

# What Does It Mean To Have a Kosher Kitchen

Having a kosher kitchen entails more than just dietary laws, it's a lifestyle one adopts into their life as a show of faith toward their beliefs and identifying what is right and wrong as stated by a higher power. A kosher kitchen is an expression of faith and morality; honoring ones ancestors and continuing the traditions which brings about spiritual peace. To truly understand what a kosher kitchen means for the Jewish community, one has to go back and learn what is kosher and why it is so important.

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## What is Kosher

In Hebrew, kosher (or kasher) means fit. When making something kosher, it goes through a koshering process which translates as to make fit for use. Being kosher means following the Jewish dietary laws of Kashrut.

## What are the rules of Kashrut

1. Meat and dairy cannot be eaten together. This extends to meat and dairy not being prepared, served, or cleaned at the same time or in the same locations.
2. Land animals must have cloven hooves and must chew cud (grass that has been partially digested and chewed again).
3. Seafood must have fins and scales. Fish such as sharks and rays are not allowed as they have cartilaginous body.
4. No eating birds of prey. Accepted birds allowed to be eaten are chicken, turkey, pigeon, duck and goose.
5. All animals eaten must be slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law where the blood is drained from the body.
6. Anything that comes from a kosher animal is kosher. Anything that came from a non-kosher animal is not kosher. For instance, eggs from a chicken are kosher while eggs from an snake are not.

## Where do these rules come from

The Jewish community follows the teaching of the Torah which is comprised of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. These books were believed to have been compose by Moses when he lead the Hebrews out of

Egypt to freedom. The Torah is seen as guidelines and laws to follow for a pure life as commanded by God.

According to the Torah in Exodus 23:19, “You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.” This passage clearly defines the first rule of being kosher, the separation of meat and dairy. This passage is repeated in Exodus 34:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21.

This passage is the staple of being kosher but can be interpreted in many ways. Orthodox Jews follow this rule to a point where meat and dairy are not allowed to be cleaned in the same sink or served at the same time. Other groups have taken it that meat and dairy cannot be eaten at the same time, but can still be served and prepared together. Some groups choose not to follow it at all. No matter how it is interpreted, the separation of meat and dairy is one of the major rules accepted in being kosher.

## **Why do foods need to be prepared in a specific way**

“For the life of all flesh – its blood is its life. Therefore I say to the Israelite people: You shall not partake of the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Anyone who partakes of it shall be cut off,” Leviticus 17:13-14.

This passage from the Torah comes from the Book of Leviticus, which clearly states that blood cannot be eaten. When analyzed, it is explaining how blood is the life of the flesh; meaning the blood is the life force of all living things. God is saying don’t eat or drink blood because you are consuming the life force of another living being which will make you impure.

When having a kosher kitchen, only specific sections of meat from certain animals can be prepared. Meats such as flank, short loin, sirloin, round and shank are not allowed to be eaten because they often contain blood. When kosher food is being prepared, the animal is drained of its blood and salted.

## **How old is the Torah**

The Torah dates back thousands of years. Modern technology has carbon dated some of the earliest versions of the Torah to around 450-350 BCE.

## **Why practice Kosher**

For the Jewish community, observing the laws of Kashrut is a religious expression and gratitude of their heritage. It pays respects to the Torah and the thousands who came before them. These rules were given to them by God as directions on how to live a pure life. The act of sitting down at a table with a kosher meal harkens back to their ancestors who sat together and paid their respects to those before them. It is about reverence; observing the commandments given by God and bestowed upon them in the Torah.

The Torah does not specifically go into any explanations on why these rules should be followed. Previously, those who did not follow kosher rules could have been kicked out of the community or suffered punishment, but modern families are allowed to choose which rules to follow. For the Jewish community, there does not need to be any reason to follow these rules. They do it because they believe it is the good and righteous way to live through the eyes of God. They believe it’s right, so they choose to practice it.

## **What does a kosher kitchen mean**

A kosher kitchen means following the beliefs in the Kashrut. It means living a pure life by God's direct teachings. It means paying respects for those who came before and guiding the next generation on how to live a pure life so these traditions continue for thousands of years. Kosher kitchens are an extension of ones' devotion to their faith and honoring the heritage they revere.