

# Kashrut Policy

*Congregation B'nai Jacob 2023*

Congregation B'nai Jacob is a Conservative synagogue in which we joyfully celebrate all aspects of Jewish life and culture.

Kashrut (the Jewish dietary laws) are an important aspect of Jewish practice. To follow the laws of kashrut is to elevate the mundane act of eating. All animals eat but only humans make choices about what they eat. To follow kashrut means that every time you eat — and we eat pretty often — you make choices that connect you to God and the Jewish people. Taken together the laws of kashrut cultivate awareness of the implications of taking an animal's life for consumption, bring spiritual awareness to the mundane act of eating, and connect us to the Jewish people many times a day.

The specifics of kashrut are first enumerated in the Torah, and elaborated in the Talmud and later Jewish legal codes. There are a few central principles:

- a. We only eat certain animals — mammals that chew their cuds and have hooves; fish with fins and scales, and birds that are not specifically prohibited, generally birds that fly and are not predators.
- b. We do not eat the blood of an animal because it is considered to represent its life force.
- c. All birds and animals that we eat must be slaughtered by a kosher slaughterer.
- d. Meat and milk are not eaten together.

We seek to uphold appropriate standards and to make sure members and guests feel welcome in our synagogue when food is served. Adhering to these principles provides an opportunity to set an example and teach our congregants as well.

This policy applies to all formal events at the synagogue — namely food served at a kiddush or other synagogue or private functions. It does not apply to potluck meals, and food for personal consumption. (For potluck rules see attached policy).

*A subcommittee of the Ritual committee recently surveyed several Conservative synagogues through their websites and by personal contact. This policy is derived from the policies of those synagogues.*

The specifics of kashrut are first enumerated in the Torah and elaborated in the Talmud and later Jewish legal codes. There are a few central principles:

### **General Rules:**

- Packaged Foods must have an approved hechsher Kosher symbol (See below).
- All Meat and Chicken must be kosher and requires a hechsher.
- Fish must be a kosher fish (w/ fins and scales). No shellfish permitted.
- Wine and Grape Juice must be marked as kosher.
- All food prepared in the kitchens must adhere to this policy.
- Food cooked at home may not be served at synagogue events.
- Food for personal consumption may not be brought into the kitchen or into a synagogue event at which food is served.
- During Passover no food other than that which is served from our kitchen can be brought into the synagogue.
- No food may be cooked on Shabbat or holidays. Warming in a pre-heated oven is permitted.
- For catered events, a list of approved kosher caterers is available in the office.

### **The following products DO NOT require a *hechsher*:**

- Fruit and Vegetables
- Eggs
- Fresh Fish
- Alcoholic beverages (excluding wine and grape-juice)
- Milk
- Grains, nuts, beans, flour, sugar, baking powder, spices, (most plain unprocessed dry ingredients — ask if not sure)
- Coffee and tea

The following products **MUST HAVE** a *hechsher*:

- *Challah*
- Creamer, both dairy and non-dairy
- Grape juice and Wine
- Processed foods/snacks (including but not limited to baked goods, pretzels, candy, crackers, etc.)
- Cheese (Some pre-packaged domestic cheese is permitted w/out hechsher)
- Dairy products (yogurts, ice creams, butter, and vegetarian margarine)
- Canned tuna
- Sodas/Juices/sports drinks
- All bread (including bagels)
- Condiments/Salad dressing

The following are the approved hechsher symbols that are common in our area.



There are many other hechsher symbols. Please consult with the rabbi for food with other hechsher symbols.

# Congregation B'nai Jacob Guidelines for Potluck Events

## What events are covered by these Potluck Guidelines?

**Eligible:** Community-building events at B'nai Jacob where Jewish people come together to celebrate Shabbat meals, holiday meals, or similar pre-approved synagogue or Judaism-related meals– except for those listed as excluded below.

**Excluded:** The following events are not considered potluck meals and are subject to the synagogue's general kashrut standards requiring the use of approved kosher caterers:

- Private parties or celebrations.
- Kiddushim on Shabbat after services.
- Smachot (Jewish family life-cycle celebrations held at the synagogue) such as:
  - B'nai Mitzvah luncheons or parties.
  - Brises, Baby-namings.
  - Wedding events.
- B'nai Jacob institutional events School and synagogue programs such as those held by the religious school.

## When and where can potluck events be held?

Potluck meals are permitted in the social hall, auditorium, library and the Youth Lounge. (Food provided for potluck meals cannot be brought into, heated, or served from our kitchens; nor can any synagogue utensils be used).

Potluck events cannot be held during:

- Passover
- Shabbat during the Congregational Kiddush and the 30 minutes after its end (i.e., approximately 1:30 PM).

## **What food is permitted?**

If it meets all other standards in the policy:

- Dairy, vegetarian foods and kosher fish. (For a list of non-Kosher fish, please contact the synagogue office.)
- Packaged and bakery-bought products that have a Hekhsher. (For the purposes of potlucks, all kosher symbols are acceptable with the exception of a printed “K.”)
- Kosher wines (whether they are mevushal or non-mevushal) and kosher grape juice

## **What food is always unacceptable?**

- Any meat, poultry (even if kosher), shellfish, and non-kosher fish.
- Non-kosher wine or grape juice.
- Food cooked or purchased on Shabbat.
- Any cooked meals specially prepared by a non-hekhshered caterer or restaurant.

## **How must potluck meals be prepared, served and cleaned?**

### **Preparation**

- Home-made meals must be prepared in new, disposable, covered cooking and serving dishes.
- Food can be prepared in home kitchens (whether the kitchen is kept kosher or not) if all of the standards of the policy are met.

### **Serving**

- Meals must be served on paper plates with new plastic or other disposable, preferably biodegradable, eating utensils. Styrofoam is not permissible.

### **Clean-up**

- Dishes or serving-ware or other items may not be washed or rinsed in the kitchen
- All utensils will be disposable and all tables will be covered.

## **GLOSSARY:**

Hekhsher	a special marking on food that has been certified kosher by a rabbinic authority
Kadosh	sacred or holy
Kashrut	the system of Jewish dietary laws
Kehilah	community
Mevushal	juice for wine is cooked immediately after the grapes have been crushed
Pareve	food that is neither dairy nor meat
Simchah / S'machot	a joyous life-cycle event like birth, b'nai mitzvah or wedding.