



KASHRUS KURRENTS

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Navigating the Ins and Outs of Renting an Airbnb



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Who would have imagined, just a few years ago, that you could go on vacation and rent a stranger's private home? But that is exactly what people now do every day, with the rise of Airbnb and similar short-term rental platforms that list millions of units in over 100,000 cities.¹

A Torah-observant individual who enters into such an arrangement will encounter numerous halachic challenges when signing up as an Airbnb "guest." This includes properties listed as "kosher" – even ones in Israel – since an owner usually cannot vouch for every renter who has used the kitchen, nor for each renter's kashrus standards, which can vary widely. Likewise, one who owns and is the "host" of an Airbnb property will have to address his own set of halachic concerns. Let's analyze some of the more common ones.

Kashrus Concerns During the Year (Excluding Pesach)

The primary area of concern for guests is

- 1 Aside from the halachos mentioned here, one should conduct due diligence when renting. A helpful resource can be found at www.fodors.com/news/photos/tips-to-ensure-your-safety-at-airbnbs.
- 2 Tin foil will often rip upon inserting. The best way to double wrap is to place the food in two disposable tin pans, one inside the other, and cover twice. The outer wrapping should be considered non-kosher and discarded.
- 3 Many ovens today use steam in the self-clean cycle, which is not sufficient to kasher the oven.
- 4 Never leave an oven unattended while kashering.
- 5 Some grates have rubber feet that may be damaged by the heat of the oven or that may damage the oven itself. Further, the oven may damage the finish of the grates. If kashering is not feasible, a *rav* should be consulted.

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obviously the kitchen and the kashrus status of the appliances in it. Before kashering appliances, be mindful that the property owner would likely not agree to any procedures that may cause damage. Kasher only if there is no such risk or with explicit permission. (Note that in one's own home, guidelines may be stricter than those listed here.)

Here are the most common appliances and areas in the kitchen that may pose an issue.

Oven – Food placed in the oven should be double-wrapped² or the oven should be kashered. A clean oven may be kashered by turning on high (at least 500°F) for 40 minutes. This will kasher the racks as well. If dirty, the self-clean cycle³ will both clean and kasher.⁴

Stovetop – Depends on the type of appliance:

- ▶ **Gas stovetop with grates** – clean the grates. Insert into the oven on high for 40 minutes.⁵
- ▶ **Electric coil stovetop** – turn on until the coils glow red. This usually takes a few minutes.

CONTROLLING YOUR TEMPER



BY RABBI TZVI ROSEN
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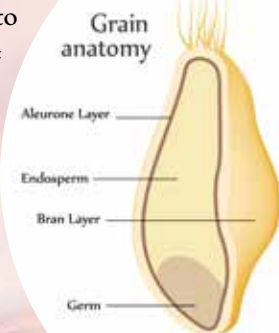
The *baalei mussar*, our guides in ethical character development, have instructed us that in order to develop and refine one's behavior, one has to control one's temper.

Controlling temper in manufacturing is a means to refine and improve the quality of the product in question. When steel is tempered, the resiliency of the steel is improved through the process of heating and cooling. When chocolate is tempered, through a similar process of heating and cooling (albeit at a much lower temperature), the chocolate acquires a lustrous, luxurious sheen, impervious to changes in color.

Likewise, tempering grain for milling improves the grain so that the final product – wheat flour – is rendered white and fluffy. The source of this final product is the humble wheat kernel.

A wheat *kernel* or *berry* is the seed of the wheat plant and is comprised of three edible parts: the nutritious *bran* wrapped protectively around the entire berry and lined with the structurally significant *aleurone layer*; the vast starchy interior called the *endosperm*; and the *germ*, which is essentially the embryo of the plant that enables it to reproduce. *Milling* is the process of separating the bran and germ from the endosperm and refining it into flour.

