

OVS Kitchen Policies: Kashrut

Introduction.

Congregation Or VeShalom (OVS) follows the Jewish dietary laws, and therefore all food served at OVS must be certified kosher. Anyone using OVS facilities, particularly the kitchen and gathering spaces, must be familiar with and comply with these policies. In order to ensure compliance, the rabbi, executive director, or their designee (called a mashgiach) needs to inspect and approve all ingredients entering the kitchen. Depending on what is being prepared, they will provide continuous or intermittent supervision while the kitchen is in use.

The following document surveys the rules of Kashrut as they are applied at OVS, including: kitchens and utensils, acceptable ingredients and liquors, and policies related to cooking on Shabbat and Holidays. These rules apply to staff, congregants, and caterers. Any person or organization found violating these policies intentionally risks losing kitchen privileges, and may even be held financially responsible for any losses that result. In the past, caterers have not always had an up-to-date copy of these policies. Going forward, we will ensure that all caterers are notified of the full policy and such updates as may be necessary. Anyone wishing to use the kitchen will be required to acknowledge receipt and acceptance of the policy.

If at any point you have a question about kashrut policy, (e.g. you are in the kitchen and you accidentally used the wrong spoon or ingredient; you have a question about ingredients while you are at the store) do not hesitate to ask, and do not try to fix it or interpret the laws of Kashrut yourself. No one will be held accountable for an honest mistake which is reported in timely fashion.

If you have questions about a specific policy or item, please call
Adam Kofinas, Executive Director (917) 494-9688

There are several benefits to holding to these high standards. First of all, it ensures that Jews from across the spectrum of the community will be comfortable dining with us. Secondly, it removes many possibilities for confusion or error- things that we can do easily in a home kitchen are harder to manage in an institutional setting, in particular as our kitchen is increasingly utilized. More importantly, in observing the laws of Kashrut, we make each act of dining at OVS a spiritual act, furthering our connection to our Sephardic tradition and to G-d.

Adam Kofinas
Executive Director

Claudio Kaiser-Blueth
Interim Rabbi

General Policies:

All food items brought into OVS must be certified kosher. It is easiest to ascertain that food is kosher by finding an approved symbol on the packaging (note that each symbol represents a different agency, and not all are acceptable). It is important to check each package: sometimes a particular product may be available in kosher and non-kosher formulations. If the agency certifies one flavor or size, but not another, there may be a reason (different ingredients, different factory). **A list of commonly-found kosher symbols is attached as on page 5. Page 7 lists some kosher symbols that should be avoided.** Some products (fresh fruits and vegetables in particular) may be used without any special certification, but must be inspected for insect infestation.

Kashrut laws require separation of milk (dairy) and meat. Foods which are neither meat nor dairy are called "Pareve." When purchasing ingredients, it is not enough to make sure that they are kosher, one must also ensure that foods containing meat are not going to be served at the same meal with foods containing dairy and vice versa.

Warning: Many products, especially creamers, which must legally be labeled as "non-dairy" will still have milk ingredients, and **must** therefore be certified as kosher Pareve to be used with meat.

OVS has two different counter tops, meat and dairy. We have separate sinks for each, separate utensil drawers and separate dish closets. Food prepared with one set of utensils may not be utilized with food prepared with the other set of utensils and may not be mixed in the social hall or elsewhere. The kitchen should only be utilized for one preparation (either dairy or meat) at any given time. Pareve food may be prepared with either set of utensils/dishes, but then **may only be served with food and utensils from the side it was cooked in.**

In addition, **food cannot be cooked on the Sabbath or holidays.** If you are planning on serving or preparing food on Shabbat, please consult the addendum on Shabbat Kitchen Policies.

Fruits and Vegetables (see appendix)

Fresh fruits and vegetables are always kosher, but must be washed to remove bugs. Canned fruits and vegetables usually required a hechsher. Frozen Fruit requires a hechsher. Frozen vegetables may be purchased if

1. they contain no other ingredients
2. they are not from Israel or China.

“Jewish Cooking”- (see appendix) In order to be kosher, certain items must be cooked, at least in part, by a Jewish person. The mashgiach should be the one who turns on the oven and burners before any cooking is done.

Entering the Kitchen

At all times, and especially when the kitchen is in use, in order to ensure the safety of those in the building and to ensure the kashrut of the preparations, only those cooking should be in the kitchen. Those in the social hall who need to access the bathrooms or office, and likewise those in the office needing to access the bathrooms should enter/exit the social hall through the lobby doors. Members and guests are not allowed into the kitchen unless previously authorized by the Rabbi or his designee.

