

THE FOOD FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): SPECIFICS

I. HAMOTZI

HAMOTZI: WHICH FOODS GET HAMOTZI

HaMotzi on Bread Made of the Five Grains

Wash the One-Time Method and say ha'motzi on bread made of the Five Grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt), even if you will not eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes.

NOTE Say the blessing al netilat yadayim on washing hands ONLY if you will eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread within four minutes.

NOTE If you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. of bread of the Five Grains, do not say birkat ha'mazon or any other after-blessing.

FORE-BLESSING: BREAD-LIKE FOODS

Fore-Blessing: Bread or Mezonot

To be halachically considered “bread,” the item must have been baked and have air holes in it. To determine whether a food made of the Five Grains qualifies as bread (ha'motzi) or mezonot (borei minei mezonot), decide whether the food had been made to be eaten as a meal or as a snack. If it was made to be:

- Bread (that is, for a meal), say ha'motzi.
- Mezonot (but you will eat a full meal), say ha'motzi.
- A snack, say borei minei mezonot.

NOTE Some foods may qualify as either ha'motzi or mezonot (such as pizza).

NOTE If at least 20% of a bread's flour is from one of the Five Grains, say a fore-blessing of ha'motzi on the bread (and birkat ha'mazon afterward, if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE Whether the bread/mezonot was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by its intended use. Mezonot rolls on airline flights may still require the blessing of ha'motzi if you eat them as part of a meal.

NOTE Since it does not have air holes, wheat tortillas get the blessing of mezonot and not ha'motzi.

NOTE The fore-blessing on stuffing made of bread or a bread kugel is mezonot if none of the pieces are 1 fl. oz. or larger.

Fore-Blessing: Small Amount of Pizza/Other Bread-Like Mezonot

SITUATION You will eat less than 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of pizza or other bread-like mezonot within four minutes.

WHAT TO DO Wash your hands using the One-Time Method, but do not say al netilat yadayim. Then say borei minei mezonot.

Fore-Blessing: Sprouted Wheat Bread

For the fore-blessing on sprouted wheat bread, say:

- Ha'motzi if the grains are more like wheat grains than sprouts.

NOTE If the sprout still has any part of the original grain, excluding the husk, it is still considered to be grain and the fore-blessing is ha'motzi.

- She'hakol if the grains were sprouted in water without soil.

Fore-Blessing: Bread/Cakes of Only Rice Flour

Bread or cakes made of only rice flour may not be used for any meal requiring eating bread and saying *birkat ha'mazon*. The blessing is *borei minei mezonot*, not *ha'motzi*.

Fore-Blessing: Bread/Cakes of Rice Flour and Mezonot Flour

In a bread containing rice flour, if at least 20% of the flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say the fore-blessing of *ha'motzi* (after-blessing: *birkat ha'mazon*).

In a cake containing mostly rice flour, if at least 20% of the flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say a fore-blessing of *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).

Fore-Blessing: Unbaked Dough

For the fore-blessing on cooked (but unbaked) dough, see [Fore-Blessing: Cooked Dough/Pasta](#).

Fore-Blessing: Bulgur Wheat/Tabouli

The fore-blessing on bulgur wheat (such as *tabouli*) is *borei minei mezonot*.

HAMOTZI: WHICH FOODS HAMOTZI COVERS

Which Foods HaMotzi Covers

Ha'motzi always covers all food eaten as part of a meal, except wine and any non-*mezonot* desserts such as fruit, on all days (not just on *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals*).

Desserts that HaMotzi Does Not Cover

Non-*mezonot* dessert foods (which often have a sweet taste) are not normally eaten with bread. Say fore-blessings on desserts at a meal (for which you have already said *ha'motzi* and eaten bread) only on:

- Fruit from “trees” (*borei pri ha'eitz*),
- Fruit from the ground (*borei pri ha'adama*), such as melons and strawberries, and
- Specialty items (*she'hakol*), such as ice cream.

HAMOTZI: WASHING HANDS

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: When To Wash

Before eating bread, you must always wash your hands.

