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Kosher

For spiritual fitness





Kosher Foods—for Spiritual Fitness

Why, in this day and age, are six million people keeping kosher? Why do 30% of the foods in your supermarket bear a seal of kosher certification? Why has the amount of kosher foods available increased by almost 2,000% in the past ten years? What is it about kosher cuisine that makes it the fastest growing sector of the food market today?

First of all, what is “Kosher”?

It all started back in Sinai. That’s where G-d told Moses what Jewish people should and shouldn’t eat. Food, it turns out, has a major impact— not just on the body, but on the soul as well. So G-d is understandably concerned.

In the thirty-three centuries since, all sorts of situations have come up, requiring more discussion, debates and final rulings—enough to fill a whole library. Furthermore, since we take G-d’s words pretty seriously, we’ve added many precautions just to keep us away from the possibility of breaking one of His rules.

The basic guidelines, however, remain fairly simple. Mainly:

1. There are critters we don’t eat, like pigs, bugs, lobsters, crabs and more.



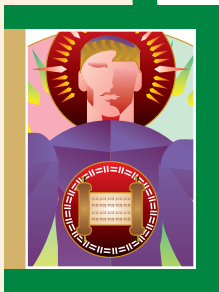
2. There's a specific, painless way to slaughter those animals we do eat.
3. We don't mix milk and meat.
4. We don't eat blood and we have a special way to salt the meat to remove it.
5. We don't use utensils that may have absorbed non-kosher food.

So why the popularity?

First of all, kosher food is health food for the soul. Just as there are foods that are friendly to your body and foods that harm it, so too there are foods that are soul-friendly while other foods are not-so-friendly.

According to the Kabala, eating is a process of purification: When we eat, we separate the coarse material from the Divine energy in the food. Everything in the world contains some sort of Divine energy. But non-kosher foods are too coarse for us to purify by eating. Rather than providing spiritual energy, once metabolized, these foods actually stand in the way and block the flow.

As it turns out, how you cook and what you eat are vital parts of a spiritual lifestyle.



5 more reasons why people go kosher:

1. Kosher meat is fresher and cleaner due to the precautions taken in removing blood. Kosher labels add an extra degree of supervision to your food.
2. The kosher rules, along with Shabbat and education, are the most vital elements in sustaining a viable Jewish community.
3. Kosher meat is slaughtered in a humane manner. The animals experience a minimum of pain.
4. Children from kosher homes have a strong, healthy sense of identity.
5. Your kitchen gets this special, spiritual aura about it. Watch out, it might even spread throughout the house.



About Kosher Supervision

Once upon a time, it wasn't hard to tell if your food was kosher. Today, a single cookie can contain ingredients from every part of the world. Last count, there were 2800 additives for food manufacturers to choose from—many of them originating from animal or insect sources. Like the red color of that candy? Could be from cochineal, an extract from an insect of the Peruvian desert. Isn't it nice that your peanut butter doesn't separate? That's

thanks to the emulsifiers, which are often an animal derivative. The product says “100% vegetable oil”—but the FDA admits that some runs could contain animal fats.

There’s only one way to know whether a processed food is kosher today—and that’s by looking for kosher certification on the label.

Today, food manufacturers have woken up to the competitive edge that kosher certification gives them. That’s why *most of the brand name products are certified kosher*. The bowl of cereal you had for breakfast, for example, was probably certified. Take a look in your pantry—you may already be well on your way to keeping kosher.



Here are some of the more common kosher symbols:



How to do Kosher

The kosher rules don't have to enter your home with a big bang. You can welcome them in step by step. Here are some of the main steps:

1. Don't eat meat and milk in the same meal.
2. Buy your meat and chicken from a kosher butcher.
3. Cut out pork, shellfish and other non-kosher critters. Kosher fish include cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, herring, mackerel, pickerel, pike, salmon, trout, and whitefish. You won't starve.
4. All processed foods need kosher supervision.
5. At some point, ask a rabbi to help you make your kitchen kosher. He'll fill you in on all the advanced stuff.



Want to know more about the beauty of keeping kosher? Visit www.ok.org



