

ANSCHE CHESED KASHRUT POLICY

Scope

Ansche Chesed's kashrut policy applies to

- All individuals and groups in the synagogue, including employees
- Everywhere on the synagogue's premises, including the sukkahs
- To food to be shared communally and food individuals bring for their own consumption.

The policy does not apply to our long-term tenants in the spaces they rent or to those who attend their programs.

When Questions Arise

As Ansche Chesed's resident Halakhic authority (*mara d'atra*), Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky rules on kashrut questions for our facility. Should there be a time when Ansche Chesed does not have a rabbi who serves as *mara d'atra*, the Board of Trustees will appoint a *va'ad hakashrut*, a group of knowledgeable members, to fill that role.

All Meat Must Be Prepared Under Rabbinic Supervision

All meat meals to be consumed at Ansche Chesed must be prepared in their entirety, including bread, side dishes, desserts and condiments, either in Ansche Chesed's professional kitchen, which is adjacent to the social hall, or by a commercial establishment under rabbinic supervision.

Prior approval by Ansche Chesed is required of all caterers, as is on-site supervision by a *mashgiach* (a kashrut supervisor trained for that role). (A list of approved caterers can be found on the Ansche Chesed website.) Members may make arrangements to use the kitchen to cook meat meals themselves so long as they have provided proof of rabbinic supervision of their cooking, either through Rabbi Kalmanofsky or through another supervisor acceptable to him. Under no circumstances may anyone bring meat cooked at home into the synagogue.

Kosher Homes May Provide Cooked Dairy and Pareve Food

Dairy and pareve food prepared in homes that keep kosher according to Ansche Chesed's definition (see below) may be brought into Ansche Chesed for private or group consumption.

Non-Kosher Homes May Provide Uncooked Food or Purchase Kosher Food

Cut-up raw fruits and vegetables, and salads, including tuna salad made with all-kosher ingredients, prepared in homes which do not keep kosher according to Ansche Chesed's definition (see below) may be brought into Ansche Chesed for private or group consumption. Note that canned tuna requires kashrut certification since certain brands cook their tuna in chicken broth. In addition, brands without kashrut certification are not always "dolphin-safe," which means that non-kosher animals may have been used in their production, making them non-kosher by definition .

Certified-kosher foods in sealed packaging may also be brought into Ansche Chesed.

Commercial Establishments

The rules articulated above apply to private homes and are designed to enhance community members' sense of belonging and their ability to contribute to communal meals. The rules do not apply to restaurants, delis and caterers. However, since no non-kosher restaurant or caterer would meet Ansche Chesed's kashrut standards, it is impermissible to bring cooked food of any kind from a non-kosher restaurant or caterer into the facility. This includes cheese pizza from non-kosher establishments and fish or vegetarian food cooked at otherwise non-kosher restaurants. The same rule applies to non-certified bagels and breads purchased from restaurants that also sell shellfish and/or non-kosher meat.

Bottom line: Commercially prepared cooked food may be brought into Ansche Chesed only if it is prepared under rabbinic supervision.

Baked Goods

Ideally, breads and other baked goods should be purchased from bakeries under rabbinic supervision. Nowadays, these are abundant. Most Hot & Crusty and Zaro's

locations are clear about which of their products have been prepared under kashrut supervision; Fairway's baked goods are under supervision; and H & H bagels, which are sold in many local shops, are under supervision. Non-certified baked goods may be brought into Anshe Chesed if they have been purchased from bakeries which do not sell or use meat or shellfish products; do not use pre-mixed dough, icings or other products; and use only kosher products (butter, vegetable oils) to grease their pans.

Note that *halakha* (Jewish law) frowns on, but does not forbid, eating dairy breads, since bread is so often eaten with meat. If you purchase commercially baked bread that lacks kashrut certification, please determine it is pareve or dairy. Obviously, all Anshe Chesed communal meals will be pareve or dairy, but people who have recently eaten meat may wish to know which.

When Is Kashrut Certification Required?

Many foods brought into Anshe Chesed for communal meals require a recognized kashrut symbol, such as the O-U, Star-K, Kaf-K, and Triangle-K (a non-exhaustive list of common certification symbols can be found at www.kashrut.com/agencies/) A simple "K" usually is not sufficient, although for some products, like Kellogg's cereals, a "K" is backed up by a recognized supervisor)

Similarly, many types of ingredients used in home-cooked food that is brought into Anshe Chesed from kosher homes require certification. In general, processed and cooked foods, meaning, those with additives and those whose ingredients are of unclear provenance, need certification. Raw and single-ingredients foods do not.

