

KASHRUT: CONCEPTS

KASHRUT: TERMS

Kosher

Kosher means fitting (food that is fitting to eat).

Nifsal Mei Achilat Kelev

Nifsal mei achilat kelev means not fit for a dog to eat. Since dogs will eat many things that are disgusting, food is considered edible by whether you would serve it to a dog. Toothpaste and lipstick (all year round, not just on *Passover*) are examples of *nifsal*.

Trafe and Neveila

"Trafe" is generically used to mean any food that is not kosher, but it actually means an animal that was "torn" (for instance, by a predator).

Neveila is an animal that was not slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law.

KASHRUT: SUPERVISION/HECHSHER

KASHRUT: FOOD SERVED BY SHOMER SHABBAT JEW

Kashrut: Food Served by Shomer Shabbat Jew

You may trust that the food a shomer Shabbat Jew serves is kosher without your needing to check it out. However, if a shomer Shabbat host serves non-kosher food or food without reliable supervision on foods that need supervision, you may not eat it.

NOTE If the host will listen to you if you tell the host that the item is not kosher, you should tell him/her. If the host will not listen, you should not tell him/her.

KASHRUT: FOOD SOLD BY STORES OR CATERERS

Kashrut: Supervision Mark

Supervision is needed during the manufacturing of certain foods to certify they are kosher. These products are usually marked with a supervision mark ("hechsher") of the certifying body.

Kashrut: Reliability of Supervision

Ask a reliable source when you need to determine whether a particular kosher-supervision body is reliable. You do not need to do any further research.

When Hechsher NOT Needed

Processed Food without Hechsher: Is It Kosher?

If a processed food does not have supervision/hashgacha, here are some issues to consider:

- Ingredients;
- Utensils/processing equipment;
- Bishul akum/"prestigious" foods that require Jewish involvement in the cooking;
- Heating system (recirculated steam?);
- Heter for milk without being supervised - which conditions and countries can be relied on;
- Non-food ingredients (lubricants, preservatives, emulsifiers...);
- Reliability of the producer;

- Is the non-kosher ingredient *batel*/nullified?
 - ownership (Is the food's producer or owner Jewish?)
 - intended consumer (Is the food being produced specifically for Jews, or is it for the public and Jews are some of the customers)?
 - Was the non-kosher substance added intentionally?
 - Does the non-kosher substance have flavor?
 - Was the non-kosher substance added for flavor?

A hechsher/kosher supervision is not needed on:

- Beer made in the US (and sometimes in other countries).
- Nuts (dry roasted) without additives.
- Olives--assumed to be kosher unless mixed with ingredients that may be non-kosher, such as:
 - Vinegar (sometimes made from grapes).
 - Non-kosher chemical preservatives (in commercially sold olives).

NOTE In open markets in which olives are sold in bulk, you may eat olives after checking the ingredients.

- Olive oil (extra virgin).
- Pure fruit juice NOT made from concentrate (such as orange or pineapple juice) does not normally require a hechsher (except for grape juice, which always requires a hechsher!).

NOTE Juices from concentrate might have kashrut problems due to the vats in which they are cooked or pasteurized. If you can verify how the juice was processed and that there are no kashrut problems, you may use the juice without a hechsher. There may also be problems with juice made from fruit or vegetables which were grown in Eretz Yisrael, due to orla, shmitta, teruma and maaser.

- Scotch whiskey--even where it might have been aged in sherry casks.

REASON Any sherry would be nullified as less than 1/6th.

NOTE Other types of whiskey may not be kosher because:

- Glycerine may have been added;
- The whiskey may have been owned by a Jew during *Passover* in a previous year; or
- Milk, or alcohol derived from milk, might have been added.

- Sugar (confectioner's) needs kosher supervision only for *Passover*. Regular sugar never needs kosher supervision (currently).
- Unprocessed foods such as
 - Raw fruits and vegetables (but might need to be checked for insects), and
 - Water, but some unfiltered tap water might have tiny creatures in it which make the water non-kosher.

NOTE Several websites list additional foods that do not need supervision to be trusted as kosher.

When Hechsher Needed

A hechsher/kosher supervision is needed on:

- Seltzer with natural flavor.
- Grape seed extract and grape seed oil.

KASHRUT: TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER

INTRODUCTION TO TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER

Introduction to Taste (Ta'am) Transfer

Gender/Kashrut Status Transfer

Foods and kitchenware (pots, pans, dishes, utensils, and containers) can absorb taste from each other and so adopt a new gender or kosher status. They can change from:

- Kosher to non-kosher,
- Kosher pareve (neutral) to kosher dairy or kosher meat, or
- Kosher Passover to kosher (or non-kosher) non-Passover.

