

Bedikat Tolaim- Insect Inspection

Preparation of Raw Vegetables & Fruits

I. In light of the many changes in policy for checking vegetables by the various Kashrut Organizations, the JSOR has reviewed the information available and has updated our guidelines. (for the most part, our instructions have stayed the same(!), as our methods have been to follow the most careful means to assure insect free produce.

There are several categories of vegetables, each with their own degrees of infestation, and method for inspection. The vegetables will be listed in alphabetically order, followed by the methods for checking.

****Always look at the product before you start working with it. If there are a number of visible bugs, the produce may not be used.**

Please note: we do not recommend the use of salt water or vinegar to properly remove insects from fruits and vegetables. Vegetable wash or unscented dish soap has proven more effective.

a) **Artichokes:** No fresh artichokes are to be used. Canned hearts may not be used, although canned and frozen bottoms are permissible providing they are not from China.

b) **Asparagus - Green:** Peel or remove tips and side triangles. Wash well. Do not use canned or frozen product unless it has a reliable *Hashgacha*.

c) **Asparagus – White:** Rinse with water; may be used without further checking.

d) **Bok Choy:** Method I

e) **Boston, Butter or Bib Lettuce:** Method I

f) **Broccoli and Cauliflower – frozen:** Use only A fancy. Place in a light colored bowl or bus box with water to defrost. Agitate well, making sure to loosen the florets. Remove the vegetable from the water and inspect water carefully. Immersing a white

paper plate may make it easier to see. If no insects are found, the product may be used. If there are insects, re-soak. If a second inspection yields insects, discard vegetable. (It is a good idea not to check too many packages together- sometimes only one batch is infested).

g) **Broccoli and Cauliflower - Fresh:** Method II

h) **Brussel Sprouts:** may not be used.

i) **Cabbage:**

Green Cabbage: Remove outer leaves and any others that appear damaged. For coleslaw, cut into six wedges and run under strong stream of water, flexing the leaves to rinse well. After washing, green cabbage may be used without further bedika.

Red Cabbage: Remove outer leaves and any others that appear damaged. After washing, red cabbage may be used without further bedika.

Pre-washed coleslaw and broccoli slaw mix are acceptable with *Hashgacha*.

Sauerkraut is acceptable only with *Hashgacha*.

Chinese Cabbage: Method I

j) **Carrots and Cucumbers:** a general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation

k) **Celery:** Wash the entire stalk, especially near the bottom.

Note: a new type of insect has been found to burrow its way inside the stalks. Cut away areas that are shaded, brownish-rust colored or suspicious in any way.

Celery leaves should be cleaned according to Method III.

l) **Corn: On the cob:-** a general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation. Canned requires a reliable *hashgacha*.

m) **Endives (Belgian):** see celery; if desired cut in half for grilling, the stalk may be cut in half and washed under a strong stream of water while fanning open the leaves.

n) **Escarole, Chicory & Kale:** Method I

o) **Flowers:** must be spot checked for insects.
If found, the batch should not be used.

p) **Herbs: Fresh:** Cilantro, Coriander, Dill,
Parsley (flat only—not curly), Rosemary,
Sage, Thyme- Method III
Dried may be used without inspection.(except mint)

q) **Lettuce and Leafy Vegetables:**

Pre-washed Lettuce: “Bodek”, “Fresh Express”, “Dole”, “Salad Time” or any other certified brand of cut and pre-washed iceberg lettuce may be used without additional bedika. We recommend rinsing first.

Fresh Iceberg Lettuce: The outer leaves should be taken off, core cut out and inner leaves washed under a stream of water. Check, if any bugs are found, re-wash. If bugs are still found after inspecting lettuce a second time, reject.

Fresh Romaine, Red Leaf & all other Lettuce- Method I

See note in celery about burrowing insects in stalks.

r) **Mescaline:** Method III

s) **Mint leaves:** can be very infested. Method III - repeat soak 2-3 times before inspection.

s) **Mushrooms:** Regular inspection: Must be washed prior to use.

Portabella mushrooms - remove brown under part; wash well.

t) **Onions :** the outer peel should be removed. Cut or peeled onions should not be left overnight unless salt or oil have been added.

u) **Peas and Peppers:** May be used after a general inspection to rule out obvious infestation. Black or brown spots on the inside of the pepper should be discarded.

v) **Scallions and Leeks:** cut along length of vegetable, wash under strong stream of water. Check for bugs inside tubes (green part) and on bottom of white bulb.

w) **Spinach:** Fresh – Method I
Triple washed Baby spinach – Method III
Frozen –Use with a reliable Hashgacha.

x) **Spring Mix** – Method I

y) **Sprouts:** No inspection required

z) **Tomatoes** – a general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.

Methods of inspection

Note: insects like company! If one bug is found, the entire head must be checked most carefully!

Method I: Leafy Vegetables that require inspection:

1. Separate leaves, remove bruised or inferior areas.
2. Soak in water with vegetable wash or a small amount of unscented dish soap (enough to see slight bubbles)
3. Agitate well, rinse under running water, while opening curled or ‘folded’ areas of the leaves. (Spin, Drain or towel dry to avoid electric shock when using the light box)
4. Make a complete, leaf by leaf (both sides) inspection over a light box.

