

HOW TO MAKE YOUR KITCHEN KOSHER

A Practical Guide

Contents

Foreword	3
How to Make Your Kitchen Kosher	4
Section I: New Utensils	5
How to Perform Tevilah	8
Section II: Used Utensils	10
How to Kasher Utensils	11
Section III: Cooking Appliances	13
Self-Cleaning Oven	13
Gas and Electric Ovens	13
Continuous-Cleaning Oven	14
Gas Range Top	14
Electric Range Top	15
Microwave Oven	15
Barbecue	16
Toaster Oven	16
Coffeemaker	16
Section IV: Kitchen Appliances and Countertop	18
Dishwasher	18
Refrigerator	18
The Kitchen Sink	18
Countertop	18
Buying New Appliances	19
Section V: Using One Appliance or Utensil for Both Meat and Milk	20
Pots, Pans, Cutlery, Dishes	20
Glassware	20
Range	20
Oven	21
Microwave oven	22
Dishwasher	23
Sink	23
Blender	23
Refrigerator	23
Recommended Reading	24

Foreword

This booklet provides specific guidelines for kashering your kitchen. Of course, the most proper way to kasher a kitchen is to engage a competent Halachic authority to assist you in the task. Many Torah-observant lay persons are also knowledgeable enough to provide hands-on guidance and advice. You can contact us for help in locating someone near your area. Similarly, please do not hesitate to phone your local (or distant) rabbi if (when) any questions arise.

The process of kashering one's kitchen might seem overwhelming, but it does not need to be. A kitchen can be kashered in just a few hours, with minimal expenses. The time and resources that one puts into kashering the kitchen is an investment that pays immediate and long term returns. The process itself can be a meaningful experience that leaves a lasting, pleasant memory.

We have kept the content to the practical realm, leaving out most of the theories, reasons, and deeper meanings, which can be found in more detailed books on the topic of Kashrus. A short, recommended reading list is included at the end of this booklet.

Throughout the booklet we have included answers to some very common "*What if...*" questions.

Parts of this booklet are based on articles written by Rabbi Moshe Heinemann and the staff of Star-K Kosher Certification in Baltimore, such as the section on kashering utensils, and by Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Director of the National Jewish Outreach Program in New York, such as the section on kashering ovens. However, the conclusions in the practical Halachah expressed herein do not necessarily reflect their Halachic conclusions. We are grateful to our Halachic consultants, including Rabbi M. Trebitz, for scrutinizing the guidelines in this booklet.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Y. Shaw
General Editor

How to Make Your Kitchen Kosher

© Heritage Retreats

New Utensils

To “kasher” means to make something fit for eating or for preparing food, in accordance with Torah law (Halachah). Generally, a utensil or appliance needs to be kashered when it was used for some type of substance that may not be eaten according to Torah law. Hence, utensils and appliances that were used for non-kosher food must be kashered in order to remove the non-kosher food particles.

Brand new utensils do not need to be kashered; since they were never used, they contain no forbidden food particles. However, certain types of new utensils need to be immersed in a Mikvah (or other body of natural water that qualifies as a Mikvah, as will be discussed below). Immersing new utensils in a Mikvah (“Tevilah”) is not actually a form of kashering them, since they do not contain any non-kosher food. Rather, the immersion of utensils in a Mikvah is a Mitzvah in the Torah¹. It represents our intent to use the utensils -- and the act of eating for which they serve -- for a holy purpose, for uplifting the mundane (food) and sanctifying it in the service of G-d. Tevilah is a Mitzvah, and it is an essential element of making a kosher kitchen.

Every utensil falls into one of three Halachic categories:

1. Utensils that require Tevilah with a blessing.
2. Utensils that do not require Tevilah at all.
3. Utensils that require Tevilah but without a blessing.

The utensils that fall into each of these categories are as follows.

1. Utensils that require Tevilah with a blessing are those that come in direct contact with food (solid or liquid) when the food is being prepared, served, or eaten, and are made from metal or glass². Included in the category of metal are gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, and lead³, as well as their alloys (such as brass and steel).

Aluminum utensils are also included in this category according to most authorities.

Included in the category of glass are crystal, Pyrex, Duralex, and Corelle.

2. Utensils that do not require Tevilah at all are those made from paper, plastic, polystyrene (styrofoam), non-glazed earthenware (ceramics), bone, stone, or wood.

A utensil made from metal or glass that is not normally used for food (such as scissors) does not require Tevilah, even if it is used for food on occasion.

¹ Some maintain that the Mitzvah is a Rabbinical enactment.