The following foods do not require certification:

- Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, including those cut up by grocery stores.
- Pure fruit juices, including those with grape sweeteners (although traditional *halakha* bans unsupervised grape products, Anshe Chesed's policy is to permit them since they are often used as ingredients in other juices)
- Dry grains, legumes and beans
- Dried fruit
- Dry-roasted nuts and nuts still in the shell (oil-roasted nuts require certification)

- Honey
- Olives
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Milk
- Coffee and tea at any restaurant (This applies both to coffee and tea purchased for your own preparation and prepared coffee purchased from an otherwise non-Kosher restaurant, since the urns used for hot water and coffee handle only this item.)
- Cheeses and wines, as discussed below.
- Certified vegan processed foods, such as those bearing the “V” symbol of Vegan Action, or Vegan.org. While kashrut laws are not the same as vegan strictures, and it is therefore unwise to confuse the two, in practice, vegan products are probably acceptable to every Ansche Chesed member and may be brought into the facility to share with others.

Note: This list is not exhaustive. When you are uncertain about whether a food needs certification, please consult Rabbi Kalmanofsky.

Fish

Fresh or smoked fish of a kosher species, meaning one with fins and scales (no shellfish), may be purchased at any market. If the fish must be sliced, please make sure that the knife used has been wiped clean beforehand. Many stores have kosher tables, which are preferred. A list of kosher species can be found at www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/.

Raw fish, like sashimi (i.e. fish only, no rice) is permitted so long as it is a kosher species. When accompanied by cooked rice, it may not be brought into the synagogue unless it comes from a restaurant or store with kashrut certification.

Conservative Judaism permits eating swordfish and sturgeon. However, because many Conservative, kosher-keeping Jews do not follow this practice and consider both species to be non-kosher, please place a sign on any dish containing either fish which you contribute to communal meals so that people can choose accordingly.

Wine

Only wine with that is certified kosher may be used for rituals and blessings.

Cheese

In keeping with common Conservative Judaism practice, all domestic cheeses and all wines are permitted for consumption at Ansche Chesed. Domestic cheeses lacking kashrut certification are permitted, on two grounds. First, the USDA may be relied upon when it certifies that the milk in a cheese comes only from kosher animals. Second, the coagulants used in cheese production are themselves kosher.

(Some authorities in previous eras argued that even animal-derived coagulants should be considered kosher. but today almost all US industrial cheese production uses microbial coagulants and is not universally considered kosher.)

Note that some members of the Ansche Chesed community do not eat non-certified cheeses. If you are making a dairy dish with cheese and you have the choice to use a brand with a *hekhsher* (symbol of kashrut certification), please consider doing so . (The popular brands Cabot and Sorrento are certified kosher.) If you choose not to, be sure to put a sign on the dish so that people can choose accordingly. .

Food Must Be Not Purchased or Prepared in Violation of Shabbat and the Holidays

Food brought into Ansche Chesed may not have been cooked or purchased on Shabbat or purchased on the first and final days of Pesach and Sukkot or, when they fall on Shabbat, on Rosh HaShanna and Shavuot. Jewish law does allow *cooking* on these days, when they do not fall on Shabbat, so you may cook, but not shop, on a holiday morning and bring the food to Ansche Chesed to share that same day.

These rules are especially important when it comes to food brought into Ansche Chesed for meals in the sukkahs.

Passover Rules

On Passover, no food cooked in any private home may be brought into Anshe Chesed. Only sealed and packaged food and drinks with kashrut certification from a rabbinic supervisor may be brought into the building. This applies to staff and annual tenants, as well.

Definition of a Kosher Home

While it is true that different households practice kashrut as they see fit, for the purposes of Anshe Chesed's communal kashrut policy, the following practices constitute having a kosher home.

Exclusively kosher foods are brought into the home:

- All meat and poultry is purchased from kosher butchers or is prepackaged and has rabbinic certification.
- Only kosher fish, i.e. fish with fins and scales, is brought into the home. Shellfish and eels are not. Note: Conservative Judaism (and some Orthodox authorities) permits eating swordfish and sturgeon, but many people do not follow this ruling. A list of kosher and non-kosher species can be found on the internet www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/. All packaged, canned, and frozen products are certified kosher or have been checked to make sure they contain no non-kosher ingredients. Note: As indicated above, it is best not to rely on the kosher-by-ingredient approach, although homes that do may still be considered kosher.
- Commercially cooked food comes from establishments under rabbinic supervision.
- Commercially baked goods come from establishments under rabbinic supervision.

Eggs are checked for blood spots and if spots are found, the eggs are discarded. Note: While critical for "free-range" and organic eggs, but checking even regular "factory eggs" is advised, although not required. *Note: All wines and cheeses are permitted.*

Meat and dairy dishes, pots, pans, utensils and flatware are stored and used separately in the kitchen:

- Separate dishes, pots, pans, utensils and flatware are used for meat and dairy foods. Utensils that become non-kosher are properly kashered (kashering processes should be discussed with Rabbi Kalmanofsky.).
- Meat and dairy dishes, pots, utensils, and flatware are washed separately using separate sponges, cloths and towels. Meat and dairy dishes are never washed together in the dishwasher.
- Products used with meat, including those labeled "non-dairy," are checked for milk derivatives like casein, sodium caseinate and lactose.