

Pre-Pesach Lecture
Chametz vs. Kitniyos

1.

1313 BCE. - Exodus chapter 13, verse 3

Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, when you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for with a mighty hand, the Lord took you out of here, and [therefore] no leaven shall be eaten.

2.

600 C.E. - Talmud Pesachim 35a

These are the species with which a person fulfills his obligation (to eat Matzah on) Pesach 1.Wheat 2.Barley 3.Spelt 4. Rye
5. Oats....

“ But rice and millet, no. From where do we know this? Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said, and so did they teach in the academy of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov: For the verse states {Devarim 16:3}: **Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith**”which do not come to leaven but to spoil

3.

1135 - Rambam - Chometz U'Matzah, Perek 5 Halacha 1

The prohibition against chametz applies only to the five species of grain. They include two species of wheat: wheat and rye; and three species of barley: barley, oats, and spelt.

However, *kitniyot* - e.g., rice, millet, beans, lentils and the like - do not become leavened. Even if one kneads rice flour or the like with boiling water and covers it with fabric until it rises like dough that has become leavened, it is permitted to be eaten. This is not leavening, but rather the decay [of the flour].

4.

France, 1210-1280 - Sefer Mitzvot Katan

Sefer Mitzvot Katan, written by Rabbi Yitzchak of Courville. “Some communities have the custom of not eating kitniyot during Pesach, even though these items are clearly not chametz”

5.

Circa 5029-5100; 1269-1340 Tur: Rabbi Jacob Ben Asher

Some prohibit the eating of rice and kitniot on Pesach because of wheat gets mixed in with them, however this is an extra stringency and it is not the custom

6.

1488-1575 - Rabbi Yosef Karo, Shulchan Aruch

Bet Yosef - It is a custom only kept by the Ashkenazim

Shulchan Aruch – besides the 5 grains other kinds of kitnios can not become leavened and you can bake with them

7.

5280 - 5332 - Rabbi Moshe Isserles - The Remo

The custom in Ashkenaz is to be stringent and we should not change this

8.

1838–1933 Poland - Mishna Berura Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan

We should follow the Remo and not even be lenient on the 8th day of Pesach unless the person does not have anything else to eat

9.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef

(IsraelINN.com) The Sephardic spiritual leader at his weekly Saturday night lecture stated that it's definitely kosher for a Sephardic Jew to eat kitniyot, which includes rice and beans. However, he admonished rabbis who claim that the Ashkenazic ban is no longer applicable. "The Ashkenazim have many more stringencies than the Sephardim, and everyone has to follow whatever his community does," Rabbi Yosef stated.

2 Main Reasons

1. Kitniyot are often grown in close vicinity to the five grains (wheat, oat, spelt, rye and barley). As such, it was not unusual for a small amount of one or more of the five grains to be intermingled with kitniyot. Thus, it was possible that one eating beans or rice on Pesach could inadvertently eat actual chametz.
2. Kitniyot can be easily confused with chametz for several reasons. Raw kitniyot resemble the five grains in appearance. Furthermore, kitniyot are processed in a similar manner to the five grains. For example, mustard seeds are threshed and winnowed in a manner similar to grains. Finally, kitniyot can be milled into flour, made into dough, baked into bread or cooked into a porridge that may resemble chametz. Because of the similarities between kitniyot and actual chametz, the rabbis feared that people may mistakenly believe that if they can eat kitniyot on Pesach, they can also eat chametz on Pesach.

List of 5 grains - wheat, oat, spelt, rye and barley

List of Kitniot - legumes:

The OU considers the following items to be kitniyot: beans, buckwheat, cardamom, corn, fenugreek, lentils, millet, mustard, peas, poppy seeds, rapeseed, rice, sesame seeds, soybeans and sunflower seeds.

(The Magen Avraham, writing in the 1600s, recommends that one avoid eating these seeds because other grains, some of which could turn to chametz, are often mixed in with aniseed and coriander. Today, however, high-end spice companies use specialized equipment such as spiral separators to remove foreign particles. As a result, the OU does certify aniseed and coriander for Pesach.)

kitniyot do not have the same status as chametz?

1. One may derive hana'ah (benefit) from them i.e. You may use ethyl rubbing alcohol to clean a wound on Pesach and Cornstarch foot powder may be sprinkled in one's shoes to keep one's feet dry.
2. Young children and the infirm can eat kitniyot, Kitniyot-based medicines may be taken on Pesach,
3. Kitniyot are batel berov (nullified in a majority of non-kitniyot).

Foods that were recently discovered - Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe, OC III:63)

Example 1: Originating in Peru and Brazil, the **peanut** is a New World crop

The minhag of not eating kitniyot only applies to foods that were known and accepted as kitniyot. We don't expand minhagim beyond their original scope, (potatoes are allowed since potatoes were not introduced into Europe until the sixteenth century). There are some people who have the custom to not eat peanuts on Pesach, and they should continue to keep the minhag,

Example 2: quinoa. Reintroduced to the world in the 1970s

Rabbis are very divided on this issue, there for it is not recommend.

Exceptions to the rule for Sefardim

But some leading Sephardi *Achronim* write that many pious Jews refrain from eating rice during *Pesach* because of a case in which some wheat was discovered in rice even after it had been checked a number of times (*Pri Chadash, Chida*). The Jews of Izmir have a custom to refrain from eating rice during *Pesach* (*Lev Chaim 2:94*), and the Jews of Morocco refrain from eating rice and other dry *kitniyot* during *Pesach*. The Ben Ish Chai (*Shanah Alef, Parshat Tzav 41*) writes that in Baghdad many ordinary Jews do not eat rice during *Pesach*, and those who do must check it first two or three times.