

Kashruth Policy Adopted by Board on 5/1/05

Be it resolved:

As Etz Chayim is an inclusive, liberal participatory community, unaffiliated with any Jewish denomination and our food guidelines are consistent with our mission statement, That the following are the food guidelines for congregational events:

- No trayf (treifah)* (Biblically forbidden foods such as pig meat -- pork, ham, bacon, pepperoni pizza -- or shellfish -- shrimp, crab, clams) is permitted in the Etz building or on Etz grounds (excluding tenant's use of the preschool space). Whether you buy baked goods or make them in your own kitchen, it is important to be sure that items are not made with animal shortening, beef fat or lard (pigfat). For example, Hostess baked goods all contain beef fat and should not be brought to Etz Chayim. Butter, margarine, and oil are all okay. Kosher baked goods are not required, but are always appreciated.
- Kiddush wine and grape juice over which congregants say a blessing must be certified kosher. Wine and other beverages used for general drinking need not be certified kosher. Beverages should be clearly labeled as kosher and non-kosher.
- The synagogue kitchen will not be maintained as kosher, except it will be kashered for Passover. Serving utensils in the synagogue kitchen will be used for dairy only, not meat. Meat may be stored in the congregational refrigerator. A meat dish may be re-heated in the congregational oven and/or microwave.
- Food served at an event which comes from a single food source must be supplied either by a kosher caterer or be declared a dairy meal*, for example, bar/t onegs. At a dairy meal, dishes may contain cheese, milk, and butter as well as vegetables, fruit, eggs, and fish, if it is biblically acceptable* (eg. tuna, salmon).
- All onegs will be dairy.
- Food served at an event which comes from multiple food sources, such as potlucks and picnics, must be declared either meat/vegetarian (with no dairy)* or dairy/vegetarian. These meals must have a Dinner Coordinator who plans and coordinates the meal.
Meat and poultry must be from biblically acceptable animals*, but they need not be kosher slaughtered or prepared in a kosher manner. Food should be brought already prepared in its own serving dish with its own serving utensils. No dairy products should be used in the meat/poultry dishes. No dairy dishes may be served at the same time as the meat dishes. After the meat meal, a dairy dessert may be served after the dishes are cleared.
- During Passover, no chametz* is permitted in the Etz building or grounds. During Passover, all food and beverages must be certified "Kosher for Passover".* Congregational seders within the congregational building will be Kosher catered.

* For detailed definition, see the Etz Chayim website, www.etzchayim.org

Congregation Etz Chayim **Food Guidelines for Congregational Events**

Adapted by Board 3/4/01

Why "Food Guidelines"?

Congregation Etz Chayim is a unique group. We have brought together people with little background and observance of Jewish traditions in their everyday lives with others who have observances that are more traditional.

For those of us who have looser practices about what we eat, it is not difficult to choose to eat less widely at congregational events. However, for those who have chosen to follow more closely traditional dietary rules, it is very difficult to go to a Jewish event and not be able to eat what is served. While our congregational guidelines will not satisfy Orthodox members of the Jewish community, the guidelines we have adopted will satisfy the great majority of the more observant members of the Etz Chayim community without putting an undue burden on others. Just as many of us have become used to being sensitive to those who are vegetarian or have food allergies, we are asking each other to be sensitive to those whose Jewish food preferences are different from our own in order to make it easier for all members of the congregation to be comfortable sharing meals.

Do these Food Guidelines apply to all occasions?

The guidelines are focused solely on food served at "*congregational events*", which are those activities sponsored by the congregation or by one of its committees or organizations. Examples include onegs (celebrations that follow a religious service, with blessings over the wine and food), Shabbat dinners, committee meetings, religious school activities, and holiday celebrations. The guidelines do not apply to private parties.

There are two different kinds of congregational events: those held in congregational facilities (including rooms outside the congregation's own facilities but arranged for on behalf of the congregation) and those held in congregants' homes. The guidelines for an event at a congregant's home are less restrictive to ease the burden on the host. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact Joan Fisch (head of the Religious Practices Committee) at (650) 327-2051 or fisch18@pacbell.net.

If an event is held with (or in the facilities of) another Jewish organization, we will follow their food guidelines when theirs are more stringent.

What about potlucks or congregationally organized meals in restaurants?

These guidelines apply to potlucks as well as meals prepared/served by just one person, including a catered meal in a restaurant. However, the guidelines do *not* apply to restaurants nor *non*-potluck picnics when people provide (or purchase) their own food for their own consumption.

What if someone brings food to a congregational event that violates these guidelines?

As a liberal and tolerant organization, we hope that this will be handled with graciousness by all and as an opportunity for learning.

Guidelines for Food served in CONGREGATIONAL FACILITIES

- **Vegetarian** (non-dairy) and **eggs** are always acceptable.
- **Dairy** (cheese, milk, butter, foods with whey, casein or lactose) is acceptable unless the meal contains meat.
- **Fish** is acceptable if it is biblically acceptable. Acceptable fish have scales and fins (such as salmon, dolphin-safe tuna, herring, anchovies, whitefish, sardines, and trout). Shellfish (shrimp, clams, lobster, etc.) and other seafood lacking fins and scales (catfish, eel, swordfish, monkfish, shark, octopus, etc.) are not acceptable.

Since fish are "pareve" (neither meat nor dairy), dairy may be used in its preparation and/or served at the same meal.

- **Meat and poultry** are acceptable if they are from a biblically acceptable animal *and* if the animal is slaughtered and prepared in a Kosher manner. Meat and poultry meals need to be *either* Kosher-catered *or* prepared and served with oversight by the rabbi or someone designated by him/her.

At a meal serving meat or poultry, there must also be an acceptable *non-dairy* vegetarian option. No dairy products (including butter) may be used in preparation or served at the meal.

- **Meat** that is biblically acceptable comes from animals that have split hooves and chew their cud (e.g., cattle, deer, bison, etc., but not pig).
- **Poultry** that are biblically acceptable include chicken and turkey.
- **Animal shortening** is not acceptable *unless* it is an ingredient in some dish or meal that is Kosher-catered or prepared and served with oversight by the rabbi or someone s/he designates. The problem with animal shortening is that it often comes from non-Kosher animals (e.g., lard) or Kosher animals not killed in a Kosher manner. Please note that using Kosher animal shortening makes the meal "meat", so it cannot be used in a dairy meal and is not acceptable in vegetarian dishes. However, **vegetable shortening** is always acceptable.
- **Beverages for Kiddush:** Grape juice and wine (sweet or dry) must be certified kosher. This means that it has been specially made to be used for Jewish sanctification.
- **Beverages for general drinking:** Wine and other beverages used for general drinking need not be certified kosher but must not contain non-acceptable ingredients (i.e. Clamato juice).
- **Dishes and utensils:** Any clean utensils and serving dishes may be used.
- **During Passover:** All food and beverages must be certified "Kosher for Passover" for the current year. All utensils and serving dishes must be new or disposable, or they must belong to the congregation and be designated only for use on Passover.

Guidelines for Food served in CONGREGANTS' HOMES

The above guidelines are to be observed with the following exceptions:

- **Meat and poultry**, from biblically acceptable animals, need not be kosher slaughtered or prepared in a kosher manner. No dairy products should be used in the meat/poultry dishes. There must also be a vegetarian *or* dairy option available from a separate serving dish.
- **During Passover:** For Create-a-Seder each group of participants will decide what level of Passover observance they wish to observe.