Cookin’ just ain’t what it used to be. Technological advances have taken the old stovetop and oven and upgraded them to be safer, more efficient, and smart for today’s lifestyle. They have also made them far more complicated. With these transformations, the observant Jew is faced with challenges that did not confront him in the past. To understand how these changes affect the halachic use of the range on Shabbos and Yom Tov, it is worthwhile to review some laws and concepts as they relate to cooking on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

**Definition of Melacha**

Cooking on Shabbos is a Torah prohibition derived from the constructive acts done in erecting the mishkan. This forbidden act is known as a melacha. There are 39 categories of acts that are prohibited.

**Melacha of Cooking**

The prohibition of cooking on Shabbos is defined as the act of using heat to make a substance edible or to change its state. In order for food to be considered hot, the food must reach a temperature of 120°F, hot enough to cause one to withdraw his hand due to the heat. If the food will not reach a temperature of yad soledes bo, there is no concern of cooking. Light a flame on Shabbos is also prohibited as it is written, “לא תבעש ואין מעשה לך וינאש” (Deuteronomy 16:21). The Torah prohibition of creating a fire on Shabbos also includes adding to an existing flame. This is referred to as mosif havarah. Furthermore, one may not do an action that will “cause” the flame to go on if it is the end result of his action. The term for this is gram havara.

**Aino Mechaven**

There is a general rule regarding actions prohibited by the Torah that says that when one does an action and one’s intent is not for the prohibited reaction that results, it is permitted. This is called aino mechaven, which literally means that there was no intent to do the activity. (For example, dragging a bench on the ground on Shabbos to bring it to another location is permitted even though it may make a groove in the ground.) However, if this unintended consequence must result in the prohibited activity being done, it is as if one had initially intended to perform the prohibited action, and the action is prohibited (i.e. dragging a heavy bench on soft earth where it will surely make a groove in the ground). This is called a psik reisha. Nevertheless on Shabbos, where the resulting consequence is neither wanted nor intended, it is classified as a psik reisha d’lo nisht leih, which is permitted by Torah law although prohibited by Rabbinic law.
A KASHRUS GUIDE TO
Medications, Vitamins, & Nutritional Supplements

RABBI DOVID HEBER, KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

Global sales of pharmaceutical products are expected to reach 500 billion dollars annually. It is therefore no wonder that the interest in kosher certification and approval for these products has also skyrocketed. Ideally, one should purchase these products with kosher certification. However, this is not always practical. It is for this reason that one of the most frequently asked questions on the Star-K hotline relates to the kosher status of these remedies. In an effort to clarify the numerous issues regarding these popular products, the Star-K has prepared the following halachic guidelines based on the psak of Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Ravsh, Rabbinic Administrator of Star-K Kosher Certification.1

CATEGORIES OF ILLNESSES

Before determining whether a non-kosher product may be taken, one must first identify the category of illness. There are three categories of illness:

I. חולי חיים ובсмерת - Someone who is ill and whose life may be in danger. A person whose life is currently not in danger, but if untreated could develop a life threatening complication. This includes an elderly person who has the flu or an infant with a fever.

Additional examples include the following:

- One who has a heart condition, diabetes, substantially elevated blood pressure, kidney disease, severe depression or any other serious condition.

- Someone with an infection (except for those skin infections known to be non-life threatening, e.g. acne) may take antibiotics.

- A pregnant woman whose life is in danger (e.g. blood clotting disorder, toxemia), or who is in active labor, or who is in danger of having a miscarriage.

- A woman who has given birth within the past seven days without any known complications or who has postpartum complications that are or may become life threatening. This may apply for an extended period of time, depending upon her condition. All instructions given by the doctor should be carefully followed, including taking the medication for the prescribed number of days, even though the symptoms may have subsided. This also applies to non-kosher medication that is flavored and tastes good.

All of the above is equally applicable on Pesach to medication which contains chametz.

II. חולי חיים ובсмерת - Someone whose life is not in danger. This includes anyone who is bedridden, is noticeably not functioning up to par due to pain or illness, or has a fever which is not potentially life threatening. A child under six years of age who has discomfort is also considered a חולי חיים ובсмерת. This category also includes the following:

- One who is experiencing symptoms of the flu.

- One who suffers from chronic debilitating arthritis pain.

- One who suffers from migraine headaches or mild depression.

- A pregnant woman suffering from non-life threatening complications (e.g. lower back pain).

- A woman who has given birth in the past thirty days without any known problems or who is experiencing non-life threatening postpartum complications. This may apply for an extended period of time.

Those listed above may be permissible.8

III. מזון פטיש - One who is experiencing slight discomfort (e.g. slight joint pains or a runny nose) or is healthy and takes vitamins and supplements to maintain good health should make every effort to ensure that the product is either kosher certified or contains all kosher ingredients. If this is not possible, a Rav should be consulted since in some instances non-kosher products taken על דרכי האלי ישלום may be permissible.9

1 Based on research conducted by IMS Health, Inc.

2 This article is based on several different articles that have appeared in Kashrus Kurrents during the past decade. The purpose of this article is to address the kosher status and halachos of these remedies. It is in no way intended to advise consumers as to whether a specific product is effective. One should consult with his physician or health advisor regarding the effectiveness and side effects of each product and determine which products may be taken. This article addresses year round kashrus and is not a Pesach guide. For Pesach information, see the Star-K Pesach Guide published annually.

3 Glucosamines, another common arthritis remedy, is now available in kosher form. The Star-K certifies vegetable-based glucosamine distributed by Nutralife Health Products of Lakewood, NJ. Unless otherwise specified on the label, most other glucosamines on the market are derived from crab, shrimp, or lobster shell fish which are not kosher. Whether one may swallow such a non-kosher product may depend...
Taking non-kosher medication that requires eating in a normal manner (e.g., non-kosher chewable tablets that taste good) is not permissible.

IV. Prevention - If a person is healthy or has a slight discomfort and his physician advises that there is a high risk of becoming a šalul or even a halitz, this person may take non-kosher supplements in an uncommon manner. For example, if a doctor advises HRT to a middle-aged woman to avoid osteoporosis, a common condition in older women, she may swallow a non-kosher capsule or tablet if an equally effective kosher substitute is unavailable. Similarly, if a doctor advises swallowing a specially formulated non-kosher vitamin for someone who has a high risk of developing macular degeneration (a disease in the central part of the retina that leads to blindness), one is permitted to swallow the product. However, if a healthy individual wishes to take non-kosher supplements to prevent an illness which is unlikely to occur, a Rav should be consulted, since the halacha is similar to one who has a šesir.

TYPES OF MEDICATIONS & REMEDIES

The following addresses various halachos regarding specific products.

1. Gelatin Capsules – Gelatin is an ingredient that is derived from animals. Unless it is made under strict kosher conditions (e.g. kosher slaughtered animals or kosher fish) or it is made from gelatin substitutes (e.g. vegetable-based capsules), the product is not kosher. Swallowing a capsule is considered as aleh from akol and may be taken by a sick person even if he is not in danger. One who has a šesir or who is in good health should consult a Rav before taking a gelatin capsule.  

II. Tablets – In tablets, the most common possibly non-kosher ingredients are magnesium stearate, calcium stearate, and stearic acid. These inactive ingredients serve as lubricants that allow the medicinal powders to adequately “flow” through the processing equipment. The stearates also make it easier for the finished tablet to “release” from the machinery at the final compression stage where the tablet is formed. These stearate ingredients may be derived from either animal or vegetable sources. However, under normal circumstances, enough lubrication will be provided with less than 1.6% stearates, making them kosher and permissible. Therefore, even one who has a šesir or who is in good health may take tablets if the only issue is whether or not the stearates are kosher. If the tablet is definitely non-kosher or contains ingredients that may be non-kosher (e.g. polysorbate 80, triacetin), a sick person - even though he is not in danger - may take it. When the šalul or akol is in question, the Rav should be consulted.

However, one who has a šesir and finds it necessary to take such a non-kosher medication should consult a Rav. The same is true for a sick adult or child who is not in danger but requires non-kosher flavored chewable tablets (i.e. “gelatin”).

III. Syrups and Liquids – These products are considered akol from akol because they contain flavors which give them a good taste. The most problematic ingredient (but by no means the only such ingredient) in these products is glycerin. This ingredient, which is not being used as a flavor or carrier, may not be kosher. The solution is to mix each required teaspoon of elixir into at least two fluid ounces of water, juice, or soda. The possibly non-kosher glycerin would then be considered kosher.

What can one who has a šesir or even one whose life is not in danger do if he finds it necessary to take a good tasting liquid medication that contains glycerin which may not be kosher? The solution is to mix each required teaspoon of elixir into at least two fluid ounces of water, juice, or soda. The possibly non-kosher glycerin would then be considered kosher.