Use of the kitchen must be scheduled in advance with the Rabbi so that an approved mashgiach must be present. This may be a volunteer or professional mashgiach or a member of the OVS staff. Non-Jewish waitstaff or chefs may not be left unsupervised in the kitchen without specific permission and instructions.

Food Deliveries

The rabbis or mashgiach must be **notified in advance of all** food deliveries to the kitchen. This especially includes “we ran out of X and had to send someone to the store.”

Outside/personal food:

Non-kosher-certified items may not be brought into the synagogue kitchen, even if they are for your own consumption. Even disposing of them is a problem. For example, pouring your coffee with milk down the meat sink could make the sink non-kosher. The mashgiach will designate a place outside for staff to eat any non-kosher food that they may have brought.

Synagogue Staff who bring in personal food which is not certified kosher may keep it only in the fridge located in the office. There is no presumption that this area is kosher, and food or food waste from this area should not be brought to other parts of the building, and especially not into the kitchen.

Utensils:

OVS maintains two sets of utensils, meat and dairy. These may not be mixed. Utensils may not be brought into the kitchens from outside without conferring with the Rabbi or his designee. With the rabbi's approval, they will need to be koshered. In addition, they may also need to be immersed in a Mikvah (immersed in a Mikvah) depending on who owns them. In other cases, once utensils have been used elsewhere they can no longer be kashered for use here. Therefore, congregants and caterers **may not** bring their own utensils from outside, or borrow OVS utensils to bring extra food home with them. Specific exceptions will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Warning: Common misconception: dunking dishes in the mikvah does not re-kosher them.

New (previously unused) ceramic plates and metalware must be immersed before use. However, this does not make them kosher if they have already been used. Depending on the material involved, boiling water or fire will likely be needed, if koshering is even possible. Metal can often be koshered. Glass can sometimes be remedied. Rubber, plastic and earthenware (porcelain) generally cannot be koshered.

Only under extraordinarily rare circumstances may outside utensils be used, or certain utensils switched from dairy to meat use. This may only be done under the direct supervision of the rabbi or mashgiach. These items may include specialized items like chocolate fountains, popcorn/cotton candy machines, or drink machines. Glasses being used for drinking only, and glass trays or baskets used only for cold/dry items also need advance approval

If you find a utensil that is out of place, or find that you have accidentally introduced non-kosher food, put any affected utensils aside (wrap them in plastic wrap). Do not attempt to rinse them off in the sink- you may only succeed in making the sink non-kosher. **In practice, nothing should be "kashered" without consulting the rabbi or his designee.**

Home cooking

We cannot allow home-cooked items to be served at the synagogue. However, one may arrange to prepare a favorite recipe at the synagogue, using OVS utensils.

Décor/handouts

Any food that could potentially be eaten must be certified kosher. This includes handouts (candy at a bris) or centerpieces. An exception is made for centerpieces which are wrapped in such a way that the food could not reasonably be accessed/eaten.

A note about Caterers:

OVS maintains and updates a list of recommended kosher caterers (those with AKC supervision) and kosher-capable caterers (those that are not ordinarily kosher, but may be certified kosher if work is done on our kitchen). Sometimes, a caterer might be approved by another congregation or rabbi, but will not be accepted at OVS due to a difference in standards. Sometimes we will not recommend a caterer for use at OVS if we find that they have difficulty working with these OVS kashrut guidelines.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the OVS property, neither inside the building nor outside our kitchen.

Acceptable Kosher Symbols. (Ingredients must be brought in unopened and sealed in original packaging). Any products bearing one of these labels are acceptable, provided one pays attention to whether they are meat, dairy or pareve. Laminated lists of more accepted symbols are available.

	Called the O-U. Often followed by a D- meaning dairy. P means Passover, not Pareve
	Organized Kashrut
	 DAIRY Star-K and Star-D
	"Chof-K"
	Atlanta Kashrut commission. Some items, like Krispy Kreme and dairy products will have the letters AKC on the packaging, rather than the regular symbol. However, not all Krispy Kremes are kosher, so make sure your box has the symbol.
	Chicago Rabbinical Council
	Kosher Va'ad Ha'ir Boston
	Beit Din of Johannesburg
	Also acceptable- Rabbi New's Hechsker (Fountain Oaks Kroger) and the signs below. This list is not exhaustive.
	    