² The laws of what utensils require Tevilah are found in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 120.

³ As listed in Bamidbar 31:22.

A utensil made from metal or glass that does not come into direct contact with food (such as a can-opener or cork-screw) does not require Tevilah.

Utensils manufactured by a Jew (or Jewish-owned company) and that were never owned by a non-Jew do not require Tevilah. (This, however, is rare, even in Israel.)

Disposable utensils, such as aluminum pans, that will be used only once do not require Tevilah. If one intends to use them more than once, then they need Tevilah with a blessing.

Storage utensils that are not brought to the table do not require Tevilah (such as a glass noodle jar or metal sugar canister). Some authorities require that it be immersed but without a blessing.⁴

Utensils used exclusively for raw and inedible material, such as cookie cutters, do not require Tevilah.

What If...

Question: What if I buy a can of beans or vegetables, and after I finish the beans I want to use the can for other food?

Answer: A can that was hermetically sealed by the manufacturer (such as the can used for canned vegetables) and that was opened by a Jew does not require Tevilah even if one intends to keep it for permanent use. This is because when the Jew opens the can he effectively creates a new utensil, and a new utensil made and owned by a Jew does not require Tevilah.

Question: What if I buy a glass jar of pickles, or a glass bottle of juice, and I want to reuse it after finishing the pickles or juice?

Answer: Glass jars that are bought solely for the food that they contain (such as a jar of pickles, or a bottle of grape juice) are secondary to their contents and do not require Tevilah. However, if one intends to use the jar or bottle after it has been emptied of its contents, one must immerse it in a Mikvah⁵.

3. Utensils that require Tevilah without a blessing include utensils made from any material that does not require Tevilah (as mentioned above) but are glazed. This includes glazed china, bone, stoneware, corningware, and porcelain.

Also included in this category are metal pots coated with teflon or enamel. Utensils used primarily for raw materials but which could be used for edible food as well, such as a metal rolling pin, should be immersed without a blessing.

⁴ Sefer Tevilas Kelim (Cohen), 11:16:13.

⁵ Sefer Tevilas Kelim (Cohen), 4:13, 11:18. While there is an opinion that is lenient (Or l'Tzion, end of 1:24), most authorities require Tevilah.

The following chart, composed by Rabbi Moshe Heinemann of Star-K Kosher Certification, lists the basic types of utensils that fall into the three Halachic categories:

Tevilah with blessing	Tevilah without blessing	No Tevilah
brass	glazed china	bone
copper	bone china	styrofoam
gold	stoneware	paper
iron	corningware	plastic
lead	porcelain	metal rolling pins
silver	metal pots coated with teflon, enamel, or plastic	non-glazed earthenware
steel	toaster (which will not break)	wood
tin	toaster oven racks & trays	arts and crafts knife
glass (Pyrex, Duralex, Corelle)	metal flour and sugar storage canisters	emptied vegetable cans (if opened by a Jew)
metal colander	mixer beaters	cookie cutters
aluminum	disposable aluminum pans to be used only once	glass storage utensils not brought to the table
disposable aluminum pans if intended to be used more than once	waffle iron	metal meat tenderizer hammer
hot water urn	sandwich maker	metal crock pot shell
	hamburger maker	non-glazed stoneware

How to perform Tevilah⁶

The utensil to be immersed must be completely clean of any dirt, dust, rust, sticker, label, or glue (nail-polish remover is effective in removing the stubborn glue residue of labels, but it should be used with caution on sensitive finishes).

Tevilah must be done in a valid Mikvah. One may perform Tevilah in an ocean or other large, natural body of water (such as the Great Lakes). One may perform Tevilah in a river, stream, or spring that flows the entire year (regardless of rainfall). A swimming pool is not valid.

Immediately before immersing a utensil, one should wet his or her hand in the water of the Mikvah, and then grasp the utensil in the wet hand and recite, “*Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech ha’Olam, Asher Kideshanu b’Mitzvosav v’Tzivanu Al Tevilas Kelim*” (or “*Keli*” when immersing a single utensil), and immerse the vessel.

The water of the Mikvah (or ocean or river) must touch the entire inner and outer surface of the utensil. The entire vessel must be under the water at one time. A removable cover may be immersed separately. One should ensure that two utensils being immersed at the same time do not touch each other.

Utensils comprised of separate pieces that are used together as a single unit (such as a meat grinder, or thermos bottle) should be immersed in the manner in which they are used; they should not be disassembled and immersed piece by piece.