NOTE If you do not plan to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread within four minutes, wash but do not say the blessing *al netilat yadayim*.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Finding Water

To find water for washing hands before eating bread:

- You must travel or walk up to 18 minutes away to find water.
- If you are already traveling, you must continue up to 72 minutes (in the direction in which you are going anyway) to find water.
- If you still cannot find water, cover your hands with any type of separation (gloves, sheet of plastic, bag, foil, or some other object) to keep your hands from directly contacting the bread.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Finding 4 fl. oz. Container

SITUATION You do not have a washing cup of at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) and you need to wash hands after sleeping or before eating bread.

STATUS You may not substitute a smaller washing container (such as a 2 fl. oz./59 ml cup) and use it twice.

WHAT TO DO You must travel up to 18 minutes away to get such a container when needed.

NOTE If you have a spigot that is less than 12 inches above the ground, you may open the spigot and let at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) flow out, close the tap, reopen it, and repeat.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Procedure

To wash for ha'motzi, use the One-Time Method, see [How To Wash Hands the One-Time Method](#).

HaMotzi: Being Touched by Unwashed Hands

SITUATION Someone who has not yet washed touches your hand after you have washed your hands, said al netilat yadayim, and dried your hands.

STATUS

- If his/her hand is dry, there is no problem of transferring impurity.
- If his/her hand is wet, this may have transferred ritual impurity to your hand.

WHAT TO DO

- If his/her hand is wet, touch a normally covered part of your body and then rewash your hands and say the blessing on washing hands.

NOTE If you have already said ha'motzi, don't repeat the ha'motzi blessing.

HaMotzi: Speaking after Washing

SITUATION You washed your hands in order to eat bread. You spoke before saying *hamotzi*.

WHAT TO DO You do not need to wash your hands again.

You do not need to say the blessing on washing hands again.

HaMotzi: Forgot To Wash

SITUATION You said ha'motzi without having washed your hands first.

WHAT TO DO Up until the time you say birkat ha'mazon, you must interrupt your meal and wash your hands.

NOTE Say al netilat yadayim ONLY if you will still eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread afterward; if you will eat less than 1.9 fl. oz., wash without a blessing.

HAMOTZI: LIFTING THE BREAD

HaMotzi: When To Lift the Bread

When saying ha'motzi, lift the bread when saying God's name. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

HAMOTZI: INTERRUPTED MEAL/HESECH DA'AT

Washing Your Hands for Interrupted Meal

SITUATION You said ha'motzi, ate any amount of bread, interrupted your meal and forgot about it, and now wish to resume your meal and eat more bread.

WHAT TO DO Wash your hands again and say the blessing on washing hands.

NOTE There is no time limit for this; whenever you forget about the meal, you must rewash before eating more bread. However, you do not say ha'motzi if it is within the allowed time to say birkat ha'mazon.

HAMOTZI: SHABBAT

HaMotzi: Shabbat

For HaMotzi on Shabbat, see Shabbat: Two Loaves (Lechem Mishneh).

II. BOREI MINEI MEZONOT

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: GENERAL RULES

Introduction to Borei Minei Mezonot

Say the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot on non-bread foods if:

- Grain
The *Five Grains* (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt) make up at least 20% of the food's flour volume, AND
- Cooking Method
Food is cooked or baked, AND
- Meal or Snack
You intend to eat the food as a snack and not a meal.

NOTE If you intend to eat a full meal that includes *mezonot* of a cake-like or bread-like texture, say *ha'motzi*.

For basing the fore-blessing on the main or preferential ingredient in a food mixture and/or saying two fore-blessings, see [Fore-Blessings \(*Bracha Rishona*\): Food Mixtures: Main Ingredient](#) and [Introduction to Food Fore-Blessings \(*Bracha Rishona*\): The Five Grains](#).

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: WHICH GRAINS

FORE-BLESSING: WHICH GRAINS: NON-FIVE GRAINS: IN WHOLE OR IN PART

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: In Whole or In Part

Say the fore-blessing *borei pri ha'adama* (not *borei minei mezonot*) on cooked or baked foods:

- If the *Five Grains* make up less than 20% of the food's flour volume, OR
- If made of non-*Five Grains*, such as corn, millet, or quinoa.

NOTE Rice is an exception; see next entry.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: Rice

Rice (including rice bread and rice pasta) gets the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot*, but not the after-blessing of *al ha'michya* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*), even if you ate an entire meal of rice.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: Tortillas

For corn tortillas (most tortillas are corn tortillas), say the fore-blessing *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*).

For wheat tortillas, say the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).