Liquors

Very few liquors are labeled with a kosher symbol, and liquor may often include non-kosher ingredients, or change formulations (for example, it is very difficult to find kosher vermouth in Atlanta, methods of production for tequila have changed over time. Some craft breweries have starting using Bacon in their hops). **Be careful about barware and blends/mixes as well.** For the most up to date information about liquors (and notes about bar items and mixers) see the following web site: <http://www.crcweb.org/LiquorList.pdf> (note, the Rabbi may permit some liquors not listed on the site).

Beer Non-flavored major brand domestic beers are usually kosher, but note the CRC list of details and exceptions- some craft breweries (including Sweetwater) are not acceptable because they have started using non-kosher ingredients in some of their formulations.

Wine All wine must be labeled kosher, and at OVS must be in a special category called “**Mevushal.**” Aside from the “Kiddush” varieties (Carmel, Kedem, Maneschewitz) you may want to consider the following more medium-tier kosher wineries which are usually mevushal: Lan Zur, Teal Lake, Baron Herzog, Bartenura, Rashi,

The following wineries offer both mevushal and non-mevushal wines: Alfasi, Gamla, Golan, Yarden. Sometimes different runs of the same winery or even the same year, will have different status.

Krispy Kreme Donuts

Pre-packaged donuts need to have the # 149 or the initials AKC on the inkjet, or come from certified stores:
295 Ponce De Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 404-876-7307
299 Cobb Pkwy., Marietta GA 770-425-0374
6689 Highway 85, Riverdale, GA 770-997-6210
9420 Highway 92, Woodstock, GA 770-516-2573
Mall of GA Store #56, Buford, GA 770-831-1174

Beverages- Many sodas are kosher, but juices, energy drinks, etc. may be non-kosher.

Items not requiring a hechsher

Unflavored milk (creamers or other dairy products, including buttermilk do require one)
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (note, dried, canned and frozen generally do)
Paper goods/disposables.
Spices on the following list: http://www.crcweb.org/spice_list.php
Unflavored Honey

Fresh or frozen Fish must come from a kosher certified source since often non-kosher fillets are substituted for kosher. Sometimes an exception may be made for Salmon or other fish that have skin and scales still attached, but this **must be arranged in advance, before purchase. In such cases, special handling is required-** may need to be washed, scraped or otherwise handled given the likelihood that it was cut or packaged with non-kosher utensils.

Eggs- Fresh eggs should be broken into a bowl or cup and checked for bloodspots before they are used.

Questionable Hechshers: DO NOT USE

Warning: The following Kosher symbols are usually not acceptable for synagogue use. You are safest finding an alternative product. If you cannot, please consult with the rabbi or mashgiach.

	<p>Warning: Triangle-K is trustworthy for home use, but follows liberal opinions not accepted by many Orthodox rabbis. Not accepted by OVS for foods containing meat, gelatin, cheese, or grape. Particularly problematic for juices or anything with “natural flavor.”</p>
	<p>Warning: Tablet-K. Found on many cheese and fish products at Costco, and some Cabot cheeses. Cheeses and Meats may be particularly problematic. Generally, not accepted at OVS Check specific items with rabbi before purchase.</p>
<p>US-K</p>	<p>Warning- K in a map of the US, not commonly accepted.</p>
	<p>Warning: Kosher Service of Philadelphia is not accepted.</p>
<p>K</p>	<p>Warning: A K with no further markings is generally meaningless. There are a few specific cases (Kellogg’s cereal) where it is acceptable. Very problematic on dairy products- this usually means it contains non-kosher gelatin.</p>

Shabbat Kitchen Policies:

Meals on Shabbat:

Special rules apply for food preparation on shabbat. Shabbat begins 18 minutes before sundown Friday and ends about an hour after sundown the next day. Check with the rabbi for exact times. The rabbi or his designee can and will appear at any time during Shabbat to ensure that these policies are being followed.

Some types of food preparation are not permitted on Shabbat

- Food may not be “cooked” by heating.
- **Ovens/burners etc. may not be turned on or adjusted** (they must be left on from before sundown). Non-Jewish staff may, at their discretion, turn off ovens or burners if the ovens will not be needed through the remainder of Shabbat. Keep in mind that your event may not be the only one using that kitchen. Therefore **you must notify us in advance if you need ovens left on over Shabbat. 200F is the highest temperature that is permitted.**
- Electrical appliances (microwave/mixer/blender/chocolate fountain/etc.) may not be used.
- Sterno cans may not be lit on Shabbat, but if sternos were lit before Shabbat, food may be placed in the chafing dishes on Shabbat.

