

# Olam Tikvah Kashrut Guide

Current as of September 7, 2015

The *mitzvot* add holiness to our lives, raising our awareness of God's involvement in every aspect of life. Food is such an integral part of human life and an essential element of Jewish celebration, and focusing on the traditions of kashrut helps us as a community to elevate our celebration to an even higher spiritual level.

Olam Tikvah's Kashrut standards are in place to make eating in our synagogue comfortable for all serious traditional Conservative Jews. With this in mind, all foods brought into any part of the Olam Tikvah building or to an Olam Tikvah function outside the building must adhere to the guidelines established by the Olam Tikvah rabbis, the *Rav HaMachshir* (rabbinic authority on Kashrut) and *mara d'atra* (halachic authority) of the Congregation. The team of *mashgichim* (kashrut supervisors) implements and supervises these policies.

## Kitchen Coordination

In order to maintain the efficiency and smooth operation of the OT kitchen, questions regarding kitchen reservations, availability of dry ingredients (primarily spices), and availability of particular utensils/tools are directed to Leona Shoon in the OT office.

## Ingredients and Food Products

All ingredients and food products that come into the OT kitchen must be kosher. Here are some guidelines; consult the rabbis with questions or concerns.

- **Eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables.** Non-processed, non-packaged foods such as eggs and uncut fruits and vegetables in their natural state may be purchased without a *hechsher* symbol.
- **Canned fruits and vegetables.** Only canned fruit juice and vegetables packed in either water or water/sugar, or their own juices are permitted without a *hechsher*. Anything containing grape juice or wine vinegar must have a *hechsher*.
- **Frozen fruits and vegetables.** Frozen fruits and vegetables are acceptable without a *hechsher* symbol as long as they contain no additives or colorings. Vegetables designated as *charif* ("sharp": onions, radishes, garlic, lemons, hot peppers) require a *hechsher*.
- **Processed, packaged ingredients.** All ingredients used for food preparation and consumption—such as spices, dairy products, cookies, etc.—must arrive sealed in their original packaging and must bear a *hechsher*.
- **Cheese.** Cheese requires a *hechsher*.
- **Meat.** All fresh or frozen meat from a kosher butcher requires a *hechsher* symbol and is still in the original packaging. Pre-packaged, unopened meats with a *hechsher* are also permitted.
- **Fish.** Whole fresh fish does not require a *hechsher* but must be from a kosher fish. In general, we order fish from kosher distributors or butchers. If you are interested in purchasing fresh fish in a different way, contact the rabbis. Packaged or processed fish requires a *hechsher*.

- **Bakery items.** Unopened baked goods from kosher bakeries are acceptable. Dairy and pareve baked goods must be clearly separated and marked. All packaged baked goods must bear a *hechsher*.
- **Alcohol.** Wine and all other grape products (grape juice, champagne, vermouth, cognac, liqueur, sherry, brandy, etc.) used in the synagogue must have a *hechsher*. Unflavored beer does not require a *hechsher*; flavored beer does. As long as wine has a *hechsher*, it is acceptable whether *mevushal* (boiled) or not.

## *Hechsher Symbols*

There are thousands of *hechsher* symbols on food products throughout the world, many of which are found locally. These symbols change all the time, and therefore it is impossible to provide an exhaustive and current list. Many supermarkets can provide (online or in the store) a list of their kosher products and the *hechsher* symbols they carry. Below are the most common *hechsher* symbols.



A simple **K** is not acceptable.\*

\* There are some products which bear a plain **K** but which are actually under supervision. These products are permitted provided that the rabbis have been able to obtain a written kosher certification from the supervising rabbi. A binder of these certifications is available through Leona Shoon or the rabbis.

In accordance with the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, Olam Tikvah does **not** accept products bearing the **Ko** *hechsher* symbol.

### **P**

A **P** accompanying a *hechsher* symbol means (kosher for) **Passover**. It does *not* stand for the word Pareve.

### **DE**

A product labeled with a *hechsher* symbol and the letters **DE** mean that it contains only pareve ingredients but was produced using *dairy equipment*. Do not cook with this ingredient using meat or pareve utensils or pots/pans. A dish containing this ingredient *may* be served *immediately* following a meat meal, provided that it is served on different (dairy or disposable) plates.

Please check with one of the rabbis if you have a question about a particular *hechsher*.

## Cooking Items and Utensils

All cooking items and utensils are used exclusively in the OT kitchen or have been purchased new. The OT kitchen is fully stocked with pots, pans, bowls, and utensils for both dairy and meat. We also have a selection of glass serving platters designated pareve. Any cooking items or utensils not from OT must be new and in their original packaging and must be checked in with Leona Shoon. If a particular tool is lacking, please see Leona.

### *Hashgacha/Kashrut Supervision*

No foods that have been prepared outside OT, including at home, are allowed in the OT kitchen with the exception of food prepared by a kosher establishment. However, this food must arrive unopened with the supervising *mashgiach* seal of the kosher establishment.

The rabbis, kitchen managers, trained OT office staff, or OT-trained *mashgichim* (kashrut supervisors) must check and approve all items that enter the synagogue kitchen. Arrange the delivery of food for your event with the OT office.

All food to be served at OT must be prepared in the OT kitchen under the supervision of an OT-trained *mashgiach/mashgicha*. This includes food preparation by an outside caterer cooking in the OT kitchen, even if that caterer brings a *mashgiach* to OT. To arrange for kashrut supervision, contact Rachelle Palley in the OT office.