If the grain were to be ground in its entirety, the result would be a brownish flour that we would recognize



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Yoshon: To Keep or Not to Keep



RABBI MORDECHAI FRANKEL
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What's "New" in Chodosh



RABBI SHOLOM TENDLER
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The Torah states¹ that *chodosh* (new) crops of the five grains may not be eaten until after the second day of Pesach (outside of Israel, not until the third day).² Thus, grain harvested in the summer of 2023 would not be allowed until Pesach 2024. On the other hand, *yoshon* (old) crops, which were harvested in the summer of 2022, became permitted after Pesach 2023. Grain planted at least two weeks or more before Pesach are permitted upon harvest, since they took root before Pesach.³

Outside of Israel, there are various customs based on numerous sources as to whether or not one needs to be stringent about using only *yoshon* products (see Sidebar). Each person should consult their *rav* for guidance. In Israel, however, these leniencies do not apply. Therefore, any product from Israel bearing a reliable kosher certification is definitely *yoshon*.

Wheat in the U.S. has two planting seasons a year: winter and spring. *Winter wheat* can be planted anytime between October and February. The wheat grows to a young plant stage and remains dormant until spring, at which time growth resumes. Once the wheat matures, it is harvested, usually in late spring/early summer. *Spring wheat* is planted between April and June and harvested as soon as it is ripe, typically 6-12 weeks after planting (usually at the end of July).

Since winter wheat is always planted at least two weeks before Pesach, it is always *yoshon*. Spring wheat, however, is planted right around Pesach and (so far) never more than two weeks before, and thus is always a *chodosh* concern. Unlike wheat, the remaining four grains are single-season crops: oats and barley are spring crops planted after Pesach and harvested in the summer and therefore

a *chodosh* concern; rye and spelt in the U.S. are primarily winter crops and are therefore not a *chodosh* concern.

Between Pesach and the end of the summer (roughly mid-August), all grain products are considered *yoshon* because they are either all from a winter crop or the previous year's spring crop. The new spring crop only enters the market around August, which signals the start of the "*yoshon* season." At that point, any products containing the new spring wheat, oats, or barley may not be eaten by those who adhere to the stringency of *yoshon* until after Pesach of the following year.

The "Olden" Days

There was a time when "keeping *yoshon*" wasn't such an issue. Most grain was *yoshon*, because for the most part, the U.S. stockpiled its grain. That changed in the 1970s, when America began to export its stockpiled grain, and *chodosh* grain from that year's summer crop became more prevalent, entering the market shortly after harvest.

Once that happened, Rabbi Yosef Herman zt"l recognized the need to conduct extensive research about *yoshon* products, and he took upon himself the responsibility to publish the results of his research in his acclaimed *Guide to Chodosh*. The *Guide* provided dates for products that consumers could use to determine if an item was *yoshon* or not. Rabbi Herman did this for decades without remuneration. After his *petirah* in 2019, the Herman family continued his legacy and shouldered the responsibility to publish the printed guide themselves. Rabbi Herman and his family are credited with singlehandedly raising awareness about *yoshon* in America and throughout *chutz la'aretz*.

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The Gemara seems to conclude that the prohibition on the consumption of *chodosh* applies worldwide.¹ However, many *shomrei mitzvos* outside Eretz Yisrael do not restrict themselves to eating only *yoshon* grain. Various reasons have been proposed:

- The *Rema* says that people rely on the fact that for any particular product that are two uncertainties. It is possible that there the food was made from a previous year's wheat crop and is *yoshon*. It is also possible that this year's crop took root before 16 Nissan and is *yoshon*. As there are two areas of doubt – a *sfek sfeika* – one can be lenient.² Others disagree and maintain that there is only one uncertainty here, whether the grain is *chodosh* or *yoshon*, and one should be stringent.³
- The *Bach* says that the prohibition does not apply to grain produced in a field owned by an *aino Yehudi*. Since most fields outside Eretz Yisroel are owned by *aino Yehudim*, one can be lenient.⁴ Others disagree, as prominent Rishonim clearly state that the prohibition applies equally to grain grown by *aino Yehudim*.⁵
- The *Magen Avrohom* suggests that custom is to rely on the opinion of the Rishonim that the prohibition of *chodosh* is limited to Eretz Yisroel.⁶ Others disagree, as the majority of Rishonim *pasken* that the prohibition applies equally in *chutz la'aretz*.⁷

The *Mishna Berura* briefly mentions these three approaches. He then states that although one cannot protest if a person follows these leniencies, a *baal nefesh* (a pious person) should not rely on them and be stringent.⁸

It should be added that a number of the Acharonim who are lenient explicitly state that this is due to the dire need for food that they experienced in their time.⁹ It is quite possible that they would not have taken the same position in the time and countries that we live in, when food is readily available. This is a further reason for a *baal nefesh* to be *machmir*.¹⁰ ★

1 *Vayikra* 23:14.

