

Judaism and the Gluten-Free Diet

Key Points

- In addition to Passover, all of the other Jewish holidays and the Sabbath require the consumption of bread strictly made from wheat, spelt, rye, barley or oats for religious acts (Mitzvot).¹ These may be either matzoh or challah.²
 - During Passover the only source of gluten is from matzoh. Otherwise, the Kosher for Passover diet is inherently gluten-free.
 - Consult with your health care professional about the appropriateness of gluten-free labeled oats in your diet. Some individuals do not tolerate them.¹ If you are unable to eat gluten-free labeled oats consult your local rabbi to explore alternatives, i.e., being excused from dietary requirements for Passover and other holidays like the weekly Sabbath.²
 - When partaking in the Seder, as well as any other religious act, such as those for other holidays and the Sabbath Meals, special care must be taken to avoid cross-contamination with any form of gluten containing matzoh or other foods containing gluten.
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What Restrictions Does the Gluten Free Diet Impose on Religious Acts?

- Of all of the Jewish holidays, Passover requires the most demanding dietary changes. This is due to the rigid Kosher for Passover Dietary laws.¹ Passover is the 8-day long celebration of the Israelites' freedom from bondage.
- No leavening (chametz) is permitted. Matzoh is the only form of "bread" allowed and it must be strictly made from wheat, spelt, rye, barley or oats. It is required for the observant Jew to partake in religious acts (Mitzvot or sacramental purposes), such as Seder meals.
- To meet the medical needs of those with celiac disease, uncontaminated gluten-free labeled and tested oat matzoh (for those who are oat tolerant) is the only acceptable alternative.¹

How Can You Access Kosher for Passover Gluten Free Oat Matzoh that is Acceptable for the Seder?

- When matzoh is needed, Kosher for Passover uncontaminated gluten-free labeled and tested oat matzoh can be used. It, however, only becomes available shortly before and during Passover. After Passover, left-over matzoh is typically put on clearance until supplies are gone. If matzoh is to be used for Passover and the Sabbath, purchase enough to last through the coming year.
- The following companies ³⁻⁵ and some on-line and physical stores sell these gluten-free oat matzoh.
- Kestenbaum Matza: <https://bakedbyyael.myshopify.com/collections/gluten-free>. Baked by Yael in Washington, DC distributes the oat matzoh on-line and in their store.
- Lakewood Matzoh: <http://www.lakewoodmatzoh.com>

Where Can You Access Kosher Gluten Free Oat Challah?

- Alternatively, uncontaminated gluten-free labeled and tested oat-containing challah may be used. Challah represents manna sent from God to the Israelites on their return to the Promised Land. Challah must contain predominately oats to meet the Jewish Dietary Laws permitting its use for religious acts, such as the Sabbath.
- The following companies ⁶⁻¹¹ sell Kosher uncontaminated gluten-free labeled and tested oat challah appropriate for religious acts:
- Katz Gluten Free: <https://katzglutenfree.com/>
- Park East Kosher: http://www.parkeastkosher.com/kosher.cfm/Bakery-Gluten-Free_368
- Gluten-Free Palace:
<https://www.glutenfreepalace.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=oat+matzoh>

How and Where Can You Access Gluten Free and Oat Free Kosher for Passover Matzoh Alternatives?

- Foods that are marked “Kosher for Passover” and that include the voluntary interchangeable terms “non-gebrokts,” “non-gebroktz,” and “non-gebroks” readily identify foods that are free of matzoh and, therefore, gluten-free.
- Kosher for Passover gluten-free matzo-style squares made from naturally gluten-free starches like potato and tapioca are available mainstream. They are not suitable for religious acts, such as the Seder or other sacramental purposes, but may be used otherwise.
- When matzoh is used for ordinary non-religious purposes, such as matzoh meal to make gefilte fish and matzoh balls, gluten-free options can be used. Examples are Kosher for Passover potato-based mixes like pancake mix or crushed matzo-like squares.

- The following companies sell Kosher for Passover foods and ingredients that are free of matzoh derivatives. **Be sure to select only labeled gluten-free items.**
 - Manischewitz: <https://manischewitz.com/?s=gluten+free> (including Manischewitz Gluten Free Matzo-Style Squares)¹²
 - Park East Kosher: www.parkeastkosher.com (type “gluten free” in the search bar)
 - Streits: www.streitsmatzos.com/passover-products/
 - Yehuda: <http://www.kedem.com/brands.php?id=28> including Yehuda Gluten Free Matzo-Style Squares) ¹³

How Can the Requirement for Alcohol Be Modified if Needed?

- Wine for all holidays and the Sabbath plays an integral role. On Passover all are required to drink wine or its alternative. On other holidays and the Sabbath only the one who is reciting the blessings is required to drink.
- For those with medical conditions, the amount required to be consumed is lowered. Wine may also be diluted by a ratio of 1 part wine to 2 parts water or grape juice. Alternatively, wine may be completely replaced with grape juice. If necessary, consult your local rabbi to address options for accommodations.

Resources

Falini, N.P. Celiac Disease and Religious Practices. Dennis, M., Leffler, D, eds. In *Real Life with Celiac Disease: Troubleshooting and Thriving Gluten Free*. AGA Press. Bethesda, MD, 2010.

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Gluten Free Nosh

<http://glutenfreenosh.com>

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