

# The OVH Guide to Preparing Fruits and Vegetables

TAMMUZ 5774 – TISHREI 5775



## Ottawa Vaad Hakashrut

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**Credit:**

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR WASHING AND CHECKING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR USE			
AT			
ALL CERTIFIED CATERERS AND FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS:			
FRESH VEGETABLES	TYPE OF INSECT	LOCATION OF INSECT	METHOD OF INSPECTION
Artichoke	Aphids and thrips	On the surface and lodged deep between the leaves	<p><b>Leaves and Heart of the Artichoke:</b> May not be used even <b>with</b> hashgacha</p> <p><b>Solid Artichoke Bottom:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rinse prior to use</li> <li>2. Make certain that no leaves are attached</li> </ol> <p>No further checking is necessary</p>
Arugula	Thrips or leaf miner worms (indicated by trails)	In the leaf curls and inside the leaf	See <b>Appendix A</b> for details
			<b>Green Asparagus:</b>

Asparagus	Thrips	Under triangle parts, along the stem, and in the tips at the top of the asparagus	<p><b>Green Asparagus:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shave down the tips located on the head</li> <li>2. Remove the triangle parts along the side of the asparagus – ensure that the asparagus is smooth</li> <li>3. Wash thoroughly</li> </ol> <p>No further checking is necessary</p> <p><b>Canned:</b> May <b>not</b> be used</p> <p><b>Frozen:</b> May <b>not</b> be used unless bearing an acceptable hashgacha and clearly stipulating that “no further checking is required”</p> <p><b>White Asparagus:</b> Wash thoroughly before use; no further checking is necessary</p>
Broccoli	Aphids, thrips, spider mites, or broccoli worm; some of these insects may appear brownish after parboiling process.	Lodged in the floret head or at the base of the under-part area connecting the floret to the stem	<p><b>Florets</b></p> <p><b>Fresh:</b> Fresh broccoli may not be used</p> <p><b>Frozen:</b> Only Eden and Bodek frozen broccoli brands are <i>currently</i> acceptable</p> <p><b>Stems only:</b> Wash thoroughly; no further checking is necessary</p>
Brussels Sprouts			<p>May <b>not</b> be used</p> <p><b>Frozen:</b> May <b>not</b> be used unless bearing an acceptable hashgacha and clearly stipulating that “no further checking is required”</p>

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Cabbage	Thrips and cabbageworms	Most often in the outermost three layers (6 leaves i.e. 2 leaves on each layer) of the cabbage head	<p><b><u>U.S. CABBAGE ONLY</u></b></p> <p><b>Green Cabbage:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detach outer loose leaves (“wrapper leaves”) and discard</li> <li>2. Core the cabbage and if desired split the head in half or quarters</li> <li>3. Check the first <b>three</b> leaves of each of the halves or quarters on a light box</li> <li>4. Check <b>both</b> sides of each leaf</li> </ol> <p>If no insects are found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No further checking is necessary</li> <li>• Remaining leaves must be washed before use</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: For use in coleslaw, wash after shredding</b></p> <p>If one or two insects are found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional 3 layers must be checked and entire process repeated</li> </ul> <p>If three or more insects are found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All</b> remaining leaves must be carefully checked <b>under a light box</b> before use, even after washing is done</li> </ul> <p><b>Please be advised:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is not sufficient to do sample checks of a few cabbages in a case. Rather, <u>all</u> the heads of cabbage in a case or sack must be checked.</li> <li>2. In the warmer months i.e. May through October, checking must be carried out with extra vigilance, as infestation is</li> </ol>
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			<p>more common.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When infested heads are found, the remaining heads in its case must be checked with extra vigilance.</li> </ol> <p><b>Purple Cabbage:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detach wrapper leaves and discard</li> <li>Core and split the cabbage in half</li> <li>Wash leaves of the cabbage thoroughly in soap and water</li> <li>If being shredded, cabbage must be washed after shredding</li> </ol> <p>No further checking is necessary</p> <p><b>Stuffed Cabbage:</b> Where stuffed cabbage is desired, an easier method may be employed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place heads of cabbage in the freezer for 48 hours</li> <li>Allow cabbage to defrost and then wash both sides of each leaf under a strong stream of running water</li> <li>Ensure that the running water has reached all folds and crevices of the cabbage</li> </ol> <p><b>ONTARIO CABBAGE</b> See <b>Appendix B</b> for details</p>
Cauliflower	Thrips, cabbageworms or mites	Surface of cauliflower or between the tightly small packed florets	<p><b>Florets</b></p> <p><b>Fresh: Fresh Cauliflower may not be used</b></p> <p><b>Frozen:</b> Only Eden and Bodek frozen Cauliflower brands are <i>currently</i> acceptable</p> <p><b>Stems <u>only</u>:</b> Wash thoroughly; no further checking is necessary</p>
Celery	Thrips, flies or leaf miner worms (indicated by trails)	On inside and outside of stalk, or buried in flesh of the celery	<p><b>Cleaning Procedure:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all side branches containing leaves</li> <li>Cut off small piece from the bottom of the celery</li> <li>Hold celery firmly under heavy stream of water</li> <li>Brush down both inside and outside of stalk with finger (firmly and rigorously) or a vegetable brush</li> </ol> <p>No further checking is necessary</p> <p>Check for damage on the stalk which may indicate the presence of a leaf minor If a worm trail is spotted</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slit open the celery stalk</li> <li>Remove worm and the entire leaf miner trail</li> <li>Wash thoroughly</li> </ol>
Edible Flowers	Thrips	At the base of each flower and between the flowers	<p>May <b>not</b> be used <b>except:</b></p> <p><b>Purple orchids:</b> Check by thoroughly examining each individual orchid for the presence of thrips which must be removed</p>
		On the surface of	Remove leaves and wash thoroughly