2 Outside of Israel, not until the third day.

3 See *Dagul Mervava Y.D.* 293.

1 קידושין דף ל"ח ע"ב ומנחות דף ס"ח ע"ב.
 2 רמ"א יו"ד סי' רצג סעי' ג.
 3 ח"י רע"א שם, כרתי ופולתי סו"ס קי קונטרס בית הספק ד"ה וגם ספק מחט.
 4 ב"ה יו"ד סי' רצג ס"ק א.
 5 ט"ז שם ס"ק ב, שו"ך שם ס"ק ו, ביאור הגר"א שם ס"ק ב.
 6 מג"א סי' תפ"ט ס"ק ז.
 7 ר"ף קידושין דף טו ע"א (בדפי הרי"ף), רא"ש שם פ"א סי' סב, רמב"ם פ"י מהל' מאכ"א הל' ב, רמב"ן ויקרא פכ"ג פט"ו.
 8 מ"ב סי' תפ"ט ס"ק מה.
 9 ט"ז יו"ד סי' רצג ס"ק ד, חק יעקב סי' תפ"ט ס"ק כ.
 10 סוגיא זו נתבאר באר היטב ע"י ידידי ר' יהודה שפיץ שליט"א בספרו Food A Halachic Analysis פרק כה.

CONTROLLING YOUR TEMPER

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as whole wheat – as the name indicates. But how does the miller succeed in producing the pristine, fluffy white powder that constitutes regular, all-purpose flour? How does he manage to separate the brown bran from the white endosperm? He tempers the grain!

HOW GRAIN IS TEMPERED

Tempering is a process in which the grains are wetted long enough so that water permeates the bran. This process of hydration makes the bran less brittle and helps loosen it so it can separate into large pieces, which are more easily sifted away from the flour when the grains are milled. Water also mellows the endosperm, making it easier on the grinders.

This “loosening” mentioned above can be attributed to the aleurone layer, which is a layer of cells just inside the bran layer. Chris Dengler, a lab analyst at Snavelly’s Mill, helpfully compares the aleurone layer in a cross-section of a wheat kernel to flat tires. Upon tempering, these cells “inflate,” creating a separable layer between the endosperm and the bran. This action creates the void that allows the bran to be easily cleaved from the endosperm on a roller mill.

Mr. Dengler explains the process further: the wheat is placed in a *tempering auger* with paddles on it – which agitates the wheat – and is sprayed with water. The wheat is then transferred to a *tempering bin* to allow the water to soak into the grain for up to twelve hours and to dry out before being transferred to the mill for grinding. Tempering times can vary from three to twelve hours, depending on the type of wheat; for hard wheat, it could be even longer.

Once dry, the grains are augered into the break rolls. The first step of milling is referred to as the *first break*. The grain passes through a *grain auger*, which is a screw-shaped conveyor used to deposit or retrieve grain into or from a bin or silo for further processing. Once the grain is “broken,” it passes through a series of sifters. In a modern mill, there can be more than twenty sifters where the bran is separated and the endosperm is converted into white flour.¹

¹ As a point of note, in the Beis Hamikdash, there were thirteen sifters.

HALACHIC IMPLICATIONS OF WHOLE WHEAT VS WHOLE GRAIN FLOUR

It is important to note that commercial whole wheat flour is commonly produced by adding the separated bran back to the sifted white flour *after milling*. This has halachic implications regarding the amount of flour required for *hafrashas challah*. Since the bran is added to the flour after milling, it is viewed as a separate component, and thus cannot be included in the calculation to determine the volume of flour. If the bran and endosperm were milled together, it would be regarded as a single entity.



At Snavelly’s Mill, Mr. Dengler not only checks incoming wheat for moisture levels but also for enzymatic activity, a concern in wheat that was left to mature in the field and may have been exposed to soaking rains before being harvested. Enzymatic activity is another term for sprouting or malting. (Unlike with tempering, the process of intentionally sprouting grain involves immersing it in water and soaking it for several hours, which causes the moisture of the grain to increase to 40% or more.) Flour from sprouted wheat creates problems for bakers and is an undesirable product from a flour miller’s perspective. Tempered grain does not lead to sprouting.

