

A Passover Primer — Answers to Common Questions About Passover

1. What Is Passover? Passover is an eight day Jewish holiday, of Biblical origin, marking the birth of the Jews as a people and their emergence as a unique nation in history, devoted to G-d's will. It celebrates the liberation of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt over 3000 years ago, under the leadership of Moses.

2. When Does Passover Begin? According to Biblical law, Passover is determined by the Jewish lunar calendar, and begins on the eve of the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan. The English date varies from year to year, falling in March or in April. (This year Passover begins Wednesday evening, April 7. Dietary restrictions begin approximately three hours before mid-day Wednesday.)

3. What Does "KOSHER FOR PASSOVER" Mean? During Passover, Jewish law forbids the consumption or possession by Jews of all edible fermented grain products *Chometz* or related foods. Therefore, even foods and household products which meet the strict, year-round dietary regulations, and are considered *Kosher*, are, nevertheless, often unacceptable, or require special preparation for Passover use in the Jewish home in order to be *Kosher For Passover*.

4. How Can One Tell If A Product is "KOSHER FOR PASSOVER"? Most processed foods and beverages require special rabbinical supervision for Passover use. They must also be *Kosher* for year-round use, and prepared in accordance with all of the regular Jewish dietary laws. Jewish consumers are urged to look for the **K** P or the **KOSHER FOR PASSOVER** designation as an integral part of the product label, and to be familiar with the rabbi or organization giving the Passover endorsement. The mere mention of *Kosher For Passover* on the label is not a sufficient guarantee of the product's acceptability for Passover use. The largest and most widely respected Kashruth supervisory agency is the Kashruth Division of the Union or Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Its registered service mark, **K** P, on thousands of consumer and industrial food products, is a guarantee of the highest standards of *Kashruth* for Passover. Processed foods not carrying any rabbinical supervision should be cleared with a rabbi before Passover use, as should any medicines and vegetables.

5. What is "MATZOH"? Matzoh is a crisp, flat, unleavened bread, made of flour prepared under rabbinical supervision and water, which must be baked before the dough has had time to rise. It is the only type of "bread" which Jews may eat during Passover, and it must be made specifically for Passover use, under rabbinical supervision. Eating Matzoh on Passover commemorates the unleavened bread eaten by the Jews when they left Egypt in such haste that there was no time for the dough to rise. There are many mystical concepts tied to the unique relationship between Matzoh and *Chometz* on Passover. One interpretation equates Matzoh with G-d's commandments *Mitzvos*, and *Chometz* with sin *Chayt*. The rigorous laws of Passover, in this interpretation, represent the great care that must be taken to follow the G-dly path, and to avoid the pitfalls of evil and sin.

6. What Special Preparations Must Be Made In The Jewish Home For Passover? The home must be thoroughly cleaned of all *Chometz* before Passover. Any *Chometz* not removed from a Jew's premises before Passover should be sold. Jewish law forbids the use of any *Chometz* which remains in a Jew's possession during Passover, even after the holiday is

over. All cooking and eating utensils must be either set aside exclusively for Passover use, or, in some cases, "made Kosher" in consultation with a rabbi, according to the procedures of Jewish law. All of these preparations must be completed by the morning before Passover.

7. What Are The Rituals For The Day Before Passover? The day before Passover, this year Wednesday, April 7 is a fast day for Jewish firstborn males, in commemoration of the tenth plague, the slaying of the firstborn male Egyptians, which immediately resulted in the Exodus. In many congregations, a special celebration *Siyum* is conducted following which participating firstborn males are permitted to break their fast. A ritual search for *Chometz* is conducted Tuesday evening, April 6, and the *Chometz* that is found is burned the next morning.

8. What Is The Passover "SEDER"? The *Seder* is a ritual banquet which re-enacts the Exodus, conducted on both the first and second evenings of Passover (Wednesday and Thursday, April 7 and 8, 1982). Its major feature is the reading of the *Haggadah*, which relates, in detail, the events of the Exodus of the Jewish people from ancient Egypt, complete with symbolic re-enactments using Kosher wine, specially prepared Matzoh, and bitter herbs. The specially prepared *Shmurah Matzoh* is made specifically for use at the *Seder*, with specially supervised flour according to particularly stringent Jewish traditions and laws. The bitter herbs *Maror* consisting of either romaine lettuce or horseradish, commemorate the harsh conditions of slavery in ancient Egypt. Four cups of wine are consumed during the course of the *Seder* to commemorate the redemption of the Jewish people, the sanctity of the holiday and events related in the *Haggadah*. The *Seder* is rich in colorful ritual events designed to stimulate the interest of children in the Passover heritage. The *Seder* is a traditional occasion for Jewish families to gather together to re-enforce their ties to Judaism.

9. When Do Passover Dietary Laws End? All Passover Dietary Laws remain in effect until nightfall of the eighth day of Passover (Thursday, April 15, 1982). *Chometz* which was in the possession or jurisdiction of a Jew during Passover in violation of Jewish law, is forbidden for consumption by any Jew even after Passover.

10. What Other Restrictions Are Applicable On Passover? Sabbath-like restrictions on work and creative activity, with the exceptions of carrying and the use of fire (with respect to cooking and the preparation of food), apply to all Jews on the first two and last two days of Passover. Full Sabbath rules remain in effect on Friday evenings and Saturdays during Passover. With the exception, during the intermediate four days of Passover *Chol Hamoed* (nightfall of Friday, April 9, through shortly before sundown, Tuesday, April 13, 1982), only non-essential work activities and crafts, as defined by Jewish law, are prohibited.

11. With the first two days of Yom Tov falling on Thursday and Friday, how can I prepare food for the Sabbath? On *erev Yom Tov* (Wednesday afternoon), each household must make an *eruv tavshilin* to permit preparation on Yom Tov for the Shabbat that follows. The *eruv* is made by setting aside at least an egg-size of matzoh and an olive-size of cooked food and reciting the blessing "*al mitzvat eruv*." The *eruv* must be left intact for the entire time on Yom Tov that Shabbat preparations will be carried out. Customarily, the matzoh used for the *eruv* is eaten on Shabbat.

LONDON (WNS) -- The Jewish community has been shocked by a play adapted from a novel by a French Jewish academician, George Steiner, in which Hitler, not dead but now a sprightly 91, defied the "final solution" and points an accusing finger at Israeli avengers who have captured him and put him on trial in the jungles of Brazil.

The play, which opened last month at the Mermaid Theater, with a skilled actor, Alex McCown, portraying Hitler, consists of two parts. In the first, Hitler's captors catalogue the sufferings of their loved one. In the second half, Hitler delivers a rambling monologue, the point of which is that he modelled his National Socialist doctrines on the Jewish separatism; that the Old Testament has subjected mankind to moral blackmail; and that the "final solution" was indispensable to the creation of the State of Israel because it taught the Jew how to drive the "lice-ridden" Palestinian Arabs from his land.

In the play, Hitler has the last word; that he, not Theodore Herzl, is the true founder of the Jewish State and that the Jews should acknowledge him as their Messiah.

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