

COMMUNITY STANDARDS OF KASHRUT

11 May 2011
6 Iyar 5771

Updates:

Starbucks Coffee: You can buy plain or decaffeinated coffee made or ground at Starbucks, Caribou, Intelligentsia, etc., even if these establishments sell non-kosher food. Even if some of the coffee equipment might be washed with non-kosher vessels, the coffee you are given at the end of this process is kosher. You should ask for a disposable cup, but if it is poured in a non-disposable cup, you may drink the coffee.

Scotch Whisky: I have been in touch with the Kashrut authorities at the London Beth Din. The good news is that the “London Beth Din continues to allow all types of Scotch Whisky.” Here are some details from my source in the LBD:

- 1) No additives are allowed in Scotch Whisky with the exception of Caramel Colour which is kosher.
- 2) Ordinary Scotch Whisky whether Single Malt or Blended without any mention of the use of sherry, port or other wine casks on the label or marketing literature, can be consumed confidently without any concerns relating to it having been in contact with wine casks.
- 3) Whisky which has been matured in wine casks has been subject to detailed Halachic consideration by major poskim (including Minchas Yitzchok Vol 2, 28 and Igros Moshe Yore Deah Vol 1, 62 and 63) who did not forbid its consumption.
- 4) There is a new process however, known as Wine Cask Finishes (also referred to as double or second maturation) which is a secondary process that some claim is specifically designed to enhance the flavour of otherwise fully matured whisky and impart a recognisable taste of the wine. This new process may not be covered by all the aforementioned heterim and accordingly some may wish to avoid products so labelled.

The London Beth Din continues to allow all types of Scotch Whisky, based on Teshuvos Igros Moshe.

Irish whiskey: With the support of Irish whiskey manufacturers and the direct involvement of the London Beth Din, the Irish government wrote legislation that prohibits flavor enhancers – some of which were not kosher – in any Irish whiskey manufactured after the middle of 2009. Many Irish whiskeys are kosher, but the bad news is that unless **specifically approved by reliable kashrut agencies** any Irish whiskey manufactured before mid- 2009 might have non-kosher flavor enhancers. Community standard: avoid Irish whiskey for another few years except ones that are specifically approved by reliable kashrut agencies. The London Beth Din, as of this printing (and subject to change at any time) approves of the following Irish Whiskies:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Bushmills 1608 Anniversary Edition | Parev |
| Bushmills Malt 10 | Parev |
| Bushmills Original | Parev |
| Crested Ten | Parev |
| Jameson | Parev |
| Kilbeggan | Parev |
| Midleton | Parev |
| Paddy | Parev |
| Powers | Parev |
| Tullamore Dew | Parev |

Gin: All unflavored gin is kosher. Gordon’s flavored gins – all flavors – are kosher, under CRC supervision.

Rye: All unflavored rye is kosher.

Bourbon: Most bourbons are kosher, but there are issues relating to chametz owned by Jews over Pesach which makes it tricky. The Chicago Rabbinical Council provides this list of popular acceptable Bourbons (which is subject to change at any time):

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Bookers | Maker's Mark |
| Basil Hayden | Old Crow |
| Bakers | Old Granddad |
| Evan Williams | Elijah Craig |
| Knob Creek | Wild Turkey (Not Wild Turkey liqueur) |
| Heaven Hill | Black Maple Hill |
| Jack Daniels | Four Roses |
| Jim Beam | Noah's Mill |
| Old Pogue | Rowans Creek |
| Woodford Reserve | A.H. Hirsch |
| Michters | Prichards |
| Bernheim | Parkers |
| Willet | Vintage Bourbon |

Vodka: All domestic, unflavored vodkas are kosher. Foreign vodka needs supervision. See the complete list on CRCweb.org. The CRC provides this list of foreign vodkas, which, if unflavored, are acceptable even without a kosher label (subject to change without at any time):

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Absolut | Kettle One |
| Belvedere | Provda (now has OU) |
| Chopin | Stolichnaya |
| Finlandia | Vox |
| Iceberg (now has OU) | Van Gough |
| Yevreyskaya | Three Olives (from England) |

Taquila: All unflavored Regular White (or Silver) Taquila is kosher.

Cut fruit from any supermarket are acceptable as long as there are no berries. Blueberries are acceptable also with no hashgacha.

The Aleph Aleph kashrut symbol of Mexico has been redesigned, and it is fully acceptable. Added in the acceptable column is the KMD symbol from Mexico – on San Marcos and other products. Also, added as acceptable is the Louisiana K (the Louisiana Kashrut Committee). Added to the not acceptable category is the OKS symbol out of New York (Rabbi Harry Cohen). Though I do appreciate an article he wrote a few years ago about issues in the Agriprocessors factory –

since transformed, he is not accepted by the New York Orthodox community. Crumbs bakeries are under the OKS and are unfortunately unacceptable.

