

There are several factors involved in determining whether or not something is kosher. This sheet is intended to provide you with a general overview.

Kosher Animals

For an animal to have the potential to be kosher, it must be these requirements:

- Land animals must chew their cud and have split feet
 - Acceptable animals include: cows, sheep, goats, bison, and elk
 - Unacceptable animals include: pigs, rabbits, camels, and horses
- Fish must have both scales and fins
 - Acceptable fish include: tuna, salmon, halibut, trout, and cod
 - Unacceptable fish include: eel, shrimp, lobster, crab, monkfish, and catfish
- Birds, in general, cannot be predators. One should consult a full list of acceptable birds.
 - Acceptable birds include: chicken, turkey, squab, duck, goose
 - Unacceptable birds include: ostrich, vulture, hawks, owls

Kosher Slaughter (Shechitah)

Even if an animal has the potential to be kosher, it must be prepared according to Jewish law. For land animals and birds, this means they must be slaughtered by someone trained in the laws of kosher slaughter (a Shochet). An animal that dies by any means other than shechitah is not kosher. So while a hamburger might be 100% beef, it can only be kosher if it was slaughtered by a shochet. Fish do not require any special form of slaughter.

Mixing Milk and Meat

The Torah prohibits the cooking of a kid (baby goat) in its mother's milk. The rabbis of the Talmud expanded this restriction to include mixtures of all forms of milk (i.e. cow, sheep, goat) with all forms of meat, including poultry. For various reasons, the rabbis do not consider eggs or fish to be meat.

Kosher Certification (Hekhsher)

It can often be quite difficult to realize that a food is not kosher (e.g. baked goods, beans, and soda). This is because non-kosher ingredients are sometimes used, causing the entire product not to be kosher. For instance, baked goods often contain animal shortening or lard. The same goes for some types of cooked beans. Sodas and other foods containing food coloring might use "natural" coloring, which is often derived from insects (true story). For these reasons, it is important both to check the list of ingredients and to look for a stamp of kosher certification. Some examples are:





Community Potluck Guidelines

Prepared by Rabbi Gabriel Botnick

We realize not every household in our community keeps a kosher kitchen. Food cooked in these kitchens is no different than food cooked at a non-kosher restaurant. Therefore, those who dine in non-kosher restaurants should feel comfortable eating food cooked in community members' homes. This sheet provides ways to maximize everyone's comfort with eating food at community potlucks.

The Kitchens at Mishkon

When a potluck meal takes place at Mishkon, the kitchens will remain closed and off limits throughout the event. No outside food items are permitted into the kitchens without the rabbi's approval and supervision.

Utensils

All plates, cutlery, serving utensils, and tablecloths will be disposable (preferably compostable). Larger serving utensils may be used if they are brand-new, have never been used, and are brought to the synagogue in their original packaging.

Permissible Foods

- All food at Mishkon potlucks must be **VEGETARIAN**.
- No foods containing meat, poultry, or fish will be permitted.
- Please remember that Mishkon is a peanut-free facility.
- Please check that all ingredients are certified kosher (see reverse side for details).
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as eggs, are permissible and do not require kosher certification.
- 100% fresh fruit juice, coffee, tea, liquor, beer, and wine do not require kosher certification.
- While dairy products do not require kosher certification, please make sure they are strictly vegetarian
 - Most cheese is made with rennet, which comes from the stomach lining of the animal. Please ensure that any cheese you use is made with vegetarian rennet (or vegetable enzymes).

Food Preparation

- Food cannot be cooked or baked on Shabbat (i.e. starting 18 minutes before sunset on Friday afternoon).
- Cold dishes (e.g. salads) may be prepared on Shabbat if they are to be eaten right away.
- Cookware should be thoroughly cleaned and sit unused for 24 hours prior to their use.

Accommodating Various Needs

- Please bring a notecard with a list of ingredients to place alongside your dish.
- Please mark dishes that contain dairy, nuts, gluten, or other allergens.
- If someone in your household has special dietary needs, we encourage you to bring enough food for that person to eat - you will be able to keep your food separate for your own personal consumption.
- If you wish to avoid carrying on Shabbat, you are invited to coordinate a Friday afternoon drop-off with the rabbi.