NOTE You can sometimes change a utensil/container to kosher-pareve (see Kashering, below), but you cannot change a

- Gendered food to neutral-pareve, or
- Non-kosher food to kosher.

Taste Absorption

Taste gets absorbed in three ways: Heat, pressure, and soaking.

Heat

To absorb taste, and therefore gender or kashrut status, through heat, a food or utensil must be heated to 120° F or more while:

- Steamed with a *halachically* “liquid” food, or
- In wet physical contact with the food or utensil.

EXAMPLES

- Two hot pans, which are clean on their outsides, only transfer taste from one to the other if they are wet on the outside and are touching each other.
- A hot utensil placed onto a counter only transfers gender to the countertop if there is liquid or food at the point of contact.

NOTE All liquids plays a major role in facilitating taste transfer.

NOTE Taste, gender, or non-kosher status do not travel upstream into the utensil that food is being poured from. Even if you pour hot liquid (pareve or of one gender) from a pot onto a non-kosher or opposite gender food, the genders are not transferred back through the stream of liquid to the pot, even if any or all of the elements are more than 120 degrees.

SITUATION You pour hot liquid from some pareve vegetables into a non-kosher sink that had hot in it within 24 hours. There are dishes or utensils in the sink.

STATUS The dishes do not change gender unless the hot liquid fills up from the sink onto them. If so, the dishes or utensils become non-kosher. But no gender change occurs through the stream of liquid back to the

pot of vegetables.

NOTE If the non-kosher sink had not had anything hot (120 degrees or above) in it for at least 24 hours, no change of gender or kosher status happens at all.

NOTE On Passover, gender and chametz status DO get transferred through a stream of hot liquid.

Pressure

To absorb taste, and therefore gender or kashrut status, through pressure or short-term soaking, one of the items must be spicy/charif.

Soaking

To absorb taste, and therefore gender or kashrut status, through long-term soaking, the food must soak for specific amounts of time.

NOTE If the food or utensil is not hot (120° F or more), is not spicy/charif, and is not soaking for a long time, there is no gender or kashrut-status transfer.

EXAMPLES

You may use a non-kosher utensil for any cold food of the opposite gender, so you may:

- Eat cold (kosher) cereal out of a meat or non-kosher bowl, or
- Use a meat or non-kosher spoon to eat kosher ice cream.

NOTE Even though these are permissible, they may not be done regularly but only on an ad hoc basis.

Food and Kitchenware: Which Influences What

Hot or Spicy/Charif Foods

With hot (more than 120° F) or spicy/charif foods:

Foods and utensils/containers transfer taste to each other.

Cold or Non-Spicy Foods that Soak

With cold (less than 120° F) or non-spicy/charif foods that soak:

- Foods do not transfer taste to utensils/containers;
- Utensils/containers do NOT transfer taste to foods.

NOTE No substances (not salt, or any food...) absorb gender from the open air.

The 24-Hour Rule: Eino ben Yomo

Torah Law: Reverts to Kosher-Pareve

By Torah law, a utensil/container always reverts to kosher-pareve after 24 hours (since the taste of any absorbed food becomes ruined with time).

Rabbinic Law: Must Be Kashered

However, by rabbinic law, the utensil/container must be kashered before using.

NOTE Even by Torah law, a hot or spicy/charif food can revive the milk-meat or non-kosher status of

another utensil/container (see below) even after 24 hours.

Accidentally or Intentionally

Food Hot and Accidentally Placed; Utensil Not Hot for 24 Hours

Kosher food hotter than 120° F (49° C) remains kosher if accidentally placed into a non-kosher, clean utensil that has not been heated to 120° F or more for at least 24 hours.

REASON After 24 hours, b'di'avad, the utensil has reverted to being kosher-pareve.

NOTE If the utensil had been “used” (heated to 120° F or more) within the preceding 24 hours, the hot food that accidentally entered the utensil would be non-kosher. Ask a rabbi for possible exceptions.

Food Hot and Intentionally Placed

If the hot food had been put into the utensil intentionally, the food would not be kosher.

REASON Chazal made a rule (takana) that if you intentionally place food of one gender into a utensil of the opposite gender and heat it to 120° F or more, the food is not kosher.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: HEAT

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: HEAT: WHAT IS HOT (YAD SOLEDET BO)

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Heat: What Is Hot (Yad Soledet Bo)

“Hot” is 120° F (49° C). This is the temperature at which an average person cannot hold his/her hand in a food for more than a few seconds (yad soledet bo).

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: WHAT IS SPICY/CHARIF

Which Produce Is Spicy/Charif

Spicy/charif fruits and vegetables include:

- (Sour) Apples
- Chives
- Garlic
- (Tart) Grapefruits
- Horseradish
- Lemons
- Limes
- Mustard (fresh or prepared)
- Onions
- (Sour) Pineapples
- Radishes
- Scallions.

