



KOSHER AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

ועד לעניני כשרות דאוסטרליא

Welcome to the new book

We're pleased to enclose the new Kosher Australia (KA) Food Guide (previously known as the KA Food Bulletin). Beside the obvious improvement to the format, you'll find numerous new features in this year's Guide (see page 19 for a partial list). Additionally, the Guide has a far more comprehensive Table of Contents which lists the categories used throughout the book. Note that there are two general sections in this table of contents listing categories: the first is a list of Deletions and Discontinuations; while the second is the actual guide.

A word about the layout: The number of products has continued to increase as has the number of products that now carry the KA logo. This, in part, explains the increase in the number of pages from 256 (including 6 pages for notes) in 2006 to 264 in 2007 to 272 this year. Some of the new products are depicted on the front cover and we are indebted to Gail Goldberg for the layout of the cover and all the advertising. Care has been taken not to place advertisements and content on the same page.

The size of the book has been maintained allowing it to fit easily into a handbag or a large jacket pocket. The binding has changed following criticism that the front and back covers detached from the previous editions, which used a spiral bind. We are assured by the printer that the new "perfect binding" is one of the strongest available and so you are unlikely to have problems during the year of subscription.

To make it easier to follow, the layout was altered to a tabular format with a line under each entry allowing the eye to scan across the page easily. The initial feedback on this, and other new features, has been very positive. This new format will make it much easier for us to maintain the book in the future, significantly cutting down the production times.

The guide also uses dictionary-style page headers which indicate the start and end categories on the page. As the categories are in alphabetic order, it should be very simple to find the category you seek even without using the table of contents.

Finally, the guide has the initial *brachab* for all foodstuffs but you may need to check the category header to see the general rule about *brochos* for that category.

Frustrations

The preparation of the Guide this year has been one of the most challenging for a number of reasons:

1. The revision of the entire book into a new format represents the most comprehensive upgrade of the book ever undertaken. This, alone, took several weeks, irrespective of content changes.
2. Our Rav Hamachshir, Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick, had been unwell for some time and was in hospital around the time that we were finalising the book. We are grateful to Hashem that he is now well.
3. When the book returned from the printer, we identified the following issues. Given that it was very late at this stage we decided to sign off on the proof and get the job printed:
 - a. A misspelling on page 19 (Austalia instead of Australia)
 - b. A misspelling on pages 58 & 61 and, hence, in the index on page 4 (Cake Mis instead of Cake Mix)
 - c. A mistake in the page headers (pp. 125-130) referring to Ice Blocks & Cream instead of Ice Blocks & Ice Cream.
 - d. An anomaly in the way the PDF version for the printer altered when recreated on a different computer. This resulted in the top line of one page being brought forward to the bottom line of the previous page (pages 83, 127, 152, 165, 190, 196, 211 and 230). This meant that subsequent pages were all out by one line (84, 128, 153-162, 166-174, 191-192, 197-207, 212-216 and 231-232).
 - e. Something also went awry with the start of the Index, which was to start at the top of p. 258 but instead became tagged onto the end of the Travellers Guide on page 257.
 - f. The new subscription form (page 271) was a revamp of the old form and, while it looks much better and is less confusing than in the past, we discovered two issues: 1) a reference to subscription conditions on the reverse side. This was a legacy from the old form but these were no longer necessary; 2) an omission of Kew Hebrew Congregation from the list of congregations whose members were

entitled to a discount. This omission was purely accidental and unintentional.

g. Dairy Bell French Vanilla, listed as non Kosher (p. 127), should have been in red.

4. The above may seem minor. However, hundreds of man-hours were spent on the new book including proofreading and checking product names in the supermarket, by some consumers. Therefore, we were disappointed that we needed to go to print knowing of these errors.
5. Given the complexity of the job and the Easter Holiday the books took a long time to return from the printer.
6. Finally, the area of Kashrut is extremely dynamic which meant that the book was already outdated when it arrived from the printer. This necessitated the attached Kosher updates.

Subscriptions

In an ideal world, we would prefer not to charge the Kosher consumer for a subscription. While this may never eventuate, we are endeavouring to find other means of funding Kosher Australia in order to reduce the subscription rates next year. At the same time, we must be careful to charge manufacturers no more than fair costs, for audit and *hashgachah*, so as not to make Kosher supervision a disincentive.

The cost of the standard subscription rose from \$49.50 to \$50. At the same time we offered a one-off \$5 discount to members of all congregations or Jewish schools – something we had not done before on such a large scale.

Current financial Mizrahi members and parents of Leibler Yavneh College (LYC) continue to receive their KA subscription for free because both Mizrahi and LYC pay KA for the subscription. The Council of Orthodox Synagogues of Victoria is considering this model for next year, whereby each congregation would pay for the KA subscription so that all congregants would receive their annual subscription for free. Because the cost of bulk distribution is less, savings would be passed onto the organisation through a reduced subscription rate.

In truth, the actual cost of each printed book is less than \$20. However, the cost of printing is one of the smaller components. The bulk of the cost of the subscription is in the hundreds of hours of human resource time to put the book together as well as in maintaining and delivering updates, the processing of subscriptions and in answering subscribers' emails and phone calls throughout each work day. Subscribers should, therefore, understand that less than 95c per week represents great value for this subscription.

Consider also, the fact that congregational Rabbis and Jewish organisations receive a heavily discounted rate and newly-weds and supermarkets get free subscriptions.

How KA covers costs

Clearly, annual subscriptions barely cover the costs of producing, maintaining and disseminating a current Kosher guide.

Another area of income is from manufacturer supervision. Because we wish to encourage Kosher certification, we are careful to set the rates for manufacturers as close as possible to our actual costs for certification. These take into account administrative time, supervision salaries, travel and accounting expenses. To keep costs at a minimum to the manufacturers, we group audits in the same geographic region so that they share the cost of the one travel expense.

The final area of income is from caterers who rely on our *mashgichim* to supervise their food production. Again, we are conscious that our charge to the caterer is passed on to the consumer and we wish to keep their kosher expenses to a minimum. We are, therefore, careful to set our charges at a rate that reflects our administrative expenses including *yotze venichnas* supervision, administration and accounting, etc. and *mashgichim* salaries.

KA provides a service to the community and, therefore, has a responsibility to cover its operating costs so that it can continue to trade. As a result, we have had to review our association with caterers and manufacturers who have not paid their accounts. In one case, we carried a debt running into the tens of thousands of dollars. Continuing to do that in the long-term would jeopardise the service that we provide to the community. KA is taking a financially responsible approach to ensure its continuous provision of good service long into the future.

Enjoy the new book! We look forward to your feedback – both positive and negative.