

Beth Jacob Synagogue Kashrut Policy 2023

From its beginnings, Conservative Judaism has affirmed the value of Kashrut. The Preamble to the Constitution of the United Synagogue of America (1913) states that the organization's purpose is:

“...the advancement of the cause of Judaism in America and the maintenance of Jewish tradition in its historical continuity, to assert and establish loyalty to the Torah, ... the Sabbath **and the dietary laws.**”

The “Standards for Synagogue Practice” affirm this essential aspect of Conservative Judaism, “[r]ecognizing *kashrut* as another basic tenet of Judaism,” and urging congregations to “take all steps necessary **to ensure proper observance of *kashrut*.**”

Members of Beth Jacob observe *kashrut* differently. Nevertheless, all who enter Beth Jacob should be comfortable in participating in and eating at all events and programs. In addition, Beth Jacob understands that the fulfillment of all *mitzvot* is to some degree aspirational, and respects the human element involved in attempting to comply with the various rules encompassing *kashrut*.

“*Kashrut*” or “keeping kosher” originates in the Torah and was developed in later rabbinic literature. There is no logic to the laws of *kashrut* -- we keep kosher simply because it is God's mandate. It brings holiness into our lives several times a day through the simple act of eating and connects us with Jews all over the world.

The purpose of this document is to memorialize the way Beth Jacob Synagogue adheres to the laws of *kashrut* regarding foods brought into its building and how they are prepared.

Only kosher food is permitted in the synagogue building. *Halakhic* issues concerning the observance of *kashrut* should be resolved by the rabbi in consultation with lay leadership.

“Only kosher food is permitted in the synagogue building.” The reason we include building segmentation is that as a practical matter, food needs to be brought into the building by current employees, for secular events and secular/religious (but not Jewish) events, and the like; and whose function/purpose can be discharged in the southern half of the building. And kosher observance by these and others similarly situated may not be of the high standards demanded by the *kashrut* policy that Beth Jacob observes for its Jewish/religious observances. But again, the aspiration for all is that only “kosher food” be brought into the synagogue. But we will limit the “kosher

Kashrut Supervision

Our community's *mashgiach* is our Synagogue rabbi, Rav Julius Rabinowitz. The *mashgiach* is the one who supervises all *kashrut* in the building and approves all food at all events on premises or associated with the synagogue.

Guidelines for Foods Allowed in the Building

1. The following ingredients are kosher without certification: Fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, eggs, milk, salt, sugar, flour, pure spices, tea, coffee, raw grains, beans and rice, raw nuts or nut flour.
2. All fresh meat, chicken or fish products must come from an approved kosher source; or if in a commercial package, bear an approved *heksher* symbol (a kosher certification mark symbol from among those listed on page 4.) For example, you may bring a can of tuna fish with the *heksher* symbol.
3. All commercially-prepared, processed, or packaged food (including canned, frozen, baked, or foods otherwise changed from their natural state), as well as dairy products (cheeses, yogurts, etc.), that are not covered by the permission in paragraph number 1 above, should be marked with an approved *heksher*. For example, packaged foods in a grocery store.
4. Notwithstanding paragraph 3, foods purchased for consumption, such as a sandwich, slice of pizza, doughnut, etc. from a retail vendor, including those purchased from a source that is not an approved kosher source, may be brought into the building under the following conditions:
 - A. there is no meat, chicken or fish within the food;
 - B. the food will be consumed on the southern side of the building (where the classrooms and offices are situated); and not to be brought into the Kiddush Room/foyer, library, Social Hall or kitchen, unless part of a Synagogue-sponsored/supervised event.³

police" function to the Library, Kitchen, Social Hall, Kiddush room/Foyer, Chapel and Sanctuary – places in the building where, if food is eaten, it **MUST** be kosher.

2. The Committee recommends that only *hekshered* cheeses be permitted, notwithstanding any additional cost or hassle involved.
3. People need to be reminded that they cannot consume food in any of these spaces unless as part of a Synagogue sponsored/supervised event. This responsibility can be delegated by the Rabbi to another for supervision as the occasion requires.

5. Meat and dairy food items may not be eaten in the same meal, or together. **To help ensure compliance with this requirement, it is recommended that meat items be excluded from all food consumption on the premises unless specific provision is made with the *mashgiach*.**
6. No food or drink (other than water) is to be brought into the Sanctuary or the Chapel, except as needed for use in a religious service.

Any prepared or processed foods that are not listed should be brought to the rabbi for review and approval.

Reheating Food on Shabbat

It is forbidden to cook food on Shabbat. However, if food is already cooked, it is permissible to reheat such food. Food can be placed and warmed in the oven or food warmer on Shabbat. The oven temperature is not to exceed 180F degrees. If it does, that constitutes re-cooking, which is forbidden on Shabbat.

Kosher Caterers

Please contact the synagogue office for a list of preferred and approved caterers. (Meat and Dairy options are available)

Passover

The kitchen will be *kashered* for the holiday. **Only Passover *hekshered* food products are allowed in the synagogue during the entire eight days of the holiday**, except for fresh fruit and vegetables, eggs, coffee, and tea. Other than as permitted in the preceding sentence, **NO FOOD** is permitted in the building from any home (congregant or non-congregant) during the holiday of Passover.

4. We are NOT saying you cannot bring meat into the building. We are saying that bringing meat into the building is what triggers the 'kashrut headache' and if you leave the meat home, you avoid 95 % of the headache. But if you want to eat it, go for it. But don't bring your questionable salami into the kitchen, social hall, the kiddush room/foyer, the library – eat at your desk.

5. For those who think that this is understood and unnecessary, both members and guests are constantly reminded that they may not bring food or drink (other than water) into these rooms when not in use for a specific religious purpose or use. The prohibition applies at all times and is necessary to maintain the sanctity of these places.