Judge the tartness of food by a sour apple: if the food you are judging is less tart, it is not spicy/charif.

NOTE Dried chives, onions, and garlic might be spicy/charif, depending on the individual product.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: FACTORS THAT AFFECT SPICY/CHARIF

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: MIXTURES

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Mixtures: Diluted with Oil

Spicy/charif will not pick up gender if the spicy/charif taste is diluted by oil and it no longer tastes spicy/charif. Mixtures with a strong taste, containing pepper, lemon juice, garlic, etc., will pick up the gender of their container if in the container long enough to become cooked.

EXAMPLE Garlic oil will pick up gender of its container if in the container long enough to become cooked.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Mixtures: Batel BaShishim

Spicy/charif food may become nullifiable (batel ba'shishim), but consult a rabbi about the exceptions and details.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: HEAT

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: When Cooked

Some spicy/charif foods, such as onions, lose their spicy/charif nature when cooked.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: PRESSURE

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: What Acquires Taste

Pressure can transfer taste from spicy/charif food to utensil/container or vice versa.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Types of Pressure

Here are some types of pressure that transfer taste from spicy/charif food to utensil/container or vice versa.

When a spicy/charif food is:

- Cut with a knife,
- Crushed,
- Squashed by a spoon or fork,
- Squeezed in a garlic press, or
- Juiced in a juicer (including in a plastic orange juicer with plastic done that fits under the half-orange and spins slowly back and forth electrically).

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Food Absorbing Taste of Utensils

When a spicy/charif food takes on the gender of the cutting/squeezing utensil:

- You may not cook or eat that food with food of the opposite gender.
- However, you MAY eat the opposite-gender food immediately after eating the gendered spicy food without waiting.

SITUATION An onion is cut with a meat knife, on a meat cutting board:

- The onion acquires meat status.
- You MAY NOT later cut this onion with a dairy knife or on a dairy cutting board. (If you do, the onion, the dairy knife, and the dairy cutting board will all become non-kosher.)

EXCEPTION If the knife and cutting board had not been used (even for cold items) for at least 24 hours, consult a rabbi.

EXCEPTION If you can sand off the surface to below the level of any knife cuts, the board might be kosher. Consult a rabbi.

- You MAY NOT cook this onion in a dairy utensil.
- You MAY NOT eat this onion with dairy food.

- You MAY eat dairy immediately after eating this onion (as long as there is no actual meat mixed into the onion).
- You MAY cook this onion with fish (even though you may not cook meat and fish together) but the fish may not be eaten with dairy food.

SITUATION You cut an onion with a meat knife and fry it in a neutral/pareve pan.

STATUS The pan becomes meat, but consult a rabbi for possible leniencies.

SITUATION You cut an onion with a meat knife and fry it in a dairy pan.

STATUS The pan becomes non-kosher. If you cook a neutral/pareve food in that pan after 24 hours have passed since the onion was cooked in it, and you ate the pareve food with milk, it is OK b'di'avad but you may not do that l'chatchila.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Non-Kosher Utensils

A non-kosher fork, knife, or spoon may not be used to eat or cut spicy/charif food, such as tart pineapple. (If the food is not spicy or hot, you may use a clean, non-kosher utensil on an ad hoc basis.)

EXAMPLE A non-kosher implement (fork, knife) that is stuck into a spicy/charif or salty food, such as a spicy pickle, will make that pickle non-kosher immediately.

Suggestion Cut onion, garlic, and other spicy/charif foods on a pareve board and with a pareve knife.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Utensils Absorbing Taste of Food

If you use a neutral/pareve utensil with pressure on a gendered spicy/charif food, you may not use this utensil with food of the opposite gender unless they are all clean and less than 120° F (49° C) and even then, only on an ad hoc basis, not as a regular practice.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Blade Sharpness

When cutting a spicy/charif food, pressure (not the physical sharpness of the knife's edge) transfers taste.

NOTE There is more likely to be higher pressure when cutting with a dull knife rather than with a sharp one!

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Forgotten Gender

SITUATION You forgot the gender of a cut onion in the refrigerator.

WHAT TO DO

- You may eat the onion with pareve food.
- You may NOT use the onion with dairy or with meat.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Sitting in Container

Cold, spicy/charif, solid food (with no liquid) does not transfer gender UNLESS it was under pressure, so simply sitting in an opposite-gender or non-kosher container does not have any effect.

NOTE Cold, spicy/charif, liquid food sitting in an opposite-gender or non-kosher container is kosher only if it sat less time than needed to become cooked.