A narrow-necked bottle should be immersed with its neck facing upwards, so that water will fill the bottle and cover the inner surface. Care must be taken that no air is trapped in the submerged utensil.

A utensil that requires Tevilah may not be used even once until Tevilah is performed. If a utensil was used numerous times without Tevilah, one is still required to immerse it before its next use. Nevertheless, food prepared with a utensil that was not immersed is permitted.

A competent rabbinic authority should be consulted in the following cases: a utensil is too large to immerse in a Mikvah, there is no available Mikvah, the utensil will be ruined when placed in a Mikvah, or immersion may present a hazard. With regard to an electrical appliance (such as an electric urn, toaster oven, or sandwich maker), there are various opinions whether immersion is required, and thus each specific situation should be evaluated by a competent rabbinic authority.

A utensil borrowed or rented from a non-Jew does not require Tevilah. Tevilah may be done during the day or night, but not on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

⁶ The laws of how to perform Tevilah for utensils are found in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 120.

A used utensil (see next section) that needs to be kashered must first be kashered and then immersed in a Mikvah. If the order was switched, a competent rabbinic authority should be consulted.

What If...

Question: What if I am at the home of a friend or relative, and they serve me a drink (kosher, of course) in a glass that has not been immersed in a Mikvah?

Answer: It is permitted to drink the beverage, or eat food, served in a utensil that has not been immersed when visiting the home of a friend or relative⁷.

Question: What if I have a pocket knife that I use occasionally for food?

Answer: A pocket knife used regularly for food should be immersed. It should be immersed in its open position so that the water will touch all areas of the blade (and other parts used for food, such as a fork).

⁷ Beis Avi #116.

Used Utensils

According to Torah law, almost all materials from which utensils are made are able to absorb the taste of non-kosher food. Accordingly, a pot that was used for cooking non-kosher food has absorbed the taste of that food and may not be used for cooking kosher food, because the non-kosher food will enter the kosher food.

The underlying principle involved with kashering utensils is that the way in which a non-kosher food became absorbed into the walls of a utensil is the way it must be expelled. Hence, a pot used for cooking (liquid heat) can be kashered with boiling water (“Hagalah”), while a pan used for baking (dry heat) can be kashered by direct contact with an intense, dry heat source (“Libun”). A sink or countertop that came into contact with hot food can be kashered by purging with a hot water pour (“Iruy Roschim”).

Newly-kashered utensils also must be immersed in a Mikvah, as described earlier.

Metal and glass utensils can be kashered. However, any utensil that might be damaged by being immersed in boiling water cannot be kashered, because of the concern that one will attempt to protect the utensil and will not kasher it properly⁸.

Wood, stone, bone, leather, and sea-shell utensils can be kashered⁹. However, if they are difficult to clean, they have hard-to-reach crevices¹⁰, or they may be damaged by the kashering process, then they should not be kashered.

Stoneware can be kashered only when the utensil is made from a whole stone. Stoneware made from ground or crushed stones that were mixed with water or another liquid and then hardened cannot be kashered¹¹.

Pyrex and duralex can be kashered¹². Enamel-coated utensils may be kashered according to many authorities¹³.

Plastic, nylon, formica, fiberglass, rubber, can be kashered¹⁴. If the utensil will be damaged by being submerged in boiling hot water, then it suffices to pour boiling hot water over the utensil.

⁸ Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 551:7.

⁹ Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 551:8, Yoreh Deah 121:2; Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos Zahav, Orach Chaim 551:31.

¹⁰ However, one may kasher such utensils by pouring a toxic cleansing agent into the crevices to render any non-kosher food particles unfit for consumption.

¹¹ Darchei Teshuvah, Yoreh Deah 121:25.

¹² Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (Pfeuffer), Hilchos Basar v'Chalav 2:11:4.

¹³ Shevet ha'Levi, Yoreh Deah 43. See also Mishnah Berurah, Sha'ar ha'Tzion 551:191.

¹⁴ Seridei Esh 2:160, Minchas Yitzchak 3:67, Tzitz Eliezer 4:6. However, Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim 2:92, disagrees.

Under certain circumstances, china, earthenware, ceramic, and porcelain utensils can be kashered¹⁵; a competent rabbinic authority should be consulted.

It should be noted that in many Jewish communities, the local synagogues have a “kashering day” right before Passover, where one may bring utensils to be kashered by an experienced staff. This saves considerable time, it puts the kashering process into the hands of reliable people, and it avoids risks involved with handling pots of boiling hot water on one’s own. In some cases it might be worth one’s time and energy simply to buy a new utensil.

