

## **Beth Sholom Guidelines for Shabbat and Kosher Food Preparation<sup>1</sup>**

*Revised December 6 2021*

Beth Sholom's greatest asset is our strong community. One aspect of strengthening our community comes when families invite each other and newcomers to their homes for a Shabbat meal. The guidelines below are intended to enable anyone to feel confident offering and accepting hospitality within our shul community, while ensuring that food and beverages can be eaten and enjoyed according to the Laws of Shabbat and Kashrut.

**We recognize that members of Beth Sholom have different levels of observance with respect to Kashrut and Shabbat. We respect and welcome everyone regardless of where they are on their Jewish path. However, if you would like to offer hospitality through Beth Sholom's hospitality committee or cook a chesed meal through the Beth Sholom Chesed Committee, you must adhere to these guidelines.**

The laws of Shabbat and Kashrut are complex. The purpose of this document is to simplify the laws. It does not replace ongoing study but it does lay down basic guidelines to allow everyone to have a common document.

This document can also be used to facilitate a conversation when you invite someone to your home. When inviting people to your home, consider saying ***"we follow the Beth Sholom Guidelines."*** This will remove any potential discomfort in accepting the invitation. If you are invited and do not know if the host adheres to these guidelines, you can respond, *"I would love to come. I only eat at homes that follow the Beth Sholom Guidelines. Will I still be able to come to your house?"*

We hope that these guidelines enhance hospitality within our community both between members and with newcomers. Thank you for helping us make Beth Sholom such a wonderful and welcoming community! If anything in this document is unclear or if you have further questions that are not addressed here, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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### **GENERAL KASHRUT STANDARDS**

#### **Dishes, Pots and Pans**

Food should be cooked, prepared, and served using only cooking utensils, serving utensils, and cutlery that have been exclusively used for kosher food and separate utensils should be used for meat and milk. Utensils should be made kosher or be new and/or disposable. Kitchen appliances and utensils can be made kosher ("kashered").

The Basic rule of Kashering is *K'bolo Kach Polto* - the way it absorbed the non kosher food/dairy/meat is how it gets rid of it. So if one accidentally cooked something not kosher in a pot, it is kashered by boiling it in a larger pot. If non-kosher food spilled on a kosher dish or surface, it can be kashered by pouring hot water onto that surface. Earthenware cannot be kashered. After the fact, (*Bidieved*) if a pot was not kashered (or kashered properly) and it hadn't been used in 24 hours, food cooked in it is 100% kosher and one would violate *Bal Tashchis* (destroying food), if one threw it out!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

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<sup>1</sup> Special Thanks to Rabbi Asher Lopatin/Rabbi David Wolkenfeld for allowing us to adapt his Standards for the Beth Sholom Community

## **Kosher Foods**

All food must bear a reliable Kosher Certification with the exception of the categories of food listed below. **The major Kashrut organizations (OU, OK, Star-K, and cRc) all maintain excellent websites which are helpful resources for kashrut.** The cRc has a particularly good list of acceptable symbols (google “crc kosher symbols”)

### ***Cheese and dairy products***

**Please remember that all cheeses and cheese-based products need reliable supervision,** even cheese which is 100% vegetarian.

### ***Grape products***

Wine, grape juice and any product with grape juice or grape flavoring, including unspecified "fruit juices", need to be reliably certified as kosher. Fresh whole grapes are kosher. Even if a wine is certified kosher, it may not be appropriate for your dinner table - especially in our community. That is because, since our community is so open and diverse, frequently we will have around our shabbat tables beloved people who are non jews or who are in various stages of the conversion process. In such a case, only wine that is MEVUSHAL (flash heated or pasteurized) may be served. Almost all American kosher wine is Mevushal (Kedem, Baron Herzog, Weinstock - except when noted), but many of the Israeli wines (especially Galil, Golan and Yarden ) are not.

### ***Fresh fish***

It is acceptable to buy the fish from a regular store as long as the following conditions are met:

1. Make sure the fish is a kosher fish.
2. Make sure you can identify this fish 100% as kosher either by seeing its scales or because it is red or pink in color.
3. Make sure you wash the fish thoroughly when you get home. Since nothing hot touched the fish, washing them off will clean off anything not kosher that might have touched them.
4. When you return home, you should gently scrape the cut part of the fish with a knife.

### ***Items that do not need a Hechsher (certification)***

*Aluminum Foil, Baking Powder, Cocoa – plain, with no additives, Coffee – plain, without flavorings, Corn Starch, Dried Fruit – with no oil or other ingredients listed (except for the usual preservatives, such as potassium sorbate, sulphur, dioxide and sodium bisulfate)*

*Flour – plain only, Fruits – Most plain canned and frozen fruits with no added ingredients besides water, salt, sugar, corn syrup, corn sweetener, citric acid, ascorbic acid, are acceptable without certification. Calcium chloride, lactic acid, and ferrous glutamate do not require certification, but beware of added ingredients such as spices, flavorings, colorings, or grapejuice.*

*Honey, Molasses, Nuts – plain, with no oil or other ingredients (besides salt) on the label, when they have been dry roasted*

*Oats, Plastic Wraps, Popcorn Kernels – plain, with no oil, flavoring, etc.*

*Raisins – plain, with no oil listed on the label, Raw Nuts, Rice – plain, with no flavor or seasoning added Salt, Spices – pure, Starch, Sugar, Tea – plain, black, green, or oolong, with no added ingredients or flavorings, Wheat, Wheat Germ – with no added ingredients, Yeast – regular*

*Liquor – All unflavored beer, ale, whiskey, rye, gin, tequila (without worm), and sake can be consumed as they all have standardized traditional methods of brewing and distilling. Flavored beers and other liquors should not be consumed without a hekshsher. Wine, port, vermouth, brandy, or any liquor made from grapes requires kashrut certification.*

### ***A Note on Fresh Vegetables:***

Fresh Vegetable need to be washed and cleaned and checked for bugs.