IV. Vitamins – Ideally, one should take kosher certified vitamins. The Star-K and other kashrus agencies currently certify several vitamin companies, as listed in the Star-K approved over-the-counter medication list (see page 11). Many kosher brands of vitamins are available anywhere in the United States through local multi-level marketers and distributors who market their products through various means, including toll-free hotlines. However, in the event that a specific vitamin or nutritional supplement is not available with kosher certification, the following guidelines apply:

Multi-vitamins often contain non-kosher ingredients that are not listed on the label. In particular, natural vitamins A and D may come from non-kosher sources. In addition, vitamin E, beta carotene, and natural or synthetic vitamins A and D may be mixed with non-kosher gelatin.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine which is used because glycerin is sold by distributors who often sell both kosher and non-kosher grades to pharmaceutical manufacturers. Therefore, one should preferably purchase cough syrups, children’s liquid medications, and other elixirs with a hechsher or review the label to ensure that the product does not contain glycerin or other possibly problematic ingredients.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
### ESTABLISHMENTS
(see letter of certification)

**Yogi’s Kosher Indian Vegetarian Cuisine**
2450 Route 9 South, Howell, NJ
RESTAURANT/TAKE OUT

### CONSUMER PRODUCTS
(only when bearing Star-K symbol)

**Aliments Toussain**
Quebec, Canada
*DUBON* OLIVES & PICKLED PRODUCTS

**Bi-Lo**
Mauldin, SC
*WALTER'S DRIED FRUIT, NUTS & SEEDS*

**Boca Java**
Jacksonville, FL
*BBOCA JAVA* COFFEES

**Brasfrigo, S.A.**
Goias CEP, Brazil
*BRASFRIGO* CANNED VEGETABLES

**Centro De Servicio Artesanal**
Lima, Peru
*LA KHOCHALITA, SUNDANCE FARMS* DEHYDRATED FRUIT

**Cibo Specialty Foods**
Linden, NJ
*DAL RACCOLTO* PICKLED PRODUCTS

**Cooperativa Agraria Ind. Naranjillo**
Lima, Peru
*NARANJILLO* COCOA PRODUCTS & COFFEE BEANS

**Cosmos Food Products**
West Haven, CT
*COSMOS* PICKLED PRODUCTS

**Dallis Coffee**
Ozone Park, NY
*DALLIS* COFFEES

**Gandules**
Lima, Peru
*GANDULES* CANNED VEGETABLES

**Giant Eagle**
Pittsburgh, PA
*LAURENTI* OLIVES

**Intex International Trade**
Brooklyn, NY
*INTEX* PICKLED PRODUCTS

**Krisp-Pak Company**
Norfolk, VA
*KRISP-PAK, FRESH PACKAGED FRUIT & VEGETABLES*

**La Tourangelle**
Richmond, CA
*LA TOURANGELLE* OILS/OIL-OILS

**Mancini Foods**
Chuluota, FL
*MANCINI* CANNED VEGETABLES

**Nutsco**
Camden, NJ
*NUTSCO* NUTS & SEEDS

**Taylor Farms Maryland**
Annapolis Junction, MD
*TAYLOR FARMS, FRESH PACKAGED VEGETABLES & SALADS*

**Vacaville Fruit Company**
Vacaville, CA
*VACAVILLE* DRIED FRUIT & VEGETABLES

**Vitarroz Corp.**
Jersey City, NJ
*VITARROZ* BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES, TORTILLAS/TACOS

### INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTS
(see letter of certification)

**A.S.I. International**
Watchung, NJ
*VITAMIN COMPONENTS*

**Advantage Botanicals Co.**
Carlstadt, NJ
*VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS*

**Ahcf International Development Co.**
Anhui, China
*CANNED FRUIT*

**Anhui Huabao Biologic Co.**
Anhui, China
*HERBAL EXTRACTS*

**BI Nutraceuticals**
Long Beach, CA
*VITAMIN COMPONENTS*

**Boca Java**
Jacksonville, FL
*COFFEES*

**CEIEC, Shaanxi Co.**
Xian, China
*JUICE & JUICE CONCENTRATES*

**Centro De Servicio Artesanal**
Lima, Peru
*LA KHOCHALITA*
Cochabamba, Bolivia
*DEHYDRATED FRUIT*

**Cooperativa Agraria Ind. Naranjillo**
Lima, Peru
*COCOA PRODUCTS & COFFEE BEANS*

**Dalian Jingang Food Co.**
LiaoNing, China
*SOY PRODUCTS*

**De Zhou Rui Kang Food Co.**
Shandong, China
*SOY PRODUCTS*

**Farmers Cooperative Elevator Co.**
Milford, IA
*OILS, INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS*

**Fetter & Son**
Morral, OH
*KOSHER TRANSPORT*

**Gandules**
Lima, Peru
*CANNED VEGETABLES*

**Guangxi HeHua Bioengineering Co.**
Guangxi, China
*AMINO ACIDS*

**Jiangsu Tianhe Medical Institute Co.**
Jiangsu, China
*VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS*

**Jilin Changbai Mountain Fine Chemicals Co.**
Jilin, China
*VANILLIN*

**Little Bee Impex**
Punjab, India
*HONEY*

**Merrimack Valley Apiaries**
Billerica, MA
*HONEY*

**Professional Service & Supply**
Minneapolis, MN
*DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS*

**Quaker Chemical Corp.**
Conshohocken, PA
*LUBRICANTS*

**S.F.C. Co.**
Chunnam, South Korea
*INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS*

**S.I.P.O. SRL**
Milano, Italy
*FOOD COLORS*

**SanTec Chemical Company**
Ft. Myers, FL
*DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS*

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 12*
The newest member of the Star-K “family” will not bear the familiar Star-K logo - not on a label, not on a plumba. In fact, this reflects the uniqueness of our non-profit lay organization, and, perhaps, explains our essence. Yes, milk and meat matters are only a part of Star-K’s commitment in serving the kosher consumer the world over. However, research and education of all “non-edible” mitzvos, from shatnes to Sabbath mode appliances, is a priority at Star-K, as well.

The mitzvah of marriage, sparking a “kosher match”, and providing an incentive for shadchanim, is the newest focus of Star-K. Attempting to do its part to alleviate the universal singles “crisis” the American Orthodox community is experiencing, Star-K is offering a $2,000 cash “gift” for the successful shidduchim of women in Baltimore’s Orthodox community - Star-K’s hometown. This is an additional incentive, on top of the customary shadchanus from the parents of the choson and kallah. According to Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Rabbinic Administrator of the Star-K, “The concept of offering monetary incentives to promote shidduchim is sanctioned by Chazal” (See Rosh, Kedushin 30b, paragraph 43).

The Problem

If you are a single woman, or the parents of daughters, chances are you, better than anyone, understand the problem. The eligible bachelor seems to have a long list of potential marriage partners. The eligible young lady sits patiently by the telephone, hoping that it will ring with a suggestion of a possible suitor. As the telltale saying goes in shidduchus: “A boy needs a secretary, a girl needs an agent.”

There are various theories as to why this problem exists. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that the singles population is getting larger and older. Thousands of single Jewish women, of all ages, who are shomrei Torah and mitzvos, are finding it difficult to find a suitable match. There are many single observant Jewish women in Baltimore, whose numbers are on the increase. A significant number of divorcees and widows, contribute to these statistics, as well.

National organizations, such as the Agudath Israel of America and the National Council of Young Israel, have long recognized the worsening problem, which is contributing to the emotional pain of our singles. Agudath Israel of America, together with N’Shei Agudath Israel, addressed this issue at the annual National Agudah Convention, in establishing the New York based shidduch agency, Invei Hagefen. Similarly, since 2001, the National Council of Young Israel initiated an annual Shidduchim conference for singles, marrieds, parents, and, matchmakers to help tackle the challenge. Other Orthodox organizations have recognized the crisis and are doing their part by introducing programs that facilitate the matchmaking process.

Star-K’s Contribution

The Star-K is attempting to help remedy the Baltimore singles situation, which is typical of that in Orthodox communities throughout the United States. It is offering the $2,000 cash incentive for a period of one year, to anyone who successfully arranges a shidduch for a woman in Baltimore’s Orthodox community. Star-K hopes that b’ezras Hashem, its gift will act as a dual incentive: for professional shadchanim, worldwide, to put Baltimore women on the top of their singles lists, and for “would-be shadchanim” and acquaintances to keep Baltimore women in mind.

According to Dr. Avrom Pollak, President of Star-K, “What we are hoping to accomplish is to get anyone - living in any community - who knows a Baltimore single woman, to make that extra effort in arranging an introduction with a suitable eligible man.”

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Oven Kashrus: for Shabbos Use

**Grama**

The halachic interpretation of a melacha is the action one does which causes a direct result. For example, when one strikes a match one directly causes the fire to ignite. When the resulting prohibited action is an indirect result of one’s action, it is called a grama. For example, setting a mouse trap is a grama for the melacha of tzod (hunting). Grama of a melacha is permitted by Torah law, but is Rabbinitically prohibited.

Where there is a combination of factors that individually may have been restricted by Rabbinic law, there may be room for leniency when combined with one another. Therefore where a grama will cause a melacha to be done that is unintended and unwanted on Shabbos (lo nica leih), the action may be done. This is the basis for allowing one to open a refrigerator door on Shabbos. In that case, a thermostat will sense the change in temperature and cause the compressor motor to run. Causing the motor to run is a grama. The running of the motor gives off sparks of fire which are not wanted or intended. Thus the melacha taking place is lo nica leih. By opening the refrigerator there is a grama to an unintended and unwanted melacha. In the same vein one may open an oven on Shabbos when one removes all the food from the oven. The resulting grama (the melacha of havarah) will be unwanted and unintended.

**Rabbinic Ordinances Regarding Food Preparation**

Many Rabbinic laws were initiated to prevent one from transgressing the Torah's prohibitions. They are intended both to distance us from what is prohibited, and to prevent us from doing actions which can be misconstrued with a prohibited melacha.

- **Shehiyah** - Among these Rabbinic laws are shehiyah, literally, one is prohibited to leave the food on or in the place where it will be cooking, even if it was placed there before Shabbos. There is concern that leaving food that is not ready to be eaten on the cooking surface or in an oven may lead one to add to the heat on Shabbos. The Rabbis are concerned that one may adjust the heat to enhance the food.

