

Guidelines for Food Preparation in The Skokie Valley Kitchen and for Skokie Valley Events

The following policies apply to all people who may be doing food related work in the Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob kitchen, including SVAJ staff, lay leadership, tenants, people renting SVAJ spaces, and caterers; and to all SVAJ events where food is served.

These guidelines are meant to continue to ensure that the Skokie Valley kitchen maintains the highest possible standard of kashrut and that all Skokie Valley events are strictly kosher.

The rabbi is the Rav Hamachshir (supervising rabbi) of the kitchen and has final say regarding any food prepared in the SVAJ kitchen or served at any SVAJ event.

In this guide, there are five sections.

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Section 1: Terms

Dairy - Foods that include milk, cheese, yogurt. Does not include eggs.

Meat - Foods that include beef or other kosher mammalian meat, chicken or other kosher fowl. Does not include fish or eggs.

Pareve - Foods that are neither dairy nor meat: vegetables, fruits, grains, fish, eggs

Rav Hamachsir - Senior Rabbi of Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob, Responsible for kashrut policy and decisions.

Mashgiach/Mashgicha - Someone who has been trained in SVAJ kashrut policies and approved by the rabbi or who is employed by an approved kashrut agency.

Keilim - Cooking and serving vessels and utensils, pots, pans, spatulas, knives, etc...

Section 2: The Skokie Valley Kitchen

Location and access - The Skokie Valley kitchen is located on the main floor of Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob, next to the Social Hall. There are two entrances, from the hallway and from the Social Hall. These entrances will be locked at all times that the kitchen is not in use.

Ovens - SVAJ has two sets of ovens, dairy ovens on the left side of the kitchen and meat ovens on the right. The appropriate ovens must be used when cooking or reheating meat or dairy food. Pareve foods may be cooked or reheated in either oven. Please consult with the rabbi if you have questions regarding the status of pareve foods cooked in the meat or dairy oven. If, in a situation where there is very high volume and all ovens of one set are full, the opposite kind of oven may be used if it has not been used in 24 hours and the food being cooked is fully wrapped.

Burners - On top of the respective meat and dairy ovens are meat and dairy burners. The appropriate burners must be used when cooking or reheating meat or dairy food. Pareve foods may be cooked or reheated on either burner. Please consult with the Rav Hamaashir if you have questions regarding the status of pareve foods cooked on the meat or dairy burners.

Sinks - SVAJ has two sink areas labeled dairy and meat. The third sink is for hand washing only. Food, dishes, sponges, and silverware may only be placed or washed in the appropriate sink.

Counters - Any counter space being used in the SVAJ kitchen must be covered with an appropriate covering (red tablecloth for meat, blue for dairy, or unused tin foil).

Refrigerators and freezers - the SVAJ kitchen contains one freezer and three refrigerators. There is additional cold storage in the basement.

Cabinets - SVAJ has a locked pantry room, in which dairy and meat keilim, as well as dairy and pareve dry goods can be found. All cabinets are locked and appropriately marked. Cabinets of the appropriate type may be unlocked. The mashgiach will have key access.

Keilim - SVAJ has meat and dairy keilim. All vessels are marked either dairy or meat, with the exception of a few non-pyrex glass trays and serving bowls. These glass trays and bowls may be used only to serve cold ingredients.

Microwaves - there is one dairy and one meat microwave in the kitchen.

Dishwashers - The SVAJ kitchen contains a meat and a dairy dishwasher. These may only be operated by or under the direct instruction of SVAJ staff.

Section 3: Caterers

SVAJ welcomes caterers with an Orthodox Kosher Certification (teudah) to provide food services at events in our building subject to several limitations. All caterers must comply with posted rules about the use of SVAJ facilities. SVAJ reserves the right to deny caterers access to our building if the synagogue leadership determines that allowing access is not in the best of interests of SVAJ.

Prepared food: If you are hosting a small event and are bringing platters of prepared food from a local restaurant or caterer the platters must be delivered with the kosher sealing tape intact. Local restaurants and caterers with an Orthodox kosher certification are all acceptable vendors.

