

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation

KASHRUT POLICY

Introduction

Reconstructionist Judaism views kashrut (the Jewish dietary laws and practices) as one of the central traditions of Judaism, and sees in kashrut a vehicle for transmitting Jewish values as well as affirming Jewish peoplehood through respect for basic categories of dietary observance.

Our policy strives to balance respect for tradition with our desire to continue to ensure that sharing of food among us becomes a source of strengthening community and not engendering discord within the community. We believe that our policies will suit the needs of the vast majority of members and guests who participate in JRC programs and services.

Definition of Terms

Kosher (also “kasher,” “kashrut,” or “kashrus”)

The dietary laws of Judaism, defining what food is and is not “kosher,” are cited in the Torah in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, and spelled out in greater detail in various parts of the Talmud and codes of Jewish law.

Trefa (also “treif”)

All non-kosher foods, including pork products, non-kosher beef/poultry and beef/poultry ingredients, shellfish (shrimp, crab, lobster, etc.) and non-kosher fish (without both fins and scales, such as catfish), and foods that mix dairy with meat.

Dairy (also called “milchik”)

“Dairy” refers to foods that consist in whole or part of ingredients derived from milk. Examples include butter and cheese. The laws of kashrut do not permit the mixing of dairy and meat ingredients.

Meat (also called “fleishik”)

“Meat” refers to foods that consist in whole or part of ingredients derived from animals. Kosher meat must come from a kosher animal (one with split hooves and chews its own cud), and is prepared according to the requirements of kashrut under rabbinic supervision. The laws of kashrut do not permit the mixing of dairy and meat ingredients.

Fish

Only fish that has both fins and scales is considered kosher. Shellfish (shrimp, crab, lobster, etc.) is prohibited. Kosher fish is considered pareve.

Pareve

Foods that in their natural state are neither meat nor dairy (fruits and vegetables, eggs, pasta, grains, nuts, coffee). Pareve foods can be served with either dairy or meat foods.

Kosher Certification (also called “Hashgacha”)

Rabbinic certifying agencies that approve food products as kosher. Consult the Rabbi if you are unsure of a designation.

Policies

1. The following shall apply to all JRC events (b'nai mitzvah and other celebratory meals in the building, potluck meals, oneg Shabbat and Kiddush receptions, community events, etc.) at which food is served:
 - 1.1. **No meat or poultry, and no foods containing meat or poultry ingredients, are allowed except when served by a caterer certified as kosher** by the CRC or another rabbinic body determined to be acceptable by JRC's Rabbi.
 - 1.2. No shellfish, non-kosher fish, and no foods containing shellfish or non-kosher fish ingredients, are allowed.
 - 1.3. No pork, and no foods containing pork ingredients, are allowed.
 - 1.4. **No foods containing a mixture of meat or poultry and dairy ingredients are allowed.**
2. Except when used by a kosher caterer following these guidelines, the JRC kitchen shall be a dairy/pareve kitchen with regard to food preparation, dishes, utensils, appliances, etc.
3. **Non-kosher caterers may cater dairy/vegetarian events at JRC**, and may use the JRC kitchen, subject to the preceding provisions, and to the following:
 - 3.1. Caterers must be provided with a copy of these Kashrut Guidelines in advance of the event they will be catering, and must submit a copy of the proposed menu to JRC's Executive Director prior to the event.
 - 3.2. Caterers may not unload any food for delivery into the building until a JRC staff person checks the invoice/order to ascertain that the food being delivered corresponds to the JRC-approved advance copy of the proposed menu.
4. We want to be cautious about what foods we bring into the building, but we are not stringent regarding the type of kitchens in which they are prepared. This is similar to the operating principles that allow us to use non-kosher caterers for dairy/pareve meals.

Dairy/pareve foods prepared at home may be brought to JRC for community events, potlucks, Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush receptions, etc. When preparing foods at home, congregants should be sensitive to the levels of kashrut observance within the JRC community. Please comply with the following:

- 4.1. Food prepared at home or purchased commercially should be checked to make certain that it contains no non-kosher ingredients such as animal fat, lard, meat/poultry/shellfish and related ingredients.
- 4.2. Special care should be taken when purchasing commercially prepared baked goods. When buying foods for an Oneg Shabbat or Kiddush reception, it is necessary to check that the products are made with vegetable shortening and that they are dairy or pareve. (Remember that some people have dairy and/or

nut allergies; it is often helpful to know if the refreshments on the table contain these items.)

5. The following shall apply to any meat or poultry meals catered at JRC by a caterer certified kosher by the CRC or other rabbinic body deemed acceptable by JRC's rabbi. If the rabbi is unavailable, questions should be directed to the Executive Director and Ritual Practice Vice-President. Only caterers with current kosher certification may cater meat/poultry meals.
 - 5.1. The individual/organization using the caterer assumes any financial obligations for kashering (ritually cleaning) the kitchen if required by the caterer prior to the event.
 - 5.2. Any kashering required by the caterer will be the responsibility of the caterer and not of JRC unless the event is a JRC-sponsored synagogue program such as a Pesach Seder.
 - 5.3. Kosher meat/poultry meals should normally be delivered prepared and sealed in warming dishes, pans, etc. so that a minimum of use needs to be made of JRC's kitchen apparatus.
 - 5.4. The kitchen surfaces, sinks and appliances may be used during the catering of a kosher meat/poultry meal, provided that:
 - 5.4.1. The caterer assumes responsibility for thoroughly cleaning all ovens, sinks, counters, etc. following the conclusion of a meat meal.
 - 5.4.2. There is no simultaneous use of the kitchen for another JRC event that would involve use of or preparation of dairy products.
 - 5.5. No meat /poultry may be brought into JRC for any purpose (such as a Board dinner, committee meeting, school snack, etc.) that is not certified kosher by the CRC or other rabbinic body deemed acceptable by JRC's rabbi.
6. JRC will not consider it necessary to kasher the kitchen following a meat/poultry meal, but will consider thorough cleaning and removal of all meat/poultry products to be sufficient for purposes of continued dairy/pareve usage.
7. JRC-sponsored events outside of the building (such as committee meetings, fundraising events, new member dinners) should conform to the same standards as those within the building.
8. While individual B'nai Mitzvah or wedding receptions are not officially sponsored JRC events, each is considered to be a Seudat Mitzvah, a celebratory meal that is extensions of the religious service. Consequently, such receptions should avoid the serving of prohibited foods, including pork and shellfish products and the mixing of meat/poultry with dairy products. JRC recommends that all such receptions conform to the standards of kashrut observed within the JRC building.

9. Pesach (Passover): Because of the Pesach prohibition on leavened foods and food containing leaven (hametz), no food should be brought into the building during Pesach unless ordered through the JRC office or schools by JRC staff.

Adopted by the JRC Board April 7, 1996