EXAMPLE You ate cold (less than 120° F, or 49° C) spicy/charif food of one gender on a cold plate of the opposite gender:

Liquid Food

If the cold spicy/charif food is liquid but it is in contact with a utensil of the opposite gender for less time than it takes to boil, it would be kosher but, again, you should only do this ad hoc.

Also see [Spicy/Charif Soaking: Long Enough To Be Cooked: Food and Utensil](#).

TASTE TRANSFER: SOAKING

NON-SPICY/NON-CHARIF SOAKING: 24 HOURS OR MORE

Non-Spicy/Non-Charif Soaking: Transfers Taste to Utensil/Container

A non-spicy/non-charif liquid or food with any liquid (enough to pour, but that may be even one drop) that sits for 24 hours or more will transfer gender or non-kosher status to its container.

SITUATION Dairy or meat liquid-containing food is in pareve container.

STATUS Container will become dairy or meat (regardless of intention).

EXAMPLES

- Milk sitting in a pareve mug for 24 hours or more would make the pareve mug dairy.
- Chicken soup sitting in a pareve stoneware bowl for 24 hours or more would make the bowl meat.

NOTE This does not apply to any type of cold glass container and the food and the container remain kosher.

Non-Spicy/Non-Charif Non-Kosher Soaking: Makes Kosher Food Non-Kosher

Any non-spicy/non-charif, non-kosher food that soaks (in water or any other liquid) with kosher food for 24 hours or more will render the kosher food non-kosher.

SPICY/CHARIF SOAKING: LONG ENOUGH TO BE COOKED

Spicy/Charif Soaking: Long Enough To Be Cooked: Food and Utensil

Food soaked in brine, vinegar, or any spicy liquid for long enough to be cooked if heated on a burner or in an oven will absorb or transfer gender or non-kosher status from/to any utensil used with it.

SITUATION Neutral/pareve food in brine, such as spicy pickles or spicy olives, sits in a container for long enough to become cooked.

STATUS

- If the container is dairy, the food will become dairy.
- If the container is meat, the food will become meat.

NOTE You may not eat this formerly pareve food with food of the opposite gender.

SITUATION

A pickle with spicy/charif pickle juice is placed into a dairy utensil/container (even if unused) for long enough to become cooked.

STATUS

The pickle will become dairy and may not be eaten with meat.

NOTE

This example does not apply to any type of glass container.

NOTE

Food soaked in brine by a non-Jew does not become subject to bishul akum.

NOTE

Even if the utensil had not been used for more than 24 hours, a spicy/charif food will “revive” the gendered or non-kosher taste in the utensil. The utensil will then make the food gendered or non-kosher. Consult a rabbi for possible exceptions.

FOOD NULLIFICATION

FOOD NULLIFICATION: FOODS

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD NULLIFICATION: FOODS

Introduction to Food Nullification: Foods

Categories of Batel/Nullification

Categories of nullification of non-kosher ingredients:

- Never batel.
- Batel b'shishim when the non-kosher substance is less than 1/60th of the total volume of the food.
- Batel baroy when the non-kosher substance is less than 1/2 of the total volume of the food.

When Can a Non-Kosher Substance Be Nullified in a Mixture?

Whether a non-kosher substance can be nullified in a mixture depends on 3 factors:

- Whether the owner is Jewish;
- Whether the intended eaters are Jewish; and
- Whether the non-kosher substance was added intentionally as non-kosher.

If the answers to all three cases is yes, the food is never batel.

Food “Nullified in 60 Parts”:

Accidentally Adding Non-Kosher to Kosher Food

Batel ba'shishim, or “nullified in 60 (parts)” is food that remains kosher despite the accidental addition of 1/60th or less in volume of non-kosher or restricted food, since at this proportion the non-kosher food's taste becomes negligible.

Taste: If the non-kosher substance:

- Has no taste, it is batel baroy.
- Has a taste but the eater cannot taste it, it is batel b'shishim (1/60th).

In all cases, if a substance is added for flavor and can be tasted in the final food, it will never be batel, regardless of whether it was added intentionally (since you can taste it, by definition it was not nullified) and regardless of whether the food was owned by a Jew or not. There are some exceptions. Consult a knowledgeable rabbi.

Some foods do impart their flavor even if less than 1/60th of the total volume of the food and these do not ever become nullified based on the 1/60th rule. Otherwise, the non-kosher food must be:

- Less than 1/60 of the volume of the whole.
- Mixed in and not lying on the surface.

- Not intentionally added by a Jew.
- Not listed in “Foods that Never Become Nullified” (below).

Min b'Mino

Substances are only *batel* when they are similar (“*min b'mino*”). The substances must be the same type, have the same taste, and have the same appearance (the eater cannot identify them as being different).