Some types of food preparation are permitted:

- Food may be cut, portioned, plated and served.
- Non-Jewish waitstaff may use any method they find most convenient (including the dishwasher) to clean dishes.
- Some types of food may be reheated if they have already been cooked (see below).
- Food may be left in an oven or crockpot- check with a mashgiach

Non-Jewish Custodians may set up coffee and tea, but must drink some themselves before others are served.

Details about permitted and prohibited cooking:

Solid foods which were already fully cooked may be placed back in the ovens, so long as they were already edible and in their final state before Shabbat started. Please note the limitations:

- Food must already have been cooked: *For example:* chicken breasts which would be edible cold may be placed back in the oven to be warmed, but chicken breasts which are not fully cooked (still pink inside) may not be placed back in the oven to finish cooking on Shabbat.
- Food must not be cooked further: *For example:* Bagels may be thawed or re-warmed from room temperature, but may not be toasted. Pasta or pizza with cheese may be re-heated, provided that the cheese was already melted and fully cooked before Shabbat.
- Soup and other liquids (sauces) may be left on the burner or in the stove from before Shabbat, but may not be placed back on a burner or in the oven. Small amounts of sauce which are only on solid food do not count.

Bringing Items in on Shabbat

For a Shabbat event: No supplies, ingredients, utensils, or decorations may be brought in on Shabbat.

For an event after Shabbat: Vendors are encouraged to bring in all items and set up before 2 PM on Friday or after the end of Shabbat (time designated by OVS) and storage will be made available. **Food items and serving pieces may not be brought in or out of OVS on Shabbat.** For non-food items (DJ, Band, lighting, games), vendors may choose, for their own convenience to arrive and unpack on Saturday, except that they may **NOT** arrive between 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM or after 4:30 PM Saturday afternoon, and all delivery and any set-up tasks must be done by non-Jews. Vendors who are visible outside the social hall between 4:45 and the end of shabbat or who are found to have Jewish staff doing non-shabbat-appropriate tasks, will forfeit their deposit and may lose the right to service future events at OVS.

Removing Items on Shabbat

Decorations/leftovers etc. will be stored until the end of Shabbat. *Non-Jewish staff, if it is for their convenience,* may remove decorations, leftovers or utensils after 2 PM on Saturday afternoon. However, doing so may mean that those items cannot be sealed by the mashgiach and may not be brought back into our synagogue or other synagogues as kosher.

Decorations on Shabbat

Staff may move chairs and tables, set tables, and place centerpieces and decorations on the tables.

Non-Jewish Staff may set up electronic equipment (DJ lights etc.), but may not operate or test them until the conclusion of Shabbat.

Staff may not tape, cut or glue, operate compressors or other electrical equipment

Candles may not be used as table decorations on Shabbat.

Decorations, Equipment and other materials for a Shabbat event must be brought in on Friday.

Washing Produce:

Fruits and Vegetables are automatically considered kosher. Bagged fresh produce does not require hechsher, but see below about bug-checking.

Canned, dried or frozen produce may have additives that could be problematic- see below or check with rabbis for specifics.

In any case, insects, however are not kosher, and it is the responsibility of the Mashgiach to work with catering staff to ensure that foods served at OVS are free of bugs.

Organic produce is often buggier than regular. Triple-washed produce with a kosher symbol does not need to be re-checked. For non-certified pre-washed produce, check for latest status updates.

How to wash regular lettuce (if not already kosher symbol)

Plug up sink. Fill with water 1/3rd of the way up. Drop in leaves and let soak. Rinse.

How to wash Bok choy, celery, leeks, and romaine lettuce:

Cut off bottom of stalk. Under running water, individually clean each stalk.

How to wash broccoli, cauliflower (applies to both bagged and whole)

Plug up sink. Fill with water 1/3rd of the way up. Drop in head. Let it soak for a minute. Grab the stalk and agitate the water around it. Rinse.

Brussel sprouts

Brussel Sprouts must be cut in half. If there are signs of infestation inside, discard the sprout.

How to wash cabbage:

Split the cabbage head in half after removing both the outermost leaves and the core, that the leaves on the head are more easily removed. If one takes six leaves from the remaining head and holds them up toward the light one at a time, bugs should easily be detected because the cabbage leaf is quite translucent and the bugs are not. If after checking both sides of these six leaves, one has not found any more than two bugs, these leaves and all the remaining leaves of the head can be eaten with only a normal washing. If more than two bugs were found, then all the leaves must be washed and checked individually.