Wine and Liquor

Wines served in SVAJ must be kosher and mevushal. All liquor must either be certified kosher or appear on the CRC approved liquor list.

Section 4: Guidelines for Preparing Food in SVAJ

1. Access - The SVAJ kitchen shall be locked at all times when not in sanctioned use. Access to the kitchen will be granted by key to SVAJ staff, executive lay leadership, and SVAJ approved mashgichim. These keys must not be shared with anyone who has not been approved as a mashgiach. **At no point may food prepared in a home or any other non-kosher certified kitchen be brought into the SVAJ kitchen for any reason.**

2. Mashgiach/Mashgicha

Food preparation in the SVAJ kitchen requires oversight. This oversight comes from someone trained in the laws of kashrut as well as the policies of SVAJ. This person shall be known as a mashgiach/ mashgicha. The mashgiach's responsibility is to be an objective observer and resource during the food preparation process.

Masgiach/a roles:

1. Unlock the kitchen
2. Arrange the kitchen appropriately for meat or dairy use (see below).
3. Check all ingredients that enter the kitchen for appropriate kosher supervision.

4. Be present supervising the correct kitchen usage throughout food preparation. S/he may help with food preparation.
5. Supervising and supporting kitchen clean up.
6. Locking up.

3. Dairy or Meat - The SVAJ kitchen may be used for preparing either dairy or meat. Before beginning to prepare food, the following steps must be taken to ensure correct usage of the kitchen:

- Sink of the appropriate side is uncovered, the sink of the side not in use is covered.
- Movable large divider carts serve are placed in front of the area not to be used to block that section of the kitchen.
- Cabinets containing the appropriate implements (dairy or meat) are unlocked.
- Prepping tables in the middle of the room are covered with the appropriate tablecloth (blue for dairy, red for meat) or tin foil.

4. Ingredients

Store bought items with an acceptable kosher symbol may be brought to SVAJ in their original, unopened packaging. Today, there are hundreds of kosher supervision agencies worldwide, each with their own seal. A list of acceptable kosher symbols will be posted in the kitchen. If a symbol is not on the list, you may consult the CRC or the Rav Hamachsir. The following are some kosher symbols that are NOT accepted in the SVAJ kitchen:



5. Keilim

Non-caterers: Keilim used for food preparation in the SVAJ kitchen must belong to SVAJ. If there is a utensil that the kitchen does not have, please contact the Rav Hamachsir about purchasing and toveling said utensil. Under no conditions may keilim from a private home or other institution be used to prepare food in the SVAJ kitchen.

Caterers: Approved kosher caterers must bring their own keilim and are prohibited from using SVAJ keilim.

Clean-up: After use of the SVAJ kitchen, floors must be swept, dishes cleaned and put away in the appropriate manner, and counters wiped down.

6. Use of stoves, burners, counters, etc:

See section 2, "Kitchen Layout."

Section 5: Shabbat and Yom Tov issues

All food to be served for shabbat must be delivered to SVAJ prior to shabbat. Cooking is not permitted on shabbat.

Warm food on shabbat:

Blech or warmers: Solid food (chicken, beef, but not liquid foods like soup, stews, or dishes with lots of sauce) may be reheated on shabbat in a warmer or on a blech.

Liquids, or foods with a lot of liquid (soup, stews, dishes with lots of sauce) may NOT be reheated on a blech or a warmer on Shabbat.

Ovens: Ovens may not be used to reheat any foods on shabbat. Foods may be placed in ovens at a warming temperature before shabbat and left in the ovens until served.

Controls for the ovens must be covered. No adjustment of fires or heat may occur unless there is a danger to people, in which they may be turned off.

Cooked foods may not be put into an oven at any time on Shabbat.

Crock-pot: Cholents placed in a crock pot that began cooking before Shabbat began may cook over shabbat, but cooking must be at least $\frac{1}{3}$ done before shabbat begins.

Hot water: Hot water heaters must be heated to boiling before Shabbat.

On Yom Tov that does not fall on shabbat, food may be cooked on a stove provided that the pilot lights were left on before the holiday began.

For events the night after Shabbat or Yom Tov, food preparing may not begin until after havdallah.