



Hakashrus

Information & Advice
for the Kosher Consumer



Dvar Hakashrus

With gratitude to the Ribono Shel Oilem, we are once again zochah to publish the Gilyon Hakashrus, which has become the platform for all information concerning kashrus. To the immense satisfaction of our esteemed readers, the Gilyon Hakashrus serves to keep the community informed about all issues regarding the kashrus of the food we consume, and about various food items that need hashgocha.

The "Hakashrus" is published especially before Tu B'Shvat, the Yom Tov in which Yidden eat more fruits than usual, as is our minhag. This guidebook is mainly dedicated to bring awareness and teach the community at large the facts and shaalos which are found in fruits. As well, it highlights the severity of the issur of eating bugs, which is one of the most important foundations in the kedusha of a yid.

Throughout the year, we have a designated staff of respected, knowledgeable, and experienced mashgichim, who are yerei hashem, and who specialize in the field of checking for food infestation. They work under the guidance of honored rabbonim, members of our beis din/kashrus division, and are always on the alert to deal with of all types of new questions and findings. This is because the facts and realities in the area of food infestation change every so often. With this type of vigilant supervision, yidden can enjoy eating pure, kosher, insect-free, and truly mehudar food.

In this guidebook, you will find halachos, information, and practical applications regarding many types of fruit that we use. We have expended tremendous effort to pursue the latest and most updated findings, and to inform the community in full detail about all the changes that have occurred during the year. This information will be useful all year, but especially on Tu B'Shvat.

Our tefilla to the Ribono Shel Oilem is, that we should always have the siyata dishmaya to be protected from every d'var issur, and in the merit of preserving our purity, we should be zochah to the geula sheleima speedily in our days.

התאחדות הרבנים דארה"ב וקנדה CENTRAL RABBINICAL CONGRESS OF THE U.S.A. AND CANADA

Kashrus Division

בי"ד המיוחד לעניני כשרות

Notice

- For the past several months our *chashuva mashgichim* have been checking quinoa and they discovered that all types of quinoa – even those that have *hechsherim* – can contain bugs (Booklice as well as mites), great expertise is required to identify the presence of mites. All quinoa that is currently being sold, including quinoa that bears our *hashgacha*, we cannot take responsibility for bugs, which can appear after packing.

Several companies will produce *iy"h* vacuum packed quinoa "free of bugs" under our *hashgacha*. This quinoa will be checked prior to packaging and will then be vacuum packed to guarantee *B'ezras Hashem* that it is indeed free of bugs.

- It is important to be on the lookout for produce marked "Product of Israel," which requires a reliable *hechsher* to guarantee that it is free of the many serious halachic issues. In particular the market is currently saturated with peppers and carrots imported from E. Israel.
- All dried fruit require a proper *hashgacha* due to flavors and other ingredients that may be introduced and issues with the containers in which they are dehydrated.

The Kashrus Division

The seal of uncompromising Kashrus



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FRUIT

The hashgocha we give on dried fruit is valid only on the kashrus of the dried fruit. We do not take responsibility for any infestation which may occur after the fruit is packaged. Therefore, one must be careful and inspect the fruit according to the guidelines below.



Apple



Apricot



Blackberry



Blueberry



Carob



Cherry



Coconut



cranberry



Dates



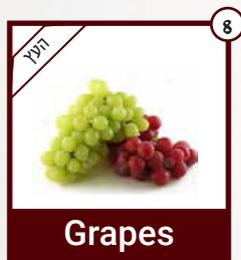
Figs



Fruit Discs



Grapefruit



Grapes



Kiwi



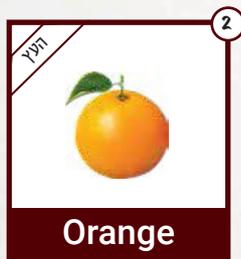
Lemon



Mango



Nectarine



Orange



Papaya



Peach



Pear



Pineapple



Plum



Pomegranate



Raisins



Raspberry



Strawberry

Rules

1

Fresh ones are **free of infestation**, but if there is an area that is rotten, it should be cut out because there may be worms.

