

Chevrei Tzedek Kashrut Policy

Scope:

This policy applies to ALL Kiddush receptions, committee meetings, holiday potlucks, and other events that are open to the entire Chevrei community (and beyond potentially). It does NOT include events where individuals or individual families are expected to bring their own food that only they will be eating. It also excludes Simultaneous Shabbat and other events where attendance is predetermined. Organizers of such activities can decide whether to utilize this policy (“every host will use this policy’s standard of kashrut”) or an alternate system for managing the dietary needs of a particular subset of the larger Chevrei Community (“we will match up guests and hosts according to their particular kashrut needs”).

Overview:

All food items served at congregational events must be kosher. Everyone who is responsible for providing food for the community should be careful to check all labels of prepared food for hekshshers .

“Ingredient-Kosher” homes are NOT considered kosher for the purposes of this policy.

Please contact the Rabbi if you are interested in transitioning your kitchen from ingredient-kosher to the level of kashrut required by this policy. Kiddush sponsors are requested to let the community know if they will be providing catered food, packaged food, or home-cooked food to be able to more easily host individuals who follow further stringencies. Only dairy or pareve food may be served at kiddush and potluck events. Meat meals may be served at selected, catered events.

Food Preparation:

1. All food must be purchased before Shabbat. Cooked foods must be prepared before Shabbat.
2. Commercial caterers must be under rabbinical supervision or be approved by Chevrei Tzedek’s Rabbi/ mara d’atra .
3. All cooked food should come from a strictly kosher kitchen, as defined by this policy.
4. Food may NOT be cooked in a non-kosher kitchen, or in a kitchen that is “ingredient-kosher” only.

5. If you do not keep a strictly kosher home, you are encouraged to provide hekhshered packaged goods or catered food. The following types of foods may be prepped in a non-kosher kitchen:

- Preparing tuna salad, using clean implements to open the cans of certified kosher tuna, mix the tuna with mayonnaise (from a previously unopened jar) or other kosher salad dressing, cutting up celery or other vegetables to include in the tuna.
- Cutting up raw vegetables, such as carrots, celery, cucumber, broccoli, etc. on a clean cutting surface or board with a clean utensil or knife.
- Fruit salads may be prepared at home using clean implements.
- Gazpacho or other uncooked soups may be prepared at home using clean implements.

Chevrei Tzedek Definition of a Strictly Kosher Kitchen:

1. A strictly kosher is characterized by the following:

- does not mix milk and meat during preparation or when serving, and maintains separate meat and dairy utensils (except for glass)
- serves only kosher meat, properly soaked and salted, and kosher fish
- does not bring in products that do not have a hekhsher, except for those things requiring no hekhsher

2. If you keep a strictly kosher home but cook with non-hekhshered cheese, gelatin or other products that are controversial within the Conservative movement, it is permissible to cook food in your kitchen as long as you haven't used your pots for 24 hours ("ben yomo").*

3. If you consider your house "ingredient-kosher", it is not kosher for the purposes of this policy.

Hekhsher Requirements

For the purposes of our Chevrei community, please use the following general guidelines:

If you have questions about a specific product, please contact the Chevrei Rabbi or mara d'atra.

Foods That Do NOT Require A Hekhsher:

1. Fruits and vegetables
2. Unprocessed grains and cereals
3. Milk
4. Eggs (unless a blood spot is found when the egg is cracked open or peeled)
5. Fish with scales and fins
6. Whole spices

Foods That DO Require A Hekhsher:

1. Canned or otherwise processed fruits and vegetables
2. Foods that are packaged or processed, including crackers, cookies, and other baked goods; sodas and fruit juices; hummus and other dips
3. Cheese and other dairy products (with the exception of milk)
4. Gelatin
5. Ground Spices
7. Wine and grape juice

Guide to Hekhshers:

1. Any Hekhsher is acceptable as long as it is more than just a plain K.
2. Dairy products may be marked with a “D” in addition to the hekhsheer.
3. Meat products may bear an “M” in addition to the hekhsheer.
4. Pareve foods may be marked “parve” or “pareve.”
5. Processed foods marked with a “P” are kosher for Passover but may not be presumed pareve unless so designated in the hekhsheer.

Kosher Caterers

All commercial caterers under Rabbinic supervision are permitted.

See below for some that have been used at Chevrei. The Associated lists all kosher caterers and restaurants.

Look below for answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

More Questions?

This Kashrut policy was written by Rabbi Rory Katz with the guidance of Rabbi Ethan Tucker, Rabbi Barry Dov Katz, Rabbi Avram Reisner, Rabbi Danny Epstein, Rabbi Moshe Schwartz, and Rabbi Joel Roth.

The laws of kashrut are quite complex, and situations might arise that this policy does not account for. Please direct all questions to Chevrei Tzedek's current Rabbi/mara d'atra.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the acceptable heksher symbols?

Any heksher is acceptable as long as it is more than just a simple “K”. Examples of acceptable hekshers include:

Please ask the current mara d’atra any questions about hekshers.

2. Do canned fruits or vegetables require a heksher?

Yes.

3. Does a kosher kitchen require separate dish towels, dish drainers, dishwashers, etc?

These questions are best answered on a case-by-case basis. Please check with your mara d’atra.

4. Is organic the same as kosher? Is halal the same as kosher?

No. You cannot assume that organic, halal, or vegan certifications imply that an item is kosher. You must always look for hekshers.

5. Why doesn’t the kashrut policy cover rules about labels?

This policy ensures that all food is kosher, in as far as any policy can. Of course, some people have stricter dietary needs than others--some even having nothing to do with kashrut, such as allergies and sensitivities. This kashrut policy aims to define what kinds of foods can be provided for the community. Future policies around how to label food to account for these dietary needs could be developed by future actions teams or committees.

Additional Resources

For a very thoughtful essay on the balance of values that is at the heart of making a kashrut policy, see this essay by Rabbi Ethan Tucker [Pluralism, Community, and Integrity Pt 3](#).

More information about:

- The concept of [ben yomo](#) aka “The 24 Hour Rule”
- [Why a plain “K” is NOT an acceptable heksher](#)
- [Rabbi Ethan Tucker](#)
- [Rabbi Joel Roth](#)
- Conservative Movement’s [Passover Guide](#)