

## Youth Lounge Dairy Potluck Policy

The following policy has been established to enable Kol Ami's members to hold dairy potluck events in the synagogue. Many congregations do not allow foods prepared at home to be brought into the synagogue building on the theory that we can never be certain such food is genuinely Kosher. While this may be true, it compromises the synagogue's mission to teach families how to keep Kosher. Arranging for on-site food preparation or paying for on-site catering is also in many cases impractical for congregants who would otherwise welcome the use of the synagogue for a communal event. We at Kol Ami will allow certain foods prepared at home, or purchased at approved bakeries, to be brought into the synagogue and accepted as Kosher both as a way of helping families experiment with Kosher cooking and Kosher eating, and as way to make the synagogue more accessible for group functions.

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The conditions under which Kol Ami members may hold dairy potlucks in the youth lounge are as follows:

- A. The potluck event must be member-sponsored. The rabbi's approval is required in advance for all potluck events.
- B. Potluck event foods must be held in the youth lounge or outside the building; All foods must remain in those designated areas.
- C. Major synagogue events, such as Shabbat Across America, Scholar in residence weekends, Shabbat morning Kiddushes, etc., must be catered through the kosher kitchens. Potlucks may not be held simultaneously with synagogue-wide events, but may commence when the larger event has concluded (e.g. a Shabbat potluck lunch may begin after Kiddush).
- D. Use of disposable plates and utensils are required. This includes the serving plates, bowls, and utensils. The synagogue utensils, trays, or plates for warming or serving may not be used. (This restriction applies to all three kitchens, including the youth kitchen.)
- E. All food brought to dairy potluck events must be vegetarian or adhere to the rules of kashrut (see attached guidelines).
- F. All food brought to dairy potluck events must be vegetarian or adhere to the rules of kashrut (see attached guidelines).

Due to the various levels of observance by Kol Ami families, we appreciate that many families need guidance on Kashrut observance. For this reason, we will provide instruction at the synagogue and this take-home guide. For those who are comfortable following these guidelines, you are welcome to bring home-prepared foods. If this seems too complicated to take on, please feel free to bring kosher pre-packaged items as explained below. A more detailed explanation of what it means to keep kosher is provided in [Appendix C](#).

Food Guidelines for dairy/vegetarian potluck events

***Please remember that mutual trust is an important part of our community life. You are cooking for members of the community strictly***

***observe Kashrut. Please observe the procedures below carefully and completely.***

1. Commercially Prepared Foods

Anyone is welcome to bring pre-packaged kosher foods, or foods that don't require a kosher symbol to the potluck event.

- a. Prepackaged foods must be vegetarian or dairy and should have a Kashrut symbol (hechsher) on the package (see [Appendix A](#)). There is a wealth of foods now available with kosher supervision: It's easy to find potato chips, cookies, breads, beverages, salad dressings, etc. which have kosher symbols.
- b. 2. As a rule, all fresh fruits and vegetables, canned or frozen fruits and vegetables (without additives or flavorings), juices, and soft drinks are acceptable (note: Gatorade is not certified, but Powerade is). Factory pre-cut fruit and vegetable trays are allowed. For a more extensive list of foods which do not require a hechsher, see [Appendix B](#).
- c. Bakery products must come from approved bakeries. The bakery at the Dan's supermarket on Foothill has been approved by the kashrut committee as kosher dairy for all products except those containing marshmallow. Kosher on the Go has kosher pareve baked goods. Krispy Kreme donuts purchased at the Krispy Kreme store or pre-packaged in sealed packages at the local grocery stores are acceptable, but self-serve Krispy Kreme displays are not.

2. Home prepared items

Anyone preparing homemade foods must read and follow the home preparation guidelines below.

- a. Home-prepared foods may be brought into the synagogue provided they are only dairy and vegetarian foods.
- b. Animal products: NO MEATS (I.E. NO BEEF, LAMB, OR CHICKEN/FOWL) OR MEAT PRODUCTS, or any foods containing those ingredients may be brought in.
- c. Plain fresh or fresh frozen fish does not require a hechsher as long as it has the required fins and scales (Common fish that are acceptable are: salmon, tuna, halibut, cod, red snapper, trout, etc.) No shellfish (shrimp lobster, crab, scallops, clams, oyster) or any products containing those products may be used. Catfish, monkfish, and eel are not kosher. Most imitation crab has actual crab flavoring and is not allowed unless it is specially certified kosher (Dyna-Sea brand).
- d. When preparing foods for the synagogue, use only Kosher ingredients (those prepared foods which contain a hechsher, like the ones listed in [Appendix A](#), or do not require certification, like those listed in [Appendix B](#)).
- e. When preparing foods for use in the synagogue, please use disposable pans and utensils. While this is not the most environmentally friendly policy, it ensures that the maximum number of our congregants will feel more comfortable participating in these events.

### 3. Why do I need a hechsher? Why not read the ingredients on the package?

A good question with two good answers:

1. The Food and Drug Administration does not require food processors to list all ingredients in packaged foods. Any ingredients under 2% of total volume is not required, or companies may list a variety of unacceptable ingredients under the category of "natural flavors," which could include animal products. So, reading ingredients alone is not always sufficient.
2. Often times, very innocent sounding ingredients are made from unacceptable sources. For example, the red food coloring, carmine, is extracted from insects. Other fats and flavorings used in food production may come either from animal or vegetable sources, and the manufacturer is not required to list them in the labeling. While some people who keep kosher at home will accept reading labels, or a product's labeling which claims it is vegetarian or vegan, we ask that for purpose of synagogue consumption, only certified ingredients be used.

The following internet sites provide further information or special order items.

- [Kosher Food at Cyberkitchen](#)
- [Searchable Kosher Restaurant List](#)
- [Conservative Judaism Kosher Information](#)