Belgian Endives	Thrips	On the surface of the leaf	Remove leaves and wash thoroughly No further checking necessary
Frisee			May <b>not</b> be used
Iceberg Lettuce	Aphids, thrips or spider mites	In the fold and crevices, generally on the first four outer layers (can be deeper inside)	See <b>Appendix B</b> for details See <b>Appendix C</b> for details regarding pre-washed lettuce
Kale			<b>Cleaning Procedure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add cold water and sufficient amount of vegetable wash or other similar soapy solution to a clean sink that has already been plugged or other similar container.</li> <li>2. Place kale in water. Kale must be thoroughly agitated while assuring that entire vegetable has been immersed in the water.</li> <li>3. Remove kale from water. All crevices and folds of the leaves must be opened while rinsing them under a strong stream of water. This washing process should be done to both sides of the leaf.</li> <li>4. Three samples (larger quantities require more checking) should be checked over a light box to verify that the washing procedure has been effective.</li> </ol>
Mesculun/Spring Mixes/Mixed Greens			May <b>not</b> be used
Mushrooms	Flies, White and Red Worms	Embedded in under part or in inner sections of the mushroom	<b>Shitake and Button:</b> Wash thoroughly; no further checking is necessary  <b>Oyster:</b> May not be used <b>Portobello:</b> May be used after the following procedure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove stem</li> <li>2. Remove entire brown fanlike under-part (which can be easily done with a metal teaspoon)</li> <li>3. Wash thoroughly and use</li> </ol> <b>NOTE:</b> For use of the portobello stem wash carefully and thoroughly. No further checking is necessary
Onions (i.e., Red, Yellow, and Spanish)	Thrips and spider mites	Found on the outside layers of the onions	<b>Cleaning Procedure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peel outer layers and discard</li> <li>2. Rub in hands while washing under water</li> <li>3. Examine outer layer for presence of insects</li> </ol> <b>CAUTION:</b> Onions may from time to time be infested with thrips. This is especially true in Spanish onions. As such, they should be examined periodically for obvious signs of infestation.
Open Leaf Lettuce (e.g. green/red leaf, boston, chicory, curly endive, bok choy, romaine, Napa {Chinese	Aphids, thrips, mites or leaf miners (during warmer months on outer leaves)	On the surface of the leaf, inside the leaf (leaf miners) or in the inner leaves	See <b>Appendix A</b> for details  See <b>Appendix C</b> for details regarding pre-washed lettuce  <b>Bok Choy:</b> In addition to the guidelines set out in <b>Appendix A</b> , the bottom must be cut off