How to Kasher Utensils

Metal pots, serving containers, cutlery, glassware, and other types of utensils that are used for hot foods are kashered by following the following steps¹⁶. *Please observe proper safety precautions when handling hot water.*

1. Thoroughly clean the utensil of food and rust (especially at the joints). Leave the utensil unused for 24 hours.
2. Prepare a large, kosher pot of boiling water. The pot should be large enough to accommodate each utensil that needs to be kashered. (The pot itself needs to be kosher. Therefore, it is advisable to purchase a new pot (and immerse it in a Mikvah) for this purpose, or to kasher a pot, as described below in #6, for this purpose.)
3. When the water in the pot is boiling, drop the utensil (pot, cutlery, etc.) into the boiling water. It should be left there for 15-30 seconds while maintaining a rolling boil. The water will cool when the cold utensils are placed into it, and therefore one should wait until the water begins to bubble again.
4. A large utensil does not need to be completely submerged at once; it can be immersed piecemeal, lowering each part into the water and keeping it there for 15 seconds.
5. After removing the utensil, rinse it with cold water. To facilitate removal of the utensil from the hot water, use tongs or a mesh basket. (When using tongs to insert the utensil into the boiling water, reposition them so that the original area to which they grasped will be exposed to the hot water.)
6. If the utensil, such as a large pot, is too large to be submerged in another pot, then it may be kashered in the following manner.

Fill the pot that needs to be kashered with water to the very top. Bring the water to a boil. Place a lid on top of the pot so that it rests loosely, and not securely, on the top of

¹⁵ Such as when the utensil was never used for cooking food, and hot food was placed into it only as a second-level container after the container in which it was cooked.

¹⁶ The laws of how to kasher utensils are found in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 121.

the pot, so that the boiling water will boil over the top edge of the pot. Pour out the water and rinse the pot with cold water.

Alternatively, if one already has a kosher pot (but it is too small to accommodate the larger pot), one may fill the large pot with water and bring it to a boil. Then, spill out the boiling water, and fill the smaller pot with water and bring it to a boil. Hold the large pot upside down and submerge its upper lid into the boiling water in the smaller pot, rotating it so that the boiling water reaches all parts of the upper lid of the large pot. When finished, rinse the large pot with cold water.

Pans used for frying or baking, as well as spits and barbecue grates, can be kashered in the following manner.

1. Thoroughly clean the utensil. It does not need to be left unused for 24 hours.
2. Place the pan on a burner and heat it to its maximum temperature¹⁷.

A pan used directly on a fire without oil is not feasible to kasher, since it must be heated until it glows red-hot, which will likely ruin the pan.

Glassware used only for cold foods or drinks, or for tea and coffee, may be kashered by soaking in room temperature water for 72 hours, and changing the water every 24 hours. This procedure cannot be used for Pyrex or glass that was used directly on the fire or in the oven. Nevertheless, it is possible to kasher Pyrex or glass utensils used directly on the fire or in the oven by submerging them in boiling water three times (the water should be changed after each immersion; alternatively, one may pouring detergent into the boiling water, and then it is not necessary to change the water after each immersion).

¹⁷ Alternatively, the pan may be heated by a blowtorch, but we recommend that this method be used only by an experienced authority. In a case of great necessity, a frying pan (especially a “non-stick” type, such as one coated with Teflon) can be kashered by submerging it in boiling water, as described earlier.

Cooking Appliances

An oven can be kashered only when it is completely clean, with no food or grease residue. The cleaning of the oven is the most time- and energy-consuming part of the kashering process. Since cleaning the oven is so essential to the kashering of the oven, a number of guidelines should be followed. (For using an oven with both meat and milk utensils, see chapter, “Using One Appliance or Utensil for Both Meat and Milk.”)

Self-Cleaning Oven

In a self-cleaning oven, the self cleaning cycle both cleans and kashers the oven. This is also the case with a convection oven that has a self-cleaning feature. To kasher the oven, follow the manufacturer’s instructions for the full self-cleaning cycle.

Gas and Electric Ovens

1. Spray all internal surfaces of the oven with a chemical cleaner to remove all residual food and grease. You may need to use steel wool or a scraper to remove spots and stains. If a caustic type of oven cleaner (such as Easy-Off) is used and some stubborn spots remain even after the cleaner was applied a second time, the remaining spots may be disregarded.

Make sure to take proper safety precautions, such as unplugging the oven before cleaning and wearing protective rubber gloves when using chemical cleaning agents.

Be sure to check hidden areas such as corners, door edges, the area behind the burners, and the grooves of the tray shelves.

