

## Concept of Kosher and its importance to Jewish Community

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study is trying to find Jews community tourism, different categories of Kosher food, its sources, related dietary rules and specific occasions for its consumption.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This study comprises the exploratory analysis of Jews community's tourists and residents of that community in India especially at Delhi and Mumbai. Observation method and focussed interview of Jews tourists and residents of Jews community have been undertaken by the scholar after analysis of secondary sources available. The variables were identified from the available reviews and data were analysed qualitatively.

**Findings:** Kosher is a highly specialized food, preferred by and oriented for, the Jewish community of the world. Kosher means something which is "fit" or appropriate and is known to be most appropriate to be eaten by a Jew. Kosher has its root in the Hebrew bible and is supposed to be defined by the Rabbi, since centuries ago when Torah (Hebrew Bible) was written. As per Torah, Jewish God proclaimed that vegetarian food is the best and purest form of food to be considered by a real Judaism-abiding person. Since kosher food is attached to the eating lifestyle and certain mannerism and belief it is very important to ensure that guests who are invited can have the entire dinner process as per their point of view how Kosher should be. People observing kosher meals have their own way of looking at things. To understand this significant global cuisine- trend, it is important to know its origin, its journey of last 2000 years, its recent path-breaking blend and characteristics that makes it a divine-like food, most acceptable to multi- community, ranging from sports person to celebrity, to even Muslims, vegetarians, neo-rich class, gym-lovers and not just the Jews of the world. The present paper is going to elaborate these aspects.

**Originality/ Value:** This study seeks to add to the greater pool of knowledge with respect to Jews tourism in India. The idea of this research is to examine sources of Kosher food and its concept, dietary rules for kosher food consumption, specific occasion for kosher food consumption and its categories.

**Paper Type:** View Point

**KEYWORDS** Kosher | Rabbi | Jews Tourism | Parve | Ethics

### Introduction:

If we talk as a lay man, Kosher is a highly specialized food, preferred by and oriented for, the Jewish community of the world. Kosher originally means "fit to use" and is strictly made from chosen items (vegetarian, non-vegetarian, dairy and others) and processed under Jewish religious law known as "Kashrut" so that it becomes absolutely pious & spiritually elevated to be eaten, conforming as per 10 commandments mentioned in Torah, the Hebrew Bible. But because of its purity, hygiene and excellent nutritious food value, that

comes from, it's various ground level judicious selection of items, processes, ingredients, philosophy, close-supervisor, clubbed with certification of guarantee from the Kosher Priests/dignified authorities, the usage is no longer confined to its religious sanctity, but gradually, by far, has crossed all socio-economical, cultural and sectarian boundaries and has acquired and fortified it's vibrant presence, not only in the Jews world, but even more, in the or non-Jews community/ sector with a big bang.

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## Objectives:

1. To understand the concept and source of Kosher Food
2. To find the different categories of kosher food.
3. To elaborate dietary rules for kosher food consumption.
4. To find occasion for kosher food consumption.

To understand different aspects of the Kosher food, let us first gauge what is Kosher, who eats Kosher, why is it eaten and what is the importance of this special cuisine.

### • Kosher Food –Concept

For some it's not wrong to say, it is a food blessed by a Rabbi (Jew Priest). However by definition it means something which is "fit" or appropriate and is known to be most appropriate to be eaten by a Jew. Kosher has its root in the Hebrew bible and is supposed to be defined by the Rabbi, since centuries ago when Torah (Hebrew Bible) was written. As per Torah, Jewish God proclaimed that vegetarian food is the best and purest form of food to be considered by a real Judaism abiding person. However during the course of the narration, mentioned in one of the five books of Torah, called "Exodus", certain animals too were considered in the Kosher list. Among the land animals, only those animals which could "chew its cuds and has split hooves" can be eaten by Jews. As for sea- animals it must have fins and scales and for birds, it must not be scavengers and birds-of-prey. Further another restriction is that and has been repeatedly mentioned in Torah that "a baby goat cannot be cooked in its own mother's milk". This means and became a commandment for the Jews that, meat and milk cannot be mixed even by mistake. To further clarify, analyse and get the crystal-clear meaning, we need to look into the following aspects more closely:

