FOOD FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): SPECIAL CASES

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES

GENERAL RULES OF FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Food Mixtures: Main Ingredient

1. Say the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) over the main or most important ingredient in a mixture of foods from various food-blessing categories.
2. The blessing on the main food covers all other ingredients in the mixture.

EXAMPLES Fore-Blessing over Turkey with Cranberry Sauce
To eat turkey with cranberry sauce, saying the fore-blessing *she'hakol* on the more-important food (turkey) covers the less-important food (cranberry sauce). Even if you eat some of the sauce after the turkey is finished, you do not say a new blessing on the sauce.

NOTE If you eat cranberry sauce by itself and not with turkey, say:

- *Borei pri ha'eitz* if it contains identifiable pieces of (or entire) cranberries.
- *She'hakol* if the cranberry sauce has no identifiable pieces.

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) over Cholent

Cholent blessing (if the *cholent* is not eaten as part of a meal) follows the most important ingredient and is somewhat subjective to the eater.

- German *cholent* —A variety of wheat is primary; say *borei minei mezonot*.
- Hungarian *cholent*—Barley is primary; say *borei minei mezonot*.
- Polish *cholent* —Beans are primary; say *borei pri ha'adama*.
- Russian *cholent* —Potatoes are primary; say *borei pri ha'adama*.
- If meat is most important, say *she'hakol*.

NOTE You may need to say more than one blessing (*bracha rishona)* if there is no one preeminently important ingredient in a mixture of food types in one utensil, such as a casserole or *cholent*, but only if:

- You especially like more than one ingredient, and
- Both (or more than two) of the ingredients can be eaten distinctly.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES: INCLUDING FIVE GRAINS

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MIXTURES WITH FIVE GRAINS: CONTAINING BREAD/MEZONOT

Introduction to Food Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): The Five Grains

Bread or *Mezonot*: Intended Use

Whether a food made of the *Five Grains* qualifies as bread (*ha'motzi*) or *mezonot* (*borei minei mezonot*)

depends on whether the food was intended to be eaten as a meal or as a snack, as follows:

- Bread for a meal: Say *ha'motzi*.
- *Mezonot* (but you will eat a full meal): Say *ha'motzi*.
- A snack (including bread as a snack): Say *borei minei mezonot*.

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

NOTE Whether the bread/*mezonot* was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by the food's 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 Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to *mezonot*.

Bread/*Mezonot*: Amount of Five Grains Needed

In a non-bread food containing a mixture of grains, at least 20% of the main ingredients must be from one of the *Five Grains* in order to require the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) of *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).
If at least 20% of a bread's flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say a fore-blessing of *ha'motzi* (and *birkat ha'mazon* afterward if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE If you do not know the actual percent of each grain, such as in cereal, say *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*). But you should try to determine the actual amounts of the grains.

Bread/*Mezonot*: Mixtures with Other Foods

Normally, the fore-blessing for bread (*ha'motzi*), or for other cooked or baked foods made from flour (borei minei *mezonot*), will override the remaining foods in a food mixture.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to *mezonot*.

EXAMPLES Saying HaMotzi over Bread Mixture
Wash and say *ha'motzi* over bread and bread-mixture foods such as French toast, if at least one piece is more than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) in volume.
If no individual piece is at least 1.3 fl. oz., say *borei minei mezonot*.

REASON Being fried changes the French toast's status, even if the total of all of the pieces is more than 1.3 fl. oz.

Saying Borei Minei *Mezonot* over *Mezonot* Mixture

Say borei minei *mezonot* over:

- *Cholent* whose main ingredient is barley;
- Ice cream cone (ice cream + cone)—see "ice cream cone" for further details;
- Pie; and
- Cheesecake with any kind of crust.

NOTE Cheesecakes are sold in bakeries and not in cheese stores, indicating that the *mezonot* part is more important than the cheese part as regards fore- and after-blessings.

FORE-BLESSINGS: FRUIT MIXTURES

Fore-Blessings over Fruit Cocktail

For fruit cocktail, say fore-blessings of *borei pri ha'eitz* (for tree fruits) AND *borei pri ha'adama* (for pineapple, etc.).

REASON Fruit cocktail does not have a main ingredient.

FORE-BLESSINGS: MIXTURES WITH RICE

Fore-Blessings: Stuffed Grape Leaves

If grape leaves are stuffed with rice, say *borei minei mezonot*.

Fore-Blessings: Sushi

Say the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot* over sushi, since the rice is primary. If you are eating the sushi for the salmon (or other ingredient) in the middle, say *she'hakol*, too (or whatever blessing is correct for that important ingredient).

NOTE To say fore-blessings over sushi:

- Say *borei minei mezonot*, then take a bite of rice (which may have nori, etc., on it).
- Say *she'hakol*, then take a bite of fish (which may have rice, avocado, etc., stuck to it).

FORE-BLESSINGS: UNUSUAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Bracha Rishona: Coconut Water

To drink coconut water:

- Say *borei pri ha'eitz* if you drink coconut water directly from the coconut.
- Say *she'hakol* if you pour the water out of the nut into a utensil.

Bracha Rishona: Fiddleheads

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on fiddleheads (unfurled fern tops in early spring).

Bracha Rishona: Hydroponic Vegetables

Say *she'hakol* on hydroponic vegetables, including bean sprouts.

NOTE If you don't know how the vegetables were grown, you are not required to research the source of the vegetables: you may assume that they are not hydroponic and say the fore-blessing of *borei pri ha'adama*.

Bracha Rishon: Olives

There is no separate blessing on eating olives with a meal. If you eat olives by themselves (without other food), say *borei pri ha'eitz*.

Bracha Rishona: Popcorn

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on popcorn.

© Copyright 2026 Richard B. Aiken | www.practicalhalacha.com