Swiss chard, spinach, fresh herbs, other loose leafy greens

Fill up sink with 1/3rd water and Drop in bags of leafy vegetable. Let it sit for a minute. In second sink, turn on water. Take handfuls at a time and rinse under running water and then put in strainer to strain out the rest of the water.

Blueberries- rinse under running water.

Blackberries – drop berries one by one on a white surface.

Strawberries- soak for several minutes. Either remove leaves, or brush leaves vigorously under running water.

Cut fresh fruit platters from supermarkets are only acceptable with a heksher. Check with the Rabbi for a list of nearby stores where this is available.

Separating Challah

If large quantities of flour-based baked goods (bread, cookies, cake) are being baked, “Challah” must be separated- to remember the tithe that was offered when the Temple stood. Challah only applies if more than 2 2/3 pounds of dough are being made- the blessing is not said unless there are at least five pounds.

To separate challah- when all the dough is in one container, break off a small portion of the dough, wrap in foil and throw into the oven to be burned up. If the dough is loose/pourable, take a bit of the finished product.

The blessing that is said is “Baruch Ata... asher Kidshanu B’mitzvotav V’tzivanu L’hafrish Challah”

For details see:

<https://oukosher.org/blog/consumer-kosher/halachos-of-hafrashas-challah/>

Bishul Akum- Jewish Cooking

A Jewish person must turn on all ovens and burners, and/or light the pilot light.

Certain foods need to have a Jewish person participate in their preparation in order to be kosher. In theory, this only applies to foods that would be served at an elegant meal and would not be eaten raw.

So, for example, a baked potato would not apply because it can be eaten raw.

Potato chips would not apply because they are not eaten at an elegant meal.

If food is already edible, and is being re-warmed, this is not an issue.

In practice, we get around this problem by having a Jewish person participate in the cooking in some way, typically by turning on the ovens or the burners or deep fryer. A Jewish person does not need to light the sterno which just keep the food warm.

If ovens or burners were turned on without the mashgiach, he/she may turn them off and back on, or will need to stir or otherwise help prepare each item.

**Acknowledgement of receipt and acceptance of Kashrut and Shabbat Policies
Event Planner/Vendor**

I have read the OVS Shabbat and kosher policy document. I agree that:

- Any food prepared or served at OVS by myself, my staff or subcontractors, as well as any services provided, will follow these policies.
- If I have any questions about Kashrut or Sabbath practices at OVS, I may consult with the rabbi or their representative (mashgiach).
- If items are brought in, or food, decorations, or other services are prepared in violation of these policies, I may be unable to serve or provide them to my client, which may result in financial loss to myself or the client.
- If, according to the sole judgment of OVS's representative, a violation was intentional, or there was an attempt to conceal a violation, I and my client may be liable for penalties including, loss of deposit with OVS. For infractions judged by OVS staff to be egregious, a vendor may be restricted from serving future events at OVS.
- I agree that this agreement supersedes any agreement with clients or other vendors. If I am restricted from OVS as a result of violation of these policies and I am not allowed to serve a future event, that I will waive all penalties and return all deposits for future events scheduled at OVS.
- Interpretation of these policies is at the sole discretion of OVS's representative, and any decision made by OVS's representative must be considered final.

Signed

Vendor

Date

Acknowledgement of receipt and acceptance of Kashrut and Shabbat Policies
Renter/Family

I have been given the opportunity to read the OVS Shabbat and kosher policy document. I understand and acknowledge that:

- Any food or decorations that I bring into OVS's facilities must comply with these policies.
- Any caterers, party planners or other vendors that I hire must follow these policies.
- If I or my vendors have any questions about Kashruth or Sabbath practices at OVS, I may consult with one of the Rabbi or their representative (mashgiach).
- If items are brought in, or food, decorations, or other services are prepared in violation of these policies, I may not be able to use them at OVS, and OVS will not be held liable for any financial losses that may result.
- If, according to the sole judgment of OVS's representative, a violation was intentional, or there was an attempt to conceal a violation, I or my vendors may forfeit our deposit. For infractions judged by OVS staff to be egregious, a vendor may be restricted from serving future events at OVS.
- Interpretation of these policies is at the sole discretion of OVS's representative, and any decision made by OVS's representative must be considered final.

Signed

Renter

Date