- There are mainly 3 categories of Kosher food: 1.Meat, 2.Dairy, 3.Parve:

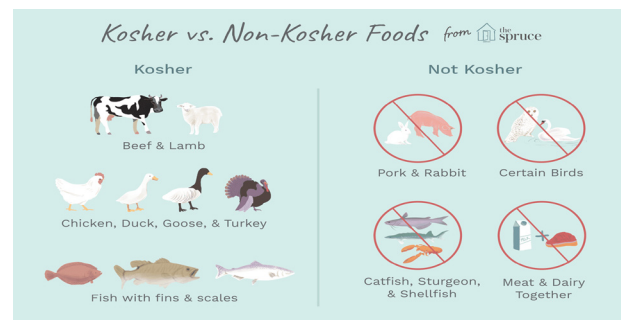


Kosher food

Kosher Food

1. **Meat to be Kosher :** As discussed above, any animal to be considered as Kosher, it must chew it's cud and also must have split hooves. Animals having only one characteristic out of the two cannot be honoured as Kosher. When we say animals "chewing its cud" it means those must be ruminant animals. And technically it means these are such animals which obtain nutrition from the food by getting is fermented in the stomach

before it gets digested through microbiological process. Some of such animals are cows, goat, lamb, oxen, deer and many more. Birds that are considered Kosher are mostly domesticated such as Chicken, goose, turkey, quail, dove and certain species of duck. Scavenger birds or birds of prey, the ones which uses its claw to catch the prey and lifts to its mount, injects venom to kill its prey, such as Owl, eagle, hawks are not considered Kosher. There is in fact a list of 24 such species birds which are considered unfit to become kosher. To add it is not only the specific animals and birds that can be eaten as Kosher. To make it Kosher, it is also very important to check, the way it has been slaughtered, the person who has slaughtered and the post slaughtering process. The special designated person who slaughters is known as Shochet. The process of slaughtering animals and birds should involve minimum/no pain inflicted upon them. Which means the weapon must be very sharp, the way of holding the animal must be very specific; the Shochet should exactly know the angle to be applied to kill the animal. Moreover post slaughtering will also call for soaking and salting the meat. The basic reason for the same it to ensure that the meat is completely removed of the blood. No strain of blood should be remaining on the meat because as per Torah, Jews are strictly prohibited from eating any blood, which will make them non Jews.



2. **Dairy :** Milk and milk products like cheese butter of Kosher animals are Kosher. However it should be eater separately and not with meat of any kind or even meat derivatives such as Rennet and Galetin, as is found in hard cheese or the processed cheese products. Also different utensils should be used to cook, store and serve for meat and dairy products. If a non kosher utensil is used for Kosher food, the food becomes non kosher. A meat utensil can never be used for dairy product cooking.
3. **Parve :** Those food items which contains neither dairy or meat element are called "Parve" such as vegetables, fruits and grains at its basic state. However a parve can become meat or dairy depending upon the category of meat or dairy it is cooked with. For example if fish is fried in better is considered a dairy food and not Parve.

- A. **Certain grains** which may be Kosher in general but may not be used as Kosher during certain festivals such as Passover. Also certain pulses and beans are not considered Kosher during Passover. Also grains in their basic forms are certainly kosher but due to the ingredients used or equipment used its products/ processed grains may not be kosher, such as bread and its variants as different kinds of oil and shortenings are used to make bread. Also if the equipment used is greased with animal fat or any such items or if that utensil is used for cooking meat or dairy it may no longer be considered kosher food. And since the standard nutrient levels do not say such things, bread or grain products must be certified by the Kosher certifier to be Kosher.
- B. **Fish and Eggs** are also considered Parve since these neither come under meat or dairy. These are neutrals. However only those fishes which have fins and scales are considered Kosher such as Tuna, salmon, Mackerel, Halibut. All those water creatures which do not have these such as all shell fishes, crabs, lobsters, oysters are not Kosher.
- C. **Fruits and vegetables** in its natural form are considered kosher. However since insects are not Kosher, all such items are thoroughly checked before sale or consumption, if there is any insect or larvae in it. Also the equipments used to produce fruits and vegetables, should not be those equipments which are used for processed milk or cook meat.
- D. **Oil seeds and nuts** : These are kosher in their basic forms. But due to its complicated processes of making Oil, and since the equipments are exposed to getting contaminated, these may be declared non kosher. Since the oil goes through so many processes it is important to check out the Kosher certification to ensure that all the processes are closely watched and certified that no non kosher equipments were used during its process.
- E. **Wine** : Wine in its purest form is considered Kosher. However the equipment for harvesting and fermenting must be Kosher too. But since wine is used at many religious occasions it is very important that the entire wine process from harvesting till production is done under the supervision of Jewish authority.

