



Congregation Beth El Pesach Guide 5786

15–22 Nisan 5786 April 1-9, 2026

Dear Beth El family,

It's Pesach time! This year, the sedarim fall on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, April 1st and 2nd—and that's *not* an April Fool's joke! The last 2 days fall on Wednesday and Thursday, April 8th and 9th. And since the first 2 days roll into Shabbat, there are a few "extras" to prep for!

In this Guide, you'll find information about:

1. Preparing the Passover Kitchen
2. What Shall We Eat?
Eruv Tavshilin—preparing food on Yom Tov for Shabbat
3. Planning your seder
4. Siyyum for the Firstborn (Wednesday, April 1!)
5. Holiday services

1. Preparing the Passover Kitchen

Pesach is a time for embracing freedom, and in practice, that often involves a major spring cleaning and, for many, a kitchen overhaul. However you prepare your home, you probably have questions. Everything you need to know is in the [Rabbinical Assembly 2026/5786 Pesach Guide](#). If you have any questions along the way, please get in touch with Rabbi Paskind.

2. What shall we eat?

Whether you're planning for apples-and-walnuts charoset or dried fruit-and-coconut charoset; whether you're avoiding or embracing kitniyot (legumes); whether your seder features a brisket or a chicken or is dairy (what?! You can do that?!)... we've got you covered. The [Rabbinical Assembly 2026/5786 Pesach Guide](#) specifies which food items never need a KFP label, which need it only if purchased on the holiday, and which items always need a special Passover label. If you have any questions along the way, please get in touch with Rabbi Paskind.

Kitniyot/legumes: Ashkenazi Jews have traditionally considered kitniyot/legumes off-limits for Pesach, while Sephardi Jews have never forbidden them. In 2015, the Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law & Standards (CJLS) approved the use of kitniyot on Pesach for Ashkenazi Jews, and members of our community are permitted to use kitniyot on Pesach should you choose. You can read the fine print in the [Rabbinical Assembly 2026/5786 Pesach Guide](#), but I (Rabbi Paskind) like to look for **unprocessed**,

Gluten-Free, Oat-Free products, even those without a Kosher-for-Passover label. I've also taken to following [Rabbi Yonatan Halevy's Pesach Kashrut Forum](#) to determine which products are ok to use without a KfP label—highly recommended!

A Note: When Yom Tov rolls into Shabbat, we must create what's called an *eruv tavshilin*, a short prayer that enables us to cook on the holiday for Shabbat.

On Pesach or any holiday that falls on a weekday, cooking is permitted, but only to prepare food for that particular day. On Shabbat, we do not cook. Therefore, preparing food for a Shabbat that follows a Wednesday night/Thursday/Friday holiday presents a challenge. To allow cooking on a Friday yom tov (holiday) for Shabbat, we create an eruv tavshilin ("combining of cooked dishes"), the combining of the cooking for the holiday and for Shabbat.

Start the Shabbat cooking before the holiday begins, on Wednesday:

- Before the holiday begins, take two prepared foods (eg: a piece of matzah and a hard-cooked egg or a piece of chicken or vegetable dish).
- Recite the bracha: *Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al mitzvat eruv.*
- Recite a declaration that cooking for Shabbat was begun before, and will be completed on, the holiday: "By means of this eruv, we are permitted to bake, cook, warm, kindle lights, and make all the necessary preparations for Shabbat during the festival, we and all who live in this city/locale."
- Set aside the two foods for eating on Shabbat during the day.

The cooking for Shabbat may now be completed on yom tov.

3. Disposing of Chametz

We are commanded to not own, or even see, chametz for the duration of Pesach. You *could* just eat it all, but that might be challenging. The most common solution is to enter into a temporary sale agreement and to symbolically burn some of what's left.

Sell it. Rabbi Paskind will serve as our community's agent for selling our collective chametz. [Please complete this online form](#) by **Wednesday, April 1 at 9:30am**. It is customary to make a donation at this time, and you are encouraged to Venmo the synagogue (@Congregation-BethElNorwalk) and earmark it "Passover donation". Your chametz will return to you at the end of the holiday on Thursday, April 9 at 8:15pm.

Remove it from your home.

Search for it. After nightfall on Tuesday, March 31st, we search our homes for chametz. Any chametz still to be eaten should be put together in one designated area. You may prepare a

candle (or flashlight), a feather or old toothbrush, and a small bag. Place some chametz, (usually pieces of bread) in ten different places around the house. Chametz is hidden so that the searcher will have something to find, and the blessing will not be said in vain. Turn off the lights, and light the candle or flashlight. In the room in which the search will begin, one should say,

*“Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha’olam,
asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al bi’ur chametz.”*

“Praised are you God, Ruler of the Universe,
who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to burn chametz.”

Using the lit candle or flashlight, search the house for chametz, and use the feather or toothbrush to sweep it into the bag. It is fun to divide the responsibilities so that one person handles the candle, another the feather, etc. When all the chametz has been found and gathered, the following is said:

“Any leaven that may still be in the house, which I have not seen or have not removed, shall be as if it does not exist, like the dust of the earth.”

Burn it. The next morning, April 1, the chametz that was found in the search is burned. Recite the following before burning or disposing of this chametz:

“All leaven and anything leavened that is in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, whether I have observed it or not, whether I have removed it or not, shall be considered nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth.”

The mitzvah of searching for chametz includes the search on Thursday night, the renunciation of the ownership of chametz made at night, and the burning or disposing of the chametz on Friday morning.

We’ll be burning chametz in the Beth El parking lot on Wednesday, April 1st at 9:30am.

**We may eat *chametz* until 10:50am.
ALL *chametz* must be disposed of by 11:54am.**

4. Plan Your Seder

“All who are hungry, let them enter and eat”. Pesach is a time to celebrate together, and it’s a great mitzvah to welcome guests (or be hosted!) to the seder.

Seder Matching (in person only)

- If you’re looking to attend a seder, let me know.
- If you’re hosting a seder and would like to welcome fellow congregants, let me know.

Online Haggadot. It’s always fun to try out a new haggadah. You can shop online for a hard copy, or check out these free downloadable haggadah texts (click on ‘em!):

[Sefaria's online Haggadah](#)

[30-Minute Seder](#)

[PI Library Haggadah](#)

[Haggadah of MAZON: Jewish Response to Hunger](#)

[HIAS Passover Haggadah](#)

Siyyum for first-borns. Erev Pesach is a fast day for first-born individuals, recalling that God spared Israelite firstborns while the 10th plague wrought death upon Egyptian firstborns. Jewish firstborns have 2 choices: 1) fast all day until the seder; or 2) participate in a Siyyum, a completion of a period of Jewish learning, followed by a celebratory break-fast meal. Since Pesach begins on a Saturday night, and we don't engage in fast days on Shabbat or on Fridays (so as not to back a fast day up to Shabbat), the Fast of the Firstborns takes place on **Wednesday, April 1** this year. We will gather for morning minyan ([8:00am on Zoom](#)), and Rabbi Paskind will lead a teaching and Siyyum for the Firstborn immediately following in the Zoom room. Firstborns, you prepare your own break-fast meal!

Yom Tov/Holiday services. Join us in the chapel or on [Livestream](#)—10am on Yom Tov and Shabbat (Thursday 4/2, Friday 4/3, Shabbat 4/3, Wednesday 4/8, and Thursday 4/9 with Yizkor), and 8am on [Zoom](#) on weekdays, as usual. We'll also be hosting an abbreviated Friday evening service on Friday 4/3 at 6pm.

Wishing each of you a Chag Kasher v'Sameach, a zissen and kosher

Pesach, Rabbi Ita Paskind