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.

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