**Kosher ethics** : Since Kosher food is attached to the eating lifestyle and certain mannerism and belief it is very important to ensure that guests who are invited can have the entire dinner process as per their point of view how Kosher should be. People observing Kosher meal

have their own way of looking at things. So if some guests refuses certain kosher food it is not the time to feel offend. Those who are religious follow the law very closely and eat only what they think is made based on the law of Kosher which is known as "Kashut". And is a promise to God and can never be broken unless it is a question of life and death. So if you wish to play safe with the Kosher friends invited to your house, best is to purchase reliable and branded Kosher certified food items and serve them on disposable plates and dishes. In fact since there are different standards of kosher observance it is best is to check with the guest if some known Kosher outlet is as per their Kosher standards. Also ensure not to heat the food in a non Kosher oven or use any such utensil.

**Who are Kosher eating people** : It was seen that only 20% of Jews were consuming Kosher food and were Kosher Market consumer. A famous Historian said that during 1914 to 24 the Kosher food consumption fell by 25 to 30% in New York city. In fact during 1930s the demand for Kosher food was so low that some scholar said there is no difference between Jew and gentleman. However in the recent few decades the situation has changed and the current is flowing the other way. Around 10 million people in US are consuming around 60 thousand Kosher products through are only 2 million Jews who are consuming kosher food. So who are the rest 8 million Americans going for Kosher products and food. It was found out that these were either vegans and vegetarians or health conscious people.

Health benefits comes from 3 main guiding forces: How much food to eat, the ingredients used, the Process of making food

**Quantity restriction** : Kosher restricts one to eat a certain quantity only. This way one eats less of Calories which is present in the food in form of sugar, salt and fat. So these 3 anti elements which is also known as Big3 is less eaten and thus less harmful to the body.

**How food is prepared and restriction on dairy and meat together** : Since there is a restriction not to eat meat and dairy products together there are many items such as pizza lasagne cannot be eaten. This way less of junk food goes inside the stomach and less of calories. On the other hand if you eat meat and milk or milk products together it stays for a long time in your intestine and increases cholesterol level. Kosher meat needs to be broiled or drained to remove the blood which is much better than frying it as it increases calories. Also since insects are non kosher, all kosher foods are thoroughly checked before processing and packaging which is not a surety in non kosher food.

**Type of food included and excluded** : Since there are many





such animals etc which are non kosher but these are good from health point of view. For example pork which is non Kosher has much allergic chances though it is leaner (with less fat and calorie) now than earlier it used to be. Again Rodent type animals are not allowed and so Rabbit cannot be eaten as a Kosher food. In some cases if the rabbit is a wild one it could have collected poison from the stew pot. So you are saved. Again shellfish is also not allowed. Normally a shellfish is healthy but if the shellfish is from a beach it could be poisonous. The red tide causes poison in clams and Oysters. So if you are eating only Kosher food you do not have to worry about the dangers of eating such toxin animals. And on the other hand fish that have scales and fin are kosher with full of protein. Similarly Chicken, geese, goat, turkey, and ducks are all high protein animals and birds. So the advantage of eating kosher food is that you have lots of food which is on the positive side of the health. So as to the belief that Kosher food is only eaten by Jews does not hold good since due to its multi beneficial qualities Kosher is highly preferred by health conscious families all over the world.