Inspection of leafy vegetables is greatly enhanced when using a light box. Therefore all JSOR establishments are required to use a light box for vegetable inspection.

Method II : Floreted Vegetables- Broccoli & Cauliflower

1. Separate florets, removing any bruised or damaged areas. Do one head at a time, discard entire head if it shows signs of obvious infestation.
2. Blanche in boiling water for 10 seconds, agitating florets. Immerse in cold water. This will open the florets and turn the most common insect, aphids into a brownish color, which is easier to see.

3. Rinse with running water each floret from the top to bottom and bottom to the top.
4. Take a sampling of the parboiled water and inspect over light box. If no insects are found, the vegetable may be used.
5. If one or two insects are present, each piece must be carefully inspected. Inspect each floret both from the under part and from above, spreading the branches slightly. If three insects are found, discard the entire head.

Method III: Fresh Stem Herbs

1. Wash thoroughly under a strong stream of water.
2. Agitate in a white bowl with veggie wash or unscented soap.(3 minutes)
3. Change water and re-agitate.
4. Remove vegetable and take several samples to inspect on a light box to verify that the produce is free of insects.
5. If insects are found, the above may be repeated two more times. (total of 3 times) If insects still present, the whole batch must be discarded.

Additional notes on insect inspection:

When the Mashgiach notices that the kitchen is running short of vegetables, or if there is a large party, he should immediately be prepared to check additional vegetables. When large amounts of vegetables are needed, and the time is a problem, the Mashgiach may have the kitchen workers help by prepping the vegetables for inspection, i.e. cutting the Florets, removing the outer leaves and separating the heads, etc. However the inspection itself must be done by the Mashgiach himself.

CANNED VEGETABLE GUIDE

It is now required that canned vegetables be purchased with a proper supervision. New methods of mass canning have made it mandatory to use with certification. This will be an enforced directive. Until recently, we (and all major Hashgachot in the US have also held that) all canned vegetables are acceptable without a hechsher when packed in water, salt, sugar and or corn syrup. This is no longer valid! Multiple types

of foods are simultaneously canned in multi-storied operations, pork and beans, meat ravioli and other actual tareif is being canned along side the corn, the potatoes and the other 'innocent' varieties.

Artichoke hearts, even those bearing a known supervision are not recommended.

All Vegetables (most commonly mushrooms) coming from Mainland China are not acceptable. Canned goods from Israel are very often problematic, unless marked with an OU or Badatz Hashgacha.

FROZEN VEGETABLE GUIDE

All frozen vegetables are acceptable, with the following exceptions that would require a reliable hashgacha:

Broccoli, Cauliflower, Brussel Sprouts, Asparagus, Spinach, Potatoes, Artichoke Hearts. Any vegetable containing added ingredients such as pasta, oil, spices, sauces, flavors, or colors; and any vegetables that are packed in Israel or China require reliable hashgacha.

II. Inspection of Fruits:

1. **Blackberries** – Fresh are prone to heavy infestation. The methods necessary to inspect can damage the fruit rendering it not desirable. If there is still a desire to check it, please call the office for guidance.. All frozen are acceptable. All canned needs a reliable *hashgacha*.
2. **Blueberries** – Fresh must be rinsed in water and a cursory inspection is needed. Frozen are acceptable. Canned needs a reliable *hashgacha*.
3. **Dates** - A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.
4. **Figs** - A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation. As one is eating, each fig must be split in half and examined closely, small white worms resembling the flesh of the fig can be found.
5. **Strawberries** – Fresh strawberries that are smooth and rounded in shape should have the tops cut off and should be soaked briefly in a veggie wash\unscented dish soap solution. Then

the strawberries should be gently rubbed while rinsed well under a strong stream of water.

Strawberries that have an unusual shape and are curved, causing some crevices and overlaps on the surface where small insects may hide, must be also washed as above. They then must be rinsed off individually under a strong stream of water while gently rubbing the surface. Afterwards a visual inspection, should be done, focusing especially on the area near the top and near all folds or indentations.

Note: if when cutting off the top a whole in the strawberry is exposed, the strawberry must be cut in half.

All frozen without added flavors or colors are acceptable. Canned needs a reliable *hashgacha*.

6. **Raspberries** – Fresh raspberries are not permitted due to high infestation. Methods of inspection frequently damage the fruit rendering it undesirable.

Frozen raspberries are acceptable.

Canned needs a reliable *hashgacha*.

Dried Fruits used in cooking such as apricots and dates must be halved and inspected for worms.

See attach dried fruit list for types permitted without Hashgacha.

CANNED & FROZEN FRUIT GUIDE

All canned fruit excluding fruit cocktail, are acceptable without a hechsher when packed in its own juice (not grape juice), sugar, corn syrup, water. Canned fruit containing grape juice, caramine, artificial and natural flavors are not acceptable without a reliable hechsher. Fruit cocktail may not be used if it contains cherries. (Grapes in the cocktail are acceptable)

All canned and frozen fruit is acceptable, with the following exceptions that would require a reliable hashgacha:

If it contains any natural or artificial flavors or natural colors, contains any grape juice or the words “fruit juice”, or if it is canned in Israel or China.