

A Basic Guide
to Keeping
Kosher

*for Private
Household
Employees*

INTRODUCTION

Keeping Kosher has been prepared to help you continue the Jewish dietary practices followed by your Kosher employer. Please read each page carefully, until the very end.

Keeping Kosher means eating only certain foods, prepared in a special way. Keeping Kosher is a system of religious practices and rules about food.

This booklet will explain how you can keep your employer's home Kosher. This is important to your employer. She or he expects, and will require you, to follow the rules exactly and completely.

TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Kosher	The way observant Jews choose and prepare food and keep their kitchens organized
Fleish	MEAT
Fleishig	Any MEAT or MEAT PRODUCT. A pot that is used for cooking meat is a FLEISHIG pot. The kitchen contains a complete set of FLEISHIG dishes, pots, pans, flatware, dishpans, towels, and cloths. No DAIRY foods or utensils are ever to touch MEAT dishes or utensils
Milch	MILK
Milchig	All DAIRY products; any foods made of milk or milk products are MILCHIG. The kosher kitchen contains a complete set of milchig dishes, pots, pans, flatware, dishpans, towels, and cloths. No MEAT (FLEISHIG) foods or utensils are ever to touch DAIRY (MILCHIG) dishes or utensils
Pareve	Foods, pots and pans that are neither MEAT nor DAIRY. See the list of PAREVE food on page 4
Traif	A food or utensil that is not kosher

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR EMPLOYER

If the locations of the MEAT (FLEISHIG) dishes, pots and pans, silverware and serving utensils, dish cloths, sponges, placemats, tablecloths, etc., have not been marked, ask your employer for permission to label each shelf and drawer with the word MEAT. Also, it would be desirable to put colored tape on silverware, pot handles and pot cover knobs and to put colored tape on the bottom of plates, cups and bowls.

Ask the same questions about the DAIRY (MILCHIG) and the NEUTRAL (PAREVE) foods and utensils. Label the MILCHIG with the word DAIRY and the PAREVE with the word NEUTRAL.

SHOPPING FOR YOUR EMPLOYER

If your employer wants you to do the shopping:

- Make a shopping list with your employer
- Shop only in those stores that your employer chooses
- Buy only those brands and products that your client has chosen.
Never make changes without asking!
- Be sure to check packaged food for the Kosher symbol that your employer prefers. There are different Kosher emblems.
(There will be only one on any package.)

Your employer may eat all of the following kosher foods providing they have one of the following kosher symbols:



Food requiring a Kosher symbol:

- DAIRY products such as hard cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, butter, yogurt and ice cream
- Frozen fish such as cod, halibut, salmon, and canned fish such as salmon, sardines and tuna
- Grape juice
- Rice
- Grains, such as kasha, and those contained in cereals. Check for bugs and insects. If found, discard
- Baked goods, such as bread, cake, cookies, as well as noodles and pasta
- Prepared foods, such as spices, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, baked beans, as well as canned and frozen soup

The following foods do not require a Kosher symbol:

- Milk and sweet cream
- Eggs that have been checked for blood spots
- Fresh fish with fins and scales that have been cut with a Kosher knife
- Flour, beans and lentils

Foods not permitted:

- Shell fish of any kind (such as crab, lobster, shrimp or clams)
- Fish without fins or scales (such as squid, catfish or shark)
- Pork products

Permissible foods:

- **MEAT and POULTRY.** Your employer may buy all of his or her MEAT and POULTRY at a kosher butcher shop. They will tell you where to shop. If they tell you to buy the MEAT and POULTRY in a supermarket, make sure the package has a kosher symbol
- Brands such as **Kineret** and **Empire** are examples of Kosher MEAT and POULTRY products sold in a supermarket
- Buy only beef, lamb, veal, chicken, duck and turkey that is labeled with a kosher symbol

Neutral (pareve foods):

- Cereal and grains
- Condiments like ketchup, mayonnaise, and mustard and spices
- Canned, fresh or frozen fish (Kosher fish only)
- Canned, fresh or frozen vegetables
- Frozen vegetables and food should be plain, not breaded, flavored or in a sauce

PREPARING YOUR EMPLOYER'S MEALS

Here are some of the most important rules to follow when preparing your employer's meals:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before handling food or utensils
- MEAT and DAIRY foods ***may never be mixed together***