cabbage} etc.)			in <b>Appendix A</b> , the bottom must be cut off
Radicchio			<b>Cleaning Procedure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add cold water and sufficient amount of vegetable wash or other similar soapy solution to a clean sink that has already been plugged or other similar container.</li> <li>2. Separate the leaves and place in water. It must be thoroughly agitated while assuring that entire vegetable has been immersed in the water.</li> <li>3. Remove vegetables from water. All crevices and folds of the leaves must be opened while rinsing them under a strong stream of water. This washing process should be done to both sides of the leaf.</li> </ol>
Scallion (Green Onion)/Leek	Light green or light brown thrips or leaf miner worms (indicated by trails)	The upper area of the bottom portion of the scallion, where shoots branch off <b>and</b> on the outside part of the green shoots where leaf miner trails can also be found	<b>Cleaning Procedure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Slit open <b>all</b> scallions or leek from top to bottom</li> <li>2. Separate each individual layer</li> <li>3. Loosen with your fingers the layers of the bottom portion of the scallion or leek</li> <li>4. Rinse the entire layer of the scallion or leek under a heavy stream of water</li> </ol> <p>The green shoot of the scallions should be examined for the presence of leaf miners: If a trail is found cut off that piece of the shoot If no trails are found the scallion or leek may be used</p>
Spinach	Thrips, mites or leaf miner worms (indicated by trails)	In the leaf curls on the surface or inside of the leaf	<b>Curly Leaf Spinach:</b> May <b>not</b> be used <b>Flat leaf or Baby Spinach:</b> See <b>Appendix A</b> for details <b>Frozen:</b> May <b>not</b> be used unless bearing an acceptable hashgacha and clearly stipulating that “no further checking is required”
Watercress			May <b>not</b> be used

HERBS	TYPE OF INSECT	LOCATION OF INSECT	METHOD OF INSPECTION
All Fresh Herbs for use in soup			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wash herbs thoroughly with vegetable wash or a similar soapy solution and rinse thoroughly</li> <li>2. Place in a gourmet or cooking bag and tie tightly</li> </ol> <p>No further checking is necessary</p>
Dehydrated Herbs			<p>All dehydrated herbs may be used without checking</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> A reliable hashgacha is necessary</p>
Basil	Thrips or leaf miner worms (indicated by trails)	In the leaf curls and inside the leaf	See <b>Appendix A</b> for details
			<b>Cleaning Procedure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add cold water and sufficient amount of vegetable wash or other similar soapy solution to a clean sink that has already been plugged or to a glass container. Add several drops of vegetable wash or a similar soapy solution</li> <li>2. Place herbs in water. Herbs must be thoroughly agitated in the water. Care</li> </ol>

<p><b>Fresh Herbs:</b> Cilantro, coriander, flat parsley, mint, oregano</p> <p><b>Specialty Herbs:</b> Thyme, rosemary, sage, tarragon</p>	Aphids, thrips, or spider mites	On surface of the leaves	<p>thoroughly agitated in the water. Care must be taken to ensure that the container is not over-stuffed with herbs so that the water can clean the herbs properly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove herbs from water (save the water) and place them in a separate container.</li> <li>Allow foam of soapy solution to clear from the water and pour through a fine screen or white cloth. A coffee filter may be used as an alternative</li> <li>In a well-lit area, put the screen or cloth on a light box and carefully examine screen or cloth for the presence of thrips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no insects are found proceed to step 6.</li> <li><b>If even one insect is found then herbs may not be used</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>Herbs should be held in a downward position under a heavy stream of water. Herbs should be spread out or pulled apart to allow the water to pass through all of the herbs.</li> </ol> <p>Important Note: In order to be sure that the insects that may be found in the herbs are washed away, a special focus must be maintained to carefully pull apart all the tightly clustered herbs. Spread out the herbs in hand, and allow water to thoroughly wash away all foreign matter that can be caught in the top of the herbs.</p>
Dill, Curley Parsley	Aphids, thrips, or spider mites	On surface of the leaves	May <b>not</b> be used

FRESH BERRIES	TYPE OF INSECT	LOCATION OF INSECT	METHOD OF INSPECTION
Blackberry	Thrips or mites	On surface of berry, nestled in crevices	May <b>not</b> be used
Blueberry	Generally insect- free		<p><b>Cultivated:</b> Place in a strainer or colander and wash thoroughly under running water. No further checking is necessary.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> If the blueberry is bruised or blemished then it must be checked for infestation</p> <p><b>Wild blueberries:</b> May <b>not</b> be used without checking</p>
Strawberry	Aphids, thrips, or mites	Under green leaf or on surface of berry	<p><b>Common (short-stem) strawberries:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully remove green leaf without making a hole in the top (If a hole was made, strawberry must be cut in half allowing both the inside and the outside of the strawberry to be washed)</li> <li>Place in a clean plugged up sink with cold water while adding a sufficient amount of vegetable wash or similar soapy solution</li> <li>Allow to soak for 3-5 minutes</li> <li>While soaking, agitate in water; the surface of each strawberry should be rubbed with your fingers</li> <li>Open the coldwater tap and allow the water to create a strong flow into the sink</li> </ol>

