

The University of North Texas  
Dining Services  
White Paper: Kosher

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## ***What is kosher?***

Kosher is the popular term for the Jewish dietary laws, *kashrut*. There are some laws that are recognized by all Jewish people, but much is open for interpretation and therefore will vary from congregation to congregation. Meats that UNT might serve that are not permitted by *kashrut* are swine, catfish and shellfish. Any animal that is allowed must be killed in the proper manner and must be examined to determine if it is fit for consumption. Another law is that meat and dairy are not to be eaten together (1, pp. 87-88). Even in preparation, meat and dairy are not to be mixed; therefore a kosher kitchen will have a set of cookware, plates, bowls, utensils, and cutlery for meat and a complete set for dairy. Some kosher kitchens may also have a set that are for neutral foods such as eggs, fruits, vegetables and grains (2). Another dietary law that may impact a kitchen is that all produce and grains should be washed twice to remove insects and worms (1, p. 88).

Kosher foods for purchase should be certified by certain authorities and will have their stamp or symbol on the package (1, pp. 88-89). One such authority is Dallas Kosher. You can learn more about them from their website, [www.dallaskosher.org](http://www.dallaskosher.org). They state that “the majority of kosher consumers are not Jewish” but rather are “regular, ordinary people that perceive kosher to be ‘cleaner’, ‘better’ & ‘healthier.’” They also have a list of kosher restaurants, bakeries and delis that they have certified. As of June 2010, there were none in Denton, the closest being in Richardson and the far northwest corner of Dallas (3). Refer to their website for an up-to-date list.

## ***Does UNT serve kosher foods?***

At this time, UNT does not have a kosher kitchen as it is not in high demand for our students. In the past 15 years, only one has come to us requesting kosher foods. It would be very expensive to build a complete kosher kitchen with two complete sets of cookware, etc. for the meat and dairy separation.

This kitchen and kitchenware could only be used for kosher foods and therefore would require close supervision as to prevent any contamination with non-kosher items. For additional information, please contact the dining office at 940-565-2462.

### ***What about other Universities?***

Many other Universities do not serve kosher meals as well. Lisa Eberhart, Registered Dietitian of North Carolina State University says:

“We have very few requests for kosher meals. I think in my whole time here, over 12 years, we have had less than 5 requests. We do not have access to kosher foods or a kosher kitchen so we have not been able to meet any kosher requests we receive. Many schools depend on a Jewish community center to cater any special kosher meals they need.”

Pam Edwards, Assistant Director of University Dining Services of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln says that they do not have a kosher kitchen either. They may purchase some frozen kosher foods and heat it up in a regular oven. Any kosher students that come through there have been “very accommodating” with them and follow a more “relaxed” and “loose” kosher diet.

Arizona State University has a growing population of Jewish students, according to Lexi MacMillan. She said that they too do not have a kosher kitchen but that they may provide kosher deli meats and frozen dinners in the future.

## References:

1. Kittler, P. G., & Sucher, K. P. (2008). Food and Culture (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). United States: Thomson Wadsworth.
2. Heiges, Ruth (November 6, 1998). Frequently Asked Questions – Kosher Food. Retrieved April 29, 2010. <http://www.cyber-kitchen.com/rfcj/kosherfaq.htm>
3. Dallas Kosher. Retrieved April 29, 2010. <http://www.dallaskosher.org>