The following is the procedure for cleaning lettuce (for bagged lettuce see below):

1. Separate Leaves
2. Soak in Water
3. Make a complete, leaf by leaf inspection
4. Wash off any insects
5. Leafy vegetables may now be used.

Bagged lettuce of any kind, which comes with a reliable supervision or is triple-washed, does not need to be washed. Most spices, whole or ground, do not require kashrut supervision. Please see the Chicago Rabbinical Council's website, CRCweb.org, for a complete list.

## **SHABBAT FOOD PREPARATION STANDARDS**

The Shabbat restrictions on heating food on Shabbat are derived from the Torah's prohibition against cooking and manipulating fire on Shabbat and from several rabbinic extensions and safeguards to these laws. Many of these laws are not applicable on yom tov that occurs on a weekday and most manners of heating and cooking food is permitted on yom tov.

**No uncooked food** or beverages may be placed on a hot burner, in a heated oven, in a crock pot that is on, on a warming tray, or in a heated urn on Shabbat.

**No liquids may be heated on Shabbat** in any fashion. This includes water for making tea, soup, stew with a lot of liquid, or any dish with lots of liquid sauce. Any liquid you want hot needs to be put on the heat, in an urn or crockpot, or on the stove and left there before Shabbat.

Do not reheat any food on Shabbat (even dry, already cooked food) once it has cooled down **by putting it directly in the oven**. However, it is permissible to reheat dry, already-cooked food on Shabbat in the following ways:

- 1) Put it on a **warming tray** - "plata" in Hebrew – which is not designed to cook, but, rather, just to warm. (An electric warming tray can be used with an electric timer. Be sure to use an “appliance timer” that can safely accommodate the voltage of the warming tray.)
- 2) A “**blekh**” (a metal sheet) can be placed on top of a stove burner that is left burning for the duration of Shabbat.
- 3) Food can be heated in a “**warming drawer**” that is not designed for cooking.

*Again, the above procedures only work for dry food. You may not remove soup or stew from the refrigerator on Shabbat morning and put it on a plata, blech or warming oven.*

Stew or cholent placed in a crock-pot before Shabbat **can be left to simmer and cook** after Shabbat has started so long as either the food is minimally edible when Shabbat begins or, the knobs and switches on the crock-pot or slow-cooker are covered before Shabbat begins.

Do not stir food in the crock-pot or on a heated stove once Shabbat comes in, at the very least until it is fully cooked. If possible, remove the inner pot from the outer metal element before scooping out the contents or remove the dish from the *blekh*. So long as the food remains hot and one had the intention to return the food to the blekh or crockpot, it can be returned if you want to consume the dish later on or the next day.

You may only add **pipng hot water to the crock-pot or a pot on the stove**, and only by transferring it directly from a hot-water urn or another pot on the stove, via a ladle or a spoon, into the crock-pot.

### **Special Shabbat procedures for tea - which can be ignored on Yom Tov:**

Tea essence: Before Shabbat, brew a thick concentrate of tea by placing several tea bags in one tea pot. This “essence” can be poured into a cup of hot water resulting in hot tea with normal strength.

**"K'li sheni"** - tea: Make sure that the tea bag only is immersed into a cup of water that has been transferred from the urn. For example, hot water is poured from the urn into a mug and the tea bag is then placed in the mug. **Do not put the tea bag in the mug before you pour the water into the mug.**

### **MAKING OUR HOMES SHABBAT-FRIENDLY**

Please remember to turn off lights in your fridge/oven/freezer or any appliance. It is prohibited to open doors of these appliances if the light will go on.

If you have a Sabbath Mode on your oven, this only allows you to *remove* food from oven on Shabbat. You are not allowed to put food in the oven on Shabbat even if it has a Sabbath Mode.

Make sure that lights are on in bathroom and toilet paper is pre-cut or tissues are available.

Remember that your guests may not be familiar with Shabbat home rituals (like kiddush, motzi, and birkat ha-mazon). Make sure to explain new terms to help guests feel comfortable.

### **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

Please don't be scared or intimidated! These laws are meant to be accessible, and if you make a mistake, that is exactly what the rules were designed for: to protect the basic Torah laws. Please speak to a member of the clergy if you have any questions, doubts or issues regarding any of these guidelines.

These guidelines are meant to help us feel comfortable in each other's homes. We hope that they will help us grow in our Judaism and also in our connections to one another. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to one of the rabbis. Thank you for making Beth Sholom a place where we can all grow together!

Rabbi Antine & Rabbi Cooper

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a Halakhic Ruling of Rav Soloveitchik