- Your employer will want to wait several hours after a MEAT meal before eating DAIRY foods. It may be more convenient to serve a DAIRY lunch and a MEAT supper. Ask your employer about their preference
- MEAT and DAIRY utensils *may never be mixed together*
- Use the correct set of utensils for preparing the meal
- Use the correct utensils for serving the meal
- Use the correct dishpan, soap, sponge, dish rack, and dish towel for washing and drying utensils and dishes after the meal is finished
- Replace everything in correct places after washing and drying
- NEUTRAL foods, including beans, rice and lentils, can be used with either MEAT or DAIRY meals when you use NEUTRAL utensils for cooking
- But NEUTRAL foods must be served in MEAT dishes when you cook them in MEAT pots
- NEUTRAL foods must be served in DAIRY dishes when you cook them in DAIRY pots
- **Note:** When serving eggs, watch for blood spots. If you see one, throw away the entire egg
- When preparing fruits, vegetables or grains, including beans, rice and lentils, watch for worms or bugs. If you see any, throw away the affected part of the fruit or vegetable or the grains. Transfer open packages to tightly closed glass or plastic containers
- If your employer is not home, try to reach him or her by telephone. If that cannot be done, put aside, in a separate place, anything involved in a mix-up
- If your employer has given you the telephone number of a rabbi to call, then of course you should use it

- If you are not sure about any of these rules or if there has been a mix-up, ask your employer
- **Do not hide a mistake. Ask your employer what to do**

PREPARING YOUR OWN MEALS

If you wish to use the employer's stove for your own meal, the food you cook must be kosher. You must follow all the same shopping, cooking and washing up rules that you use for your employer.

Remember:

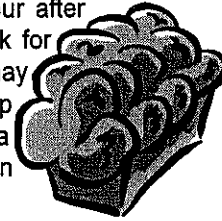
- Keep MEAT and DAIRY foods and utensils separate
- Use correct MEAT or DAIRY dishes for your foods
- When you use NEUTRAL utensils, wash them separately. Wash and dry your dishes and utensils right after you have eaten your meal, and put them away according to the rules

If you bring in your own non-kosher food:

- Cover the table with paper or plastic
- Separate and label your food
- Use paper or plastic disposable plates and utensils
- If you want to heat non-kosher food, bring your own electric hotplate and utensils. Ask your employer for a place to store any of your leftover food in their refrigerator
- If you use your employer's microwave oven, wrap your foods in a tightly sealed double plastic bag
- If your employer does not permit you to bring your own food, she or he is doing what many other employers in kosher households do in order to avoid the possibility of accidentally mixing foods

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

The Sabbath (from sundown Friday night to one hour after sundown on Saturday) is the holiest day of the week for your employer. They may eat special foods, they may want to dress up and they may want to light candles up to 18 minutes before sunset Friday night and say a prayer over them. The candles should be left to burn out themselves.



Ask your employer which lights they prefer to leave open on the Sabbath. Do not turn them off.

All food preparation for the Sabbath must be done before the sun goes down on Friday. Your employer may prefer to use a special tablecloth and plates for the Sabbath meal. **Ask!**

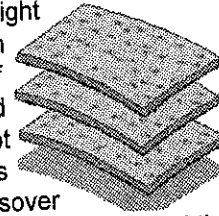
CONCLUSION

Your employer keeps a kosher home and has a set way of doing this. Let her or him guide you. And remember the rules:

- Buy only in stores your employer chooses
- Buy only those products and brands she or he prefers
- Keep the kitchen exactly the way it has been set up
- Store each set of utensils exactly the way your employer wishes
- Wash up after each meal according to the rules
- Above all, let your employer know if there has been a mix-up

KEEPING KOSHER FOR PASSOVER

Passover, the spring festival which is observed for eight days, recalls the Exodus from Egypt and the liberation of the Israelites from slavery. The first two nights of Passover are celebrated with a traditional feast called the **Seder** at which the story of the Exodus from Egypt is read from the Haggadah. **Seder** in Hebrew means "order" and refers to the traditional order of the Passover rituals and ceremonial meal. Your employer is dependent on you and therefore it is important that you are knowledgeable about the specifics that constitute *Keeping Kosher for Passover*.



All Jewish dietary laws and practices observed by your employer during the year apply to Passover as well. Additionally, no "**chometz**" may be eaten or owned during the entire eight days of Passover. This is one of the most important kosher rules governing the celebration of Passover.