In the past, when cooking was done directly over burning logs, there was a concern that someone might stir the embers. This would add oxygen and heat. By stirring the embers, one transgresses two Torah prohibitions: burning a fire on the Shabbos day and (if the food is not yet cooked) cooking. In order to prevent any wrongdoing, the Rabbis decreed that unless the food is edible before Shabbos, one may not leave it on or in the oven once Shabbos begins, unless the embers are removed or covered to prevent someone from stirring them. In lieu of covering the coals, we have the custom of placing a blech over the flames before Shabbos. It should be noted that the main function of the blech is to make sure that one does not adjust the fire. Therefore, with a modern oven or cook top, one should cover the temperature controls in addition to covering the flame with a blech.

- **Chazarah** - Another Rabbinic prohibition is chazarah, returning cooked food to the heat source on Shabbos. Even if the food is still hot and fully cooked, one may not return it to an oven or a covered stove unless it was removed with the intention of being replaced, and had not been put down and let out of one’s hand from the time it was removed to when it is replaced on the heat. This certainly would prohibit taking a cold pre-cooked food and placing it on a blech on Shabbos. This Rabbinic decree was instituted because one’s action of placing the food on the heat appears as if one is beginning to cook. It is important to note that reheating cooked foods that are liquid or have liquid content may be a transgression of the Torah’s prohibition against cooking on Shabbos. Solids that have been fully cooked before Shabbos may be re-heated (i.e. kugel or roast) on Shabbos. However, because of chazarah, reheating must be done in a way that cannot be confused with cooking. Therefore one may place a kugel or challah on top of a pot of food that is on the blech, but not on top of the blech itself.

**Ovens and warming drawers:**

Now that we have some of the basic principles, let us examine what happens in practice when using an oven or warming drawer.

As mentioned, aside from the prohibition against cooking on Shabbos there is a prohibition against initiating a fire or causing increased burning. In the case of thermostatically controlled ovens and warming drawers, opening the oven or warming drawer will cause the mechanism to call for increased burning to make up for the heat lost by opening the door or drawer. The resulting effect is a grama of havarah, which is prohibited. However as discussed earlier, where one does not want or intend for an action to take place, and has no need for its result, this is only prohibited by Rabbinic law. When coupled with the fact that the ensuing melacha is a reaction that was brought about indirectly but was initiated through a grama, there is room for leniency and the initial action is permitted. Therefore food left in the oven or warming drawer from before Shabbos may be removed despite the fact that this will eventually cause the oven to burn. This is because with the removal of the food the resulting additional burning is not wanted or intended. However this can only be said where all of the food will be removed at that time. If some food remains in the oven to be heated, then the
additional burning caused by the door opening is viewed as intentional and therefore prohibited. Most warming drawers and ovens are thermostatically controlled and would fall into the above category.

If a warming drawer is not controlled by a thermostat one must check with the manufacturer to be sure that by opening the drawer he is not turning off the heating element. If there are multiple temperature settings, these controls must be covered as discussed earlier regarding stovetop controls. Even where the warming drawer is not controlled by a thermostat and the opening of the drawer will not affect the flow of power to the heating element, one cannot place food into the warming drawer on Shabbos if its operating temperature is higher than yad soledes, 120 degrees, as this is prohibited under the laws of chazarah.

Sabbath Mode Ovens
Due to the halachic complications that technological innovations have placed upon the Jewish consumer, the Star-K has been working with some manufacturers to design ovens that are more user friendly to the Jewish consumer (see sidebar for names of appliance manufacturers). Some of the common problems found in new ovens are twelve hour safety cut off, lights, icons and temperature displays that may be turned on by opening the oven door, and time bake features that must be manually turned off to silence the bell. In certified models, many of these features are disabled. (Contact the Star-K office at 410-484-4110 for details of individual models.)

In addition, some Sabbath mode features such as temperature adjustment are quite practical and allow for easier use of the ovens on Yom Tov where the restrictions of cooking and burning are lifted when done under prescribed conditions. However, the Sabbath mode features do not in any way circumvent the regular restrictions involved in food preparations on Shabbos Kodesh. The laws of Bishul, Havarah, Shehiyah and Chazarah must still be observed even when using a Sabbath mode oven.

COMMON QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
Now that we have reviewed the basic rules, let us look at some frequently asked questions about oven and stovetop use on Shabbos and the responses given by Rabbi Moshe Heine- mann, Shlita, Star-K’s Rabbinic Administrator.

I have a smooth top electric stove. The manufacturer says that

this should not be covered or it will crack. Can I leave my food on the smooth cooktop on Shabbos without a blech?

It is customary to cover the heat source as was done in the past when one cooked directly on the embers. The concern then was to prevent stirring the embers to add heat. As noted in our introduction, today the primary concern is that one should not try to raise the heat so that the food will cook faster. When one cannot place a blech on the stove top, it is sufficient to cover the controls and leave the cooked food on the stove top.

May I adjust the temperature of an oven that has a Sabbath mode feature on Shabbos?

No! The temperature adjustment feature in the Sabbath mode oven is for Yom Tov use only. (This issue is addressed in the Kashrus Kurrents article titled, “Oven Kashrus: For Yom Tov Use.”) On Shabbos, one may not adjust the temperature, as that causes the fire to burn or be extinguished. Nor does the Sabbath mode allow you to put food up to cook or reheat on Shabbos.

May I leave cooked food in an oven that is on if it was placed in the oven before Shabbos?

Yes. However, because of shehiyah, the controls for the oven should be covered or taped. It is customary to cook all food before Shabbos to the point that it is edible for the average individual.

May I open my oven to take food out on Shabbos?

First, one must be sure that opening the oven door does not automatically cause a light, icon or electrical switch or flame to go on. In the case of convection ovens, the door opening may cause the circulating fan to go off. Even though one does not intend to do these actions, it is prohibited, as if there were intent, since this is an automatic consequence. If opening the oven door

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\( ^1 \) Shemos 35:3.
\( ^2 \) Psik reisha d’lo nicha leih asur l’rov harishonim.
\( ^3 \) See Biur Halacha 253:1 Venohagu.
\( ^4 \) Yiddish for metal sheets.
\( ^5 \) Garuf v’katum.
\( ^6 \) For a copy of this article, contact the Star-K office at 410-484-4110.
\( ^7 \) Psik reisha on the burning.
Oven Kashrus: FOR SHABBOS USE

Oven Use on Shabbos

Dear Readers: We at the Star-K have worked with numerous appliance companies to make modern appliances more kosher consumer friendly for Shabbos and Yom Tov. During this process we have, in many cases, eliminated lights, icons, tones, and digital displays, provided for timed bake without tones and icons, and temperature adjustment on Yom Tov. However, these companies have chosen to name this feature the Sabbath Mode, and we are concerned from a halachic point of view that there may be some misunderstanding as to the proper use of these ovens on Shabbos. We would therefore like to make some clarifications.

1. No adjustment to the temperature is permitted on Shabbos even in the Sabbath Mode.
2. All food must be fully cooked and placed in the oven before Shabbos. No food (cooked or non-cooked) may be placed in the oven on Shabbos to re-warm or cook. This is true regarding ovens, as well as warming drawers.

May I take out some food from the oven and leave the rest to remove later?

No. When one opens the oven door, one is letting cool air into the cabinet. The thermostat will sense the loss of heat and make up for it by additional burning. When one opens the oven door, one indirectly causes additional burning. This is grama havarah which, in its own right, is Rabbinically prohibited. However, normally one does not want the burner to go back on if the oven is empty. Even though opening the oven door will cause the fire to burn longer, one does not want this to happen. On the con-trary, it is a needless waste of gas or electricity. This is considered a psik reisha d’lo nicha leih. Although we do not allow a psik reisha d’lo nicha leih on a Torah prohibi-tion, this action occurs in-directly as a grama and is only a Rabbinic prohibition. Therefore, here where there is a combination of factors (a grama on a psik reisha d’lo nicha leih), it is permitted. However, if one leaves food in the oven after the door has been opened, he obviously wants the oven to go back on. This is pro-hibited as a psik reisha d’nicha leih, as if one intended to cause the fire to burn longer. If one accidentally opens the oven door, he must remove all the food. Therefore, the oven door cannot be opened to check on the food. If the door was accidentally opened and closed and no food was removed, the food is still permitted to be eaten provided that it was completely cooked before Shabbos.

May I use a warming drawer on Shabbos?

As discussed earlier, one may not put food into a warming drawer on Shabbos. Most warming drawers are regulated by a thermostat. When you open the drawer to put the food in, you are going to cause the burner to go on and compensate for the heat loss that you created. By keeping food in the drawer, you are showing that you want this extra heat to be generated. This is prohibited on Shabbos. If the food was placed in the drawer before Shabbos, a warming drawer must be emptied the first time it is opened. A warming drawer that has adjustable temperature settings that include temperatures over yad soledes (120°F) is like an oven and must have its controls covered. If the warming drawer’s settings are all below yad soledes, there is no gezeirah, Rabbinic prohibition, regarding raising the setting. Therefore, the controls do not have to be covered. However, one may not change the setting on Shabbos.

My oven and warming drawer have a delayed start timer feature. May I set it to go on Shabbos morning and place the food to be heated there on Shabbos before the pre-determined time?

No. The food should not be placed there to be heated on Shabbos.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

an “out of town” date. The Star-K leaves it to some of the other kashrus organizations to follow up on this excellent suggestion.

The buzz created by this program has already begun to create an awareness which will, B’ezras Hashem, result in more introductions, more meetings, and ultimately more couples standing under the chuppah. Last week, a recently married woman living in New York called the Star-K to say, “I have been procrastinating about introducing my seminary roommate who I thought would be good for my husband’s cousin. After reading about your program, I immediately made the phone call. Thank you, Star-K. I feel so much better!”

FINALLY, I must admit that it was with some trepidation that in launching this program we would, G-d forbid, inadvertently offend some of the women over what can be a most sensitive subject. However, Boruch Hashem, the reaction from single women, themselves, is best articulated in a thank you note written to Rav Moshe Heinemann, shlita, by one of Baltimore’s singles.