NOTE In such situations, it would be *batel barov* from *Torah (d'oraita)* but *batel b'shishim* (1/60th) by rabbinical order (*d'rabanana*).

EXAMPLE A piece of non-*kosher* meat is mixed in with *kosher* meat of more than 60 times the volume of the non-*kosher* piece. The non-*kosher* meat is *batel b'shishim*.

NOTE As a practical matter, this can only apply to ground meat.

COUNTER EXAMPLE Non-*kosher* chocolate syrup or a non-*kosher* flavored extract mixed into *milk* or other liquid or onto a solid would NOT be *min b'mino* even though both are liquids, since their appearances, flavors, and substance are different.

Too Thin To Make Non-*Kosher*

The thinnest layer of non-*kosher* fish oil, vegetable oil, soap, or any other very thin substance on food that does **not** make the food non-*kosher* is whatever amount cannot be detected by the five human senses.

Foods that Never Become Nullified

Here are some foods that NEVER become nullified by being less than 1/60th of the main food:

- ***Yayin Nesech***
Wine that has been offered to a pagan god or used for idolatrous purposes (*yayin nesech*) is forbidden in any amount!
- **Mixtures of *Milk* and Meat**
Mixtures of *milk* and meat are not ever *batel* if they were cooked together.

EXCEPTION *Batel* in 1/60th if:

- You cannot identify either substance AND
- The mixture is liquid in liquid or solid mixed with solid.

Examples: *Milk* from a pig mixed with *milk* from a cow; ground *kosher* meat mixed in with ground non-*kosher* meat.

- ***Chametz***

Any *chametz* in any amount that became mixed with *kosher-for-Passover* food DURING Passover is not nullified in 60 parts (*batel ba'shishim*).

NOTE *Chametz* may be nullified if:

- Less than 1/60th of the volume of *kosher-for-Passover* food, AND
- Mixed with the *kosher-for-Passover* food BEFORE the holiday began, AND
- Liquid (solid *chametz* that got mixed up with *kosher-for-Passover* food is never nullified).

- **Jew Intentionally Adding Non-*Kosher* Item**

If the non-*kosher* substance was added by anyone (Jew or non-Jew) unintentionally (he did not realize it was not *kosher*), the food is *kosher/batel b'shishim* (1/60th).

If a Jew intentionally adds a non-*kosher* ingredient to a food, that ingredient never becomes nullified, even if the ingredient is less than 1/60th of the total volume of food and even if the ingredient has no flavor. Note

that there are exceptions when non-Jews do the action, especially when a non-Jew adds a non-kosher ingredient or adds stam yainam wine to other liquids.

- **Unflavored or Flavored Non-Kosher Ingredient**

- Non-Jew Adds Unflavored Non-Kosher Ingredient**

SITUATION A non-Jew adds a non-kosher ingredient that has no flavor.

STATUS The non-kosher ingredient is nullified if less than 1/2 of the total (it does not need to be less than 1/60th--batel ba'shishim).

- Non-Jew Adds Flavored Non-Kosher Ingredient**

SITUATION A non-Jew adds a flavored non-kosher ingredient even if to impart flavor.

STATUS The non-kosher ingredient is nullified in 60 parts (batel ba'shishim).

NOTE If a Jew had told the non-Jew to add the ingredient, the mixture is non-kosher, just as if a Jew had added it.

- **Stam Yeinam Added to Water**

SITUATION A non-Jew adds—to water--stam yeinam (uncooked/non-mevushal) wine that has been handled while open by anyone other than a shomer-Shabbat Jew.

STATUS As long as the wine is less than 1/7th of the final volume, the mixture is kosher.

NOTE For mixtures with liquids other than water, consult a rabbi.

- **Essential Additives**

Any additive that is essential to making a food (such as rennet for making cheese, or yeast for baking bread) is NEVER nullifiable.

- **Food Bought by the Piece**

An item that is always bought by the piece (davar she'beminyan) such that even one piece has importance—such as a mango—is never nullifiable.

SITUATION One mango grown in Eretz Yisrael during a shmita year got mixed in with many mangoes that were grown outside of Eretz Yisrael.

STATUS Batel ba'shishim does not apply and you must apply the laws of shmita to all of them.

NOTE If kosher and non-kosher food items have become mixed up, it is sometimes permissible to eat from the batch of food if most of the items are kosher (batel ba'rov), but a rabbi must be consulted.

- **Important Food**

SITUATION A food with which you could honor a guest (chaticha ha'reuya l'hitchabed), such as 1/4 of a non-kosher chicken or a serving of non-kosher chopped liver, was mixed up with kosher servings—even if more than 60 kosher servings.

STATUS None may be eaten.

- **Permissible in Future (Davar SheYesh Lo Matirin)**

An item that would become permissible in the future (*davar she'yesh lo matirin*) cannot become nullified by being mixed in with currently permissible foods.