TEMPERING IMPLICATIONS DURING PESACH

Since water does penetrate the endosperm of tempered grain, we are confronted with a number of questions relating to Pesach. How does halacha view the tempered grain? How does flour differ from all other chometz items in one’s pantry? Is a kosher consumer who does not sell *vadai chometz* required to sell her flour before Pesach?

Tempering grain is not a new milling technique. It was a front burner issue in the Gemara where the halacha is clear. *Lesisa* – tempering grain to make flour for matza – is forbidden. In fact, in contemporary matza flour milling, all boxed matza produced in the U.S. is made using non-tempered grain. A miller who operated the Spangler Mill once commented that he could hear the “cracklin’ bran” when they milled the matza flour.

The Rambam cites a case of a boatload of grain that was submerged in water.² The inundated grain was deemed *vadai chometz* because there was no movement in the water. The Bais Yosef even added this caveat: even if the grain didn’t sprout, it is considered chometz since the grain was stationary.

The *Mishna Berurah* analogizes the submerged grain to *lesisa* tempering but adds that the grain has to be close to sprouting to be considered *vadai chometz*.³ The *Rema* concurs. In contrast, the *Shaar Hatziyun*, while acknowledging those *poskim* who consider tempered grain as being *vadai chometz*, rejects their opinion by noting that we do not know *exactly* when the grain is considered sprouted and, furthermore, by observing that the grain is hard.⁴ He is actually describing a modern-day tempered grain. He ends by concluding that a dry grain, which is the case with a tempered grain prior to milling, would not be considered *vadai chometz*. Yet, one cannot discount the fact that water did penetrate the endosperm, so the grain – and, therefore, the tempering – would deem the flour *safek chometz*.

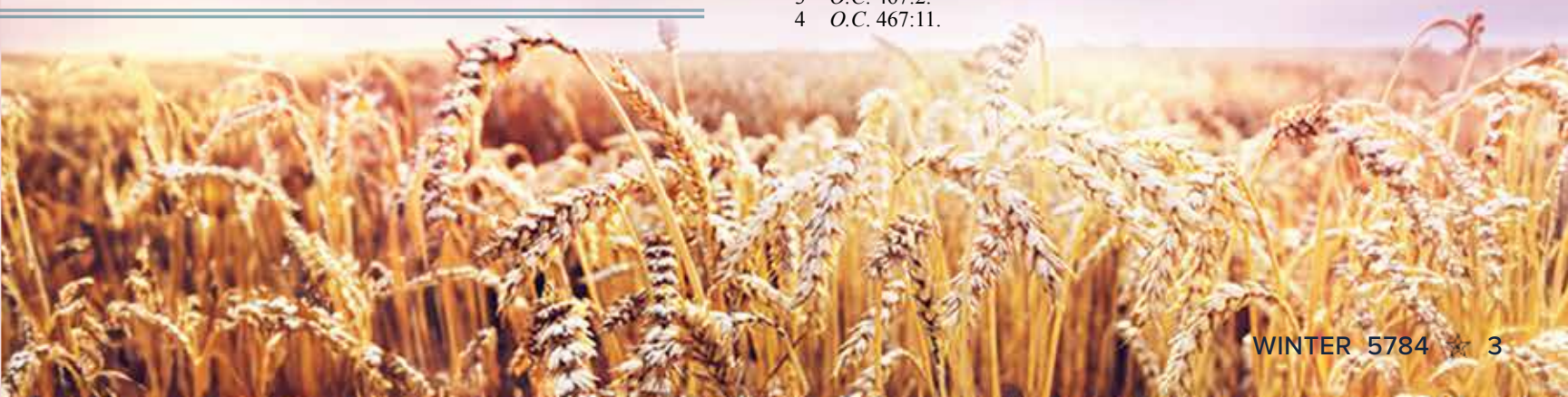
There are at least two compelling reasons to deem the flour *safek chometz*. The first, as noted above by the *Shaar Hatziyun*, is that we see that the grain is hard and we cannot be sure at precisely what point the grain will sprout.

² *Pesachim* 40b.

³ *O.C.* 467:2.

⁴ *O.C.* 467:11.