**Increasing demand** : Dr. Jeff who is the Doctor of Biology and the Director of Ingredient research claims that demand for Kosher certified food and ingredients have increased in bewildering proportion in recent times. Due to this reason even the wines are supervised by the Kosher experts so that the best of wines are produced and certified. Again all those Hindus, Muslims, who are strictly vegetarians look for Kosher – Parve certified food so that it is a promise to the customer that no animal derived fat or oil has been used while processing the food. In fact people have been consuming Kosher food even unknowingly. To name it some of the brands like, **Post, General Mills,** and Kellogg's cereals, Coca Cola, Nabisco, Philadelphia Cream Cheese are all produced under Kosher certification. So as discussed before, the Kosher food habit and lifestyle has come into the blood of many sections of the society not just because of the religious compulsion but due to various other factors such as family tradition, upbringing of the child, and the diet pattern of the family.

**Childhood observations** : Many people who are born to a family which have Jewish life style have been watching Kosher food consumption and think this just normal and they do not even know if something called non kosher even exists.

**Kosher eating people /family members can be entertained** : Eating with large family members or neighbourhood is a great delight. So some people like to keep their Kitchen a Kosher Kitchen so that all family members and also those neighbours who are Kosher can be accommodated and all of them can sit together and eat and enjoy the meal time.

**Dairy allergies or intolerance** : There are people who are allergic to dairy and are quite intolerant. So if the food is marked kosher she or he could be dead sure that the food is either meat or if it Parve it has neither meat nor dairy. Parve

as it is called Kiddish does not have either meat or dairy element. Since all fruits, veg, nuts, are parve it is non meat and non dairy.

**High level of supervision** : Since Kosher food needs high standard of supervision due to certification issue, it is a guarantee of good product. Many factories and outlets are often supervised very closely by the Jewish experts. So if a product is Kosher certified it is a promise of high hygiene standards have been maintained. Also since insects are considered non kosher all food items are minutely checked and rechecked before it is processed and packaged.

**Humane side of slaughtering the animals** : As per Jews and Torah the Kosher animals are slaughtered in Kosher way which inflicts minimum pain to the slaughtered animal as against the Islamic or the factory style slaughtering. However it has become a big controversy and is supposed to be a part of Islamic-phobia or anti- Semitism. It is said if an animal has to be slaughtered it has to be inflicted with pain more or less. So it is a double standard and hypocoristic way of thinking.

**Good for vegetarians** : Since it is categorically separated as Meat, dairy and parve ( no meat or dairy inside) the vegetarians can confidently purchase a vegetarian items.

**Safer food** : Kosher meat from animals and birds are supposed to be on the safer side since, due to its salting system, which is applied to cleanse every bit of blood from the meat, it disinfects harmful bacteria, such as Salmonella, due to its anti bacterial properties.

**Better choice for Halal Observant** : Though there are many differences between a Kosher meat and a halal meat but there is some similarities too which makes a Muslim buy a Kosher meat in case they do not find a Halal-certified meat. Both Kosher and Muslim refrains from eating a pork, no blood stained meat and also kosher meat animal must be slaughtered. Animal which die out of illness or are dead without slaughtering are not supposed to be fit to eat as Kosher meat and the same goes for Muslims too. So in absence of Halal meat or not sure on the process of slaughtering, they go for Kosher Meat which is more trustworthy and goes in accordance with their religious to some extent.

**Maintaining tradition and Jewish lifestyle** : One of the French gastronome Jean confidently says : "Tell me what you eat and I will tell who you are". There is no doubt about it that Kosher is a lifestyle, it tells the profile of the person and also to which community one belongs.

**Kosher is not just a food habit** : It is not just eating or not eating Kosher. It requires, lots of dos and don'ts of making and eating Kosher food. There is certain discipline in it. There is a waiting time required before you can eat meat after eating

dairy or vice-versa. You need to pray before and after eating Kosher food. You have to adhere to so many etiquettes and if you are Kosher food eater. It is not that you just go and eat kosher food. There is a complete system laid down. This gives birth to good and deep feelings about food, hygiene social etiquettes and above all it gives a sense of spiritual fulfilment

**Religious compulsion** : Though people have tried to explain the philosophical, ideological and semi- scientific reasons why Kosher is to be adhered, but the truth is that for Jews it is a like a law, a mandate a part of the Gods commandment. So all Jews are Kosher since it is a law in Jewish community and follows almost blindly even if sometimes there are no explanation to so many things that are involved in Kosher making.