Use caution to avoid disturbing the thermostat wire in the cleaning process.

2. Take out all removable parts of the oven such as grates, the shelf separating the oven from the broiler, the broiler and its drawer, and clean them again thoroughly with a chemical agent, steel wool, and/or scraper. (See above with regard to a self-cleaning oven.)

3. Leave the oven unused for 24 hours.

4. Replace the cleaned oven parts. Set the oven to broil for about forty minutes.

The broiler tray can be kashered by heating it in the oven to the maximum temperature¹⁸. If one does not kasher the broiler tray, it may still be used. It must be thoroughly cleaned and left unused for 24 hours, and then it may be used as long as

¹⁸ Based on Tax, Yoreh Deah 121:7, and Shach 121:17. See also Mishnah Berurah 451:27. The more common practice today, however, is to apply direct, dry heat (such as with a blowtorch) to the broiler.

cooking food does not rest directly on the tray but is placed in a separate pan, or the tray is covered with aluminum foil.

Some have the custom to blowtorch the inner surface of the oven, but this is not required by Halachah.

Continuous-Cleaning Oven

Continuous cleaning ovens do not necessarily become clean as a result of the cleaning process, despite the claims made by the manufacturer. A visual inspection is required.

1. The oven should not be cleaned with a caustic or abrasive oven cleaners (such as Easy-Off), because they will destroy the continuous-clean properties of the oven. Therefore, a non-caustic and non-abrasive cleaner must be used. Grease spots will usually disappear when the top layer of grease is cleaned with Fantastic and a nylon brush. Turn the oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit for several hours, so that the continuous clean mechanism can work. If spots remain even after the use of the continuous-clean mode, then try to remove them manually. Spots that still remain may be disregarded if they are dark and crumble when scratched.

2. Once the oven has been cleaned in the manner described above, it is ready to be kashered. Turn the oven to its highest setting (or broil) for about forty minutes.

Gas Range Top

1. Remove grates, burner jets, drip trays, and the entire cook top if possible.

2. Clean all exposed parts with scrub pads (steel wool) and cleaning agents.

3. Leave the range unused for 24 hours.

4. On a gas range, the cast iron or metal grates upon which the pots sit may be inserted into the oven after they have been thoroughly cleaned. The grates can then be kashered simultaneously with the oven. Another method of kashering the grates is to place a double layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil over them and then turn the burners to the highest setting for ten minutes.

5. A stainless steel top can be kashered by pouring boiling water on it. This may also be done with a porcelain-coated cook top, since cooking food is usually not placed directly on the cook top¹⁹. However, it is best to refrain from placing pots directly on the porcelain cook top. If something was placed on the cook top inadvertently, it remains permitted to eat.

¹⁹ Based on Mishnah Berurah 451:11. See also Chazon Ish 122:3.

6. The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and do not need to be kashered. Similarly, the knobs that control the gas or electricity do not need to be kashered, but only cleaned. Burner jets do not require kashering.

Electric Range Top

1. Clean all of the exposed parts of the range (as described above).
2. Leave the range unused for 24 hours.
3. Turn on the elements of the stove until they come to a glow. This serves to kasher the burner areas.
4. In order to kasher the rest of the cook top, the entire surface area must be exposed to direct heat. This method however, may cause the glass to crack, since glass tops are made of tempered glass that are not meant to be heated, and is therefore not advised. Instead, one may use the electric range without kashering the surface of the cook top, provided that the area between the burners is kept clean and dry, and food is not placed directly onto this surface. Similarly, hot pots should not be placed directly onto this surface.

However, in the event that cooking food was not placed directly on the glass cook top, it can be kashered by pouring boiling water on it, as described above with regard to a porcelain cook top.

5. In an electric cook top (with coil burners), it suffices to turn on the burners to a high heat setting for several minutes in order to kasher them. If the surface of the cook top cannot be kashered, pots should not be placed directly on it. Pots may be placed on the burners.

Microwave Oven

When food is heated in a microwave oven, the interior sides and top generally do not reach a temperature that is too hot to touch (and thus do not require kashering). The bottom, though, generally does get hot. Nevertheless, kashering a regular microwave oven is a relatively simple procedure.

Microwave models with browning or convection features must be treated like regular ovens, and they cannot be kashered.

For an ordinary microwave oven, the kashering procedure is as follows.

1. Thoroughly clean the interior walls of the oven, and purchase one or two new trays. (Due to the possibility of spillage, it is recommended to designate one tray for meat and the other tray for dairy use. Alternatively, one may use a paper or styrofoam plate under the food.)

