

KOSHER COOKERY





The laws of keeping kosher are given in the Bible and further explained in rabbinical interpretations. These laws are not simply a list of what people can and cannot eat, but represent a way of life. Judaism sanctifies the majority of events in human life --- from waking up in the morning to burial and remembrance of the dead. The laws of keeping kosher reflect the trend within Judaism to instill the seemingly commonplace act with holiness.

-Blessings are recited as we wash our hands before a meal and before we eat bread. Blessings are recited after a meal has been completed.

-The laws of ritual slaughter and of separation of meat and milk teach compassion for animals. As we eat food that comes from another life, we must do it with a sensitivity to what life means.

-The laws of keeping kosher remind us that our choices for the food we eat and its preparations are governed by someone greater than ourselves, who gives life and creates food.

The laws of keeping kosher also reflect another essential component of Judaism --- community. Essentially, the family that eats together, stays together. We are bonded together by our similar habits and shared experiences.

Kosher foods are available today in all varieties, shapes and sizes. They can be identified by a symbol such as the , ,  on the label of the food package. Take a close look at the Heinz ketchup bottle label for an example of the . These symbols are logos of organizations that supervise the preparation of packaged foods. Jewish dietary laws divide all food into three classifications:

1. Those which are inherently kosher and may be eaten in their **natural** state: grains, nuts, fruit, vegetables, tea, coffee, etc. (Anything that grows from the ground and is processed without additives.)

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2. Those which require some form of processing (special slaughter and subsequent preparation) to be kosher, such as meat and poultry.

3. Those which are biblically forbidden: pork products, the meat from carnivorous animals and birds, shellfish and meat from fish without fins and scales.

The laws of keeping kosher require that dairy (milchig in yiddish) foods and meat (fleishig in yiddish) foods can never be mixed. (Thus the prohibition of the cheeseburger.) Pareve, or neutral foods are considered as neither dairy nor meat foods and can be used and eaten with both. Fruits, vegetables, and grains are pareve. Eggs and fish are also considered pareve as long as they are not prepared with dairy or meat products. For example, an egg fried in butter is milchig and an egg inside a meat loaf is fleishig. Traditionally, a Jewish household has two sets of dishes, pots, silverware, and utensils for each kind of cooking --- one set for dairy and one set for meat.

Keeping kosher is a discipline, a challenge, a way of life. The laws create responsibilities and a structure for the Jewish people that link them to their past, and to their present community, and provide a pathway for future generations.