FORE-BLESSING: WHICH GRAINS: NON-FIVE GRAINS: MEZONOT/NON-MEZONOT COMBINATIONS

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Ice Cream Cone

The fore-blessing for ice cream cones depends on which part you prefer to eat:

SITUATION 1 You like the ice cream more than the cone and would eat it without the cone.

WHAT TO DO Say the fore-blessing of *she'hakol*.

NOTE *She'hakol* covers the cone.

After-blessing

- *Borei nefashot* if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup--including cone, if you eat the cone) within four minutes.
- No blessing if you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. in four minutes.

SITUATION 2 You like the cone and the ice cream equally.

WHAT TO DO Say *borei minei mezonot* (this will cover the ice cream).

After-blessing

- Al ha' michya if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup of ice cream plus cone) within four minutes.
- No blessing if you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. in four minutes.

SITUATION 3 The cone is sweet and you ALSO like the ice cream as much as the cone.

WHAT TO DO

- Say *she'hakol* on the ice cream.
- When you get to the cone, add borei minei mezonot.

After-blessing

- Borei nefashot.
- Also say al ha'michya if the cone totaled at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) and you ate it within four minutes.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Pie

Normally, for a pie say:

Fore-Blessing

Fore-blessing of borei minei mezonot, even if it contains less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of flour.

After-Blessing

To say the after-blessing, al ha'michya, you must eat a total volume of at least 1.3 fl. oz.--even if the flour was a minority of the ingredients.

However, if you prefer the filling to the crust (if you would not eat the crust by itself), say the appropriate fore-blessing over the filling, such as:

- *She'hakol* (after-blessing: borei nefashot), or
- Borei pri ha'eitz (after-blessing if on more than 1.3 fl. oz. of the Five Special Fruits--figs, dates, grapes, or pomegranates: al ha'eitz).

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Turkey with Bread Stuffing

SITUATION You will eat bread stuffing with turkey. The bread stuffing has at least one chunk of bread at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

WHAT TO DO Wash and say ha'motzi. If you eat at least 1.3 fl oz of the stuffing, say *birkat ha'mazon* afterward.

SITUATION You will eat bread stuffing with turkey. There is NOT at least one chunk of bread at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

WHAT TO DO Do not wash and say ha'motzi, and do not say *birkat ha'mazon* (unless you eat enough to constitute a full meal). However, if you enjoy the stuffing as much as the turkey or will eat some stuffing by itself, say borei minei mezonot.

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: WHICH COOKING METHODS

FORE-BLESSING: COOKED DOUGH

Fore-Blessing: Cooked Dough/Pasta

Bread must be baked in order to say ha'motzi on it ; dough that was cooked by any method other than baking (such as pasta) gets the fore-blessing of borei minei mezonot.

NOTE Even if you eat enough to constitute a meal, you still say al ha'michya afterward.

FORE-BLESSING: FRIED BREAD BATTER

Fore-Blessing: French Toast

See Bread/Mezonot: Mixtures with Other Foods.

FORE-BLESSING: RAW OR COOKED GRAINS

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Porridge/Oatmeal

If oatmeal is porridge, say borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Rolled Oats/Muesli

If rolled oats are eaten without cooking (such as in raw muesli), say borei pri ha'adama (after-blessing, borei nefashot).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Granola

On granola, since it is cooked (baked), say borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Granola Bars

On granola bars, say borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

FORE-BLESSING: CAKE BATTER

Fore-Blessing: Raw Cake Batter

Before eating raw cake batter, say she'hakol (after-blessing: borei nefashot).

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: INTENDED AS MEAL OR SNACK

Fore-Blessing: Bread-Like Crackers

Fore-blessing for Ryvita and other bread-like crackers :

- Ha'motzi if they are normally eaten as a meal—even if you eat only a small amount. The after-blessing is birkat ha'mazon as long as you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes.

NOTE If you ate less than 1.3 fl. oz. or took more than 4 minutes, do not say any after-blessing.

- Borei minei mezonot if normally eaten as a snack (after-blessing: al ha'michya).

SITUATION Crackers are normally eaten as a snack, but YOU eat it as part of a meal.

WHAT TO DO Say ha'motzi (after-blessing, birkat ha'mazon).