2. Some authorities recommend leaving the microwave unused for 24 hours.
3. Place a container of water in the microwave and turn it on until the water boils and the vapor fills the oven and collects on the surface of its walls. (Alternatively, one may boil the water with conventional means and then place it into the microwave.)

Some authorities suggest that the container be refilled with water and place in a different part of the microwave, repeating the steaming procedure, in order to allow the steam to reach the area where the container was resting the first time. (This second procedure is relevant when there is no tray or turntable on the floor of the microwave. When there is a tray or turntable, it should be replaced or covered.)

Barbecue Grill

There are various types of barbecue grills that operate in different ways (such as gas grills, electric grills, charcoal grills, firepits, fire cookers, smokers) and are built of different components, and thus one should consult with a competent rabbinic authority in order to kasher one's barbecue.

In general, the same theory that applies to kashering all other cooking appliances applies to kashering barbecues as well: the manner in which the non-kosher food was cooked is the manner in which it is expelled. Thus, in general, a barbecue is kashered by thoroughly cleaning all parts of the barbecue with a strong cleaning agent, and then running the barbecue empty at its highest temperature for about twenty minutes, so that the grates, racks, and grids are heated to the maximum temperature²⁰.

Toaster

It is not feasible to kasher a toaster that was used for non-kosher foods, and thus a new one should be purchased.

According to some authorities, a sandwich maker is like a toaster oven and cannot be kashered. Others maintain that it can be kashered by thoroughly cleaning it with a strong cleaning agent (such as Easy-Off), leaving it unused for 24 hours, and then operating the sandwich maker empty at its highest temperature.

Coffeemaker

Coffeemakers that have been used for brewing only unflavored, pure coffee do not need to be kashered.

Coffeemakers that have been used for brewing flavored coffee (that might have contained non-kosher ingredients) should be cleaned thoroughly and left unused for 24

²⁰ The more common practice today, however, is to use a blowtorch for these parts of the grill that come in direct contact with fire and food.

hours. Water should then be poured into the chamber and heated until it drips over the exposed metal base. The filter holder and filters should be replaced, and the carafe should be replaced or kashered (by submersion in boiling water, as described earlier).

Kitchen Appliances and Countertop

Dishwasher

There are various opinions regarding the kashering of a dishwasher. Some maintain that a dishwasher can be kashered by cleaning all parts of the dishwasher, leaving it unused for 24 hours, and then running the dishwasher empty with the water temperature set to the highest setting (if the machine has a soil sensor, this option should be turned off when kashering the dishwasher). When cleaning the dishwasher, one should make sure to clean the filter with a strong cleaning agent (there are specially-made dishwasher cleaners available that remove lime scale, iron, soap scum, and grease and food stains). One may use the racks (metal or plastic) after they have been thoroughly cleaned and kashered by being left in the dishwasher while it runs at its highest temperature²¹.

(For using a dishwasher with both meat and milk utensils, see below.)

Refrigerator

A refrigerator and freezer require no special kashering process other than a thorough cleaning with soap and water. Any residue from spilled liquids or foods should be removed.

The Kitchen Sink

A sink made of metal (such as stainless steel) can be kashered by thoroughly cleaning the sink, leaving it unused for 24 hours, and then pouring boiling water over the entire surface of the sink. (The water must be boiling right before it is poured.)

This method of kashering may also be used for porcelain sinks²². (With regard to using a single sink for both meat and dairy dishes, see below.)

Countertop

Countertops made from granite, marble, or stainless steel can be kashered like a sink. Clean the countertop, leave it unused for 24 hours, and then pour boiling water over the entire surface of the countertop (you may need to refill the pot several times). It is not sufficient to pour water on one spot and let the water run over the counter.

Wood can be kashered as long as it has a smooth surface and no cracks.

²¹ Some authorities maintain that plastic racks should not be kashered, and new ones should be purchased.

²² Some authorities maintain that since porcelain cannot be kashered (see above, footnote 15), a porcelain sink cannot be kashered, and one must use sink-inserts. We have written the lenient ruling here, based on a number of relevant Halachic considerations.

A countertop made of granite or stone can be kashered only when it is pure granite or stone. A composite cannot be kashered²³. Instead, it should be thoroughly cleaned. It may be used for cold pots and food. Hot food should not be placed directly on the countertop. However, a hot food that was accidentally placed on the counter is permitted to be eaten.

A countertop made of Formica, Corian, Silestone, or other materials with plastic components can be kashered by pouring boiling water over the countertop²⁴, as described above.