			<p>for a jacuzzi effect</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully wash off the entire surface of each strawberry, one by one, under a heavy stream of water using your fingers to thoroughly massage the surface of the strawberry</li> <li>Dry strawberries, wiping their surface <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For an additional measure of precaution, it is advisable that this process be repeated a second time.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Raspberry	Thrips or Mites	Nestled on the surface of the berry as well as inside the open cavity	May <b>not</b> be used

RICE	TYPE OF INSECT	LOCATION OF INSECT	METHOD OF INSPECTION
Basmati	Thrips	On top of the rice grain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place three large cups of rice from the bag in a bowl of water</li> <li>Agitate, and then allow to stand for 2-3 minutes</li> <li>Carefully examine the water for insects, which will normally float to the top</li> </ol> <p>If insects are found, the entire bag is likely to be infested and must be checked</p>
Wild rice	Worms	On top of the rice grain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place three large cups of rice from the bag in a bowl of water</li> <li>Agitate, and then allow to stand for 2-3 minutes</li> <li>Carefully examine the water for worms, which will float to the top</li> </ol> <p>If worms are discovered, the entire bag should be checked</p>
GRAINS AND BEANS	When using grains, an easy way to ascertain if they are infested is to place the product on a white paper plate and look for obvious signs of infestation Beans should be observed for similar signs of infestation		
Flour, pasta and rice	These items should <b>preferably</b> be observed for obvious signs of infestation; worms may develop when stored in warm areas. The presence of infestation is much more prevalent during the warm summer months. Recently, we have found occasional infestation of the black flour beetle in flour. As such, we advise that the surface of flour be checked using sifter. Insects will be clearly visible and moving across the surface. Additionally, infestation may occur to <i>yoshon</i> flour stored through the winter. Store these items in a cool, dry place or, when possible, refrigerated. When properly stored, it is unusual to find worms in these products especially those made in Canada and the USA. If worms are found, the entire box or bag must be carefully sifted or checked on a white paper plate before use.		

FRUIT	TYPE OF INSECT	LOCATION OF INSECT	METHOD OF INSPECTION
Date	Worms	Inside of date	<b>Dried:</b> Take 3-5 dates from container, slice lengthwise and examine, opening up the date completely, examining for worms. <b>No checking necessary when using pitted dates.</b>
Fig	Wasps or worms	Inside of fig	<b>Fresh:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut stem off the fig</li> <li>Slice 3-5 figs from each package and turn inside out</li> <li>Look for webbing when examining seeded section</li> <li>Examine for any signs of damage</li> </ol> <b>Dried:</b> May <b>not</b> be used

Nuts, walnuts, cashews	Worms		<b>Cashews:</b> Should be avoided when the shell appears perforated with small holes. This may be a sign of infestation. <b>Other nuts:</b> Look for obvious signs of infestation (i.e., shells perforated or small holes)
Dried Fruit: Examples include Apricots, Carob-Buxer			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove a few samples from each box or package and submerge in a basin of water.</li> <li>2. Inspect the water for infestation. If the water is clean then you may use the box or package.</li> <li>3. If the box stays open for a period of time, you will repeat steps 1 &amp; 2</li> </ol> <b>Dried apricot</b> – Imported dried apricots must be individually inspected
<b>SEAWEED/ NORI SHEETS</b>	Sea insects- mini scorpions and mini seahorses as well as other small mites.	On the surface of the leaf. Resembles small white seahorses or white worms.	Seaweed/Nori Sheets must carry a reliable hashgacha. Spot check from time to time.

<b>PRODUCE NOT TO BE USED AT ALL</b>
Artichoke leaves and hearts
Blackberries
Brussels sprouts
Canned asparagus
Curly leaf spinach
Dill
Edible flowers
Fresh broccoli, Fresh cauliflower
Friesse
Mesculun Mix, Spring Mix, Mixed Baby Greens
Oyster Mushrooms
Curley Parsley
Raspberries
Watercress

## Appendix A

The following leafy vegetables are subject to the procedure described below:

<b>ARUGULA</b>
<b>BASIL</b>
<b>OPEN LEAF LETTUCE</b>

GREEN AND RED LEAF
BOK CHOY
BOSTON
CHICORY
CURLY ENDIVE
NAPA {CHINESE CABBAGE}
ROMAINE
OTHER OPEN LEAF LETTUCE
SPINACH: FLAT LEAF AND BABY

Look for thrips and aphids, leaf miners are often found in the aforementioned vegetables. Leaf miners will leave visible trails that can be spotted on the leaf.