Dried: Those from California are mostly **free of infestation**. Red blotches are not a sign of infestation. As a *hiddur*, it is recommended to inspect some apricots from every package by opening the fruit and checking inside for bugs. If they are found to be clean, it may be assumed that the rest of the batch is clean as well. However, if an insect is found in any apricot, all of the apricots must then be inspected. One who is medakdek checks all of the apricots to begin with.

Turkish **may contain bugs**; therefore, it is important to open and inspect each one for any insects that may be found within.

2

The peels are **often infested** with scales. In addition, there is a concern about the kashrus of the coatings used on the fruit. Therefore, the peels should not be used unless the outermost layer is peeled off.

Important note: When juicing unpeeled oranges with a juicer, worms that may be present in the peels can find their way into the juice. One should strain the juice with a shirt-like cloth to filter out these insects. Alternatively, a thin, outer layer of the orange can be peeled off before juicing.

3

Tends to be **very infested**. The insects are mostly found inside the fruit. One must first inspect the outside for signs of infestation, such as webbing, a lot of crumbs, or holes. If the outside looks clean, the carob should be broken up into small pieces and the inside should be checked for webbing, a lot of crumbs, or holes. If any of these signs of infestation is found, the entire carob should be discarded.

Due to the high level of infestation and difficulty in inspecting carobs, we do not give a *hashgocha* on this fruit.

4

Due to the concern about the kashrus of the coatings used on pears, one should peel pears before eating or cooking/baking.

Bosc (brown) pears need not be peeled, since this coating is not used on these pears.

5

All types, whether fresh or frozen, even if they are of excellent quality, **are often infested** at the crown. In addition, scales can be found on the outer skin. Therefore they should not be eaten.

Those with our *hashgocha* have been carefully inspected by professional *mashgichim* and are free of insects.

6

All types, whether fresh or frozen, are **very infested**. It is not possible to inspect them properly; therefore, they should not be eaten.

The raspberry products under our hashgocha are produced from raspberry juice which has been thoroughly filtered and is clean from infestation.

7

Fresh ones are **free of infestation**.

Dried: from California are generally **free of infestation**; therefore, one is not obligated to inspect them. However, since in some cases, worms can be found inside the fruit, it is advisable to open the them and check the area around the pit.

Those from other countries are **often infested**; therefore, one is *mechuyav* to open the dates and check for worms in the area around the pit.

Pressed are **often infested** and impossible to be checked, therefore it should not be used.

8

All kinds, from any country of origin, are **often infested**. Therefore, the following steps must be taken:

Each cluster should be divided into smaller clusters, which should then be thoroughly rinsed three times under a strong stream of cold water. One should ensure that each grape is completely and strongly rinsed.

If one wants to eat them on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*, it should *lechatchila* be washed before *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*, to avoid the issue of borer.

When making wine or must, the grapes should be rinsed before using. After juicing the grapes, the juice should be filtered through a shirt-like cloth.

9

Are **free of infestation**, but if there is an area that is rotten, it should be cut out because there may be worms. Rarely, insects may be found near the pit, especially if the pit is split. Therefore, some people are machmir to cut open plums and inspect them.

Due to the concern about the kashrus of the coatings used on fruit, it is a *hiddur* to wash them with soapy water before using. One is not obligated to peel them.

High quality prunes (dried plums) are free of infestation.

10

All types of strawberries, whether fresh or frozen, are **very infested** and should not be used.

The only way strawberries may be consumed is by following the steps outlined:

One should trim the leaves off the top, along with a thin slice of the strawberry, being careful not to create a hole in the top of the berry. If a hole did form, the strawberry should not be used. The strawberry should then be completely peeled until the entire surface is smooth, without any indentations, then washed under a strong stream of water, while rubbing with the fingers.

Strawberries with our hashgocha have been carefully inspected by professional mashgichim and are free of insects.

11

Fresh ones have **sometimes been found to contain worms** inside among the seeds, and at the bottom of the fruit. (The top is where the fruit is attached to the stem.)

It is recommended to cut the fig in half, slice off the bottom indented portion, then press the seeds out from under each half so that the seeds are quite spread out. The seeds should then be carefully inspected, taking note of the fact that the insects found in figs are very similar in appearance to the inside of the fig.

Dried: The flesh of the fruit is **very infested** between the seeds. Since it is so difficult to find these worms, many people refrain from eating dried figs.

