

Not To Worry! It' Kosher!

Kosher food is food prepared in accordance with Jewish dietary guidelines or "Kahrut", which means "proper." Any food can be called kosher food if it follows the proper guidelines. Conversely, foods typically labeled as "Jewish" aren't necessarily kosher. The word "kosher" isn't used for only food, however. Kosher basically means something follows all the Jewish legal guidelines.

What are some of the laws governing kosher food?

1. According to the Torah, the five books of Moses, cloven hoofed, cud-chewing mammals are kosher. Deer, sheep and goats are all considered kosher foods.
2. Only certain birds are considered kosher in the United States. Chicken, duck, goose and turkey.
3. Lobster lovers might be dismayed to find that for a fish to be kosher, it must have fins and easily removable scales. In most cases, scales must be present on the fish in order to be purchased by the consumer. There's more. If a fish monger isn't kosher, that means his cutting implements and machines aren't kosher either. If it is to be considered kosher food, it must be prepared with kosher equipment.
4. Fish and meat cannot be served together.
5. Milk and meat cannot be served together.
6. Processed food must be prepared in the presence of a rabbi.
7. Poultry and meat must be slaughtered under strict guidelines called "shechita." This means the animals are slaughtered without pain. Only those who are trained and qualified are allowed to slaughter kosher animals. Once the animal is no longer alive, another team of experts will examine the animal to be sure the animal is without illness, abnormalities or anything else that can be considered unsanitary. The lungs in particular must be pure. In addition, all blood and most fat must be removed.

8. Families who eat only kosher food must use two separate sets of utensils, pots, pans and dishes. One set is for poultry or meat, and another is set for everything else. In addition, these dishes and utensils can't be washed together. If a kitchen has two sinks, it is an ideal setup for a kosher family. If not, one set of dishes must be washed; the water emptied and sink scrubbed before the other set can be cleaned. Dishes and utensils must be dried using separate racks or dishtowels. [<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-kosher-food.htm>]