EXAMPLES

- An egg laid on *Shabbat* will not be nullified by being mixed with eggs laid before *Shabbat*.
- *Matza* made of *chadash* flour will not be nullified by being mixed with *matza* made from *yashan* flour.

- **Whole Insects**

An entire insect (*briya*--whole creature) never becomes nullified even if mixed with other *kosher* food.

NOTE An insect that is not whole MAY be nullified.

EXAMPLES

- Frozen or raw chopped or ground vegetables or spices may be considered *kosher* even without supervision.

REASON We assume that any bugs in the food would have gotten partly chopped or disintegrated and therefore nullified.

- If a recipe calls for chopping or grinding herbs or vegetables, you may do so without first checking them for bugs.

NOTE However, if you know there are bugs, you may not chop the food for the purpose of making the bugs nullified: You must still check for insects before cooking or eating the food and if you see any bugs, you must remove them.

NOTE You may not eat bugs even if they have been dead for more than 30 days (some people erroneously permit this).

FOOD NULLIFICATION: UTENSILS (KASHERING)

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD NULLIFICATION: UTENSILS (KASHERING)

Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils (Kashering)

Food Nullification in Utensils: *Torah-Law* and *Rabbinic Decree*

By *Torah* law (*d'oraita*), any clean utensil, countertop, etc., automatically reverts to neutral/*pareve* and *kosher* after not being heated to more than 120° F (49° C) for 24 hours.

But by *rabbinic* decree, utensils do not automatically become neutral/*pareve* even after 24 hours and must be *kashered* by heat (*libun*—direct heat; *hag'ala*—boiling in a pot; or *eruy rotchim*—pouring boiling water over item) or, if some types of glass, by soaking in water (*meluy v'eruy*).

Changing Gender of Utensil

You may *kasher* a pot or cooking/eating utensil from:

- Non-*kosher* to *kosher*, or
- Year-round use (*chametz*) to *kosher* for *Passover*.

You may not intentionally *kasher* a utensil in order to change it from *dairy* to meat or meat to *dairy*; you must first *kasher* it from accidentally (or intentionally) non-*kosher* to *kosher/pareve*, or from non-*Passover* to *Passover/pareve*. You may then use it for either *dairy* or meat.

Once you have used it for that gender, the item retains that gender (unless you re-kasher it for *Passover* or you make it non-kosher first, then kasher it to neutral/pareve).

But if you accidentally heat meat with a dairy utensil or vice versa, you may kasher it back to its original gender by any one of the kashering methods, depending on how it became non-kosher.

Items/Materials that Can Be Kasher

The following materials can be kasher:

- Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other kosher status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be kasher (except for *Passover*) (see *Meluy v'Eruy*, below). Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other kosher status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be kasher (except for *Passover*) (see *Meluy v'Eruy*, below). Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other kosher status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be kasher (except for *Passover*) (see *Meluy v'Eruy*, below).

NOTE Glass used directly on fire or in the oven (kli rishon) cannot be kasher except by heating in a kiln.

- Granite (not granite composite)
- Marble
- Wood, if smooth (see notes on *Eruy Rotchim*, below)
- Metal, including stainless steel, cast iron, and aluminum.

NOTE While metal can be kasher if thoroughly cleaned, welded handles and other difficult-to-clean parts may render a metal utensil not kasher. You might be able to use lihun.kal on the problematic area and still use hag'ala for the remainder of the utensil.

Items/Materials that Cannot Be Kasher

- China
- Corian
- Corningware
- Crockpot
- Formica
- Glass that has been used directly (kli rishon) on a stove or in an oven; however it can be kasher in a kiln
- Granite (composite)
- Knives with Plastic Handles (knives with wooden handles may be kasher if there are no cracks in the wood and if the rivets do not have spaces that catch food and prevent you from cleaning it completely)
- Mixer-there might be exceptions. Consult a rabbi.
- Plastic
- Porcelain (Enamel)
- Pyrex (if used directly on stove or in oven--kli rishon)
- Rubber (synthetic)
- Silestone
- Silverstone

- Stoneware
- Teflon
- Toaster/Toaster Oven
- Waffle Iron.

Pot Lid Handle

Kashering

The handle on a pot lid does not need to be kashered for normal use during the year.

REASON It does not normally get hot.

Cleaning

However, the pot lid handle must be removed and the lid cleaned where the handle attaches, if possible.

NOTE If the gap between the handle and lid cannot be completely cleaned, you may not use that lid for *Passover* and you normally may not kasher it if it becomes non-kosher. If the lid handle cannot be removed, consult a rabbi.