Please see our updated 2011 acceptable kosher supervisions.

The Triangle K was added to the not-acceptable category. I really tried on this one, but I cannot call it reliable.

If you have used Triangle K products in the past, you do not need to kasher your dishes, and if you are in an extremely awkward situation where you feel you will embarrass someone by not eating a Triangle K product, there is room to be lenient and to eat it. But on a regular basis, Triangle K does not meet the standards of the Anshe Sholom community.

Some products are reliably kosher even with a Triangle K: 1) Any product that does not need supervision in the first place, such as pure, non-grape, fruit juice, is still kosher with a Triangle K. 2) A rabbi from a reliable supervision told me that Sunchips with a Triangle K are acceptable. I take his word for it. 3) Some simple products without a risk of grape, oil or meat products are OK with Triangle K supervision: apple sauce, cranberry sauce, and we will continue to indicate this in our Community Standards of Kashrut available online and on the front table in the shul.

Clarification: To prepare lettuce for eating: It is preferable, but not required (even for Romaine), to soak lettuce before eating it. However, all lettuce needs to be checked on a leaf by leaf basis, checking both sides of the leaf. (Rabbi Heinemann - Star -K).

All products from China require reliable supervision.

Enjoy "k'virkat Hashem" – with God's blessings,

Rabbi Asher Lopatin

Introduction to Community Standards of Kashrut

In an effort to create a **community standard of kashrut**, where we can all eat in each other's homes and enjoy each other's hospitality, we are also enclosing a new, updated, wallet-sized list of the approved labels which signify reliable kashruth supervision. If a product has rabbinic supervision, you can tell based on a symbol somewhere on the package. My gratitude to Kashruth Magazine for listing kashruth labels available in America. My gratitude as well to the rabbis from all over the world with whom I consult regularly in order to determine which supervisions are reliable. **The following outlines the Community Standard of Kashrut for Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation. Not all of it corresponds to the Chicago Rabbinical Council's rulings, but I have discussed with them our areas of disagreement and they respect our right to differ from their rulings.**

What makes a supervision unreliable?

The supervisor, or supervising agency, may rely on certain leniencies within the law which the contemporary Orthodox community of today does not to rely on. Sometimes our standards of observance change over time, and the supervising authority needs to keep up with the accepted halacha of today, not just what was deemed OK many years ago. In addition the supervisor may not be careful enough on the lines that he or she is in charge of: not purposely giving hashgacha to a non-kosher product, but not meeting communal standards of oversight, Some supervisors have apparent attitude problems - they may be too clever for their own good - which seem to prevent them from correcting errors which demand attention and are immediately addressed by a more reliable organization. Even fancy titles such as "Chief Rabbinate of Mexico" do not ensure reliable supervision. Rather, personal integrity and hard, careful work are what makes a supervision reliable.


Products from Israel

Products from Israel, under rabbinical supervision, are reliable, and I would encourage all of us to purchase products from Israel whenever possible. However, you must make sure that the product does not contain gelatin (even "kosher" gelatin). The Rabbinate in Israel accepts a different standard regarding gelatin than the Ashkenazic Orthodox community has accepted here in the Diaspora. If you live in Israel you should feel free to follow their ruling. But in our community, the standard is not to allow any gelatin from non-kosher, or non-shechted animals. The only gelatin-type product which is acceptable is Kolatin. Any product with an accepted Hechsher will have the right kind of gelatin. **At Passover time, especially, beware of marshmallows or any chewy candies from Israel, which might have gelatin in them.**

Winnipeg K: fully acceptable

The Winnipeg K (WK) is now fully reliable, under Rabbi Dovid Jenkins.

Half Moon K: fully acceptable

Items with the Half Moon K  are all reliably kosher, under Rabbi Dovid Jenkins and the Orthodox Union.

Cheese and dairy products

Please remember that all cheeses and cheese-based products need reliable supervision, even cheese which is 100% vegetarian. On behalf of the kosher world, I apologize that most kosher cheese is usually so expensive and sometimes inferior in quality; this is starting to change. There is a gourmet cheese section at the Jewel on Southport and on Howard. However, please note that cheeses available in Jewel and Dominick's with the Tablet K or the KO are not acceptable. Fresh milk, fresh cream, half-and-half, and butter (grade AA and AAA) should preferably have supervision, but are acceptable without supervision. On the other hand, cream cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, and yogurt, all need reliable supervision. If you want to be strict about the law of "Chalav Yisra'el" (milk watched by Jews), you need to buy milk which specifically says "Chalav Yisra'el." Please check with the rabbi or the local Jewish kashrut authorities for dairy products purchased in countries outside of North America.

