KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: CHECKING INDIVIDUAL PRODUCE

ARTICHOKES

Checking Raw Artichokes for Bugs

Artichokes frequently have bugs that cannot be washed out. To use artichokes, you must generally remove all the leaves before cooking. You may then:

- Just cook and eat the artichoke hearts, which infrequently have bugs, OR
- Check all the leaves, remove any bugs, and then cook and eat the leaves.

NOTE If you are preparing many artichokes, you could:

- Remove the leaves of three artichokes,
- Check all the leaves, and, if there are no bugs,
- Cook and eat the remaining whole artichokes in that batch without removing the leaves.

Finding Bug in Cooked Artichoke

If you cook an artichoke and then find a bug in it, the entire artichoke is not *kosher* and may not be eaten, even if you cut away the part with the bug in it.

REASON We assume that there are more bugs inside.

ASPARAGUS

Asparagus

Asparagus, whether fresh or frozen, is OK to eat:

- **Fresh Asparagus:** You must wash fresh asparagus and check for bugs.
- **Frozen Asparagus:** You do not need to wash frozen asparagus.

BROCCOLI

Broccoli

Fresh broccoli must be soaked (preferably in a solution of chlorine in water) and the water checked until no bugs are found.

NOTE You may wash indefinitely until the bugs are gone.

FIGS

Figs

Figs must be checked.

REASON Fig worms sometimes grow in the fruit while the fruit is still on the tree.

NOTE Worms may only be eaten if they grew in the fruit after it was picked and never came out (and even then, only if they are not considered disgusting).

MUSHROOMS

Mushroom

You must check mushroom gills for bugs and you must remove them if present.

NOTE This is normally not a problem in US-grown mushrooms but is a problem in mushrooms grown in China and other countries.

PARSLEY

Parsley

Parsley's bugs can be removed by hitting the parsley on a table, but you must still check the parsley after hitting.

RASPBERRIES

Raspberries

Raspberries and other hollow berries: Blow into them to remove bugs.

ROMAINE

Romaine

Romaine can have green or black bugs, which must be removed.

SEA VEGETABLES

Sea Vegetables

Sea vegetables are OK whether raw/fresh, dried, or toasted, but you must check for small crustaceans and other sea life.

SPICES

Spices

Spices (pure) are OK everywhere but beware of bugs. If the spices are ground, you may use them.

REASON Any bugs would be ground up and not visible.
NOTE Spices from China, even if ground, need a *hechsher*.
NOTE Spices from *Eretz Yisrael* may have *teruma* or *ma'aser* issues.

SPINACH

Spinach

Fresh spinach may have bugs and must be checked.
Frozen spinach does not need to be checked, especially if chopped.

NOTE Although chopped spinach may not be chopped finely enough to grind up very small bugs such as aphids, you may still eat the spinach.

STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries

To eat strawberries:

- Cut off the green at the top, and
- Soak the remaining strawberry in mildly soapy water.

NOTE This applies to fresh or frozen strawberries since bugs can burrow into the surface. (Defrost frozen strawberries before trying to remove bugs.)

VINEGAR

Vinegar

Vinegar has “eels” in it during production, but the eels are typically filtered out and you may use the vinegar.

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