

Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation Community Standards of Kashrut

Rabbi David Wolkenfeld

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Introduction

This Revised Comprehensive Community Standards document is intended to consolidate four separate documents that were written by Rabbi Lopatin and shared within the ASBI community over a period of several years. These standards have been copied by other communities across the United States and are a model for the way in which hospitality and communal unity can be cultivated through education and open communication. At ASBI, we believe that serving kosher meals on Shabbat and Yom Tov is the birthright of every Jew. These guidelines are intended for clarity and reliability to enable anyone to feel confident extending and accepting hospitality within our shul community.

As a community, we have always been committed to respecting the personal decisions that every household makes about how they will observe Kashrut and Shabbat in their own homes. All of us are on a religious journey and the pace and scope of that journey must be authentic for each individual. These community standards are designed to empower you to extend and accept invitations for Shabbat hospitality with the confidence that the food is kosher, and that the food can be eaten and enjoyed according to the Laws of Shabbat.

Please reach out to Rabbi Wolkenfeld if anything in this document is unclear or if you have further questions that are not addressed here. These guidelines are intended to be simple enough for a novice to accommodate, yet reliable enough to make a meticulously observant Jew feel confident.

Part I. Guide for a Kosher Kitchen

Food should be cooked, prepared, and served using only cooking utensils, serving utensils, and cutlery that have been exclusively used for kosher food, that have been made kosher according to the procedures listed below, or that are new and/or disposable.

Kitchen appliances and utensils can be made kosher (“kashered”) in the following ways:

Self-Cleaning Ovens: Run the self-cleaning cycle once. Anything which is in the oven during self-cleaning, such as the oven racks or stove-top burners that have been placed inside the oven can be simultaneously made kosher through being inside the oven during the self-cleaning cycle.

Non Self-Cleaning Ovens: Oven interiors should be cleaned to remove any food residue that may have become stuck to the oven walls. Black or brown staining that may remain on the oven walls is mere carbon and is not considered food residue. Then, after waiting 24 hours from the oven’s previous use, run the oven at its hottest setting on bake mode (using upper and lower heating elements). Let the oven run long enough for it to reach that hottest temperature and remain there for several minutes. Oven racks should be left inside the oven and are made kosher along with the oven itself.

Gas or electric stove-top burners: Leave unused for 24 hours, clean off any food residue from the burners and the area beneath them. Turn each burner on, in succession or at the same time, for 15 minutes.

Glass stove tops: Clean the glass, removing any food residue, and leave unused for 24 hours. Turn on all burners, at the same time, for 20 minutes.

Microwaves: Remove food residue from the interior of the microwave. Let the microwave sit unused for 24 hours, and then boil a bowl of water in the microwave for 4 minutes.

Dishwashers: Remove any food residue from the dishwasher filters. Let the dishwasher wait unused for 24 hours, and then run the dishwasher once, with soap, on its hottest/highest setting. Porcelain dishwashers cannot be kashered.

Refrigerator and freezer shelves: There is no need to kasher refrigerators or freezers.

Sinks: Stainless steel or granite sinks can be kashered by pouring boiling water into the sink after 24 hours have elapsed since the last time hot water was used in the sink. Sinks can be used for cleaning dairy and meat dishes by means of separate sink-racks that are designated for dairy and meat utensils. Porcelain sinks cannot be made kosher.

Metal and Plastic Pots and Cutlery: These items should be unused for 24 hours, thoroughly cleaned, and then immersed in boiling water. To kasher a large pot, place it into an even larger pot, or fill it with boiling water and then place a stone - or any other item - into the pot of boiling water. The displacement will cause a bit of boiling water to overflow the edge of the pot, thereby kashering the exterior surface of the pot.

Part II: Kosher Ingredients

Kosher food can only be made with kosher ingredients. Processed foods should only be used with a reliable kosher certification. [See here](#) for a list of reliable kashrut organizations. The major Kashrut organizations ([OU](#), [OK](#), [Star-K](#), and [cRC](#)) all maintain excellent websites which are helpful resources for kashrut. In addition, Rabbi Eidlitz - a kashrut expert from California - maintains kosherquest.org which is an invaluable resource for learning about kashrut and maintains a very comprehensive list of ingredients and basic foods that do not require special kosher certification.

The following list of food and ingredients are kosher and can be used without further need for 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 glutomate do not require certification, but beware of added ingredients such as spices, flavorings, colorings, or grape juice.

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 *hefshber*. Wine, port, vermouth, brandy, or any liquor made from grapes requires kashrut certification.

Note about Kosher Wines:

In the phrasing of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, Jews are heirs to a dual covenantal burden. We must join together with all humanity to develop the world, to support civilization and advance human culture, and we are accountable to God to remain faithful to the covenant of Sinai. As the “community of the few,” we have an added hurdle of conserving and stewarding our

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ability to make a unique contribution to the world as a tiny minority amidst the “community of the many.” We are meant to shoulder the burdens of citizenship along with neighbors of all religions and we must seek out only fellow Jews as marriage partners so that our homes can become an incubator of Judaism for future generations. This dialectic is expressed in some details of the laws of kashrut. Because of the symbolic nature of wine, open bottles of wine that have been moved or poured by gentiles are no longer kosher unless that wine has first been cooked (or pasteurized). Wine that has been cooked is called “*mevushal*” and will be indicated as such on the label.