Pot or Pan Handle

A plastic handle that gets hot, especially if it is over a flame on a burner, may not be kashered. If the handle becomes non-kosher, it must be replaced. If a plastic handle connects directly to the metal of the utensil, consult a rabbi about what to do.

Food Nullification: Heat-Kashering

Three Methods of Heat-Kashering

Heat-Kashering is of three types: Libun, Hag'ala, and Eruy Rotchim.

1. Libun (Direct Heat)

How It Works Burns up any residual food taste

What It Works On

Complete Burning (Libun gamur--heating metal red-hot). Stoves, ovens, grills, grates, baking pans, roasting pans, etc., that were ever used with direct heat **MUST** be kashered by heating to red-hot (libun gamur). Libun gamur works on anything except pottery (this is a rabbinic injunction since you might not do a good job).

Light Burning (Libun kal--heating metal hot enough to burn paper on the side opposite the one being heated). You may use this method whenever there is a question of whether an item needs libun. For example, food may have overflowed onto gas-stove grates. Due to safek, we use libun.kal-- gas-stove grates do not need libun gamur.

Process

Libun Gamur The entire metal substance of a utensil, oven, or other cooking surface becomes red hot, but the item does not need to be red hot all at the same time: it may be heated sequentially as long as the entire surface gets red hot at some time. Libun gamur can be done by blowtorch or by placing the item in a kiln.

Libun Kal

- Direct a flame, such as a blowtorch, onto the inside of a pot. Pot is hot enough when a piece of paper that touches the outside of the utensil burns (it does not need to burst into flame, just to smolder), or
- Put the pot into the oven at 500 ° F for 40 minutes. (First, remove any non-metal handles; they will need to be kashered separately or not used.)

Waiting Time You do not need to wait at all before kashering by libun--and certainly not the 24 hours needed before kashering by hag'ala.

2. Hag'ala (Boiling)

How It Works

Any non-kosher or meat or milk taste is removed from the walls of the utensil during boiling (hag'ala). You may kasher a pot or utensil by either:

- **Boil Method** Boiling water within the pot to be kashered, and making the boiling water overflow, or
- **Dip Method** Dipping a smaller pot or utensil to be kashered into a larger pot of boiling water.

What It Works On

Pots and utensils that are used with liquids (meaning, liquid all the time) can be kashered by being immersed in boiling water (hag'ala). The utensil being kashered by hag'ala must be made of a material that can release flavor, such as metal or wood. Materials that cannot be kashered (except in a glazing furnace!) are pottery--and, by extension--china, enamel, and similar materials.

NOTE The Boil Method only helps if the utensil became non-kosher due to food inside the utensil. If the non-kosher food was on the outside of the utensil, you may only kasher it by the Dip Method or by libun.kal.

NOTE The boiling water must reach at least the same temperature during kashering as when the utensil became non-kosher.

NOTE Once the *Passover* holiday has begun, chametz cannot be nullified with hot water/hag'ala (only libun can kasher something during *Passover*). You may only kasher during chol hamoed, not during the first and last (festival) days.

NOTE Whenever hag'ala is effective, you may instead use libun.kal, since libun.kal is a stronger form of kashering. Sometimes you may find it more convenient to use libun.kal to kasher an item that needs only hag'ala.

SITUATION A metal pot of the opposite gender went through a dishwasher cleaning.

WHAT TO DO Even though the pot only needs hag'ala, you may instead kasher it by libun.kal by putting it in an oven at 500° F (for this application).

Process

The Boil Method can be used as:

- Batel BaShishim ("nullifying in 60 times" the volume), or
- Batel BaRov ("nullifying in a majority"--that is, boiling the item in water that is more than twice the volume but less than 60 times the volume of the non-kosher element).

NOTE If a pot is hot (over 120° F, or 49° C) when only part of the pot becomes non-kosher, the entire pot is non-kosher and its volume is figured into the volume of water needed for boiling.

NOTE For whether the lid becomes non-kosher, consult a rabbi.

In Batel BaShishim, by the actual halacha, you do not need to wait at all before kashering. But the custom is to wait 24 hours--except in extreme circumstances--because it is too hard to figure out 1/60th. In Batel BaRov, you must wait 24 hours.

The Boil Method: Batel BaShishim

Using batel ba'shishim for the Boil Method is not customary. You may use it for emergencies ONLY; ask a rabbi in this case.

EXAMPLE To kasher a spoon with the batel ba'shishim type of hag'ala, immerse the spoon in boiling water of a volume at least the volume of 60 spoons. No waiting is needed before kashering with this method.

The Boil Method: Batel BaRov

To kasher a pot or utensil by hag'ala using batel ba'rov:

- Clean the pot or utensil well.
- Wait 24 hours after the pot or utensil was last heated to more than 120° F, or 49° C (such as when it was cleaned).