- 1) Add cold water to container or plugged sink. Add dish soap or vegetable wash (enough so that some bubbles are visible), add vegetables. ensure they are removed from stem.
- 2) Agitate vegetables for about 2 minutes, then remove from water and rinse.
- 3) Take three large handfuls of product and place on a light box. Check both sides of the leaf, open crevices, and focus on insect trails.
- 4) If no insects are found, the rest may be processed without further checking
- 5) If one or two insects are found in the initial handfuls, three more handfuls must be checked and the process repeated.
- 6) If three or more insects are found in the initial handfuls, ALL the leaves must be checked before further processing can take place.
- 7) When checking **romaine lettuce**, each leaf must be checked, both sides, over light box.

## Appendix B

### **This Appendix addresses iceberg lettuce and Ontario cabbage**

The following process serves to ensure that the aforementioned vegetables are cleaned properly from infestation of aphids and thrips. Care must be taken to follow this process meticulously and with patience. Failure to do so may result in failure to remove insects.

- 1) Cut in half or quarter. Remove the wrapper leaves (first 1-2 layers), and discard.
- 2) Add cold water to container or plugged sink. Add dish soap or vegetable wash (enough so that some bubbles are visible). Remove three (3) layers of the vegetable and add to water solution.
- 3) Agitate vegetables in water for about 2 minutes, then remove from water and rinse each vegetable thoroughly, both sides, and open crevices.

4) If no insects have been found, the rest of the vegetable may be used.

NOTE: If Ontario Cabbage is being used for coleslaw the above procedure may be carried out after shredding is done

## Appendix C

**This Appendix is devoted to pre-washed lettuce and salad mixes**

- 1) Without acceptable Hashgacha or without any Hashgacha will be treated **as if** they were not pre-washed.
- 2) Acceptable Hashgacha:
  - **Iceberg lettuce** should be spot checked from time to time looked over for signs of infestation
  - If the hashgacha on **iceberg lettuce** clearly states “no further checking necessary” example: Bodek, it is allowed without checking
  - **Open Leaf Lettuce/Romaine lettuce/Baby Spinach and various salad mixes** that incorporate these vegetables should be treated **as if** they were not pre-washed: See **Appendix A** for details

## APPENDIX D

**This Appendix delineates points that the Mashgiach (and the owner) must be aware of:**

- 1) If ever a doubt arises please call Rabbi Teitlebaum at 613-255-5829. I try to be available and will return calls and queries as soon as we can.
- 2) The following guidelines apply to washing and checking systems:
  - a. Checking of problematic fruits and vegetables must be performed by the **mashgiach only**.
  - b. Fruits and vegetables that require washing and checking (see Appendix A) may be washed by kitchen staff under the guidance of the Mashgiach. Checking must be performed by the mashgiach only.
  - c. Problematic fruits and vegetables that require washing only (strawberries, scallions etc.) must be washed by the mashgiach only. For items that can be checked (cabbage, iceberg lettuce) the Mashgiach may choose to check samples of the wash instead of washing himself.
- 3) It cannot be stressed enough that in order for a Mashgiach's system of *Bedika* to work, the kitchen staff must be familiar with and completely aware of the importance of vegetable inspection. Therefore, a foolproof system must be developed between the Mashgiach and the kitchen staff to distinguish between inspected vegetables and non-inspected vegetables. One approach is to designate marked bowls or other containers in which only checked vegetables would be placed by the Mashgiach. Logs can be kept to

keep track of unwashed product. Afterwards, the kitchen staff can draw from those bowls as needed.

- 4) The Mashgiach must be organized. In order to be effective, he should start his vegetable inspection early enough to allow time for careful and thorough checking. The Mashgiach can also demonstrate to a responsible member of the kitchen staff how to break up and wash each vegetable prior to *Bedika*. It is also important for the Mashgiach to show this worker what the actual insects look like. After the designated individual has completed the thorough washing, the Mashgiach must visually inspect the vegetables. This system can save the Mashgiach many valuable hours.
- 5) When vegetables are being prepared for a large affair, it is extremely advisable to check as many vegetables as possible the day before the affair. This will relieve a great deal of pressure and allow the Mashgiach to perform a more methodical and thorough checking.
- 6) In the event that the Mashgiach notices the kitchen running short of vegetables, or if there is a large party, he should be prepared to check vegetables immediately. Vegetable checking should be avoided during peak hours when the Mashgiach's services are often needed elsewhere.
- 7) Signs should be placed in English and any other language spoken by the staff, informing them that unchecked vegetables are not to be used under any circumstance.
- 8) Every food establishment that sells or serves any of the aforementioned produce that require checking for insects is now required to purchase a light-box.