The note reads: “I am writing to express my sincere thanks to you and the Star-K regarding the Shidduch initiative. Regardless of the results of the program, which we will be able to assess in a year from now, the Star-K is commended for taking action and attempting to attack a problem that has been plaguing our community, as well as every other Jewish community, for well over a decade. Even if, chailah, the action does not result in success, you are sending a strong message to the single women of our community that you care about our plight and our future. That, in itself, provides more chizuk than I have felt in a very long time. Thank you.”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For the shadchan of a successful shidduch to qualify for this gift, the following conditions apply:

• The single woman must be at least 22-years and 2-months old at the time the engagement is announced. There is no upper age limit.
• Widows and divorcees are included.
• The couple must be committed to observing the laws of kashrus, Shabbos, and taharas hamishpacha.
• Parents, grandparents, children, siblings, sibling-in-laws, and aunts and uncles of the single women are not eligible for the gift. Cousins and other relatives who arrange a shidduch are eligible.
• A Baltimore woman is defined as:
  1) Her parents must have lived in Baltimore for one year and have purchased a house there, or have rented a dwelling there for two years. If she lives in Baltimore alone, without family, she must have lived in Baltimore for two years (student years do not count).
  2) A Baltimorian living in New York or elsewhere, for less two years, whose parents are presently living in Baltimore, is eligible.
• Requests for payment of the Star-K gift must be made, in writing, by the shadchan to Star-K (122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300, Baltimore, MD, 21208), within 30 days of the engagement. Both sets of parents, or both the choson and kallah, must confirm who the shadchan or shadchanim are.
• If more than one person was involved in the introduction of the couple, the $2,000 award will be divided amongst the parties according to traditional guidelines. For example, if one person thought of the idea and asked a professional to arrange it, the one who thought of it gets 1/3 of the shadchanus and the professional gets 2/3 of the shadchanus.
• If the shidduch breaks up, chas v’shalom, before the wedding, Star-K is exempt from paying the gift.
• Payment of the gift will be made by Star-K within 30 days after the chasana.
• The initial introduction of the couple (i.e., the first meeting of the couple) must not have been made prior to the starting date of this program, the first night of Chanukah, 5765 (December 7, 2004).
• All disputes, e.g., who is the shadchan, questions regarding eligibility, etc., will be settled by Star-K Rabbinic Administrator, Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, shlita, whose decision will be final.

“Although Star-K is initially funding this program for a one year period, we hope that it will be successful and that we will have the funding to continue,” says Dr. Pollak. “We also hope that Star-K will serve as an inspiration for organizations or individuals in other “out-of-town” communities to launch similar programs.”

Questions regarding this program should be forwarded to Star-K Shidduch Incentive Program:
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300, Baltimore, Maryland 21208
Telephone: (410) 484-4110. Fax: (410) 653-9294
E-mail: shadchan@star-k.org
A kosher brand is recommended. Under normal circumstances, one may not take a chewable non-certified multivitamin.

Prenatal vitamins are a type of multivitamin taken by pregnant women. As previously indicated, multivitamins may contain non-kosher vitamin components. Fortunately, numerous kosher prenatals are now available.16

Single vitamin (e.g. vitamin C) or supplement tablets should ideally be certified with a hechsher. If one determines that the component and inactive ingredients are kosher, the product may be taken without certification.

V. Homeopathic and Herbal Remedies – In homeopathic remedies, the source ingredient, known as the mother tincture, may be non-kosher. For example, Lachesis is derived from snakes and Formica Rufa from ants. Non-kosher mother tinctures are usually diluted at a ratio of 1:10 (an ingredient used to dilute the mother tincture). The non-kosher ingredient is listed if the potency is 2X and higher or 1C and higher (as indicated on the label).17

Of course, one must also determine that the dilutants are approved. The most common dilutants are lactose (milk sugar) and alcohol.18 These ingredients pose kashrus concerns and ideally require kosher certification. If the homeopathic remedy is not certified and is in a base of lactose and/or alcohol, take special care. The active ingredient (e.g. a tablet that is swallowed or placed under the tongue and absorbed directly into the bloodstream and not swallowed), and the mother tincture is either kosher or non-kosher/parve, a Rav should be consulted.19

Herbal remedies generally consist of an herb, a solvent (for extraction), and inactive ingredients. If the inactive ingredients are kosher, these products are generally acceptable.20

VI. Dairy – Often, medicines contain dairy ingredients which serve as a bulking agent.21 If one eats meat, he should wait at least one hour before taking these dairy products.22 This is certainly true if it is batel bshishim. This is very relevant to OB-GYN prescriptions for women, as they often contain lactose.

VII. Shabbos – One who has a high blood pressure or high cholesterol may do so on Shabbos even if there is no need. On Shabbos one may take antibiotics for an infection.23 A pregnant woman may take all necessary medications and vitamins on Shabbos. Someone who is in good health and takes a product to change the normal function of the body (e.g. caffeine pills to avoid falling asleep), may also take this product on Shabbos.

When taking medication, it is proper to say the following tefillah24 where one asks that Hashem allow the medicine or procedure to cure the illness:

When a person takes medicine, the moment he takes the first pill, he says the following tefillah that he asks Hashem to cure him:

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the purpose of this tefillah is that one should not think that the medicine is the only part of the cure. Rather, it is the person who causes the medicine to take effect. With this tefillah, one who is yafe ill is given the opportunity to place his trust in the true hakapeilim.
**CERTIFIED PRODUCTS**

The following is a partial list of companies with kosher certified supplements, health, and pharmaceutical products. Products are certified only when bearing the symbol of the certifying agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Preventive Medical Group</th>
<th>Freeda OU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amway/Access Business Group</td>
<td>Shaklee</td>
<td>Landau Volover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Tech</td>
<td>Sunrider</td>
<td>Maxi-Health OU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Science Laboratories</td>
<td>Trout Lake Farm</td>
<td>Navitas OU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaleuca</td>
<td>Adwe KAJ</td>
<td>Nutri-Supreme Kof-K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature’s Sunshine</td>
<td>First Quality Health OU</td>
<td>Solgar Kof-K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPROVED Over-the-Counter Medications 2005**

This medication list is a small sample of frequently used over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Prescription medications are not included on this list. If a medication is not listed, it still may be kosher. One should consult a Rav. Certifying agencies are indicated next to products that have kosher certification. It is imperative that each individual understand that under no circumstances should one refrain from taking a prescribed medication or withhold such a medication from children without discussing the matter with a competent Rav and physician. NOTE: Products are approved only when sold in the United States and in the indicated form (e.g. “caplets”, “children’s”, etc.). This list should NOT be used for Passover.

### ANTACIDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alka Seltzer</td>
<td><strong>Approved</strong></td>
<td>Effervescent &amp; Antacid Pain Reliever Tabs (Original, Cherry, Lemon Lime, Heartburn Relief, Morning Relief, P.M., Ex Str)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas-X</td>
<td><strong>Approved</strong></td>
<td>Reg &amp; Ex Str Chewables With Maalox (Orange, Wildberry) Fasttabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maalox</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antacid Liquid Max Str Antacid/Anti-Gas Liquid Quick Dissolve Antacid Calcium Carbonate Chwbls - Reg &amp; Max Str</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mylanta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reg, Children’s, Max Str &amp; Ultra Tabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepsic AC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chewable Tablets - Dairy Swallowable Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phazyme</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quick Dissolve Chwbl Tabs (125mg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolaid</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reg Str: Cherry, Original Peppermint, Spearmint Tabs Ex Str: Cool Strawberry, Freshmint, Fruit, Tropical Punch Tabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tums</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diamond K Regular - Asst Fruit, Asst Peppermint Tabs Ex-X - Asst Berries, Asst Fruit, Asst Tropical Fruit, Wintergreen Tabs E-X Fresh Blends Tabs - Dairy Ultra - Asst Berries, Asst Fruit, Asst Tropical Fruit, Peppermint, Spearmint Tabs Cool Relief Cool Mint Tabs - Dairy Smooth Dissolve - Tropical Smoothies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triamcin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chewable Tablets Original Formula Tablets - Dairy Less Drowsy Tablets - Dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLD, ALLERGY &amp; DECONGESTANTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Benadryl - Cold &amp; Cold Caplets Allergy &amp; Cold Fastmelt Tabs - Dairy Allergy Fastmelt Tablets - Dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benadryl-D</td>
<td></td>
<td>Allergy &amp; Sinus Fastmelt - Dairy Chlor-Trimeton 4-hr Allergy Tablets - Dairy Claritin Non-Drowsy 24-hr Tablets - Dairy Claritin-D 12-hr Tablets - Dairy Non-Drowsy 24-hr Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coricidin HBP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cold &amp; Flu Tablets - Dairy Cough &amp; Cold Tablets - Dairy Max Str Flu Tablets - Dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singlet Caplets</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudafed 12-hr Non-Drowsy Tablets Severe Cold Non-Drowsy Caplets Sinus &amp; Allergy Tablets - Dairy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ANTI DIARRHEAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imodium</td>
<td><strong>Approved</strong></td>
<td>A-D Caplets Advanced Chewable Tabs &amp; Caplets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapectate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reg Liquid - Cherry, Peppermint, Vanilla Extra Str Liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepto Bismol</td>
<td></td>
<td>Original &amp; Cherry Chewable Tabs Original Liquid Maximum Strength Liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Child, Nyquil Cold/Cough Relief Lq Nyquil Cough Liquid Nyquil Multi-Symptom Cold-Flu Relief (Original, Cherry) Liquid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ANTI-NAUSEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dramamine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Caplets Reg &amp; Sugar Free Powder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LAXATIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lactose Intolerant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lactaid Reg, Ex Str &amp; Ultra Caplets - OU Ultra Chewable - OUD Dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAXATIVES</td>
<td></td>
<td>Colace Liquid 1% Solution Ex Lax Reg, Max Str &amp; Ultra Pills Chocoloated Pieces - Dairy Perdiem Overnight Relief Pils Peri-Colace Tablets Philips' Original Milk of Magnesia Liquid Senokot S (Blood Softener) Tabs - Product may be dairy if expires before 2/08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PAIN RELIEVERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aleve Caplets &amp; Tablets</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approved Caplets &amp; Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s Chewable Aspirin (81mg) Ex Str Plus Aspirin Caplets (500mg) Night Time Relief Caplets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotrin Aspirin Tablets (325mg &amp; 500mg)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goody’s Ex Str Tablets Powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motrin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s Chewable Tablets Regular Tablets &amp; Caplets St. Joseph Low Str Chwbl Tabs (61mg) Tylenol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SLEEPING AIDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nytol</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quick Caps - Dairy Sominex Original Formula Tablets Vivarin Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLEEPING AIDS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unisom Sleep Tablets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THREAT LOZENGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luden’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>Throat Drops - OUD Fisherman’s Friend - Manchester B.D. (no kosher symbol required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRODUCTS ALWAYS APPROVED**

