

בית הוראה דיעטראיט
BAIS HORAAH OF DETROIT
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF HaRav Shmuel Irons שליט"א VAAD HALACHA Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher • Rav Yissachar Wolf • Rav Boruch Miller

KITCHEN • SHABBOS • YOM TOV • BRACHOS • AVEILUS • TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA • EVERYDAY SHAILOS

ISSUE #27 – Vacation FAQs

Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

Below are some common questions and answers based on psakim from the rabbonim of the Bais Horaah. Please note: in the event one believes they have heard a different opinion in the past, one's family posek should always be consulted. Mareh mekomos for any specific answers below are available by email request to ask@bhdetroit.org.

- **I am staying at a vacation rental that has a kitchen. May I use the appliances?**
 - The methods outlined below may be used to kasher appliances at a vacation rental for temporary use during your stay. For kashering appliances in permanent settings or other circumstances, please consult a halachic authority.
 - Consider bringing your own portable appliances (such as a Betty Crocker Pizza Maker or similar items) to avoid the need for kashering altogether.
 - Please Note: Most portable appliances require tevilah. Contact the Bais Horaah for specific directions on how to safely toivel these appliances without causing damage to the electrical components.
- **Stovetop:**
 - **Electric coil cooktop:**
 - Run each burner for 5-10 minutes until it turns red hot.
 - **Electric glass cooktop:**
 - Run all burners on high for 30 minutes.
 - Keep the area between the burners clean and dry. Do not place hot pots directly on this area.
 - It is advisable to designate burners for milk or meat.
 - Milk and meat should not be cooked simultaneously on the stove, as spillovers can create serious problems on this type of cooktop.
 - **Gas cooktop:**
 - Place a large pot with water on each burner and run on high for 30-45 minutes.
- **Oven:**
 - Run the self-clean cycle if available. Steam cleaning is not sufficient.
 - If self-cleaning is unavailable, one may use the oven as-is by wrapping all food with two layers of aluminum foil on all sides.
 - If cooking food uncovered is necessary, a non-self-cleaning oven may be kashered using the following steps: 1) Clean the oven thoroughly with a caustic cleaner (e.g., Easy Off) and wait 24 hours since last use 2) Run on the highest temperature for one hour 3) During the final 30 minutes, add a disposable 9x13 pan filled with hot water. Even after this kashering process, food may not be placed directly on the racks.
- **Barbeque Grill:**
 - Barbecue grills are impractical to kasher properly and risk damage in the process. Disposable grills or kosher portable grills are recommended as alternatives. Please note: barbecue grates require tevilas keilim in a kosher mikvah. If a kosher mikvah is not accessible, consult a halachic authority regarding acceptable bodies of water.
- **Sink:**
 - Clean thoroughly. Wash dishes by hand with warm water (not hot). To place dishes in the sink, use a grate or basin on the bottom.
- **Microwave:**
 - The preferred option is to double-wrap food on all sides. If this is not feasible (e.g., for soup or other liquids) and the microwave is relatively new and very clean (including the fan area), consult a halachic authority to determine if and how it can be kashered.
- **Counters:**
 - Hot food and hot pots should not be placed directly on counters. Use a potholder or towel instead.
- **Do vacation rentals advertised as kosher require the same level of kashering?**
 - In most cases, there is no way to verify that all previous tenants were kosher observant or maintained the same level of observance. One must assume everything is non-kosher and treat it identically to a non-kosher rental.

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- **If one inadvertently left meat cooking on their barbecue unattended in a public area, does the meat become forbidden?**
 - As long as the meat remains recognizable as the same piece, it may be eaten even if non-Jews or non-observant Jews are in the area.
- **What must be done to permit carrying outdoors at a vacation rental?**
 - One must physically inspect all property boundaries to ensure that fencing or other barriers provide complete enclosure in a halachically acceptable manner. In many cases, if not most, gaps or trees disqualify the enclosure. Additionally, if the property is shared with other tenants, consult a halachic authority, as additional steps beyond creating an enclosure may be required.
 - Please note: Carrying under an awning or porch may not be permitted depending on the specific construction. A halachic authority must be consulted with details of the specific structure, as slight variations can change the halacha. The Bais Horaah can often assist by reviewing submitted photographs.
- **Are there concerns with opening the refrigerator on Shabbos?**
 - The door switch must be disabled. Removing the light bulb may not be sufficient. See Issue #16 - Appliances FAQs for details on using appliances on Shabbos. As always, contact the Halacha Hotline with any questions.
- **The owner has a video camera, alarm system or motion-activated thermostat. What needs to be done?**
 - Investigate these potential concerns well before Shabbos and arrange for them to be disabled. If this is not possible, contact the Halacha Hotline via text message with specific product information. This should be done as early as possible before Shabbos to provide optimal guidance for your specific situation.
- **May one fish for sport without intending to eat the fish?**
 - No. It is prohibited to cause pain to animals merely for enjoyment. If one is fishing with the intention to catch kosher fish, they may release any unwanted fish.
- **May one engage in skydiving or other dangerous sports?**
 - One may not place themselves in situations of great risk to life for the sake of enjoyment. If there is a specific need, discuss this with your Rov or mentor.
- **Does one recite a bracha upon seeing an elephant or monkey?**
 - The bracha of Meshana Habrios is only said with Hashem's name if one has never seen this type of animal before.
 - However, if one has not seen this particular animal in at least 30 days, the bracha should be recited without Hashem's name.
- **Is a bracha recited upon seeing the Great Lakes?**
 - No, due to several halachic considerations.
- **Is a bracha recited upon seeing the ocean?**
 - One should recite the bracha of Oseh Maaseh Bereishis upon seeing any of the oceans, provided one hasn't seen it in at least 30 days.
 - Due to halachic uncertainty, the bracha of Oseh Yam Hagadol may only be recited in Gibraltar, where the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea can be viewed simultaneously.
 - Please note: When reciting a bracha near bodies of water, particularly in warm weather, one must exercise caution regarding immodestly dressed individuals.
- **Are recreational activities permitted during the Nine days?**
 - During this period, we exercise extra caution and avoid even activities that carry slight risk. Additionally, activities that generate extreme enjoyment should be avoided due to the solemn nature of these days.

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