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► **Glass stove top** – clean and turn on until coils glow red. This will only kasher the area above the coils. The area outside the coils will not be kashered. To use a pot that extends outside this area, keep the glass top clean and dry. Wipe up any spills quickly.

BBQ Grill – Kashering a grill is not practical due to the difficulty of cleaning it and the high kashering temperatures which can cause damage. It's best to bring a portable grill.

Microwave – Food that is heated in a microwave should be enclosed in two leakproof wrappings.

Dishwasher – Do not use.⁶

Refrigerator – There is no issue with storing food in a clean refrigerator.

Ice Maker – One may use ice made in the freezer that is stored in a clean receptacle.

Instant Hot Faucet – May be used to prepare hot drinks and foods.

Sink Faucet – May be used to fill vessels for drinking and cooking.⁷

Sink – Kashering is not recommended as it is messy and involves a risk to counters and cabinets in case of spills.⁸ Instead, to use, first ensure the sink is clean. Then either use the sink only with cold or lukewarm water, or use a basin to hold dishes and place a sink rack underneath (with separate basins and racks for meat and dairy).

Countertops – Cold vessels may be placed directly on clean surfaces. For hot cookware, lay a towel or kosher trivet beneath the vessel.

Utensils – Dishes, mugs and certain utensils found in the home are permitted for cold use on a temporary basis in case of need; they are not permitted to be used with sharp foods. Before using, utensils should be carefully inspected to make sure they are perfectly clean. When checking forks, pay special attention to the area between the tines. Knives are difficult to clean properly for kosher use and should not be used.⁹

If the owner of the house is Jewish, then utensils which require *tevila* cannot be used, since you would need to *tovel* them before use.¹⁰ If you have no information about the identity of the owner, and the rental is outside of Israel, then you may assume the owner is not Jewish since the vast majority of people there are not.¹¹

Can Opener – can be difficult to clean and should not be used.

Coffeemaker – A coffeemaker may be used. A Keurig should be cleaned and run through a cycle of hot water before use.

Food provided by owner – Sometimes food or condiments are provided. Use only if these are in unopened containers.

Renting Over Shabbos or Yom Tov

Before renting over a Shabbos or Yom Tov, consider issues related to sensors and automations that may be part of the environment. For example, will opening the door or moving around in the house activate alarm lights or sounds, even if the alarm is not set? Asking the host might not be sufficient; the host might not even be aware of the functioning of the electronics in his property or understand what you are asking.

It is advisable to arrive at the rental with enough time to familiarize yourself with the property so you can work out any halachic concerns that become apparent. When possible, it helps to rent a property that was previously rented by someone you know, who can attest to its “Shabbos friendliness.” Before booking, if you have concerns, carefully consider if you can keep Shabbos properly in the rental unit.¹² Some of these concerns are detailed below.

Cameras – There may be security cameras in the home or outside. It is best to avoid being videoed by such cameras on Shabbos if the image is projected onto a screen.¹³ However, if this is difficult to avoid and you have no

interest in being seen by the cameras, then you are permitted to walk past them. If there are monitors in the house, the screens should be turned off. A Ring doorbell may illuminate upon sensing your presence and should be disabled.

Lights – Bathrooms, hallways or the home entrance may have automated lights that are activated or brighten when a door is opened or one walks around. These must be disabled.

Locks – Electronic locks or card keys used in many Airbnb homes may not be used. Obviously, this will create a major challenge if everyone plans on leaving the home on Shabbos. If a regular key is provided and there is no *eruv*, be mindful that you cannot take the key with you and will need to store it in a suitable place.¹⁴ Furthermore, opening the door into the house while the key is inserted in the lock may be forbidden.¹⁵

Porch – If there is no *eruv*, carrying on the porch might not be permitted. Consult with your *rav* for guidance.

USEFUL ITEMS TO BRING ALONG:

For during the week:

- tabletop pizza maker
(can be used for many types of foods)
- portable BBQ grill
- disposable utensils

For Shabbos:

- hot water urn
- hotplate
- crockpot
- lamp
- timer
- strong tape to tape down a fridge plunger
- magnets for fridges that don't have plungers

6 STAR-K does not recommend kashering plastic; all dishwashers have plastic parts or piping.

7 When renting properties in New York City, be aware that unfiltered water may contain copepods – small but visible crustaceans.