Chometz is a mixture of flour and water that has been allowed to rise, either naturally or through a leavening agent. The possession or eating of all varieties of bread are prohibited, as well as noodles or any other pasta product, cakes, cookies or pastries made of flour. Products containing wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt and their derivatives, and all types of hot and cold cereal are considered *chometz*, and are not to be eaten unless they have the appropriate kosher symbol and the words "Kosher for Passover." Many Eastern European Jews also do not eat various grains (rice, kasha, etc.), beans (peas, lentils, etc.) and corn. Derivatives of these products such as cornstarch, corn oil, peanuts and soy flour may also be prohibited. Consult your employer to determine which of these products they are traditionally prohibited from eating.

SPECIAL PREPARATIONS MUST BE MADE IN THE JEWISH HOME FOR PASSOVER

The home must be thoroughly cleaned of all *chometz* before Passover. It is wise to begin cleaning a couple of weeks before Passover. Every room must be thoroughly cleaned and *chometz* removed. The following list will help you search and clean thoroughly:

Bedroom * Beds * Behind Furniture * Bookcases * Books * Bread
Boxes * Cabinets * Carpets * Chairs * Closets * Clothes * Couch * Desk
* Drawers * Freezer * Furniture * Garbage Pail * Kitchen * Kitchen
Appliances * Medicine Cabinet * Oven * Pockets * Purses * Radiators
* Refrigerator * Shopping Cart * Sink * Sink Area * Storage Room
* Stove * Table * Telephone * Utility Drawers * Vacuum Cleaner

THE KITCHEN

The cleaning of the kitchen is extremely important because that is where all the *chometz* was kept and prepared during the year. It is also where Passover food preparation will take place. All traces of *chometz* must be scrubbed out, and shelves, countertops and eating surfaces that are used year-round should be cleaned and covered for Passover use. Special dish racks, sink racks and wash basins may be necessary. Cooking surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned and covered with aluminum foil. Ovens should be thoroughly cleaned twice, and if your employer has a self-cleaning oven remember to use the self-cleaning cycle. **A DISHWASHER THAT IS USED DURING THE YEAR MAY NOT BE USED DURING PASSOVER.**

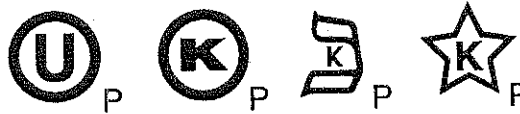
- Tables and chairs should be scrubbed down thoroughly and all closets and dishes cleaned very well. If you remove the dishes that are used during the year from the shelves, you must first clean and line the shelves before putting in the Passover dishes that your employer may have kept stored in a different area. All large appliances must be cleaned very well
- Kitchen appliances that are used year-round may not be used on Passover, for example, toaster, food processor, blender, can opener, etc.
- Allow several complete days for cleaning the kitchen and preparing for Passover use. Clean out one small area or room and set it aside for storage of Passover packages. Nothing is to be put in the kitchen until it is completely ready for Passover
- Closets where *chometz* dishes are kept must be closed off and "sold" through a Rabbi. They may not be opened for the entire 8 days of the holiday

Jewish law requires separate cooking and eating utensils for Passover, therefore your employer probably has a set of cooking and eating utensils that are used exclusively for Passover. If your employer does not have separate dishes or glassware then plastic or paper goods may be used.

Eating and cooking utensils that are used during the rest of the year must be put away. All preparations and cleaning for the Passover holiday must be completed by the morning before the holiday begins.

SHOPPING FOR "KOSHER FOR PASSOVER" FOOD PRODUCTS

All processed and packaged foods must have one of these better known Kosher symbols, as well as either a P following the symbol or the words, "Kosher for Passover."



Your employer should consult his or her physician and Rabbi to ascertain that the medicines that should be taken during the holiday are approved for Passover, and any special procedures that must be followed.

IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU DID NOT BRING ANY OF YOUR OWN FOOD INTO YOUR EMPLOYER'S HOUSE DURING THE EIGHT DAYS OF PASSOVER.

Your diligence and care during Passover will be appreciated by your employer, and undoubtedly you will be rewarded with your employer's trust and appreciation.

NOTES

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FOR HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYEES**

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