

A Step-by-Step Guide To Koshering Your Kitchen

Step One: Countertops and Sinks

Clean all surfaces before *koshering*. Wait 24 hours from last use with hot or warm¹ food or liquid. Boil water in a pot or kettle with wide opening and pour the heated water over a hot stone or hot piece of metal so that it's boiling over the countertops and sink. If the counter just had a splatter of non-*kosher*, or milk or meat liquids on the opposite type counter, it is sufficient to *kosher* it without a hot stone. Do each sink or countertop like this. Refer to the Lessons to see what type of surfaces may be *koshered* in this manner. For surfaces that cannot be *koshered*, avoid placing any hot, warm or cold food directly onto the surface. Additionally, a sink can filled with hot water and brought to a boil with a commercial immersion heater and then put in a hot stone to make it go over the rims. For sinks that cannot be *koshered*, use inserts or racks. **Note:** One may use water boiled in a meaty pot for *koshering* a milky sink or vice versa if they were not used for hot in the last 24 hours.

Step Two (I): Stovetops

For stovetop surfaces made from materials that can be *koshered* such as stainless steel, follow same directions as in Step 1. *Koshering* is only practical if the stovetop will be designated exclusively for meat or milk use. Otherwise just clean it with soap and water. Do not eat any hot or warm food that falls onto this surface within 24 hours of the non-*kosher* (*treif*) use, as it still remains not *kosher*, or within 24 hours of meat or milk if the opposite type of food fell on it.

Step Two (II): Ovens, Oven Racks and Grates

Clean the Oven as best you can using a caustic cleaner (e. g. Easy Off®). Turn the heat onto the highest setting for two hours. This works even for oven surfaces of materials that cannot be *koshered*. Oven Racks should be cleaned in the same manner and *koshered* in the oven at the same time. The grates should be *koshered* by placing a few layers of heavy duty aluminum foil or a blech over each grate and putting the burners on for about 10 - 15 minutes. Each burner should be done individually as this method produces intense heat and may ruin some surfaces. Alternatively, a pot can be placed on the entire grate instead of the foil. There should be water in the pot to prevent the pot from getting scorched. Stovetops with electric coils need to be turned on until they get red hot. If the coils are defective and do not get red hot, consult a Rabbi.

Step Two (III): Self Cleaning Ovens – Small Pots are like Step 4

For self cleaning ovens, running it through its cycle will *kosher* any racks trays or pans even if they are not cleaned beforehand.

Step Three (I): Large Pots

Fill the pot to the top with water and bring to a boil. While you are waiting for the pot to boil heat a stone or piece of metal. While the pot is boiling take the hot stone or piece of metal with pliers or tongs and drop it into the pot. This will cause it to overflow thus *koshering* the top rim of the pot.

Step Three (II): Frying Pans

Frying pans made of materials that can withstand intense heat can be *koshered* by torching or placing into a self cleaning oven. Those that will get ruined by the intense heat cannot be *koshered*, such as frying pans with non-stick surfaces.

Step Four: The Silverware

For cutlery made of material that can be *koshered*, clean thoroughly and wait 24 from last use with hot or warm before *koshering*. Dip each piece into a pot of boiling hot water. Make sure the water remains boiling for the entire process. Rinse each piece under cold water immediately after *koshering*. If a meaty or milky pot is used for the opposite types, one may *kosher* a few pieces of silverware at the same time making sure that the boiling hot water to surrounds each piece entirely.

Step Five: Microwave

If microwave was used for both milk and meat, clean it thoroughly and do not use the microwave for 24 hours prior to *koshering*. Boil a glass of water for several minutes in the microwave until it gets all steamed up. Now refill the water and move the glass to another spot repeating the process. Wipe the microwave clean and designate for use of either dairy or meat. If one wants to use it occasionally for the other kind, it should be double wrapped so that no steam escapes into the oven. If the wrappers pop open ask your Rabbi what the status of the food is.

Step Six: The Dishwasher

Determine with the help of a Rabbi that is familiar with the different brands and types of dishwashers. Some can be *koshered* right away while others cannot be *koshered* until after 12 months or not at all. It will be helpful if you can determine what material the liner is made of and whether the dishwasher has the option of heating its own water. After the Rabbi determines that it can be *koshered*, thoroughly clean the entire dishwasher including the racks and drains. Wait at least 24 hours from last use. Run the machine through a cycle using dishwasher detergent. Now *kosher* the dishwasher by running it through the cycle with fresh clean water. Designate it for milk or meat and use. Refer to Lessons for other details.

Step Seven: Food Processor

If it was used for hot or warm food, take it apart, clean the blades and proceed to *kosher* the blades in boiling hot water. If the container is of material that can be *koshered*, follow the same procedure for *koshering*.

Step Eight: Toaster Oven

Follow the same procedure as for a regular non self cleaning big oven. The racks will need to be *koshered* with a strong torching (i.e. as when put through a self cleaning cycle in the oven). This may ruin or discolor the racks.

Step Nine: Kitchen containers that are not used with hot foods

Requires only to be washed with COLD water and soap. If there is a chance that they were used with hot or warm foods, washed with hot or warm water, or a non-*kosher* liquid was stored in it for 24 hours, then follow Step Four. One must pay attention to what the container is made of. For example, some people have a custom not to *kosher* cheres (clay) utensils even though they were only used for cold food since this type of utensil absorbs taste easily.

Step Ten (I): Fridge, Freezer and Dining Room Tables

Clean thoroughly using soap and water. A dining room table that was used for non-*kosher* foods should only be used when covered.

Step Ten (II): Formica® Table Tops or Countertops

Some *Halachic* authorities maintain that one can *kosher* such surfaces. One should clean them with a strong cleaner and *kosher* by pouring boiling hot water over a hot stone or piece of metal on the tabletop or countertop.

Step Eleven: T'vilas Kalim

After you have *koshered* your kitchen, take any utensils purchased from someone not Jewish and immerse them in a Ritual Bath – *Mikvah*. The same applies for items manufactured by people that are not Jewish even when purchased from a Jew.

1. Approximately 109°-110°F (this applies to all references of "warm" in this guide).