REASON Waiting 24 hours allows the taste to become “ruined” and then to be nullified (batel) in a majority (ba'rov) of boiling water.

NOTE During the 24-hour waiting period, you could still “use” the utensil for watering plants, etc., as long as the water remains under 120° F.

- Fill the pot to the brim with water.
- Bring the water in the pot to a boil.
- Cause the water to overflow the entire rim of the pot by:
 - Plunging something hot into the pot (any item that will not cause the water to stop boiling is OK), or
 - Tilting the pot to slosh water over all of the pot's rim.
- Cool off the pot by dipping it in cold water or putting it under cold running water.

NOTE If you did not put the utensil under cold water, it is still kosher b'di'avad.

The Dip Method

To kasher a smaller pot or any other kasherable cooking or eating utensil by hag'ala, you may dip the pot or utensil into a large, kashered pot containing boiling water.

- If the pot in which you are kashering the items had been heated to 120° F (49° C), with food of that gender in the pot, or more within the previous 24 hours, the items you are kashering will assume the gender of the pot.
- If the pot in which you are kashering the items had NOT been heated to 120° F or more for at least 24 hours, any items that are kashered in it will become kosher and pareve.

NOTE When kashering a utensil by hagala, you may dip it into boiling water one part at a time; that is, you do not need to immerse the entire utensil under the water all at the same time. This is different from doing tevila since for tevila, the entire utensil must be immersed completely.

Calculating 24-Hour Waiting Time

Once a pot has become non-kosher due to any reason, if it gets heated to 120° F (49° C) or more with any food or liquid in it, you must wait another 24 hours from the latest heating before you can kasher it, since everything inside the utensil becomes non-kosher again.

Calculating Volume

If only part of a pot becomes non-kosher, as long as the pot was hot (over 120° F, or 49° C), the entire pot becomes non-kosher and its volume gets figured into the volume of water needed for boiling.

3. Eruy Rotchim (Hot-Water Pour)

Process Pouring hot water over, for example, a sink to kasher it.

Waiting Time You must wait 24 hours before kashering by eruy rotchim.

NOTE Only items that became non-kosher by being poured onto, may be kashered via eruy rotchim.

NOTE Smooth-surfaced wood may be kashered through eruy rotchim (pouring boiling water) but ONLY if it became non-kosher through eruy. If it became non-kosher by being cooked or heated in an oven, it may not be kashered via eruy rotchim.

NOTE A wooden cutting board may be kashered if the board is smooth. If it has cracks and crevices, it can be sanded until smooth and then kashered.

Food Nullification: *Meluy V'Erui*

Meluy V'Erui To Kasher Glass

Halachically, “glass” includes Arcoroc, Corelle, crystal, Duralex, and Pyrex.

NOTE In pre-war Europe, where glass was expensive and hard to obtain, it was customary to kasher drinking glasses, especially for *Passover*, by soaking the glasses for three 24-hour periods (meluy v'eruy), as follows:

Step 1: Submerge glasses in cold water for 24 hours.

Step 2: Empty water, refill, and submerge glasses again.

Step 3: Repeat Step 2.

NOTE If any of these materials were heated directly on a flame or other heat source, they cannot be kashered by meluy v'eruy!

NON-JEWISH COOKS (BISHUL AKUM)

Bishul Akum: Prestigious Cooked Foods

Do not eat bishul akum (foods cooked by non-Jews under these conditions):

- Prestigious, which a king or president of a country might serve at a state meal. (Foods that would not be served at a wedding are certainly not subject to bishul akum.)
- Foods cooked in a regular stove/oven.
- Foods that are only eaten cooked, such as:
 - Asparagus;
 - Eggs;
 - Some types of fish (not those eaten raw); and
 - Meat.

Foods that are sometimes or usually eaten raw are not subject to bishul akum, but they must be edible raw, without any further preparation.

EXAMPLES

- All fruits.

- Many vegetables.

NOTE For a food to be considered edible raw, more than 10% of the population near where you are must eat that food raw. Even if that food is eaten raw by most of the people in another country, you may only consider the people in your own locale.

EXAMPLE Even though Japanese eat a lot of fish raw, only Jews living in Japan may consider raw fish free of *bishul akum* restrictions.

NOTE Ceviche, cold smoked salmon (lox), and foods that have been marinated or soaked in brine, vinegar, or other liquids are not considered to have been cooked and are permitted to be eaten even if wholly prepared by non-Jews, but not if the foods are cooked.

For a Jew to eat prestigious, “only-eaten-cooked” foods cooked by non-Jews, a Jew must do some part of the cooking—such as lighting a flame or participating in the cooking.

NOTE *Bishul akum* laws do not apply to foods cooked in a microwave oven or induction coil cooker.