The only way they may be consumed is by following the steps outlined:

The fig should be cut in half, and the bottom indented portion should be sliced off. The seeds should then be pressed out from under each half and smoothed and spread out with one's hands. They should be held against a strong light until the seeds become transparent, and inspected for worms. A light box is not sufficient for this, since this light cannot penetrate the thickness of the seeds.

The white spots crystals are generally a part of the fruit, but if one is in doubt, all the dirt should be removed.

Due to the high level of infestation and difficulty in inspecting dried figs, we do not give a *hashgocha* on this fruit.

12

The peel and leaves are **very infested**; therefore, pineapples should be peeled carefully, ensuring that no brown dots that are part of the peel remain on the fruit itself. After peeling, the pineapples should be rinsed well.

If the leaves are used for ornamental purposes, they must be wrapped in plastic where they may touch any food.

Pineapple products under our hashgocha are produced with great care, ensuring that only the inner, clean part of the fruit is used. As of now, we do not certify any pineapple juice, due to the difficulty involved. Canned pineapple under our *hashgocha* is packed with syrup, not pineapple juice.

13

All types and colors are **very infested**. The insects adhere to the grapes while still in the fields. There is no way to clean them properly; therefore, raisins should not be used.

Products & baked goods under our hashgocha are made only with currants, which appear similar to raisins, but are free of insects.

14

Free of infestation.



NUTS

The hashgocha we give on Nuts is valid only on the kashrus of the nuts. We do not take responsibility for any infestation which may occur after it's packaged. Therefore, one must be careful and inspect according to the guidelines below



Almonds



Cashews



Chestnuts



Brazil nuts



Hazelnuts



Macadamia nuts



Pistachios



Peanuts



Pecans



Pumpkin seeds



Sunflower



Walnuts

1

Is usually **free of infestation**, and one is not obligated to inspect them; however, it is definitely preferable to inspect them by opening each nut.

Roasted or fried, or if they have a flavor or seasoning, must have a reliable hashgocha, due to the oils and equipment used in the process.

2

There is no *kashrus* or *bishul akum* concern with unshelled, even if salted, and they are also **free of infestation**.

Shelled are also **free of infestation**, but if they are roasted or fried, they must have a reliable *hashgocha*.

3

Roasted or fried, or if they have a flavor or seasoning, must have a reliable *hashgocha*, due to the oils and equipment used in the process.

These are usually **free of infestation** and one is not obligated to inspect them. If there is a hole in a nut, it should be opened and checked. If one notices

worms or any of the three signs of infestation (listed below), it should not be used.

If they were kept in a warm place, such as in a cabinet near the gas range, for a period of time (approximately 4 weeks), they often become infested, and one is obligated to check if there are worms/mites or if there are any of the three signs of infestation.

Those who are medakdek always inspect them nuts. (This is actually written on the package – ראי (לבדוק מתולעים).

Following are the three signs of infestation in nuts:

1) **Webbing**. When the nuts are poured out of the container, they remain attached to the container, either clumped together or hanging from thread-like substances. If single nuts remain attached, it is usually due to static electricity and not necessarily from infestation.

2) **Nuts are clumped together**. When trying to separate the nuts, if they crumble completely like salt or sugar, it is usually not a sign of infestation. Likewise, if the nuts were in the refrigerator, they

may be stuck together due to moisture, and not as a result of infestation.

3) A considerable amount of crumbs of a similar size and appearance are seen.

4

Is often infested and can only be used by cutting them in half and inspecting them. They can also be inspected after cooking. If it looks eaten away or appears spoiled, it is a sign of infestation and should not be used. (They are possible to be checked after cooking as well).

Cooked chestnuts under our *hashgocha* are *bishul yisroel* and free of infestation.

5

Unshelled, even salted, are not *bishul akum*. However, there may be a *kashrus* concern regarding flavoring and even possibly *chalav akum*.

Shelled ones must have a reliable *hashgocha*. They are usually **free of infestation**, but since occasionally insects may be found, therefore it is advisable to check them.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There are some companies that have our hashgacha only on certain products; therefore, one must check every product label individually, to see if that specific product has the seal of our beis din.