8 If there is only one sink, then in any event it will become not kosher if used for dairy and meat.

9 See *Shach Y.D.* 94:29.

10 Unless the owner is *shomer mitzvos* and *toveled* the utensils. For a list of utensils which require *tevila*, see <https://www.star-k.org/articles/kosher-lists/1170/tevilas-keilim-guidelines/>. An ocean may be used for *tevilas keilim*. Certain lakes or rivers may also be used. A *rav* should be consulted for proper guidance. See also <https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/13191/insights-from-the-institute-toveling-utensils-in-a-lake-or-river/>.

11 Unless there is some indication that the owner is Jewish (e.g., there is a mezuza on the door). Note also: There may be religious symbols hanging in the rooms. One should cover the symbols. *Kaf Hachaim* 113:27. If there is no other alternative, one may daven in the room and face away from the symbol, even if it requires facing a direction other than east. *M.B.* 94:30.

12 Staying in a hotel for Shabbos has halachic issues as well, but at least there are non-Jews who can be helpful when necessary and permitted. An Airbnb does not usually have that luxury. See “The Travelers’ Halachic Guide to Hotels” at <https://www.star-k.org/articles/articles/seasonal/501/the-travelers-halachic-guide-to-hotels/>.

13 One may encounter *tznius* issues even during the week if there are cameras and there is a pool.

14 A lockbox may be provided by the owner. You might want to consider bringing along your own lockbox.

15 Since you are moving the key from one domain to another. See *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa* 18:49.

Thermostat – Many homes have energy-efficient thermostats. When it senses that the room is unoccupied, the thermostat adjusts the climate to an energy-efficient setting. When the guest re-enters the room, the thermostat readjusts to the original setting. Sensors should be disabled prior to Shabbos.¹⁶

Oven – Of course, one cannot cook in an oven on Shabbos, but many people like to use the “Time Bake” function to leave fully cooked food in the oven before Shabbos and have the oven turn off during the evening *seuda*. An oven without a Sabbath Mode will beep continuously after Time Bake is finished. The STAR-K website lists oven models that are Sabbath Mode certified, which are engineered to disable this beeping. If the oven is not Sabbath Mode certified, the Time Bake feature should not be employed.

Refrigerator – Fridges and freezers can have Shabbos concerns (e.g., activation of lights, temperature gauges and defrost cycles). Check if the fridge has a Sabbath Mode by reading the model number on the ID sticker inside the fridge and checking the STAR-K website.¹⁷

Renting Over Pesach

There are two situations to consider when renting over Pesach: kashering the unit and performing *bedikas chometz*.

Kashering

As noted above, secure permission from the owner before kashering. Ideally, all kashering should be completed before the end time for eating chometz on Erev Pesach.¹⁸

Sometimes, a person might not arrive at his Airbnb until later in the day of Erev Pesach, or on Chol HaMoed.

▶ **If one arrives on Erev Pesach after the end time for eating chometz where the property is located:** the oven and stovetop grates may still be kashered. A sink may be kashered if one can ascertain that the sink is *aino ben yomo* (i.e., has not been used with heat in the last 24 hours).¹⁹ Follow the kashering guidance provided in Rabbi Moshe Heinemann’s article, “Preparing/Kashering the Pesach Kitchen,” available on the STAR-K website.²⁰

▶ **If one arrives on Chol HaMoed:** due to the strictness of Pesach halachos, it may be impractical or even ineffective to do kashering during that time.

Bedikas Chometz

▶ **If one arrives before or on the night of the 14th of Nissan:** do a bedika as usual.

▶ **If one arrives on the 14th during the day or on Chol HaMoed:** do a bedika without a bracha. **Further, if one arrives after the time that chometz is forbidden to be owned:** before entering the home, he should have in mind to not want to acquire any of the chometz. If chometz is found and the owner is non-Jewish, it should be covered. If the owner is Jewish, then a *rav* should be consulted.