Fore-Blessing: Bread Sticks

Bread sticks are intended to be eaten as a snack, so say borei minei mezonot and not ha'motzi (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Crackers

Over crackers, say the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

III. BOREI PRI HAGAFEN

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: WHAT IT COVERS

When To Say Borei Pri HaGafen

Say borei pri ha'gafen on wine or grape juice, whether at a meal with bread or not.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: MIXED DRINKS

Borei Pri HaGafen: Mixed Drinks: Wine/Grape Juice Mixed with Water

Say borei pri ha'gafen on drinks of wine or grape juice mixed with water if at least 1/7th of the total volume is wine (or grape juice) but the mixture but also still be considered to be wine or grape juice.

Borei Pri HaGafen: Mixed Drinks: Wine/Grape Juice Mixed with Non-Water Liquids

Say *borei pri ha'gafen* on mixtures of wine (or grape juice) with beverages other than water, as long as the final mixture would still be considered to be wine (or grape juice) by most people in your area.

NOTE If the mixture is at least 50% wine (and maybe even at greater dilutions), it will normally be considered *borei pri ha'gafen*.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: IN SUCCESSION WITH SHEHAKOL

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN*: AFTER SHEHAKOL

Borei Pri HaGafen*: After SheHakol

SITUATION You said *she'hakol* on a non-grape beverage, drank the beverage, and then want to drink wine (or grape juice).

WHAT TO DO Say *borei pri ha'gafen* before drinking the wine (or grape juice).

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN*: BEFORE SHEHAKOL

Borei Pri HaGafen*: Before SheHakol: Drink at Least 2 Fl. Oz.

If you say *borei pri ha'gafen* and drink at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, the *borei pri ha'gafen* will cover all subsequent beverages you drink at about the same time--even if their fore-blessing should be *she'hakol*.

NOTE Saying the after-blessing on the wine/grape juice--if drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of the wine/grape juice--covers the water or other beverage that you drank.

Borei Pri HaGafen: Before SheHakol: Drink Less than 2 Fl. Oz.

If you say *borei pri ha'gafen* and drink less than 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, you must say *she'hakol* over any subsequent non-grape-based beverages that you drink.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: SAYING AGAIN

Saying Borei Pri HaGafen Again

You may say a new blessing on any remaining wine if:

- You said, or heard someone saying, *borei pri ha'gafen*,
- Drank some wine (or grape juice),
- Decided to stop drinking (*hesech da'at*), and
- Returned to drink from the same cup later.

NOTE If you are not sure you had *hesech da'at*, do not say a new blessing.

IV. BOREI PRI HA'EITZ

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: ALL FRUITS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: All Fruits: Perennial Fruits and Nuts

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* on fruits and nuts from perennial trees or bushes.

NOTE A perennial tree or bush is a plant whose trunks or stalks survive from year to year; often with bark on the trunk or stalk.

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: FIVE SPECIAL FRUITS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: Five Special Fruits: General Rule

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* on the *Five Special Fruits* for which the Land of Israel is praised.

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: Five Special Fruits: Order and Preference

To eat more than one type of the *Five Special Fruits*:

- If you have a particular preference, you may eat the fruits in whichever order you prefer.
- If you have no particular preference, eat them in this order:
 - Olive
 - Date
 - Grape
 - Fig
 - Pomegranate.

NOTE Order of *Five Special Fruits*

The order for eating the *Five Special Fruits* comes from *Deuteronomy/Devarim* 8:8 and follows the fruit's proximity to the two times the word “*eretz*” is used:

“*Eretz chita u's'ora v'gefen u't'eina v'rimon, eretz zayit shemen u'dvash.*”

A land of wheat and barley and grapevine and fig and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey.

V. BOREI PRI HAADAMA

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS: GENERAL RULES

Borei Pri HaAdama: Which Foods: General Rules

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on:

- Common vegetables,
- Fruits and nuts that grow on annual plants (such as pineapple, bananas, strawberries, peanuts), and
- Uncooked or unbaked grains, including those not of the *Five Special Grains*.

NOTE For when to say *she'hakol*, see [Borei Pri HaAdama: Sprouts](#) .

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS: SPECIALTY FOODS

Borei Pri HaAdama: Bananas, Hearts of Palm

Say *borei pri ha'adama* if the tree from which the food grew can only be used once, such as banana trees or palm trees that get cut down after giving their produce.

Borei Pri HaAdama: Bread Croutons in Salad

For fore-blessing of bread croutons in salad, see [Borei Pri HaAdama: Salads](#).