The following are products that may always be used without kosher certification: Antibiotics for an infection - except for those skin infections known to be non-life threatening (e.g. acne), Canker Sore Medication, Castor Oil (with no additives), Enemas, Injections, Intravenous (IV), Mineral Oil (with no additives), Sodium Bicarbonate (pure baking soda), Externally applied products including: Antiseptics, Creams, Dermatologicals, Ear Drops, Emollients, Epsom Salts, Eye Drops, Gels, Lotions, Oils, Ointments, Nasal Sprays, Powders, Rubbing Alcohols, Shampoos, and Soaps.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Sensient Fragrances, S.A. 
Granada, Spain
ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS, FLAVOR CHEMICALS

Shanghai Wanxiang Group 
Shanghai, China
FLAVOR CHEMICALS

Stevian Biotechnology Corp., Sdn, Bhd 
Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
SWEETENERS

Sunland Trading 
New Canaan, CT
HONEY

Suntec 
Mineola, NY
VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS

TMA / Chemnet Systems 
Florence, KY
DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS

Taicang Lulin Perfumery Co. 
Jiangsu, China
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

Tongbao Biochemical Engineering Co. of Deqing City 
Zhejiang, China
AMINO ACIDS

Top Foods Limited 
Shaanxi, China
JUICE & JUICE CONCENTRATES

Xing Hongda Food Co. 
Jiangsu, China
DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

Zey-Tur-San Gida Sanayi ve Ticaret A.S. 
Bursa, Turkey
OLIVES & PICKLED PRODUCTS

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Address __________________________
City ____________  State _______  Zip _______
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Jewish life-cycle events, be it a baby, a bar mitzvah, or a wedding, are special occasions that we anticipate eagerly and celebrate with joy. At any simcha, we fill our cups with wine, raise our glasses of schnapps, and with great fervor pronounce a resounding “L’chaim!” in honor of the blessed event. This custom of combining alcohol with simcha has been a Jewish practice from time immemorial. The cup that is raised today, however, bears very little resemblance to that of yesteryear.

The single fleshef of schnapps has given way to a sprawling bar, complete with every imaginable alcoholic beverage. The drink combinations abound. All too frequently, the names, as well as the kashrus, of these selections are difficult to discern. To the uninitiated, all spirits look alike. Who knows the difference between a liquor and a liqueur, a tequila or a sombrero?

This article will attempt to lead the kosher consumer through the maze of alcoholic beverages, their original sources, their unique processes and the various kashrus issues inherent in this fascinating and complicated industry.

Hashem, in His ultimate kindness, has provided man with the keys to unlock some of nature’s most amazing secrets. Alcoholic beverages are no exception. Simply put, alcoholic beverages are territorial substances. In the case of alcoholic beverages, yeast, a fungus found in nature, converts the sugar found in grains, fruits, vegetables or plants, into carbon dioxide (natural carbonation) and ethyl alcohol. Fermentation is the basic process for producing beer. Distillation is an chemical process where an agent causes an organic substance to break down into simpler substances. In the case of alcoholic beverages, yeast, a fungus found in nature, converts the sugar found in grains, fruits, vegetables or plants, into carbon dioxide (natural carbonation) and ethyl alcohol. Fermentation is the basic process for producing beer. Distillation is an additional process that separates two or more substances through heating, and which may be used to produce alcoholic beverages.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
THE PROCESS OF BEER MAKING

The four steps of beer making are malting, roasting, brewing, and fermenting.

Malting: The first step of beer making combines barley and water in a process known as malting. Barley is composed of germ, endosperm, and a layer of bran. The living part of the barley, the germ, lies dormant until it is planted or comes in contact with water. Once the germ comes in contact with water, it germinates and begins growing. The starch in the endosperm provides the nourishment needed for the living germ. However, it is too difficult for the germ to digest the starch without assistance. Therefore, the germ secretes an enzyme that breaks the starch into simpler sugars which can be digested more easily. Although barley is not sweet at all, it has been discovered that barley which is soaked in water and allowed to sprout, produces a sweet syrup. This is a result of barley's natural germination process. This enzymatic conversion of barley into fermentable sugars is known as malting. The barley malting process lasts for forty-eight hours, thus enabling the barley to begin germinating and sprouting.

Roasting: The sprouted barley grain is then roasted. Roasting is a vital step in the ultimate creation of beer's color and flavor. Adjusting the roasting time, temperature, and amount of barley will cause variation. A longer, higher roast produces a darker, more flavorful beer. Conversely, a lower, shorter roast produces a less flavorful beer.

The roasted barley kernels are then ground into a grain mixture called a grist. Sometimes, with blander beers, the barley is mixed with other cereal grains, such as corn, wheat, or rice to replace the grain. The grist is then mixed with hot water to form a mash. The purpose of the mashing is to continue the malting process where the germinating barley left off. This process allows the enzymes contained in the grain to convert the starches of the mashed grains into sugar. The sweet liquid solution created by the germinated grain water is called a wort.

Brewing: Hops, dried flowers from the spice-like hops plant, are now added to the wort to create a hoppy wort. There are many varieties and forms of hops grown throughout the world. The hopped wort is boiled in a copper or stainless steel kettle, imparting a unique aroma and cooked flavor into the wort. The liquid is now ready to be converted into beer.

Fermenting: Yeast is added to the wort, and through fermentation the sweetened wort is converted into natural carbonation and alcohol. Though there are literally thousands of yeasts, the two popular fermenting yeasts are saccharomyces cerevisiae, a top fermenting yeast that produces ales, and saccharomyces uvarum, a bottom fermenting yeast that produces lager. Both ales and lagers can be light or dark, strong or weak, more flavorful or bland, depending on the temperature, ingredients, and brewing methods.

Beer making has been known for centuries, yet, throughout the millennia it has been elevated into an art form. According to Michael Jackson, author, consultant, and world-renowned wines and spirits expert, man has developed over forty styles of beer, each with a full spectrum of flavors and colors. How do the beer meisters do it? By varying beer's natural ingredients, grains, hops, and yeast, and by modifying the roasting and brewing methods, new flavorful varieties are created.

In the new technological world of major beer production, the key term of successful brewing is consistency and uniformity. In recent decades, scientific discovery has facilitated consistency and uniformity, enabling brew meisters to comprehend the simple centuries-old process of beer making. Technological scientific research has shown that additives and processing aids can provide assistance needed to deliver a consistent and uniform product, though not necessarily a beer with more character.

How do these revelations impact on the kashrus status of this generically kosher beverage? Are there any additives that would compromise the kashrus of beer?

Processing Aids: Hydrogen peroxide, bromade, or other alkalis can be used to accelerate malt germination. Natural enzymes such as papain, bromelin, or aspergillus niger, or industrial enzymes such as amylo-glucosidase, can supplement an enzyme-deficient mash to help break the starches into sugars and facilitate brewing. Hops extracts can be added for flavor. If necessary, papain or tannin can assist in the removal of unwanted protein, delivering a cleaner brighter beer. After brewing, natural clarifiers such as isinglass finings (prepared from ground tropical fish), gelatin, silica gel, or a synthetic clarifier poly-vinyl poly-prolamine (PVPP) remove dark particles from the beer, giving the final product a crystal clear appearance. If the completed product needs bolstering, caramel color may be added for coloring, extra carbon dioxide for carbonation, or alginates for head retention. In all, over fifty-nine chemicals or additives are legally permitted to be used as beer additives and don’t have to be listed on the ingredient panel.

Gelatin and isinglass clarifiers are not used in domestic beers. Isinglass finings is a traditional British beer clarifier that has been used for centuries in the United Kingdom. Isinglass (pronounced i-zing-glase) is a gelatinous substance made from the swim bladders of certain fish - usually sturgeon, a non-kosher fish. Like gelatin, it causes yeast to settle out of the beer more rapidly. It is fascinating to note that over two hundred years ago the great halachic authority, the Noda Beeyohuda, permitted the use of the isinglass clarifier. A clarifier only filters unwanted particles and should not be present in the final beverage.

Flavorings: Traditional beers do not have added flavorings. Cherry flavorings, other fruit flavorings, and spices are used to make flavored products, and by law must be termed “flavored beers”. Such a product would definitely require kosher certification.

Yeast: Barley wine is a specialty beer that could possibly be fermented with non-kosher wine or champagne yeast and would definitely require kosher certification.

