

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.