

AN OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS FOR KOSHER CERTIFICATION



February 2005



KOSHER AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

ועד לעניני כשרות דאוסטרליא

THE PROMISE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD IN KOSHER CERTIFICATION

Overview of Kosher Food- Page 2

What Does 'Kosher' Really Mean?

The term "Kosher" means "proper" or "fit". It has nothing to with "the Rabbi's blessing".

Kosher laws are based on principles set forth in the Bible with elucidation in Rabbinic literature such as the Talmud and the Code of Jewish Law.

All foods and their components and derivatives are divided into 4 categories:

- 1) Meat
- 2) Dairy
- 3) Pareve (Neutral)
- 4) Non-Kosher, which includes mixtures of Meat and Dairy, and mixtures of Meat and Fish. These categories are explained below.

Meat

These include:

Animals that chew their cud (generally cattle and sheep), and have split hooves;

All species of poultry;

The animals must be slaughtered in a prescribed manner by a trained ritual slaughterer ("shochet"). The meat must then undergo a soaking and salting procedure to remove the blood ("Koshering"). The entire procedure must be performed under the supervision of a Rabbinic supervisor ("mashgiach").

Dairy

This includes milk and all its derivatives.

Milk from a non-Kosher animal (e.g. pig, camel) is not Kosher.

Even a very small amount of meat or dairy (or their derivative) in a product gives that product a "meat" or "dairy" status. Furthermore, food processed with heat on equipment previously used for a dairy product, acquires dairy status unless the cleaning process complies with kosher sterilisation.

Pareve (Neutral)

Everything Kosher that does not fall under the above two categories i.e. neither meat nor dairy.

Included under 'pareve' are eggs, plants, and Kosher fish (with fins and scales).

While meat and dairy products and their derivatives may not be mixed or eaten together in any amount, 'pareve' (neutral) products can be mixed with either meat or dairy products.

Fish is an exception: it may not be mixed with meat.

Non-Kosher

There are two categories of non-Kosher:

Intrinsically non-Kosher

- All animals that do not chew their cud or those that do not have split hooves.



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- Most birds outside of poultry.
- All animals and birds that have not been slaughtered, soaked, salted and inspected according to Jewish Law.
- All shellfish.
- All insects.
- All grape derived products that have not been supervised by a Rabbi.
- All hard cheese products that have not been supervised by a Rabbi.
- All mixtures of meat and dairy ingredients and their derivatives.
- All mixtures of meat and fish.

Non-Kosher processing methods:

This may apply to food and ingredients whose manufacture includes heat processing, i.e., spray-dried products, reacted flavours, production of fatty acids, canned foods, etc. If the equipment has been previously used for non-Kosher products, it renders any Kosher product non-Kosher. The Kosher product is viewed as absorbing the non-Kosher material from the walls of the vessels. However, if the equipment undergoes a special cleaning process called "Kosherisation" under supervision of a Rabbi, it can then be used for Kosher products.

Ingredients

There are a number of categories of ingredients:

Ingredients that can never be Kosher: e.g. civet, castoreum, cochineal, and ambergris.

Ingredients that are presently not available in Kosher form: e.g. natural cognac oil.

Given the small number of items in the two preceding categories, the overwhelming majority of basic ingredients may or may not be Kosher, depending on their origin and processing history. Consequently, they require Rabbinic certification to ascertain that their origin is indeed Kosher, and whether they are meat, dairy, or pareve.

Ingredients that require Rabbinic certification if the finished product is to be Kosher certified:

Products that may be derived from an animal source	Products that have or may have a grape origin:	Ingredients that are dairy or may have a dairy origin and will cause a product to be dairy:
All oils and fats	Juice concentrates	Milk solids.
Natural fatty acids and their esters e.g. palmitic, stearic, oleic, and pelargonic acids	Wine	Lactose, casein and derivatives
Polysorbates, sorbitans and all emulsifiers	Enocianine	Cream and derivatives
Amino acids	Natural cognac oil	Starter distillates
Hydrolysed and Vegetable proteins	Fusel oil	Whey and derivatives
Glycerol and compounds thereof	Amyl alcohol and esters	Fatty acids from butter or cheese, e.g. caproic acid
Enzymes & Enzyme modified products	Ethyl alcohol	
Whey	Natural acetaldehyde	
Vitamins	Vinegar	



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Levels of Supervision

A common misconception is that Kosher production requires a Rabbinic supervisor to be present at all times. While the presence of a supervisor is certainly an advantage, modern production methods allow certification to take place as long as the production complies with rigid work instructions and defined bills of material.

A typical facility may only require an annual certification audit with additional surveillance audits (as determined once the certification audit has been conducted).

There are exceptions to this:

- Meat preparation – as noted earlier, supervision is required at all stages;
- Cheese production – where rennet is used in the cheese product (even if the rennet is microbial) a Rabbinic supervisor or orthodox Jew must dose the rennet;
- Grape juice and grape wine production (including other grape by-products) – from the start of the juice extraction up until pasteurisation, the process must be handled by Rabbinic supervisors;
- 'Super Kosher Milk' or Chalav Yisrael – milking must be viewed by a Rabbinic supervisor;
- Vegetables that are not usually eaten raw must be either cooked by a Jew or the oven/stove/cooking medium initiated by Jew – these include potatoes, beetroot, rice, pumpkin, eggplant – unless the product being made is a snackfood;
- A facility that stores 'kosher sensitive items' that may easily be interchanged with non-kosher varieties e.g. gelatine, glycerine – the level of surveillance may be increased depending on the Rabbi's assessment of the danger of using non-kosher substitutes.

A company seeking certification will be required to sign a contract that obliges the company to inform Kosher Australia of any changes to production, cleaning, and ingredients in advance of those changes so that the effect of those changes on Kosher certified production can be assessed.

Passover Guidelines

Passover, an eight-day festival in March/April each year, has an added restriction against the consumption of any food that contains 'leaven'.

In addition to the above restrictions, the following and their derivatives may not be used for Passover unless they have specific Rabbinic certification for Passover:

- Wheat, Rye, Barley, Oats, Spelt,
- Corn,
- Legumes, (soy, peanut, etc.)
- Rice, and
- Mustard.

Note: *Derivatives that include the following are also prohibited for Passover without specific Rabbinic certification for Passover:* Alcohol, beer, dextrose from wheat or corn including their derivatives (such as sorbitol).

Moreover, all products requiring Passover certification must be manufactured under Rabbinic supervision.