

Counter Intelligence

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Every housewife's dream is the kitchen remodel. New counters, new cabinets, new appliances. With a remodel project comes many choices of materials. There's also a myriad of choices for appliances. Let us try to navigate all these choices so that our new kitchen will be halachically correct.

Here are some of the questions one should consider when planning a remodel.

- Will my counters be kosherable
- Will my oven/stove be kosherable for Pesach. Will it be useable on yom tov? Warming drawers, what's their limitations.
- Will my fridge present any Shabbos/Yom Tov issues when opening and closing.

Counters

Granite, Marble, Limestone, Slate, Quartzite, Travertine, Onyx – are natural stone materials that can be kashered. Similarly, stainless steel counters can be kashered. See page 25 for method on how to kasher a counter.

Corian, Quartz, Formica, Granite Composite, Silestone are synthetic materials that are not kashered for Pesach. Similarly, porcelain tile counters cannot be kashered. Alternatively, one may have custom counter covers made for the Pesach holiday.

Sinks

Enamel sinks are not kosherable. Stainless steel sinks are kosherable and come in two forms. 1) The top mount sink 2) The under mount sink. Both are kosherable by pouring hot water on them. Some use an immersion heater to kasher their sink. This method is not recommended for an under mount sink, unless the sink is braced from underneath. The mounting adhesive has a tendency to soften when heated, which may cause the sink to drop.

Cool Ideas

Refrigerators – Technology has caught up with the fridge. Here are some pointers.

Plunger switches & Magnetic Switches – Many basic models have the old plunger switch which is in full view when opening the door. Upscale models have magnetic switches, which are hidden in the frame of the fridge. These magnetic switches are triggered by the door opening and closing.

Lights, Digital Readouts & Icons – On most models interior lights can be disengaged. However, if the model has any icons or digital readouts that turn on with the opening of the fridge door, one would either have to 1) purchase a model with a Sabbath mode 2) tape down the plunger switch 3) use



a magnet if the fridge has a magnetic switch (sometimes there is more than one magnetic switch).

Freezer Doors – The interior light can be disengaged. The door switch should be checked to ensure it only turns on and off the light, not the fan.

Timer Defrost vs Adaptive Defrost – Basic models use a timed defrost that sets the fridge into defrost cycle once every 24 hours. The user does nothing to alter this cycle. Adaptive defrost technology is computer based. There are sensors triggered by the magnetic door switch that count how many times the door is opened and for how long the door is kept open. Refrigerators with an adaptive defrost system must either be equipped with a Sabbath mode or fitted with magnets that make the computer think the door has not been opened.

Hot Trends

Stove Tops – Piloted ranges are long gone. Today everything is electronic ignition, which precludes igniting on Yom Tov. For gas ranges a standard stove top with a visible flame is preferred. Likewise, for electric ranges a standard visible coil is preferred. Glass top ranges present a challenge when kashering and should be avoided. On Yom Tov, a gas flame may be adjusted within the confines of halacha (adjusting up to cook and adjusting down to prevent burning of food). As an aside, some ovens vent out of one of the burner areas on the stove top. If one is generating a lot of steam while cooking inside their oven, this may affect a pot that is simultaneously cooking on the stove top (meat/dairy issues).

Ovens – Ovens come in many flavors today. There's the self clean, continuous clean, convection oven, double oven. The self clean feature allows for easy kashering. An upscale oven may have an indicator light turn on or a convection fan shut down when the oven door is opened. Additionally, it may chime continuously to let you know the oven has finished its cook cycle. Ovens with these features may be used on Shabbos and Yom Tov provided they are equipped with a Sabbath mode feature.

Warming Drawers – These drawers should be considered like a regular oven pertaining to placing food in them for Shabbos and Yom Tov. Whether these drawers can be kashered is a discussion among the authorities. Consult your Rabbi.

Microwaves – Due to concerns of food residue and splattering, it is recommended to have separate microwaves for meat and dairy.

May you celebrate many happy occasions in your newly remodeled kitchen. Chag Kosher V'sameach! 🍷