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To maintain a [kosher](#) house, you must allow only reliably-supervised kosher food into your house. But, beyond that, your entire kitchen and eating areas must also be kosher. Here are some guidelines:

Dishes and silverware

It is essential to have separate sets of dishes for dairy products and meat. It is best to have two distinct colors, patterns or styles so that you will not be confused when you look at a plate or a fork as to whether it is for dairy or meat.

Cabinets, drawers, and trays

To help avoid confusion, it is best to designate separate cabinets for the dairy equipment and meat equipment. If you have cabinets on two sides of the kitchen, you may want to put the meat on one side and the dairy one on the other to avoid confusion. When you first organize your kosher kitchen, it is wise to label the cabinets on the outside as "Dairy [Chalav]" and "Meat [Basar]." You can use masking tape or colored file dots that you can get from a stationary store (red and blue are popular to be used, red for meat, blue for dairy). Many Judaica stores and online Judaica shops also sell various styles of labels for meat and dairy. You will also find these labels come in handy if you have guests and they want to put the dishes away or take them out. If you have a housekeeper, labeling helps make sure no mistakes are made.

Tablecloths, napkins, and placemats

As with the kitchen, the dining room/eating area maintains the separation of meat and dairy foods by using separate utensils. This includes separate tablecloths, (cloth) napkins, placemats and other similar items.

While laundering may be suitable to kasher them (particularly if mistakes are made), it is advisable to have a separate meat and dairy set because you may forget before using them which type of food was eaten on them last.

Refrigerators

When placing food in the refrigerator, care should be taken to avoid contact between open packages of meat and dairy products.





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Ovens

One should not use the oven for dairy and meat at the same time. Between using the oven for dairy and meat, the oven should be cleaned (wiped up) if spillage has occurred. Electronic self-cleaning ovens can be kashered simply by cleaning up spills and running the self-cleaning cycle, however, oven manufacturers generally recommend that the self-cleaning cycle not be used more than once or twice a year due to the extremely high heat that the self-cleaning cycle generates.

Using Stovetops

Spills on the stovetops should be cleaned, particularly in between using the stove for meat and dairy foods. This is especially true if you tend to rest pot lids on the stovetop when cooking. There is no need to designate separate meat and dairy burners. It is best to avoid cooking meat and dairy foods on the same stovetop at the same time to avoid spillage. If you must do so, extra care should be taken to ensure that no spillage or transfer of liquid or heat occurs and to ensure that your pots are covered tightly.

Using Microwaves

It is best not to use a microwave oven for cooking meat and dairy foods at the same time because microwave covers usually have holes in them that allow fumes to escape.

Porcelain sinks

Because the sink itself is made of material that is not kasherable, sink racks (that fit on the bottom of the sink and keep the dishes from touching the bottom) or a tub (which can be used for soaking the dishes) are put into the sink. Separate racks or tubs must be used for dairy and meat.

Metal Sinks

Metal sinks may be kashered by pouring boiling water in them. The water must be boiling before you pour the water in and remain boiling as it comes into contact with the metal lining of the sink. There should be a separation (such as racks or tubs) between meat and dairy dishes.



Dishwasher

There is a difference of opinion as to how to use dishwashers:

1. Most [Orthodox](#) authorities hold that you cannot use the same dishwasher for meat and dairy utensils, even if they are washed at different times.
2. Some liberal authorities hold that one may use the same dishwasher (provided its interior is stainless steel) for meat and dairy utensils provided that they are washed at different times and an empty full cycle, only with dishwashing soap, (using the hottest water that your dishwasher provides) must be run in between meat and dairy. Some hold that the dishwasher must be left unused for 24 hours before running this cycle.
3. Some authorities require that the (stainless steel) dishwasher be given a thorough cleaning (including the strainer) and that separate racks must be used between meat and dairy cycles. This is the opinion of [Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l](#).
4. Meat and dairy utensils can never be washed in the same dishwasher at the same time.