

Guidelines for TBE Potluck Dinners

We're delighted you can join us at Temple Beth El for a potluck Shabbat or festival dinner.

Most Potluck dinners will begin at 6:00 PM. You are also most welcome to join us for our spirited Kabbalat Shabbat Eve service, which begins at 7:30. Please take a look at our guidelines if you wish to prepare a dish; if you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact Rabbi Hammerman at rabbi@tbe.org.

Please bring a dairy or "pareve" entrée or salad dish. It can be prepared at home, and the kitchen does not have to be kosher. If you are *purchasing* prepared foods from a caterer or supermarket, however, please look for kosher certification (called "hechsher").

Whether or not your kitchen is kosher, please aim to use ingredients that are kosher (no shellfish, for instance).

Following the practice that has worked well elsewhere, we'll have **two buffet tables** for the food. One will be marked "**Vegetarian**," for food prepared in kitchens that aren't kosher or if you simply aren't sure. The other table will be marked "**Vegetarian, with Hechsher**," for food that is purchased as well as food prepared in kosher kitchens. This way, everyone can feel comfortable. Those without kosher kitchens can be valued contributors to the dinner and those who keep strictly kosher can eat freely without concern.

We don't require rsvps, but we would love to know that you are coming (and with whom and how many) and what you are (literally) bringing to the table! So do reply, if you can, to our web sign up page, with your name(s) and your dish. Also let us know if you are interested in helping to plan future TBE potluck dinners.

All are welcome to attend. Please, please let your friends know about this, as we hope to fill a major void in our community, by giving young Jews a chance to have a comfortable Shabbat experience on their own terms, without coercion or discomfort – and free! Everyone is welcome here. The more the merrier!

Please plan to bring a main course, side dish or salad – but if you wish to bring a dessert in addition, that's great. Desserts can be either dairy or pareve, but they should be marked accordingly. We'll also be providing dessert and drinks.

Some other guidelines:

- Non kosher ingredients include (but are not limited to) lard, animal shortening, or suet. (Watch out for pie crusts - many of them contain lard.) Watch out for "shortening," it should specify "vegetable shortening." Also, products with glycerin or gelatin should only be purchased with kashrut certification.
- **Please bring all items in new plastic or foil containers with new plastic serving utensils.**

- Please label what it is you've made/bought and highlight any dietary issues that people might need to know (nut free or gluten free, for instance)
- When you arrive at the synagogue, please place the dish on the appropriate buffet table (and then feel free to head into services).
- It is OK to bring things in on Shabbat, but we ask that items be cooked or bought before Shabbat or the festival begins
- Our kitchens will remain closed.
- All standard Kosher symbols are acceptable as "Hechsher," but a simple K on an item is not.
- No meat or poultry or products with those ingredients, even if kosher.
- No shellfish or non-kosher fish.
- All non-meat products with kashrut certification are acceptable.
- For ritual purposes (e.g. kiddush, havdalah), wine and grape juice should have kashrut certification. Since this is a Shabbat meal, we ask that if you bring wine, that it be kosher. There are excellent kosher wines out there – we've gone way beyond that gloppy concord grape stuff.
- All cheeses, even those in which rennet is used as a curdling agent, are acceptable, even without kashrut certification.
- If you buy bread or prepared foods from a bakery or take-out establishment, please inquire as to the ingredients used.
- Please take home the leftovers after the meal. If significant food remains, you might want to consider donating it to a local agency or shelter. Once we get this program rolling, we might consider asking people to bring cans of food to donate as an "admission cost" since this is an otherwise free event.
- We would love to hear your ideas for future potluck dinners. Our goal is to begin doing these regularly, and possibly to include speakers, Israeli dancing or other "extras." But the main goal is fellowship – the chance to schmooze, eat and celebrate being Jewish and free, and in that way to sample the holiness of Shabbat.

For more info on the Two Tables system see <http://mahrabu.blogspot.com/2006/02/hilchot-pluralism-part-i-two-table.html>.

Thanks, and we look forward to sharing our community potluck dinners with you!

I look forward to welcoming you here.

Rabbi Joshua Hammerman