



Kosher Resource Guide - October 2023

What is Kosher?

Kosher is a term that comes from Jewish dietary laws. It means following specific guidelines and rules on what is proper or acceptable to eat according to Jewish tradition.

What is Kosher Food?

Kosher food refers to food that follows the Jewish dietary laws and is permissible for Jews to eat.

What's Included in Kosher Food:

- **Meat:** Kosher meat comes from animals that meet specific criteria, including having split hooves and chewing cud for mammals, and having fins and scales for fish. The animals must be slaughtered in a specific way known as "Shechita," following Jewish laws.
- **Poultry:** Kosher poultry includes chicken, turkey, and other permissible birds that are slaughtered according to the Shechita guidelines.
- **Seafood:** Kosher seafood includes fish with fins and scales. Examples include salmon, tuna, and herring. Shellfish and non-kosher fish are not allowed.
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** All fruits and vegetables are considered kosher and can be consumed freely.
- **Grains and Legumes:** Common grains and legumes like wheat, rice, corn, and lentils are kosher.
- **Dairy Products:** Milk, cheese, and other dairy foods are kosher, but they should be produced with kosher ingredients and supervised by a kosher authority.

What's Not Included in Kosher Food:

- **Pork:** Pork and its by-products are strictly forbidden in kosher food.
- **Shellfish:** Shellfish like shrimp, crab, and lobster are not allowed in kosher food.
- **Non-Kosher Animals:** Non-kosher animals, such as rabbits and camels, are not permissible for Jews to eat.
- **Mixing Meat and Dairy:** Kosher dietary laws prohibit the mixing of meat and dairy products in the same meal. Separate utensils and dishes are used for each.

Remember, these are general guidelines, and specific kosher practices may vary among different Jewish communities or interpretations.

Item	Included in Kosher	Not Included in Kosher
Meat	Chicken, turkey and other permissible birds prepared according to kosher guidelines.	Pork and its by-products. Non-kosher animals like rabbits and camels.
Seafood	Fish with fins and scales such as salmon and tuna.	Shellfish (e.g. shrimp, crab, lobster) and non-kosher fish.
Fruits	All types of fruits are kosher.	-
Vegetables	All types of vegetables are kosher.	-

Grains	Wheat rice oats and other kosher grains.	-
Legumes	Lentils beans chickpeas and other kosher legumes.	-
Dairy Products	Milk cheese yogurt and other kosher dairy foods produced with kosher ingredients.	Dairy products with non-kosher additives or not supervised by a kosher authority.
Poultry	Chicken turkey and other permissible birds prepared through kosher slaughter (Shechita).	Poultry not slaughtered according to kosher guidelines.
Mixing Meat and Dairy	Separation of meat and dairy products during meal preparation.	Mixing meat and dairy together in the same meal is not allowed under kosher rules.

Regarding chicken and beef being kosher, not all chicken or beef is automatically kosher. For chicken or beef to be considered kosher, it must meet specific requirements:

For Chicken to be Kosher:

- The chicken must be from a kosher species of bird (e.g., chicken, turkey).
- It must be slaughtered according to the kosher guidelines known as “Shechita,” performed by a trained person following Jewish laws.
- All blood must be properly drained from the chicken during the slaughter.

For Beef to be Kosher:

- The beef must come from a kosher species of cattle (e.g., cows, bulls).
- It must be slaughtered according to the kosher guidelines known as “Shechita,” performed by a trained person following Jewish laws.
- All blood must be properly drained from the beef during the slaughter.

Therefore, both chicken and beef become kosher when they meet the above requirements and undergo kosher slaughter (Shechita). If these conditions are not met, the chicken or beef would not be considered kosher. To ensure that chicken or beef is kosher, it’s best to look for kosher certification symbols on the packaging or purchase from trusted kosher-certified suppliers.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who can eat kosher meat?

Kosher meat is permissible for Jews to eat, according to Jewish dietary laws. Non-Jews can also consume kosher meat if they choose to, as there are no restrictions on who can eat kosher food.

2. Are there any special considerations before serving kosher food?

Yes, there are some essential considerations before serving kosher food:

- Ensure that the food products, especially meat and dairy, have kosher certification or meet kosher standards.
- Avoid cross-contamination between meat and dairy products during preparation.
- Use separate utensils and containers for meat and dairy to prevent mixing.

3. Can Jews eat halal or vice versa?

Jews can eat halal food if kosher options are not available, as halal food follows some similar rules to kosher. However, halal certification does not necessarily guarantee that food is kosher, as there may be differences in certain practices and ingredients. Jews are encouraged to check specific ingredients and preparation methods to ensure they comply with kosher requirements.

4. Does kosher food need to be prepared in a certain way?

Yes, kosher food, especially meat, must be prepared following specific guidelines. Meat must come from kosher animals and undergo kosher slaughter (**Shechita**), where a trained person performs the ritual slaughter following Jewish laws. Additionally, meat and dairy products should not be mixed or served together in the same meal.

5. Should we have separate utensils/containers for kosher food?

Ideally, it is recommended to have separate utensils and containers for kosher food, especially for meat and dairy products. This ensures there is no mixing or cross-contamination between meat and dairy items. If proper cleaning and separation are ensured, it is permissible to use the same utensils and containers for both kosher and non-kosher food, as long as there is no risk of mixing or contamination.

6. What is gelatin? Where can I find if a product has non-kosher ingredients?

Gelatin is a protein obtained from animal collagen, commonly used as a thickener, stabilizer, or gelling agent in various food products. Gelatin derived from non-kosher animals, such as pigs, is not considered kosher.

To find out if a product has non-kosher ingredients like gelatin, you should check the food label for ingredient information. Manufacturers are required to list all ingredients on the product packaging. If the label mentions gelatin without specifying the source, you may need to contact the manufacturer directly or look for kosher certification symbols on the packaging, indicating that the product adheres to kosher guidelines.