

FAQ for Searching and Selling Chametz

FAQ's

1. When should one do bedikat chametz?

One should start the mitzvah immediately after צאת הכוכבים, which is 20 minutes after sundown.

2. What locations in my home need to be checked for Chametz?

Any place where one might find a kzait-size of Chametz needs to be checked (Shaar Tzion 442:60). Some are stringent to even search for any crumbs (Chayei Adam 109:6 / Chazon Ish). It is based on this stringency that people search through their seforim for chametz. In homes with young children, any and all locations where children might have brought food need to be checked thoroughly.

2. Do we rely on the cleaning done before the 14th of Pesach?

One should clean their rooms where chametz entered thoroughly before the night of the 14th. Some are stringent to check these rooms carefully during Bedikat Chametz as well on the night of the 14th. Others are more lenient that only a cursory check is required if the room has already been cleaned and no food has been brought into that room since.

3. If you go away for all of pesach, do you need to clean?

Some say you don't need to check anything because you sell the house. Many poskim (SA 436:3) rule you should still perform the mitzvah. In practice, one should sell/rent their whole house to a non-Jew, except for one room where they should perform bedikah.

4. When should one do bedikah if they are traveling before Pesach?

- a. If one is traveling 30 days before Pesach, they need not search for Chametz, they can simply sell and nullify their chametz
- b. If one is traveling within 30 days of Pesach, one should do bedikat Chametz **without a beracha** (Rema 436:1)
- c. On the night of the 14th (erev Pesach) one should perform Bedikat Chametz in the location they are staying throughout the Chag.

5. Can I use a flashlight to search for Chametz?

Chazal decreed that one should do bedikah with a candle. This is the standard practice. One may also use a flashlight instead, especially if they will search better and they are concerned that the flame might be dangerous (Yehaveh Daat 1:4). Practically, I recommend starting with a candle and then moving over to a flashlight, especially with kids around.

6. Does one need to hide pieces of bread before Bedikah?

The Rema (432:2) quotes this minhag. The Arizal specifically recommended scattering 10 pieces of bread. The goal is to make sure that one does not make a beracha in vain if they do not find any chametz. In truth, this is not needed because the beracha is on the search itself, but one should maintain this minhag (Peninei Halakha 1:9).

7. Bedikah in a hotel room?

If one checks into a hotel in the middle of Pesach, they must ask if the place was checked for Chametz. If it was merely cleaned, but not checked, one must perform a check without a beracha even on Pesach itself.

8. What does Bitul Chametz really mean?

Bittul literally means nullification of the chametz. Some Rishonim (Rashi and Ramban) argue that bitul means to nullify the chametz as if it is like the dust of the earth. Others (Tosfot) argue that it means to renounce one's ownership of the chametz (i.e. Hefker). The Ashkenazi version of כל חמירא includes both elements. The Sephardic version only includes nullification.

9. Does one need to get rid of Chametz in the garbage can?

If the garbage is in a public container, it is not a problem. If it is in your garbage can and it is on your premises, and the garbage will not be collected before the chag, then one should pour bleach or some other substance onto the chametz in order to render it inedible.

10. Does the sale of Chametz include the sale of the utensils as well?

It is best not to have in mind to sell your utensils that are holding the chametz because then the utensils might require tevilah (Hatam Sofer). Others are lenient (Aruch Hashulchan) but one should be stringent according to the first opinion. The contract for selling Chametz in Ra'anana specifically indicates that the sale does not include utensils.

11. Does the sale of Chametz include a sale of one's home or premises?

The short answer is no. It does not include selling one's home because one is not allowed to sell their home to a non-Jew in Israel. This is why the contract specifically says that we rent the premises to the non-Jew.

12. Can one sell all types of chametz? Whisky ? Bread?

Some are stringent not to sell any products that are חמץ גמור such as bread products, wheat products, whisky (Rav Soloveitchik). Others say that you may sell all your chametz products but only if not selling it will result in a significant loss. In practice, this means that one will get rid of all bread/wheat products and perhaps keep their whisky. Personal loss is defined on a personal basis (Rav Eliezer Melamed). One should certainly get rid of all their bread and try to use up as much chametz as possible.

13. Where should I sell my chametz if I am traveling overseas?

When traveling overseas (east or west), there is a debate about when/where to sell your chametz. There are three opinions on the matter:

- a. Sell your chametz in the location where your chametz is located [עונג יום טוב]
- b. Sell your chametz in the location where you will be for Pesach [מקראי קודש, מים חיים]
- c. Sell your chametz in the location that will start Pesach first (i.e. further east) [אגרות משה].

It is best to act strictly according to the third opinion. For example, if you will be traveling East to China, sell your chametz in China. If you will be traveling west to America, sell your chametz in Israel.