When the Key Belongs to You: Obligations of the Owner

One is prohibited from making money on Shabbos or Yom Tov. For a rental that is over a Shabbos, the charge can be considered to be for Friday or Motzei Shabbos. However, a two-day Yom Tov or Yom Tov-after-Shabbos rental poses an issue and should be discussed with one’s *rav*. A partnership with a non-Jew may be possible.²¹

The owner may have a guest who moves out Shabbos morning and another who moves in Shabbos afternoon. In such a case, he (or his manager, if he has one) will need to arrange cleaning during Shabbos day. This is a problem of *amira lakum*. If the owner has arranged a partnership with a non-Jew, this issue can be dealt with as well. If it is possible to set up the rental app to block rentals that begin on Shabbos or Yom Tov, this would also solve the issue.

Before Pesach, the home should be thoroughly cleaned and all chometz put away to be sold, as in one’s own home.

We eagerly await the days of Mashiach, when “each man will rest securely under his grape vine and palm tree.”²² At that time, people will not need to vacation for pleasure, as the home will provide spiritual and physical contentment.

HALACHOS OF MEZUZAH IN A TEMPORARY RENTAL

Mezuzos are not required for a stay of less than 30 days.¹ Even though one who leases an apartment in Eretz Yisroel is normally obligated in *mezuzos* right away, one who stays less than 30 days in an Airbnb is not obligated.

For the owner of a rental property, the halachos of mezuzah vary. If the owner never stays overnight, he is not obligated. If he goes sometimes, even for just one night, he must have *mezuzos*. If the owner is afraid that renters will damage them,² then he should take them down when he leaves.³

1 And perhaps not even when more than 30 days, as opposed to when signing a lease on an apartment. See *Chovas Hadar* 3:5:16 and *Shaarei Mezuzah* 9:24:41.

2 One owner reported that the renter thought the *mezuzos* were extra cameras!

3 Rabbi Moshe Heinemann.

To comment on this article, please email the author at airbnbkosher@gmail.com. ☆

16 Nest, a popular model, cannot be properly disabled by covering it. One can ask the owner to allow you to change the settings; research online ahead of time how to accomplish that.

17 If there is no Sabbath Mode, then at a minimum tape down the plunger to fool the fridge into thinking it is closed. If there is no plunger, then a magnet can be used for this purpose. Contact STAR-K for more information.

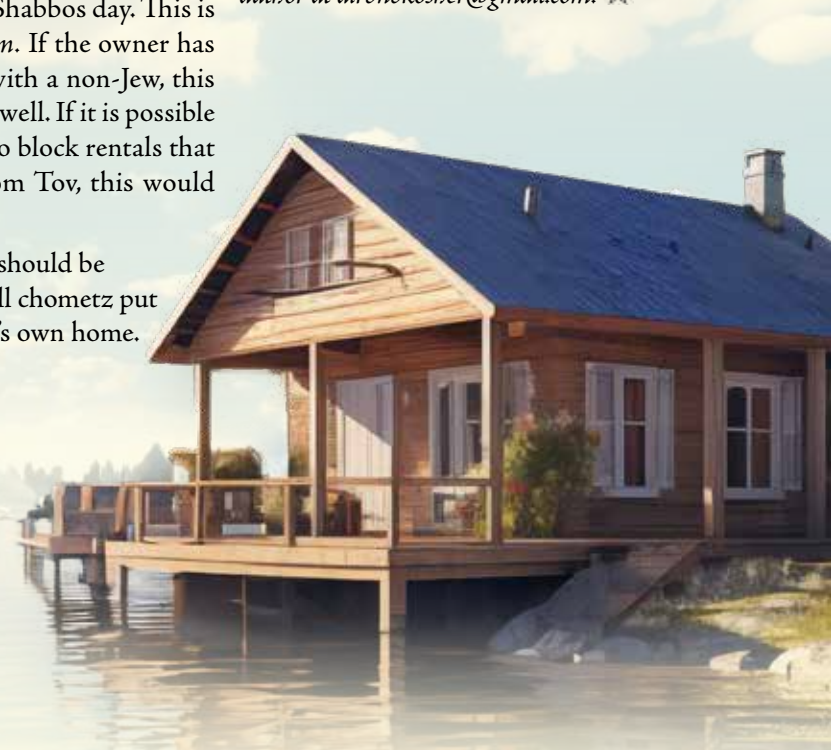
18 *O.C.* 452:1.

19 This includes being certain that it has not been cleaned with hot water within 24 hours prior to kashering. For example if the owner is a *shomer mitzvos*, one could ask them for this information.