## Using the OT Kitchen

### **Layout**

The OT kitchen is equipped for preparing meat and dairy foods. The right-hand side of the kitchen is dairy; the left-hand side is meat. Each side has designated sinks, plastic counter tops (blue for dairy, red for meat), utensils, cutting boards, oven mitts, sponges, and dish soap. Refrigerators and freezers are marked as dairy or meat. Additionally, there are dairy and meat walk-in closets in the back of the kitchen which contain dishes, baking sheets, large bowls and more utensils. The kitchen is dairy by default—all of the countertops are considered dairy; therefore, they must be covered with the red plastic covers when cooking meat. Cover the sink *not in use* with its designated color.

The water pitchers, coffee pots, challah board, and challah knife are all pareve. Do not use dairy or meat sponges to wash them.

Closets and utensil drawers not being used should be kept locked. Keys to all drawers and closets are located in the kitchen and are the responsibility of the supervising *mashgiach/mashgicha*, Simcha Catering captain, kitchen manager, or designated office staff.

The OT kitchen must be reserved for use at least 4 weeks in advance by calling the main office.

### **Ingredients**

The kitchen contains some ingredients, including cooking spray and a variety of spices. Please consult Leona Shoon to check the availability of these items before you purchase duplicates. Please do not use any ingredients marked for someone else's use.

### **Special concerns**

Eggs: Although eggs do not require a *hechsher*, they must be checked for blood spots by cracking into a glass bowl or cup. Any egg with a blood spot should be discarded. Eggs are pareve.

Fruits and vegetables: Fruits and vegetables in which small insects or bugs may be hiding must be washed vigorously and checked prior to use. This includes: lettuce and other leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, artichokes, and strawberries. An easy way to do this is to fill a sink or large bowl with cold water, agitate the water and produce, and let the produce sit for a few minutes, then check as you rinse off. There is no need to wash these fruits/vegetables with soap or salt.

“Sharp” foods (חריף/*charif* in Hebrew): Some pareve foods are considered *charif*, which allows them to impart their flavor to any utensils or food with which they come into contact, and similarly they absorb whatever flavor is imparted to them. For example, an onion cut with a meat knife becomes a meat onion and therefore may not be cooked with dairy food. *Charif* foods are onions, radishes, garlic, lemons, hot peppers, and spicy pickles. Since the OT kitchen does not utilize meat and dairy items at the same time, *charif* foods should not be a problem.

Fish and Meat: Some Jews observe the custom of separating fish and meat during a meal. We do serve fish and meat in the same course, but please make sure that there are plenty of plates and utensils available so that those who prefer to eat fish and meat on separate plates and using separate utensils may do so.

## Appliances

1. Gas stoves and ovens. There are meat and dairy stove/oven appliances in the OT kitchen, marked as such. In order for the stove and ovens to work, the fan must be on. The switch for the fan is located near the dairy sink. Pilots on both ranges must be lit every time. There is a lighter in the dairy drawer. **NOTE: IF YOU SHUT OFF THE FAN, THE GAS WILL GO OFF.**
  - a. Stove. The pilot turns on the stove top.
  - b. Oven beneath the stove. Flip open the bottom panel (the door is hinged—lift up and pull down). While holding down the red button, light the pilot through the hole. Once the pilot is lit you still need to hold down the red button for 30-45 seconds. If it does not work, try again (you may have to hold the button even longer once the pilot is lit).

CLEANING: THE BURNERS ARE CAST IRON AND MUST BE DRIED AFTER WASHING TO PREVENT RUST. IF THERE IS FOOD ON THE BURNERS, TURN THEM UPSIDE DOWN OR PLACE ON ANOTHER BURNER TO BURN OFF THE FOOD.

2. Free-standing ovens. We have separate racks for meat and dairy, color-coded red and blue, respectively. The ovens will be marked with a red “Meat” or blue “Dairy” magnet to indicate their status. The kitchen manager will ensure that the ovens are prepared for either meat or dairy. These are lit by putting the ovens on and setting the temperature. If they do not start, turn off the oven and wait a couple of seconds. Try again.
3. Warming oven. There are separate racks for meat and dairy. To turn on the warming oven, set the temperature on the dial. It takes about 15-20 minutes to heat up. The fan does not need to be on for the warming oven.

4. Sinks. We have 3-compartment sinks (on each side of the kitchen): rinse, wash, sanitize. There is a unit above each sink that automatically gives you the correct amount of detergent.
5. Dishwasher. Choose the normal cycle to turn on the dishwasher. The auxiliary heater will automatically turn on. Make sure you turn on the fan to help with the heat. The timer is located directly across from the dishwasher. Set the number of hours that you need. Once set, do not touch.

### **Kashering**

Any utensils that are found in the wrong drawer or closet are assumed to have been made *treif*, that is, not kosher. An item becomes *treif* by being heated up—for example, a dairy spoon in a meat pot. Some items can be kashered, and that must be done before using it for cooking. (Some items may not be kashered and will be considered unfit for use in the OT kitchen.) Please inform the office of any utensil or appliance in the OT kitchen that you know must be kashered. The office and OT *mashgichim* will handle the kashering.

## **Shabbat and Holidays**

Certain food-related activities are prohibited on Shabbat and holidays, primarily cooking and the manipulation of fire/electricity.

- Nothing is allowed to leave or enter the OT building after 12pm on Friday afternoon. If there is a delay, consult the OT office. Absolutely **no** deliveries will be made after Shabbat has begun.
- Nothing used in the kitchen (food or utensils) may be purchased on Shabbat or Yom Tov.
- Cooking (browning, boiling, etc.) is not allowed on Shabbat. Foods that have already been cooked are allowed to be warmed on Shabbat.
- Use of lighted candles or “Sternos” flames for chaffing dishes is not permitted on Shabbat or Yom Tov.
- OT’s non-Jewish employees will turn on and off all utilities (stove, lights, air conditioning) on Shabbat and Yom Tov.