Canned Vegetables

Canned vegetables, along with almost all other processed foods, need reliable kashruth supervision.

Canned and Bottled Fruit:

Canned fruit – including cranberries and apple sauce - meeting the following criteria are kosher without supervision:

- 1) Can't be made in China, the "ROC"
 - 2) No artificial color
 - 3) No artificial flavor
 - 4) No Natural color
 - 5) No natural flavor.
- (No natural or artificial colors or flavors)

The following are accepted additives: Sugar, Heavy or light syrup, high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) Citric Acid & Ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) (Thanks to the Dallas Vaad, with some modifications)

Grape products: If you're having guests, make it Mevushal or have the host pour the wine!

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 gentile, not yet fully converted to Judaism or who may have converted with non-halachic conversions. In such a case, only wine that is MEVUSHAL (flash heated or pasteurized) may be placed on the table for everyone to take. Otherwise, your guests may be drinking wine rendered as non-kosher as Gallo or Paul Masson. I would recommend, then, using only mevushal wine if you are having anything but the most intimate of meals, or making sure at the very least that the host – Jewish – pours for everyone, and no one else touches the bottle.

Almost all American kosher wine is Mevushal - Kedem, Baron Herzog, Weinstock - except when noted; many of the Israeli wines, especially Golan, Yarden and some **Tishbi** wines, are not. **However, there are many outstanding Mevushal Israeli wines such as most Barkan wines, Kinneret Wines – especially recommended, Cabernet-Merlot-Franc – and Carmel wines.** Chilean wines are usually NOT MEVUSHAL, Australian wines are usually MEVUSHAL and French wines can go either way. In order to make your table as inclusive and comfortable as possible for all people, please look for the word MEVUSHAL on the back label of the kosher wine you buy. Sometimes it is in the Hebrew *מבושל*.

There have been cases where there has been non-Mevushal wine on the table, and someone has told a non-Jewish guest not to touch it: The gentile was deeply hurt by this incident. Please, go the extra step to make your home comfortable for everyone you welcome into it.

Fruit juices

Except for grape juice, pink grapefruit juice, **prune juice and tomato juice**, which always need reliable supervision, other fruit juices which are 100% pure - orange, apple, pineapple, grapefruit, etc. - with no added natural or artificial flavorings or added "fruit juice" listed in the ingredients, do not need supervision. However, if possible I would recommend finding juices with supervision. Tomato juice always needs reliable supervision. Hawaiian Punch of ALL VARIETIES is kosher even without any kashruth label, except that boxes of Hawaiian Punch, powder or one-gallon bottles are NOT RELIABLY KOSHER.

Other Beverages

Please be careful to look for supervision on any juices that have added fruit flavorings in them (all tomato juices and grape juices need supervision). Most pops are kosher. For a complete list provided by the Chicago Rabbinical Council, you may contact their website directly: **CRCweb.org** under "kosher lists".

Spirits:

All Scotch whiskies are kosher (London Beth Din).

Irish whiskies need to be on an approved list (Jameson and Bushmills original and 10 are kosher).

Gin: All unflavored gin is kosher. Gordon's flavored gins – all flavors – are kosher, under CRC supervision.

Rye: All unflavored rye is kosher.

Bourbon: Most bourbons are kosher, but there are issues relating to chametz owned by Jews over Pesach which makes it tricky. The Chicago Rabbinical Council provides this list of popular acceptable Bourbons (which is subject to change at any time):

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| Knob Creek | Wild Turkey (Not Wild Turkey liqueur) |
| Heaven Hill | Black Maple Hill |
| Jack Daniels | Four Roses |
| Jim Beam | Noah's Mill |
| Old Pogue | Rowans Creek |
| Woodford Reserve | A.H. Hirsch |
| Michters | Prichards |
| Bernheim | Parkers |
| Willet | Vintage Bourbon |

Vodka: All domestic, unflavored vodkas are kosher. Foreign vodka needs supervision. See the complete list on CRCweb.org. The CRC provides this list of foreign vodkas, which, if unflavored, are acceptable even without a kosher label (subject to change without at any time):

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| Absolut | Kettle One |
| Belvedere | Provda (now has OU) |
| Chopin | Stolichnaya |
| Finlandia | Vox |
| Iceberg (now has OU) | Van Gough |
| Yevreyskaya | Three Olives (from England) |

Taquila: All unflavored Regular White (or Silver) Taquila is kosher.

