed container.
6. Charoses should be ground or chopped.
7. Saltwater should be prepared.
8. Seals on wine bottles should be opened.
9. Matza boxes should be opened.
10. Pillows brought down to the table.
11. Sufficient Haggadahs should be at the table.
12. Wine glasses should be measured to meet minimum requirement.
13. Saucers to be placed under wine glasses.
14. Chart for Matza and Maror minimum requirements at the table.
15. Washing basin should be ready in the kitchen.
16. Prepare Seder plate and Three Matzos.
17. Pour wine into decanters.
18. Prepare cover or towel for Afikoman.
19. Extra Matzas at the table.
20. Extra Maror in the fridge.
21. Kittel for men.
22. New clothing/jewelry for women.