**Kosher – increasing food segment** : It has been seen even in the Bolly-wood movies the detective tells “ It does not smell Kosher” when he finds that something is unfit or not

usual. Fitness, be it physical or spiritual, Kosher stands for purity, truth, wholesomeness and honesty. Its about make right choices and right way of living. Kosher food segment has been increasing leaps and bounds. Gone are the days where Kosher was like prescribing for health benefits. It was originally meant for spiritual reasons, but it seems “what is good for soul is good for health also”.


**Diet for soul** : Body and soul are definitely interconnected. When something happens to the body the soul gets affected and when soul is hit the body shows up. There are various examples of food such as junk food which adversely affect the body, similarly soul is too affected by wrong food. Every soul in the world needs to breathe fresh and needs to reconnect to the ultimate source. And soul can reconnect only though body, wrong food chokes the arteries of the spiritual lungs of the universe. Kosher food not only purifies self soul but it also affects the entire universe. Since the way you eat and what you eat is so soulful if Kosher, that the energy produced by eating such food transforms one and all to the spiritual light.

**GJEIS Prevent Plagiarism in Publication**

The Editorial Board had used the Urkund – a Swedish anti-plagiarism software tool which is a fully-automatic machine learning text-recognition system made for detecting, preventing and handling plagiarism and trusted by thousands of institutions across worldwide. Urkund is GDPR compliant with privacy by design and an uptime of 99.9% and have trust to be the partner in academic integrity. <https://www.orkund.com>] tool to check the originality and further affixed the similarity index which is {2%} in this case (See Above Annexure-I). Thus, the reviewers and editors are of view to find it suitable to publish in this Volume-12, Issue-2, April-June, 2020.

**Annexure 1**

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Instances where selected sources appear: 5

**Reviewers  
Comment** **Reviewer Comment 1:**

The author has used a zesty topic which is very impressive and continues to keep it same throughout the article. The article highlights Kosher food and the rationality behind Kosher foods which is widely being accepted by non-jews too. The article depicts Kosher food and how the adoption of it could help people to maintain a balanced diet. The article is presented with secondary data but primary data could add robustness to the study.

**Reviewer Comment 2:**

The paper is well presented and organised with the help of available relevant information on the theme yet the inclusion of some qualitative or quantitative analysis could improve the generality of the findings. But on the other hand the paper also provides the foundation for the future researchers to do empirical analysis on the theme.

**Reviewer Comment 3:**

The article is based on the lifestyle of Jews in context to Kosher food. The article describes the meaning of Kosher food and the different aspects related to Kosher food. The article is well-organized which gives a clear view of Kosher food. The article comes with information about a food type which many readers may not have been aware of. The use of statistical tools to analyse data could enhance the study.

**Editorial  
Excerpt**

The article has 2 % of plagiarism which is accepted as per the norms and standards of the journal for the publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the authors (Arvind & Vidyanath) and accordingly all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to "Concept of Kosher and its importance to Jewish Community" both subject-wise and research-wise. The paper deals with a very lively topic by attracting the attention of the readers to the lifestyle of Jews which is being adopted by many others. Kosher is a concept of highly specialized food, preferred by and oriented for, the Jewish community of the world. The article discusses the what is Kosher, who eats Kosher, why is it eaten and what is the importance of this special cuisine. The study is based on secondary data. The article is structured in a manner which engages the readers throughout the article and builds the interest in the concept of Kosher. The Kosher food has been elaborately mentioned along with the process of cooking the meal and philosophy of the same. The paper has high scope of further research with primary data being used for the study. After comprehensive reviews and editorial board's remarks the manuscript has been categorised and decided to publish under "View Point" category

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**Disclaimer**

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the views of the GJEIS. The author has made every effort to ensure that the information in this paper is correct, any remaining errors and deficiencies is solely the responsibility of the author.

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