THE PROCESS OF DISTILLED BEVERAGES: LIQUOR AND LIQUEURS

The creation of a distilled alcoholic beverage or “spirit” involves three fundamental processes: fermentation, distillation, and aging.

Fermentation: As with beer, liquor fermentation combines grains, plants, fruits, or vegetables with water to create a liquid blend mash. Yeast is added to the mash to convert the natural sugars present in the mixture into ethyl alcohol and CO2. Barley malt is also added because it is richer in amylase that helps convert starch into sugar. This fermented product is now ready to be distilled.

Distillation is a process that separates two or more combined substances through heating. If one of the substances in the solution (e.g., Substance A) boils at a lower temperature than the other component (e.g., Substance B), when the boiling temperature of Substance A is reached, it will evaporate out of the solution. The vapor is then captured and collected in a separate part of the distillation apparatus called a still. When the vapor cools, Substance A condenses as a separate substance.

In the alcohol distillation process, Substance A refers to the alcohol vapors that are separated from the fermented mash (Substance B). These vapors are collected and are condensed by cooling them over cold water pipes, to form a separate liquid called ethyl alcohol, the
Kashrus in High Spirits

fundamental ingredient for all alcoholic beverages.

Percentages in alcohol commonly range between 40% and 50%. The term proof indicates the percentage of alcohol present; the higher the proof, the more alcohol. The percentage of alcohol in a beverage can be easily determined by dividing the proof in half. Hence, an 80 proof whiskey contains 40% alcohol, 100 proof, 50%, and so on.

Aging the Spirits: After distillation, the whiskey’s unique flavor and color is developed through aging. Whiskey must be aged a minimum of two to four years in wood barrels. The different tastes of these spirits depend on a number of factors: the raw ingredients, the amount of alcohol present, and the type of wood used for aging.

Bourbon by definition must be aged in new charred oak barrels. By law, the barrels can only be used once. Scotch maturation does not have that restriction and can use a variety of wooden barrels. Most barrels used to age Scotch are used bourbon barrels. Some new barrels are used as well. Bourbon casks give the Scotch a very distinct overt woody flavor. Over time the Scotch distilleries needed to increase their supply of casks and began using Spanish oak casks that were originally used to age wine and sherry. Sherry casks were used to age and store sherry, port and madeira casks were used to age and store port or madeira wine.

The use of wine casks for aging alcoholic beverages is not a new halachic revelation. The method of aging spirits, which is clearly described in the Shulchan Aruch, mirrors the description outlined by world-renowned scotch blenders.

Before using the casks, all barrels are cleaned and washed free of any residual sherry. The casks remain empty and dry for a number of weeks before any sherry is matured in them. No sherry is added to the casks, the purpose of aging is not for the sherry to taste like sherry. Rather, aging allows the newly distilled Scotch to have its innate fragrance, flavor and color enhanced when it is matured in wood.

Can we assume any sherry cask to be sherry cask free? According to Michael Jackson, “Most distilleries have over the decades acquired a ‘mishmash’ of casks from different sources. The distillery manager or group blender orchestrates what is available to try and achieve consistent bottling. It is therefore difficult, even in a single malt, to be sure that a drop came from a sherry cask. In my view no blended Scotch could be guaranteed innocent of sherry. Macallan Scotch, in fact, boasts that their cask is exclusively aged in sherry casks.” The use of sherry casks in most distilleries is minimal: 94% bourbon and 6% sherry. In better quality distilleries 80% bourbon and 20% sherry casks are used. Very few distilleries use sherry casks exclusively.

POPULAR VARIETIES OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

The following is a brief rundown of some of the more popular varieties of alcoholic spirits, along with some information on how they are produced.

Whiskey is a term derived from the Scotch Gaelic, meaning “water of life.” Whiskey, the broadest category of alcoholic beverage, includes the following types: Bourbon, Rye, American, Tennessee, Canadian, Irish, and Scotch. There is a fundamental difference between American, Canadian, and English whiskies. American whiskey is spelled with an “e”, Canadian whisky and English whisky without.

Bourbon is produced from at least 51% corn (maize) and 49% other grains such as rye, barley, oats or wheat. After distillation, the bourbon has to be aged in new oak charred casks for six to eight years. Premium bourbons can be aged over twenty years. No additives are allowed to be added to bourbon. (It is interesting to note that when the bourbon matures, a small percentage of the maturing spirit is absorbed or lost in the cask. This absorbed portion is called the “angels’ share.”) Small batch bourbon refers to a superior quality production of bourbon that is made in limited quantities. All distilleries know where the bourbon ages best. The premium bourbon that is bottled from the heart of the warehouse is known as special reserve bourbon. Bourbon is the beverage of choice in Dixie. It is also the alcoholic beverage of choice amongst “the heimishe” due to the fact that nothing additional is added to bourbon and that it is aged in new oak casks.

Rye is made with 51% rye plus a combination of other grains. Rye and Tennessee whiskies are aged in new wood casks. Blended American whiskey uses a combination of new and used oak casks.

Scotch whisky, originating from Scotland, comes in three types: malt, grain and blended. Malt whisky is produced from 100% malted barley. Grain whisky is produced from a combination of grains. Single malt refers to malted Scotch whisky that comes from one distillery. Blended whisky is a combination of the two - malt and grain - blended together to achieve a uniform form taste. Blended scotches do not use additional blending agents in the process.

There is a shortage of wood in Scotland but there is a great demand for whisky casks to be able to age all the scotch that needs years of maturation to achieve the desired quality. There is a written American law that bourbon casks can only be used once. There is no such law regarding Scotch, hence the great amount of reused bourbon casks used to age Scotch. Furthermore, casks are reused for Scotch and Irish whisky. These casks are called refts. Another source of casks comes from countries like Spain that used the casks to age sherry, port or madeira wine. Some Scotch producers empty the scotch from their original casks and refill them into sherry or port casks. This is called “finishing.” (The halachic ramification of aging in sherry casks or scotches that state sherry or port finish will be discussed later in the article.)

Canadian whiskies, like their American whisky counterparts, are produced from corn, rye and barley. They are aged for two to six years in oak casks. Canadian whiskies are light bodied and are blended.

Other Alcoholic Beverages:

Vodka is derived from the Russian term “voda”, meaning waters. It is a distilled beverage usually made from barley, corn, or rye, and sometimes made from potatoes, sugar beets, grapes, or whey. Vodka is known as a neutral grain spirit, meaning that it has no taste or color. It is not aged, and can sometimes be sweetened with sugar. Vodka is used primarily in mixed drinks. If other flavors or sweeteners are added, it can no longer be called vodka, and is instead known as a distilled spirit specialty beverage, which requires strict kosher certification.

Gin is a distilled neutral grain spirit and it is flavored with juniper berries and other seed oils, such as coriander oil. Gin, too, is used in mixed drinks and is combined with both alcoholic and non-alcoholic mixers.

Rum is distilled from fermented sugar or molasses. It, too, is distilled and aged. Depending upon the length and process of aging, rum color can be light (light rum) or dark (dark rum). Dark rum is colored with caramel. Rum is aged in oak casks for five to seven years. It can be enhanced with rum blenders. Typically, the flavors are other esters, which are higher alcohols retrieved during distillation, basically, natural rum flavors coming from rum itself. Flavored or special rum is known as flavored rum, or spiced rum.

Brandy is a Dutch derivative meaning distilled wine. Brandy is distilled from fermented grape wines or other fermented fruits,
Kashrus in High Spirits

such as plums or cherries. It is then aged from two to eight years. Cognac is grape brandy originating in the Cognac section of France. Although brandy is derived from grapes, the bracha on grape brandy is sheholok because brandy no longer tastes like wine.

The brandy is a distilled spirit made from a fermented mash containing at least 51% of the agave plant. There are four categories of tequila: silver (white), gold (dark), anejo (aged), and repesado (rested). By law, nothing can be added to silver. Caramel color and blending agents can be added to the other tequilas. Anejo and repesado are aged gold tequila. Sherry casks can be used to age tequila. Tequilas containing a worm in the bottle (Mezcal) should be avoided.

If manufacturers followed the strict and simple rules of liquor production, liquor kashrus would not present major concerns. However, as in all industries, nothing is simple, as we will soon see.

Flavored Alcoholic Beverages

Liqueurs or cordials are flavored grain spirits. Liqueurs include flavored whiskies, brandies, neutral grain spirits and rums that are colored and flavored with a variety of ingredients such as fruit, chocolate, coffee, peppermint, cream, or with combined flavors. Additives, such as wine or glycerin, are often added, as are emulsifiers, sweeteners and colors.

TRICKS OF THE LIQUOR TRADE

Additional processing practices range from the simple to the sublime. They include:

Caramel Color: Although the aging process can darken liquor naturally, often caramel color, a kosher ingredient, can be added as a coloring. Color is commonly added to whiskies, rums, and brandies.

Enzymes: These are sometimes used to expedite or standardize the fermentation process. Enzymes, which create harshness problems, can be used in the fermentation of American or Canadian whiskies, vodka, or in a batch of neutral grain spirits.

Off Standard Wine: It has been said there are two constants in our lives that never go away: death and taxes. The only difference now be considered a wine product, which is tax while not compromising the quality of their highly taxed commodity, the liquor industry away: death and taxes. The only difference: death and taxes. The only difference.

Blenders: The U.S. and Canadian governments allow blenders, “harmless coloring or flavoring materials”, to be added to their blended whiskies. It has been alleged that glycerin is possibly added to U.S., Canadian, and English whiskies. After extensive research from manufacturers, producers, and independent sources, we have conclusively confirmed that no glycerin is used as a blender, it is never added beyond 1%. The Canadian government allows O.T.S. wine to be used in their blended whiskies. By law, no blender wine can be added beyond 1% of the total volume. In actuality, the standard quantity of flavor blenders added is typically less than 1/2 of 1% of the total volume of product. Blenders are used to cut the harshness of the whiskey in order to improve “mouthfeel”, an industry term that refers to the mellowness of industry term that refers to the mellowness of.