20 See <https://www.star-k.org/articles/articles/338/preparing-kashering-the-pesach-kitchen/>.

21 See also *Orchos Shabbos* 2:22:95.

22 *Melachim I* 5:5.





What's "New" in Chodosh

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During the course of the last decade, it became apparent that there was a need to have comprehensive *yoshon* information available online and not just in a printed guide. In 2010, The Yoston Network, Inc. (TYNI) launched the *yoshon.com* website as well as the *yoshon.com* mobile app using information largely based on Rabbi Herman's *Guide*. Meanwhile, in response to consumer requests to create an abridged version, about five years ago STAR-K began publishing and posting the *Yoston Quick Reference Guide* on *star-k.org*, listing the most popular and commonly used *yoshon* items.

"Chadashot" This Year

With the increasingly global nature of food productions, the ability of the Herman family to obtain and accurately track *yoshon* data in a timely manner became much more challenging, causing them to reach out to the Association of Kashrus Organizations (AKO) and express their concerns. In response, the major kashrus agencies formed a committee together with *yoshon.com* to collaborate on gathering and disseminating *yoshon* information.

The new committee of kashrus agencies has begun working directly with their mashgichim in each food plant to obtain precise data about specific products. The updated information is now posted on the *yoshon.com* site and mobile app. The site is also planning to soon provide a link which will allow consumers to download the full TYNI guide and print out a hard copy.

This new collaborative approach has resulted in some significant changes. Previously, one *yoshon* date was used for all grain products based on the start of the grain harvest. So, if the harvesting of wheat began on August 1, the listed cutoff date was about two weeks later, on August 15. The new approach allows for dates to be both more precise and much later, thereby exponentially increasing *yoshon* availability. There are now separate dates for flour mills (which are earlier) and for food products (which are naturally later). Additionally, as mashgichim monitor plant productions, they are better able to ascertain whether or not items are *yoshon*.

For more information about *yoshon* products, visit star-k.org/yoshon or yoshon.com. ☆

CONTROLLING YOUR TEMPER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

A second reason is offered by Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, STAR-K's Rabbinic Administrator. He posits that there is an ironclad scientific basis for considering tempered grain to be *safek chometz*. Millers need the grain to be dry enough to mill efficiently and they therefore set the moisture level of incoming wheat to no more than 14%. Mr. Dengler points out that wheat that arrives at their mill with a higher moisture content is routinely rejected. When wheat has been properly dried, he explains further, either in bins at grain elevators or at the farm, it is very stable and can be stored for very long periods of time without any germination – in some cases, even for years.

Sprouting only occurs once the moisture level reaches 22-24%, typically seen in wheat that was subjected to heavy rain after fully maturing. In view of that observation, Rabbi Heinemann rules that

we can rely on accepted scientific standards to consider tempered grain as *non-sprouted*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

What are the halachic consequences of this conclusion? One who doesn't sell *vadai chometz* before Pesach may sell his flour. Likewise, one who doesn't purchase sold chometz after Pesach may purchase flour immediately after Pesach. This ruling on flour surely makes life easier for the scrupulous kosher consumer. And it definitely shows the wisdom of our *gedolei haposkim* who really understood how to control their temper!

The author wishes to thank Mr. Chris Dengler for his assistance with this article and for sharing his extensive knowledge about all things grain. Mr. Dengler is a lab analyst with Snaveley's Mill Inc. in Lititz, PA. ☆





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Correction: In Rabbi Ahron Haskel's article, "Shemita After Shemita" (page 4, Fall 5784-2023), we mistakenly wrote that 2022 vintage was a non-Shemita wine. It is most certainly a Shemita wine.

Digital copies of the article were corrected before being released.

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The most recent webinar, entitled "Keeping Kosher in the Military," took place on October 26. USAF Chaplain Captain Alan "Avromi" Kahan discussed the halachic ramifications of keeping kosher and other mitzvos while serving in the military. The conversation included the opinions of the Chofetz Chaim pertaining to wartime halachos.

All recordings are archived on the STAR-K webinar channel. They are also available on STAR-K's The Kosher Conversation podcast wherever you get your podcasts.



L to R: Rabbi Goldberg, Chaplain Captain Kahan and Rabbi Beyer

STAR-K continues to pray for peace and for the welfare of all of our brethren in Eretz Yisroel.

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