Unflavored beers do not require supervision. New Zealand beers may be dairy. Liqueurs require reliable supervision except for Amaretto Disaronno, Peter Cherry Herring and Drambuie, which are all kosher without a kosher sign. **Kahlua is not kosher, unless it has an OU symbol on it.**

Plain and decaffeinated coffees and teas are all kosher. Flavored coffees and teas need supervision. You can buy plain or decaffeinated coffee made or ground at Starbucks, Caribou, Intelligentsia, etc., even if these establishments sell non-kosher food. Even if some of the coffee equipment is washed with non-kosher vessels the coffee you are given at the end of this process is kosher.

Mike's Hard Lemonade is not kosher by community standards (thank you to Rabbi Drew Kaplan)

The plain K

Merely having the letter "k" on a product does not mean it is kosher. It just means the manufacturer wants you to think it's kosher. **Look out for yogurts and Jell-O, which have a "k" but are not kosher by our community's standards (usually have gelatin).** On the other hand, there are products that bear a "k" which really stands for a reliable supervision, such as on Kellogg's products. KD means that they are dairy. Kellogg's with a "k" are under the supervision of the Va'ad Harabanim of Massachusetts. **Please note that some of Kellogg's cereals are not kosher and do not bear any "k".** Other reliable plain "k"s are Tabasco sauce and Starbuck's Frappacino with a "k".

Fresh fish

While it is preferable to buy your fish from a kosher fishmonger, such as at the kosher fish area at the Jewel on Howard, or Devon Fish and Pizza, it is perfectly acceptable to buy fresh fish from a regular store as long as the following conditions are met:

- 1) Make sure you can identify the fish as kosher either by seeing its scales, or by some other unmistakable mark
- 2) Have the store wash off their knife before they cut your fish
- 3) Make sure you wash the fish thoroughly when you get home. Since nothing hot touched the fish, washing it off will clean off anything treif that might have touched it.

The good news on fruits and vegetables

Fruit:

Cut fruit from any supermarket are acceptable as long as there are no berries. Blueberries are acceptable also with no hashgacha.

Raspberries: Check at least three of those you wish to eat for bugs outside and inside. The Star-K tells people to blow on it and then look for bugs. If no bugs found, all are good.

Strawberries: Two methods: 1) Carefully remove the green leaf of the strawberry without making a hole in the top of the strawberry. If a hole was made, the strawberry should then be cut in half, allowing both the inside and outside of the strawberry to be washed. Then rub the surface of each individual berry while holding it under a stream of running water. Careful attention should be paid to the area beneath the green leaf at the top of the berry. (Orthodox Union)

2) Soak thoroughly, and, if possible, with a fruit and vegetable detergent which is kosher, and stir vigorously. Cut off the top. Wash and serve. (Orthodox Union; Star -K)

Canned FRUIT, except from China, do not need any supervision (except on Passover) as long as the only added ingredients are salt, sugar, corn syrup or water. Canned fruit that comes from China (ROC), e.g. Mandarin oranges, requires reliable supervision.

Vegetables:

Except for artichoke hearts and brussel sprouts and all products coming from China - which always need supervision - fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables are all kosher as long as there are no extra flavorings or stabilizers— beyond salt or baking soda or the like – and have no added oils. I would suggest going to the Star-K Online website for a more extensive discussion of fresh fruit and vegetables. Rav Moshe Heinemann is an accepted gadol on kashrut and of all the various rulings on fruit and vegetables; I have come to trust his opinion. Some highlights:

Broccoli and Cauliflower and Asparagus: Wash it under running water, shake it over a white or light bowl, and check for bugs on the stalk or in the bowl. If you don't find any, it is kosher to eat.

Dried beans, lentils, grains, sugar, flour, plain cocoa, honey, popcorn, *unflavored* coffee, and tea do not require supervision.

Fresh Cut vegetables: Commercially processed vegetables such as baby carrots, celery, sliced mushrooms etc are kosher without a supervision. Typically these types of companies only process vegetables and there are no kashrus concerns. "In store" processed and cut produce will require supervision (Dallas Vaad). Sesame seeds do not need supervision.

Lettuce: It is preferable, but not required (even for Romaine), to soak lettuce before eating it. All lettuce, however, needs to be checked on a leaf by leaf basis, checking both sides of the leaf. These are the standards put out by Rabbi Heinemann and the Star –K. While there are stricter standards out there, I have chosen the Star –K since they provide a balance between the importance of eating vegetables and the importance of being kosher. You can do both! Romaine lettuce needs to be washed, and Romaine lettuce needs to be soaked in water with vinegar. Bagged lettuce of any kind, which comes with a reliable supervision, 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. They also have a complete list of which dried fruit are kosher without supervision - such as domestic raisins.**

If we all work together to keep to these standards, everyone in our community will feel comfortable to be invited or to invite others to their home. Let us continue to create a community whose standards reflect the pleasantness we each have within us, which we can bring to our tables and homes.

Rabbi Asher Lopatin