Vodkas, tequilas, and liqueurs may use glycerin blenders. If glycerin is used as a blender, it is never added beyond 1%. The Canadian government allows O.T.S. wine to be used in their blended whiskies. By law, no blender wine can be added beyond 1% of the total volume. In actuality, the standard quantity of flavor blenders added is typically less than 1/2 of 1% of the total volume of product. Blenders are used to cut the harshness of the whiskey in order to improve “mouthfeel”, an industry term.

CHOMETZ SHE’AVAR ALAV HA’PESECH

As is the law with private Jewish consumers, Jewish merchants or Jewish manufacturers may not own chometz on Pesach. Included in this prohibition are grain derived beverages (i.e., those derived from barley, rye, oats, wheat or spelt). These products must be consumed or destroyed before the Pesach holiday. In the event that the volume of Jewish owned chometz is too great to be consumed or destroyed, the chometz can be sold to a non-Jew in a bona fide sale so that the chometz will be fully transferred out of Jewish ownership. Failing to do so will render the unsold chometz forbidden for Jewish consumption after Pesach. These laws apply equally to any chometz, whether it is simply owned by a Jewish merchant, or produced by a Jewish manufacturer and was in his possession during Pesach.

How does this prohibition impact on the alcoholic beverage industry? Most authorities are of the opinion that alcoholic beverages such as whiskey, which is derived from wheat, barley or rye, are chometz gamur, and a person must not own these products on Pesach. If a Jew did not sell his liquor, the prohibition of chometz she’avar alav ha’Pesan would apply; the whiskey cannot be used, nor can any benefit be derived from these beverages.

What about the whiskey manufacturers? After years of research, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of companies producing spirits are either large corporations that are publicly owned or are non-Jewish. There is a major American whiskey company that is Jewish owned that has been selling their chometz through the Orthodox Rabbis in Louisville, Kentucky for well over a decade.

Moreover, the finished goods do not go directly to your neighborhood liquor store; they first go to large distributors that house great inventories of alcoholic beverages. In many large metropolitan areas, the owners of the liquor distribution companies are Jewish and do not sell their chometz. There is little control over what is distributed on Pesach. However, unless one knows for a fact that the liquor comes from a non-observant Jewish distributor who did not sell his chometz and owned the alcohol over Pesach, or if whiskey comes from the local Jewish liquor proprietor who did not sell his chometz and owned the liquor over Pesach, one need not be machmir. Since chometz she’avar alav ha’Pesan is a rabbinic prohibition and we have a safek, a reasonable doubt, the halacha allows us to take a lenient position.

THE HALACHIC BOTTOM LINE

The question is, can we, in accordance with halacha and in good conscience, consume beverages that do not have any hashgacha? Obviously the best case scenario would be to purchase alcoholic beverages with a reliable hechsher. There are, in fact, a few selections that have reliable kosher certification, but these are few and far between. Where research into ingredients and production practices indicates that there are no apparent kashrus problems with the product, then halacha permits us to follow the concept of halachin achar havur, that we may assume that the majority is the scenario with which we are dealing. The following assumptions can therefore be made:

- All varieties of domestic whiskies are acceptable. Glycerin is not used as a blending agent for these whiskies and the O.T.S. wine is a citrus wine.
- Mexican whiskies present a fundamental kashrus question. Does the possibility of grape O.T.S. wine or blends added to Canadian whiskies in very small percentages of 1% or less create real kashrus concerns? Can we rely on britol, halachic nullification, or do we need concrete information about each beverage? As stated before, since the O.T.S. wine is added in less than a sixtieth,
is halal. Furthermore, some Poskim maintain that the wine would be haful even if it would be added in less than a sixth. Additionally, there is a doubt whether the O.T.S. wine is indeed grape, or whether blenders are used altogether. Canadian whiskies would therefore be acceptable. Nevertheless, our recommended liquor list reflects those products that do not specify aged in sherry casks exclusively in sherry casks, sherry finish, port finish, or dual cask finish (see sidebar).

### Acceptable Liquors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liquor</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourbon</td>
<td>All Straight and Blended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandy</td>
<td>Carmel (OU), Herzog French (OU), Tishbi (OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Whisky</td>
<td>Crown Royal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognac</td>
<td>Dupuy-Vsop (OU), Herzog (OU), Louis Royer (OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gin</td>
<td>All except Sloe Gin; Sloe Gin requires certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Whisky</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rum</td>
<td>Bacardi (Eighty, Gold, Superior), Cruzan Regular and Flavored (OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotch</td>
<td>All except when label states aged exclusively in sherry casks, sherry finish, port finish, or dual cask finish (see sidebar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Whisky</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tequila</td>
<td>Silver (All except Mezcal - with worm in bottles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gold - Jose Cuervo, Sauza, Herradura, Jimador, Casa Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vermouth - Kedem (OU)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vodka - Domestic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All, except Hanger 1, Lost Horizon, or those listing whey alcohol, wine alcohol, or flavored vodka</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flavored - First Guild (OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imported - requires certification: Absolut - Reg. (LBD), Binyamina (OU), Canadian Iceberg (OU), Carmel (OU), Danzig Gold (LBD), Finlandia - Reg., Forward (OU), Goldbarr (OU), Grey Goose - Reg., Ketel One - Reg., Pravda (OU), Stolichnaya (OU), Vox - Reg., Ykiev Gold (OU)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Acceptable Liqeurs & Cordials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liquor</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advoscotch</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaretto Di Sarono</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arak</td>
<td>(OU) - Alouf, Extra Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azmara</td>
<td>(OU) - Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartenura Cordials</td>
<td>(OU) - Amaretto, Etrog, Hazelnut, Sambuca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briscoe</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmel</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Exotics</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dambuiue</td>
<td>(LBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frangelico</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godiva</td>
<td>(OU) - Chocolate (pareve), Cappuccino (dairy), Chocolate Cream (dairy), Vanilla (dairy), White Chocolate (dairy) [Dairy Godivas are cholov stam.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kava</td>
<td>B’datz - Eida Hachareidis - Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kijafa</td>
<td>(OU) - Cherry-Chocolate Cherry, Cherry, Black Raspberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leroux</td>
<td>(OU &amp; OUD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARASKA</td>
<td>(only when bearing STAR-K) - Slivovitz, Cherrica, Wisniah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melody</td>
<td>(OU) - Banana, Cherry, Chocolate, Peach, Triple Sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacock</td>
<td>(CRC Hisachdus) - Pear, Chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Heering</td>
<td>(OU) - Cherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Jelinek</td>
<td>(OU) - Slivovitz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rodriguez</td>
<td>(OU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabra</td>
<td>(OU) - Chocolate Orange, Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit of Solomon</td>
<td>(CRC Hisachdus) - Amaretto, Apricot, Cherry, Chocolate, Chocolate Mint, Chocolate Truffle, Citrus, Coffee, Kirschwasser, Lemon, Orange, Peach, Pear, Strawberry, Wisniah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taam Pree</td>
<td>(CRC Hisachdus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vromprom</td>
<td>(STAR-K) - Apple Brandy, Apricot, Brandy, Slivovitz</td>
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</tbody>
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### Populor Liqeurs Not Recommended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liquor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberlour</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balvenie</td>
<td>Double Wood &amp; Port Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Bushnell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenmorangie</td>
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<td>Glenronach</td>
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<td>Macallan</td>
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### Tiescot/not Recommended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liquor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B &amp; B Liqueur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bailey’s Irish Cream</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benedictine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cristal AguArientie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dubonett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galliano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Schlaeger</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mariner</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiram Walker Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kahlua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ouzo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sambuca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schlinh Haus Kabinett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheidrians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Comfort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stock from Italy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss Kirchwasser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tia Maria</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yukon Jack</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Shandong, China
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Ningbo Create Biological Project Co.
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AMINO ACIDS
Ningbo Oriental Jiuzhou
Food Trade & Industry Co. (L63)
Ningbo, China
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VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS
Turgutlu A. S.
Izmir, Turkey
DRIED FRUIT
Tybbyuo Corporation
Houston, TX
HORSERADISH
Xi’an Hao Tian Bio-Engineering Technology Co.
Shaanxi, China
SWEETENERS, VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS
Xinjiang Chalkis Tomato Products Co.
Xinjiang, China
TOMATO PRODUCTS
Yunnan Weixin Tianchang Green Co.
Yunnan, China
HORSERADISH
Zhangjiagang Hongxin Chemical Pharmaceutical Co.
Jiangsu, China
VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS
Zhangjiagang Shugang Biochemical Factory
Jiangsu, China
AMINO ACIDS
Zhangzhou Tongfa Foods Industry Co.
Fujian, China
CANNED FRUIT & VEGETABLES
Zhejiang Longway Food Co. (LW)
Zhejiang, China
CANNED FRUIT

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Michelle’s Outrageous
Beverly Hills, CA
MICHELLE’S OUTRAGEOUS MARSHMALLOWS™ CANDY & CONFECTIONERY ITEMS
On Thyme Gourmet
Bridge, MT
ON THYME GOURMET CONDIMENTS
Camellia. Camellia is the plant family to which tea belongs. The botanical name for tea reflects its origins; Camellia sinensis, roughly translated as Chinese camellia. Camellia is the plant family to which tea belongs.

**PROCESSING**

Tea production begins on the plantation where leaves are still harvested by hand in the traditional way. There are some areas of the world where the harvesting is mechanized, but for various reasons, one being that most teas are grown on difficult high altitude terrain, machines are not practical for most plantations.

