

Shmura Matzah

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There are many products that we purchase specifically for Pesach. When shopping for these items, we are careful that they have appropriate hechsherim for Pesach.

If we aren't sure of the reliability of a specific Kosher symbol, we will refrain from purchasing the product in question.

When it comes to the purchasing of matzos for Pesach, or any product containing ingredients that are made from matzos, such as matzah meal, cake meal, etc. we must be extra careful. If these products were not made with all of the necessary Pesach restrictions, our Pesach observance would be seriously compromised.

When purchasing matzos for Pesach, and specifically to be used for the seder, additional consideration must be taken into account. Not only must the matzos be produced under strict supervision, to make sure that all of the details of Kashrus for Pesach have been observed, there is an additional requirement that the matzos be made Lishma, for the purpose of being used for the mitzvah of eating matzah. At the matzah bakery each time a new batch of matzos is made, everyone on the assembly lines says "L'Shem Matzos Mitzvah" - "for the sake of the matzos to be used for the mitzvah of eating matzah".

Another requirement is that in order for the matzos to be considered watched, they must be watched from very early on in the process. Some authorities require this supervision from the time the grain is harvested in the field, while others require the supervision from the time the wheat is ground into

flour. Our shmura matzah is watched from the time it is harvested. All of this added labor and need for supervision has impacted on the high cost of shmura matzah.

There is a difference of opinion whether the requirement for shmurah matzah and Lishma can be fulfilled through a machine or must be done by hand. Many prefer hand made shmura matzos to machine made shmura matzos while others are satisfied with the machine version as well.

Even when not using the shmurah matzos, many recommend using matzos that are called "18 minute matzos". These matzos are made on machinery that has been thoroughly cleaned between each batch, or matzos that were baked at the beginning of the day. Because of the potential for small amounts of flour to be caught in the machinery, rather than relying on bitul (the insignificant amount is null and void), if the machines are cleaned earlier of any residue, this problem disappears.

One may fulfill his/her requirement for eating matzah with matzah made from any of the five types of grain. They are wheat, spelt, barley, oats and rye. Today with many people suffering from allergies restricting them to non-gluten matzos, these other choices of grain make it feasible to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah without the need to compromise on their dietary needs.

There is a requirement to eat at least a Kzayis of matzah for each time we consume matzah at the seder. For specific guidelines as to how much must be eaten, please contact your rabbi. 