Borei Pri HaAdama: Salads

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on vegetable salad.

NOTE The fore-blessing of *borei pri ha'adama* also covers salad toppings and additions that by themselves require a different blessing, such as:

- *Borei pri ha'eitz* for a sprinkling of pine nuts, cashews, apple slices, or raisins, or
- *Borei minei mezonot* or *ha'motzi* for bread croutons.

REASON Since these toppings and additions are subordinate to the main salad, you do not say the

individual blessings; you only say borei pri ha'adama.

Borei Pri HaAdama: Sprouts

Say the fore-blessing of *she'hakol* if the sprouts were grown only in water.

Say borei pri ha'adama if the grains were sprouted in the ground (such as sunflower sprouts or wheat grass).

VI. SHEHAKOL

SHEHAKOL: WHICH FOODS

SheHakol: Which Foods: General Rule

Say *she'hakol*, the most general blessing, over any food or drink that does not fall into a higher category (*HaMotzi*, *Borei Minei Mezonot*, *Borei Pri Ha'Eitz*, *Borei Pri HaGafen*, and *Borei Pri HaAdama*).

NOTE One blessing of *she'hakol* covers both liquids and solids that will be eaten/drunk at the same snack or meal.

SheHakol: Which Foods: Mistaken SheHakol

She'hakol may theoretically apply to many foods, *b'diavad*,--even bread, wine, the Five Special Fruits, and *mezonot*. However, we have a principle to say the highest-level food blessing possible.

If you said *she'hakol*, mistakenly believing it was the correct blessing for a higher-level food, *she'hakol* does cover the food after the fact and, *b'di'avad*, you may eat the bread, wine, or other higher-level food.

SheHakol: Which Foods: Unrecognizable Foods

You must be able to recognize, from at least one piece, that an ingredient is from the ground or from a tree in order to say *borei pri ha'adama* or *borei pri ha'eitz*. If not, say *she'hakol*.

So say *she'hakol* on:

- All foods that did not grow in the ground or on a tree, but also
- Foods that you cannot personally identify as having grown in the ground or on a tree—either because it has been finely ground or processed or because you personally do not know what it is.

EXAMPLE Even if you know that a *kugel* is made with potatoes, unless you can see recognizable pieces of potato, do not say *borei pri ha'adama*, but rather *she'hakol*.

EXAMPLES (Foods that Get *SheHakol*)

- Apple Sauce.
- Beer, Cognac, Grape Brandy, and other alcoholic beverages other than wine and grape juice and their derivatives.
- Cheese and other *Dairy* Products (unless they contain grain).
- Eggs (plain).
- Fish.
- Fruits or vegetables whose identity is not recognizable.
- Honey.
- Ice Cream.
- Juice.
- Meat.
- Mushrooms.
- Poultry.
- Seaweed.

- Soda.
- Soup (clear).
- Sprouts.
- Water.

SHEHAKOL: IF YOU CANNOT EAT THE FOOD

SheHakol: Said But Cannot Eat

SITUATION You said the blessing *she'hakol*, intending to eat some cheese that is in front of you, and then remember that you ate meat shortly before.

WHAT TO DO You should not eat any of the cheese but, instead, say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.*

SHEHAKOL: HOW OFTEN

SheHakol: Drinking Water Once

Say the *she'hakol* blessing on water once for the entire day if you:

- Are hiking or doing other outdoor activities, and
- Have water with you or know there is water along the way, and
- Expect to be thirsty again later in the day and will want to drink water.

SheHakol: Drinking Water Again

Say a new *she'hakol* blessing if you buy more water along the way while hiking or doing other outdoor activities--even if you said the blessing at the start of your day's activities.

SheHakol: Drinks while in Flight

If you intend to continue drinking during a flight, you may say one blessing on beverages (*she'hakol*) and continue drinking for the entire flight.

SHEHAKOL: WHEN NOT TO SAY

SheHakol: When Not To Say: Non-Nutritive Foods

Do not say a fore-blessing on chewing gum or bubble gum if it contains no nutritional substances.

SHEHAKOL: HUMOROUS REMINDER POEM

SheHakol: Humorous Reminder Poem

If you're in doubt,
 And you do not know,
 Say *she'hakol*
Nihiyeh bi'dvaro.