

A Teacher's Guide to Judaism

Kashrut/Kosher

The law of eating kosher

The rabbis in biblical times developed the principles of kashrut. In order to consume kosher land animals and birds, it is necessary to slaughter them in a prescribed way, in a manner that has been described as a more humane method than is practised commercially. In addition, the prohibition of cooking a baby goat in its own mother's milk is the basis for the complete and physical separation of all milk and meat products. These are the fundamental elements of kashrut.

Kosher

A Hebrew word meaning "fit" or "appropriate" which describes the food that is suitable for Jewish people to eat. With its roots in the Hebrew Bible, the system of defining which foods are kosher was developed by the rabbis of late antiquity.

Rules:

- Animals must chew the cud AND have cloven hooves
- Birds must be domesticated types (e.g. no birds of prey)
- Fish must have fins AND scales
- Milk and meat foods are kept apart and never eaten together
- Separate crockery and cutlery is needed for milk and meat cooking and eating

In the Home:

Practice

The use of different sets of dishes and pots and pans developed in order to ensure a greater separation between milk and meat foods. This is also the basis of waiting several hours after eating a meat dish before eating a dairy product, so that the two types of food shouldn't even mix together in our stomachs!

Torah and biblical source

According to the Torah (Leviticus 11), only certain kinds of animals are considered inherently kosher. For land animals, any creature that both chews its cud and has split hooves is kosher. For sea creatures, any fish that has both fins and scales is acceptable, and for birds, only those birds approved by the Torah (or others that later authorities have judged to be like them, a list that excludes scavengers and birds of prey). In addition, it is repeated three times in the Torah that it is forbidden to cook a baby goat in its own mother's milk.



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These resources describe practices that are common in the UK, but there is a wide range of Jewish traditions and observance, and different Jewish people have different levels of observance. When interacting with Jewish pupils and their parents, teachers should be aware that it is always best to ask about their own preferences.

DEFINITIONS AND GLOSSARY

Kashrut

The LAW of keeping kosher

Kosher

Hebrew for FIT or APPROPRIATE

Milchik / Dairy

Often described with the Yiddish word milchik, these are foods, such as cheese, milk, yogurt, ice cream, etc.

Fleishik / Meat

Often referred to with the Yiddish word fleischik, this includes all kosher animals and fowl slaughtered in the prescribed manner, and their derivative products.

Parev

A Yiddish word meaning “neutral,” this describes foods that are neither dairy nor meat, such as eggs and fish, tofu, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables, and the like, provided they are not prepared with any milk or meat products.

Torah – the five book of Moses from the Jewish Old Testament Bible



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