Buying New Appliances

There are a number of Halachic considerations that one must be aware of when buying new appliances, such as ovens, cook tops, ranges, and refrigerators. Many new appliances have features that pose problems for use on Shabbos and Yom Tov. A discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this booklet. We refer the reader to the outstanding work of the staff of *Star-K Kosher Certification* (<http://www.star-k.com/cons-appl.htm>), who provide detailed information about specific brands and models, as well as instructions and endorsements for specific model numbers.

²³ See above, footnote 11.

²⁴ According to some authorities, a countertop made of Formica, Corian, Silestone, or other materials with plastic components cannot be kashered (see above, footnote 14). We recommend following the lenient opinion.

Using One Appliance or Utensil for both Meat and Milk

Pots, Pans, Cutlery, Dishes

Pots, pans, cutlery, and dishes are usually used with hot food, and therefore they absorb the taste of the meat food, or dairy food, with which they are used. Consequently, they may not be used for the opposite type of food, because the taste absorbed in the utensil might enter the other food, creating a forbidden mixture of meat and dairy.

Therefore, it has been the universal practice in Jewish homes to maintain two sets of pots, cutlery, and dishes, one set for meat and one for dairy.

Glassware

Due to the unique nature of glass, glass is not considered by Halachah to be non-porous and does not absorb the tastes of foods the same way that other materials do.

Accordingly, glasses may be used alternately for meat meals and dairy meals, provided that they are thoroughly clean. Even if they were used for hot beverages, they may be used for the opposite type of food. Beverage glasses should not be washed in hot water (such as in a dishwasher) together with meat dishes or with dairy dishes (unless the glasses are designated specifically for meat use or for milk use), but they may be hand washed with cold water together with other dishes.

Many homes buy separate sets of glasses for meat use and for milk use.

Other glass dishes, such as salad bowls, may be used for meat meals and dairy meals, provided that the food is cold, or, when the food is hot, the glass dish is the second container in which the food has been placed after being heated.

Range

The burners of the range (cook top) may be used for cooking dairy foods and meat foods, according to most opinions. However, if food spilled out of the pot and remains on the metal grate of a gas burner, or on the coil of an electric burner (and was not burned up by the fire), the grate or coil must be cleaned and dried so that no residue of food or grease remains, in order to use the burner for the opposite type of food.

Since the cooking food often spills and splatters on the area between the burners, one should refrain from placing food directly on that area.

Oven

Cooking meat foods and dairy foods one after the other in an oven is more complicated, for there are additional problems involved. The steam that rises from the cooking water in which meat is being cooked causes the entire oven to absorb the taste of meat, and, under certain circumstances, that taste might then enter a dairy food that is cooked in the oven.

Nevertheless, it is possible to use one oven for both meat and dairy dishes. The simple way is to designate the oven for one type of food (such as meat), and then always to cover the other type²⁵ (such as dairy). When one chooses to cover the meat or dairy that is cooked in the oven, that gender must always be covered in the oven (it is the common practice to cover the type that is cooked in the oven less frequently).

The second way is to kasher the oven between cooking meat and cooking milk. One should make sure that the oven is thoroughly clean, and then heat the oven to the highest temperature until the oven becomes hot enough to cook food (approximately 20 minutes). The other type of food may then be cooked in the oven uncovered. It is not necessary to wait 24 hours to cook the other type of food.

(There are various other opinions regarding cooking meat foods and dairy foods in the same oven. The most stringent opinion is that one should avoid cooking both types of food in one oven²⁶.)

This applies only to cooking (i.e. with water), but not to baking (without water). If one cooked a meat dish in the oven uncovered, he may bake a dairy dish (or pareve dish) afterwards uncovered, as long as the oven is clean. It is preferable to cover the surface under the pan with aluminum foil, or to use a separate oven rack.

Cooking or baking uncovered dairy and meat dishes in the same oven at the same time is forbidden.

If one inadvertently cooked a dairy food in a “meat” oven (or vice versa), depending on the circumstances the food may still be permitted. Each individual case should be posed to a competent rabbinic authority.

These guidelines apply both to a gas oven and an electric oven. Convection ovens are considered like regular ovens.

A pareve (non-meat and non-dairy) food that is cooked in an oven normally used for meat, or in an oven normally used for dairy, retains its pareve status and may be eaten with either meat or dairy provided that the pareve food is dry and the oven is clean of any meat or dairy residue. A liquid pareve food retains its status provided that it is

²⁵ Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:40.

