

Kosher Information Page for the European Food Industry

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Kosher: Means suitable to human consumption according to the Jewish dietary laws. Every foodstuff must be Kosher certified.

Animals: Only cows, sheep and goats are Kosher (have both Kosher marks: cleft footed and ruminant. Their milk is Kosher and their meat is only Kosher when they were slaughtered according to the Jewish ritual. Any other milk and meat are strictly forbidden.

Fowls: Only poultry (hens, ducks, turkeys, geese and pigeons) are Kosher their eggs are Kosher and parve (see later) and their meat is only Kosher when it is slaughtered according to the Jewish ritual.

Fish: Kosher fishes are those that have both Kosher marks: fins and scales. (e.g. salmon, carp, tuna, herring, trout mackerels etc.) All other fish, without fins as eels, sharks etc. are non-kosher. All seafood e.g. lobsters, crabs, oysters etc. are strictly forbidden.

Insects: All insects are forbidden. Flour has, therefore, to be sieved as well as some sorts of legumes e.g. rice, beans in order to prevent worms, etc.

Beverages:

- a) All that originated from the grapevine (wine, grape juice) has to be produced only by Jews under strict supervision.
- b) All derivatives of the grapevine must come only from Kosher wine (e.g. wine vinegar, tartaric acid, wine alcohol, brandy).

Pastry: Needs to be, first, free from any non-kosher ingredients and also bakes as “**Affiyat Ysroel**” (Jewish baked), that means that the rabbi (or his assistant) operates himself, by lighting the oven, the entire baking process.

Meat-Parve-Diary: The Jewish dietary laws require always a full separation between products that contain meat and those containing milk. It is strictly forbidden to eat or even to cook meat and milk together, therefore, every foodstuff must be labeled “**meat**” or “**diary**” or “**parve**” (means: neutral that can be consumed with meat or milk e.g. water, bread, fruits and vegetables).

Raw materials:

- a) All raw-materials used in the food industry must be free from any animal or wine derived substances e.g. gelatin, animal fat, glycerol, stearin, emulsifiers, mono-di glycerides, polysorbates, tartaric acid, shellac anti-foams and anti-caking.
- b) All products that were in contact with non-kosher materials or produced on the same line without kasherisation are non-kosher. This contact might be also in the steam system.

Kasherisation of production plants: A plant where non-kosher products were produced can be “koshalized” once the non-kosher ingredients were removed. This is done by a full cleaning process consisting of hot boiling water with steam and addition of strong chemicals. The entire procedure must be done under rabbinical supervision.

Passover:

- a) During these festival days (that falls in end March – beginning April and lasts one week) it is forbidden to eat cereal products (leavened bread and pastry, flour, wheat starch, beverages and corn alcohol) as well as all products that have come in contact with them. It means that products like sweets, juices, baby food, oils and flavors must all be produced Kosher for Passover under Rabbinical supervision.
- b) As a result must every product, that is meant to be used during the Passover days, be produced only under strict rabbinical supervision to ascertain that the production line was throughout cleaned from any residues and that the ingredients are free from any cereal derivatives. The finished products are then labeled as “Kosher for Passover” and must carry a special Kosher certificate.
- c) All products that contain legumes e.g. maize, soybean, rice, etc. In form of flour, oil or starch are only partly allowed for use on the Passover days. They must be labeled, therefore, “Kosher for Passover – Kitniyot”.

Super-Kosher: These are products that have a high Kosher standard and are consumed by the ultra-Orthodox Jews. Usually, these product are produced only under strict Rabbinical supervision. When milk powder is used then it must be controlled from the milking process. It is called “**Chalav Yisroel**”.

What is needed for a Kosher certificate? A Kashrus expert – Rabbi, has to inspect the production plant in order to find out if the products are kosher and to advise the company of the needed changes. A full list of all the products, ingredients and their suppliers has to be presented. Every such information must be revealed only if the inspecting rabbi commits himself to keep it as strictly confidential.

Who is authorized to issue a Kosher certificate?

For export to Israel:

- a) The Chief Rabbinate of Israel must approve the Kosher certificate issued in abroad and only those European Rabbis and the Kosher organizations who enjoy its confidence are entitled to issue a Kosher certificate.
- b) In addition, some of the Israeli importers require a super-kosher certificate, (see above) that is issued by the ultra- orthodox Kosher organization named Badaz, or by those European Rabbis who enjoy its confidence.

For export to the USA: There are in America several Kosher organizations. The main one s are: the Orthodox Union (O.U.), the Kosher Laboratories (O.K.), the Kof-K and the Star-K. The certification is done by the staff or the representatives of these organizations or by the European Rabbis who enjoy their confidence. A well-known European Kosher organization is the Kosher Federation of London (KF) that its certificates are fully accepted in the USA as well as in Israel and Europe.

Halal: Means allowed to be eaten according to the Moslem dietary laws. Since the Islam forbids also the eating of food containing animal substances and alcohol, most of the kosher products can be certified also Halal.