Due to the many friends and relatives of all religious backgrounds who grace our homes on Shabbat and holidays, and due to the numerous individuals who are in various stages of a process of conversion to Judaism in our community, only *mevushal* wine should be served at all meals that are attended by anyone other than immediate family and very close friends.

Herzog wines from California, Teal Lake Wines from Australia, Bartenura Wines from Italy, and Barkan wines from Israel are *mevushal*. Many other Israeli wines are not *mevushal*, nor are the Spanish Terrenal wines sold at Trader Joes.

Part III: Serving Warm Food on Shabbat

Introduction:

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 that are delineated in the Talmud, Medieval legal sources, and modern halakhic literature.

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* even as other forms of labor are prohibited.

You may think that it is easier to avoid these seemingly complex laws by eating only cold food on Shabbat, but the Talmudic sages encouraged warm foods on Shabbat as a way to show our devotion to the laws of Shabbat and as a way to maximize the enjoyment of Shabbat.

1. 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.
2. 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. An “instant hot” faucet is a misnomer. It should really be called “very quick hot” and cannot be used on Shabbat.
3. Do not reheat any food on Shabbat (even dry, already cooked food) once it has cooled down. For example, it is forbidden to reheat a cold piece of chicken or a kugel on Shabbat by placing it inside an oven. However, it is permissible to reheat dry, already-cooked food on Shabbat in the following ways:
 - A. Dry, already-cooked food can be reheated by placing it on an electric warming tray (sometimes referred to as a *platta*). A warming tray is not designed for cooking and has no knob or switch to adjust its temperature. 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.
 - B. A “*kedeirah blekh*” can be placed on top of a stove burner that is left burning for the duration of Shabbat. A *kedeirah bleakh* is a tray filled with water covered with a metal sheet.
 - C. Food can be heated in a “warming drawer” that is not designed for cooking.
4. A simple *blekh*, a flat sheet of metal covering a stove burner, merely allows hot food to be kept hot on Friday night as Shabbat begins. Dry foods can be removed from the *blekh* and returned to the *blekh* so long as the food remains hot and one had the intention to return the food to the *blekh*. For example, a tray of chicken can be kept warm on a *blekh* as Friday night dinner begins. The tray can be taken off the *blekh* so that chicken can be served to guests, and then returned to the *blekh* so it remains hot for anyone who wants a second helping of chicken.
5. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik taught his students and local Boston community that any dry cooked food which is in the oven or on a *blekh* when Shabbat begins and remains there for the entire duration of time between candle lighting and nightfall (*bein ha-shemashot*) can be returned to a *blekh* or to an oven on the following day after it has cooled. This position, originally attributed to Rabbenu Nissim of Gerona, the great medieval scholar, can be relied upon in extenuating circumstances, even by

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those of us who are not from Boston. This leniency only applies to foods that were kept heated for the entirety of time between sunset and nightfall on Friday.

6. Stew or *chullent* placed in a crock-pot or slow-cooker 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.

7. Hot water that was heated in an urn before the onset of Shabbat can be used to brew tea in one of two ways:

- A. 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.
- B. Hot water can be poured into a mug or tea-pot from the urn, and then poured into another mug which functions as a “third vessel” (the urn is the primary vessel where the water was heated, the teapot or mug is the secondary vessel, and the final mug is the third vessel). It is permissible to place a tea bag into a cup that is a “third vessel” of hot water.

Part IV: Making Our Homes Friendly for Shabbat-Observant Guests

These guidelines help us perform the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming guests into our home and making them feel comfortable.

1. Please de-activate the light in your refrigerator so the door can be opened and closed on Shabbat without the light going on and off. Even if your guests will not be using the refrigerator, keeping the light off will reassure them that their host is sensitive to Shabbat. Some refrigerator lights can be easily unscrewed. Sometimes the button that turns the light on and off can be taped in the off position before Shabbat. Many modern refrigerators have “Shabbat modes” that can be activated before Shabbat and which prevent the light from going on and off. You can Google your refrigerator model, find the owner’s manual even after many years, and see if your refrigerator has a Shabbat mode.
2. Many Shabbat observant Jews refrain from tearing toilet paper on Shabbat. While there are alternative lenient positions - and certainly one can rely on those lenient positions if one finds oneself without any other option - it is easy enough to stock a bathroom with tissues or pre-torn toilet paper.
3. Place liquid soap in the bathroom that your guests will use. Using bar-soap is considered a violation of Shabbat by many influential halakhic scholars (because the rubbing changes the shape of a solid object). If your guests have liquid soap, they can clean themselves with comfort!
4. Tape the light switch in the bathroom that your guests will use in the on position so that each and every guest will be able to use the bathroom without the need to switch on the light. It is so very easy to accidentally switch off a light when we are accustomed to automatically turning off lights as we exit a room.
5. Enable your guests to access and leave your high-rise apartment through the stairs. You may need to explain to your building staff that guests will be arriving who will not use the intercom to announce themselves and who will need to access the staircase. It is permissible to directly ask a gentile (for example, a doorman) to push an elevator button if one is traveling above the 5th floor or if walking to the desired floor will present special hardship.
6. Remember that your guests may not be familiar with Shabbat home rituals (like *kiddush*, *motzi*, and *birkat ha-mazon*). Distribute *benchers* with English translations or instructions and announce the pages of any songs you may sing to include more of your guests in the singing.