²⁶ Minchas Yitzchak 5:20, Badei ha'Shulchan 92:80.

covered when cooked in the oven (and, according to some, 24 hours have passed since the oven was last used for meat or for dairy).

Pareve food that was cooked in an oven in such a way that its status of pareve was compromised (for example, a liquid pareve food was cooked uncovered in an oven used for meat or dairy containing liquid within the last 24 hours), may not be eaten together, at the same meal, with the opposite type of food. However, it may be eaten before or after a meal of the opposite food, and there is no need to wait (as one must do between eating meat and dairy).

What If...

Question: What if I am visiting friends or relatives, and I want to heat or cook food in their non-kosher oven? Is there anyway that I can use their oven (without kashering it entirely)?

Answer: In such a situation, you may use a non-kosher oven by wrapping the food in two layers of wrapping (such as with tightly-wrapped aluminum foil). This, in fact, is how your kosher meal is heated on an airplane.

Microwave Oven

Meat foods and dairy foods may be cooked in the same microwave oven, one after the other, without covering them. However, the microwave must be cleaned before cooking the other type of food. In addition, separate trays should be used beneath meat dishes and dairy dishes (a clean styrofoam plate may also be used). Some authorities, however, advise covering all dairy foods cooked in a microwave designated for meat, and vice versa²⁷.

A microwave oven in which the temperature of the ceiling and walls exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit during heating is treated like an ordinary oven, and one of the two types of food must always be covered.

What If...

Question: What if I am visiting friends or relatives, and I want to heat or cook food in their non-kosher microwave oven? Is there anyway that I can use the microwave (without kashering it entirely)?

Answer: In a regular microwave oven (which is not a convention microwave nor has a browning element), the oven does not get hot, and thus food can be heated even uncovered when three conditions are fulfilled: First, all parts of the microwave (the ceiling, floor, door, and walls) must be completely clean of food particles, spills, and residue. Second, no non-kosher food may be

²⁷ Rabbi Yisroel Belsky recommends that meat or dairy food heated in a microwave oven designated for the opposite type be double wrapped (such as with a paper towel or Saran Wrap; note that certain types of plastic wrap may pose a health hazard when used in a microwave) in order to lower the rate at which steam passes from the food into the oven.

heated in the microwave at the same time. Third, the floor or turntable must be covered, or the food placed on a thick plate (such as a styrofoam plate, or cardboard).

One who wishes to be stringent (or when it is too difficult to clean the inside of the microwave) may wrap the food in a double wrapping and heat it in the microwave.

Dishwasher

A dishwasher may be used alternately for dairy utensils and meat utensils without being kashered between alternate usages²⁸. However, one must clean the drain and filter (or pour a strong cleaning agent into it, rendering any particles of food inedible)²⁹.

The common practice is to designate the dishwasher for use with only one type of utensil.

Sink

Many Jewish homes have two sinks, one for meat and one for dairy, which is the preferable practice.

When one has only one sink, one must be careful not to place meat and dairy dishes together in the sink. Moreover, some suggest not to place any dish directly on the floor of the sink when using hot water, since the sink may contain the absorbed tastes of meat and milk (such as when such dishes were cleaned with hot water one after the other), and they advise instead to keep two plastic sink tubs, one for meat and one for milk dishes³⁰. Similarly, separate drying racks should be used for meat and milk dishes.

Blender

A blender and food processor need separate containers and blades for dairy and meat use.

Refrigerator

A refrigerator and freezer may be used for both dairy and meat products. One should be careful to position the different woods in such a way that nothing from the dairy drips into the meat, and vice versa.

²⁸ This is based on Shach, Yoreh Deah 94:15.

²⁹ Some require that separate racks be used for dairy and meat dishes, and that the dishwasher be run empty for one cycle, with detergent, between dairy and meat use. Large pieces of food should be cleaned off of the dishes before being placed in the dishwasher. See Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 3:12:2.

³⁰ See, however, the ruling of Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:42.

Recommended Reading

The Laws of Kashrus. Rabbi Binyomin Forst. Mesorah Publications, 1999.

The New Practical Guide to Kashruth. Rabbi S. Wagshal. Feldheim Publishers, 1991.

Is it Kosher (Revised). Rabbi Eliezer Eidlitz. Feldheim Publishers, 1999.

The Kosher Kitchen. Rabbi Ze'ev Greenwald, illustrated by Michael Gonopolsky. Feldheim Publishers, 1997.

Halichos Bas Yisrael. Rabbi Yitzchak Yaacov Fuchs. Feldheim Publishers, 1997.