Tea bushes are carefully pruned for three years. This produces a nice growth of “flush.” Flush is the term used to describe the tender new leaves that are used to make tea. The plants will continue to be pruned throughout its life to ensure a steady growth of usable flush. Depending on the climate, tea is harvested two or three times a year and sometimes year round.

Once the leaves arrive at the factory, most will go through a four stage process. The first stage is known as withering. The leaves are spread out to wither or dry to remove as much moisture as possible from the leaves, making them pliable. In most factories this is accomplished by spreading the leaves out in the sun, or in large trays made of netting or fine wire mesh, called withering racks. They are dried either in an open air shed by natural breezes, or by forced cool air. This stage can take eighteen to twenty-four hours.

From the withering racks, the now softened green leaves move into the rolling machines. These machines break and twist the leaves, breaking up their cell walls, allowing the juices to be exposed to the air, and cutting the leaves into marketable sizes. This is the beginning of the oxidation (or fermenting) of the tea, and the first important chemical change to occur. This step leads to the development of the essential oils that give the tea its flavor.

This chemical change continues and matures in the oxidation room. The tea leaves are spread out on a flat surface, usually on a tile or cement floor, in a cool damp room. As a result of increased oxidation, after two to three hours, the leaves will turn the color of a bright new penny. The above steps are typical for the production of black tea. This is the type of tea that most Americans drink. Green tea is made from the same leaves used in black tea, however, green tea skips the withering step and is, instead, immediately steamed. This keeps the leaves from oxidizing so they remain green. Oolong tea represents a compromise between black and green. In oolong the leaves are allowed to oxidize only partially, turning a brownish green color. Another type of tea becoming popular is white tea, which is oxidized even less than green tea.

After drying, the tea must be graded. Tea grades are based on size, not quality. The leaves are passed through sifters of various sizes to determine the grade. If the leaf is too large to fit through any of the sifters, it is sent back for additional rolling. It is interesting to note that the designation “Orange Pekoe” (pronounced peck-oh) seen on many packages of tea, is actually nothing more than the basic grade for black tea. Pekoe is a Chinese term used to describe the tea buds. One explanation for the “orange” in the name is that it refers to the House of Orange from the Netherlands, a major player in the tea trade in the old days.

After grading and sorting, the tea is packed in crates and shipped worldwide to wholesalers and distributors. High end tea will be sold loose or by the box. The mid and lower end tea is made into tea bags or instant tea.

**TEA VARIETIES**

**Scented Teas:** Genuine scented teas, such as Jasmine or Rose, are made by forcing hot air over Jasmine or Rose blossoms that have been layered on top of the finished tea. This imparts the scent of the flowers to the tea, which also influences the taste. The dried out petals are then mixed in with the tea for visual effect. This scenting process does not present us with any kosher problems. Other teas of this type are Magnolia and Orchid.

One of the most famous scented teas is Earl Grey. The second Earl Grey of England picked up the original formula for this tea while on a diplomatic mission to China back in the early 19th century. True Earl Grey employs bergamot oil sprayed onto the finished tea to achieve its unique flavor. Bergamot is a pear-shaped citrus fruit grown in southern Europe. Bergamot oil is a member of that group of fruit oils known as essential oils, which are derived from the fruits through pressing and distillation. Based on broad experience and knowledge of industry practices, oils of this type are considered kosher even when not certified as such. Other oils in this category, used widely in the food industry, include orange, lemon, and lime oil. Earl Grey tea that has bergamot oil as an ingredient, with no additional flavors, would be acceptable even without a kosher certification.

**Flavored Teas:** Flavored teas, both regular and herbal, are processed in the same way. After placing the leaves in a rotating drum, the liquid flavor is sprayed directly onto the product. The procedure is done at room temperature so there are usually no equipment problems from the perspective of hashros. The one equipment issue that does come up occasionally is that the company may be using non-kosher flavors for non-certified teas on the same equipment. As long as the flavors are not compatible with the kosher flavors being used, this is not a problem. This is because the company has no interest in having divergent flavors mixed with each other and they are careful to clean in between runs.

As we mentioned before, because the process is cold, a cleanout is sufficient to prepare the flavor drum for kosher production. The major question we are faced with here is the hashros of the flavorings.

Food flavor chemicals represent one of the most challenging areas in hashros. Since ingredients for flavors are derived from a myriad of sources, any product containing either natural or artificial flavorings requires certification. Flavored teas are no exception. Star-K certification requires of its kosher supplier to make frequent unannounced visits to check on the hashros of all flavored teas.

**Dairy Tea:** One important issue to keep in mind when purchasing flavored teas is to make sure you check if the product is certified pareve or dairy. There are several flavored teas on the market now that are reliably certified, but they are dairy. Since many people are used to thinking of tea as a pareve beverage, they have become accustomed to drinking it with dairy or meat. Obviously, a dairy tea mistakenly consumed as a pareve tea can present you with several problems: the kosher status of your dishes, drinking it with or after a meat meal, and chickus issues.

**Tea Bags:** Traditionally, tea was brewed loose. In the early twentieth century, Mr. Thomas Sullivan of New York began selling coffee and tea in small silk bags that customers would place directly into the teapot. The leaves are then brewed in hot water and strained out after a certain period of time.

The mid and lower end tea is made into tea bags or instant tea.
The above is true for herbals and medicinals that are simply dried herbs. However, if additional ingredients such as flavors have been added, they would need to be reliably certified. One of the most popular brands of teas, “Celestial Seasonings,” has many herbal and regular teas that have been certified by the Star-K since the mid-1980s.

**Iced Tea:** Most historians credit American tea plantation owner Richard Blechynden for inventing iced tea at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis. Trying to get fair goers to sample his hot tea on one of the hottest days of the year was no easy feat for Mr. Blechynden. So, the enterprising businessman dumped a load of ice in the tea, and he became the father of one of the biggest innovations in tea.

It is estimated by the tea industry, that 85% of the tea consumed in the U.S. is iced tea. Available today in ready to drink varieties, the standard procedure for iced tea production is very similar to that of other soft drinks.

The basic ingredient is concentrated syrup developed by the soft drink company or specialty manufacturers. It is composed mainly of the flavor and color used in the drink. This item must be kosher certified. The concentrate is sent to the bottler where the remaining ingredients, including water, sweeteners, and preservatives are added, and the drink is made. Based on knowledge of the soft drink industry, we can say that the processing and additional ingredients employed at the bottlers do not present any kashrus knowledge of the soft drink industry, we can say that the processing and additional ingredients employed at the bottlers do not present any kashrus issues. Therefore, if it is known that the concentrate is kosher certified by a reputable kashrus source, the finished product is also treated as kosher. This is true even if the product does not have a kosher symbol on the label.

The above is true for most soft drinks. Iced tea, however, and some fruit juice drinks have few wrinkles in their production that change the rules. The issue revolves around the producer’s desire to sometimes market a more premium product - in this case, one which is preservative-free - that can be sold for a higher price. Many people will pay more for a product that is not made with chemical preservatives, such as those found in iced tea: citric acid, potassium benzoate, phosphoric acid, and sodium citrate.

The most prevalent method employed in avoiding the use of preservatives is to pasteurize the product, similar to what is done to milk. This kills the bacteria that the preservatives would normally control. This is a hot process and is a kashrus issue if the plant produces both certified and non-certified products.

**Instant Tea:** A relative newcomer to the tea world, instant tea has only been around since 1953. Although the idea behind instant tea is a simple one, the technology employed to produce it is complex. The basic process begins by boiling strong tea which is put through various stages of evaporation, which continually concentrates the tea flavor. The tea essence is then extracted and filtered. This step could be repeated several times before the tea is vacuum concentrated and sterilized. Finally, the product is spray dried.

Since this process employs high heat at several stages, and it is not uncommon for equipment of this sort to be used for non-kosher applications, it would normally be assumed that all instant teas need to be reliably certified. However, this is not the case. This is because the collective experience of reputable kashrus authorities has shown that the companies that manufacture these products are dedicated to tea. We have no fear of the equipment being used for other potentially non-kosher foods. This holds true only for unflavored teas, however. Instant that has flavors and other added ingredients require kosher certification.

Therefore, when purchasing iced tea without preservatives make sure it has a reliable certification symbol on the label.

**SHABBOS**

Since many people enjoy their tea mainly on Shabbos, it would be appropriate to briefly mention the dos and don’ts of tea preparation on Shabbos. One should not use tea/herbal bags or loose teas on Shabbos. This is because tea is part of that group of foods known as halev hafrashah, or easily cooked foods. These foods are considered so sensitive to heat since they will cook in circumstances that other foods will not.

Therefore, the only way to enjoy tea on Shabbos is to prepare tea essence before Shabbos. The common practice is to make a very strong cup of tea before Shabbos by using several bags and pouring boiling water over them. It is preferable to also remove the bags before Shabbos. This essence can now be added to a cup of hot water (ki lo shefrish) on Shabbos. The preferred method, however, according to Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, shli’a, Rabbinic Administrator of the Star-K, is to place several bags into a pot of water and actually boil them up on the fire before Shabbos.

This essence, minus the bags, can be stored in a cup and added to hot water.

Alternatively, you may want to use instant tea on Shabbos. When using instant tea, or coffee, the preferred method is to add the tea to the hot water (ki lo shefrish) and not vice versa.

We can say that, for the most part, tea remains one of life’s simple pleasures that can be enjoyed comfortably by the kosher consumer. But, remember, tea is no different than many other foods – from a kosher perspective, the simpler the better. Once you venture out into the world of more complex tea products proceed with caution...to avoid being in hot water!