

# HALACHICALLY SPEAKING



► Authored by Rabbi Moische Dovid Lebovits  
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## BIRCHAS HAMOZON – SELECTED HALACHOS

*Birchas hamozon* (or *bentching*) encompasses many *halachos*. Many people avoid bread because they do not want to *bentch*. This issue will deal with many issues, such as who is obligated in *bentching*? Should one use a *siddur*? Is one required to wear a hat and jacket? What is the proper *nusach* of *bentching*?

### The Source – Reason

The *posuk* in *Eikev*<sup>1</sup> says that one who eats and is satisfied is *mevorech*. If he is not satisfied, then his obligation is of *Rabbinic* origin.<sup>2</sup> The *Chinuch*<sup>3</sup> offers this reason for *bentching* after we eat bread. *Hashem* created everything good, and He wants us to have

1. 8:10. See Meseches Berochos 48b. Refer to Bal Haturim, Rambam 8:10.
2. Meseches Berochos *ibid*, Rambam Hilchos Berochos 1:1.
3. Mitzvah 430.



אין לו  
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אמות  
של הלכה  
בלבד...  
(ברכות ח.)

good as well. By recognizing *Hashem* as the source of all blessings, we merit to receive those blessings.

## Reward

The *Chinuch*<sup>4</sup> says, “I have a tradition from my *rabbeim*, that those who are careful with *bentching* will receive their *mezonos* (i.e. *parnasa*) in an honorable fashion all of their days.” The *poskim* note that there is no Hebrew letter “*pei*” in the entire *bentching*. This is because one who *bentches* properly merits that no anger will fall on him from *Hashem*.<sup>5</sup> (The terms for anger, *af* and *ketzef*, end with a *pei*).

## Women

There is an obligation for women to *bentch*, but there is an uncertainty if this obligation is *d’oraisa* or *d’rabbanan* in nature.<sup>6</sup> This is based on the *Torah’s* statement that we, “*bentch Hashem* for the good land which He gave you.” This statement cannot apply to women who generally do not inherit land.<sup>7</sup> Those women who are lenient and do not *bentch* are acting incorrectly.<sup>8</sup>

Based on this uncertainty, a woman who was satisfied but is not sure if she *bentched* does not have to *bentch*, but may do so if she desires.<sup>9</sup>

## Children

A parent should be *mechanech* his children in *bentching*.<sup>10</sup> This applies even if a child only at a *kezayis*.<sup>11</sup> The age for *chinuch* depends on the intelligence of the child.<sup>12</sup>

The *Mishnah Berurah*<sup>13</sup> says that one should train his children to say a shorter version of *bentching* a little at a time until he is ready to say the entire *bentching*.<sup>14</sup>

4. Ibid. Refer to Ateres Zekanim 185:1, Elya Rabbah 185:1, Mishnah Berurah 184:1, Aruch Hashulchan 189:7.

5. Be’er Heitiv 185:1, Elya Rabbah 185:1, Aruch Hashulchan 189:7.

6. Refer to Meseches Berochos 20b, Rashi “noshim, Tosfas “noshim,” Shulchan Aruch 186:1, Magen Avraham 1, Taz 1, Levush 1, Shulchan Aruch Harav 1, Chinuch mitzvah 430, Chayei Adom 47:2, Mishnah Berurah 2, Aruch Hashulchan 3, Kaf Hachaim 3, Yechaveh Daas 6:10.

7. Rashi Meseches Berochos ibid “oy.”

8. Ben Ish Chai Chukas 1:11.

9. Mishnah Berurah 3, Biur Halacha “eleh.” See Aruch Hashulchan 184:9. Others say she should hear *bentching* from someone else (Piskei Teshuvos 186:2).

10. Shulchan Aruch 186:2, Levush 2, Elya Rabbah 3, Aruch Hashulchan 4, Kaf Hachaim 2, V’sein Beracha pages 288-289, see Shulchan Aruch Harav 3, opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Ashri Yiladito 1:page 215:24.

11. Mishnah Berurah 4.

12. Chanoch L’nar 15:1. See V’sein Beracha page 288:footnote 23.

13. 187:4.

14. Refer to Halichos Shlomo Tefillah 1:8, Chinuch Yisroel 1:2:10.

כל השונה  
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A child who claims that he *bentched* is believed and one does not have to make sure he *bentches* again.<sup>15</sup>

## How Much?

In order for one to be obligated in *bentching min haTorah* one has to eat a *shiur* which is satisfying, but if one eats a *kezayis* he is obligated *m'd'rabbanan*.<sup>16</sup> This is not equal to all people since everyone has different eating habits.<sup>17</sup> One who ate a *kezayis* and is in doubt if he *bentched* does not *bentch* because it is *sofek* on a *d'rabbanan*.<sup>18</sup> It is preferable to eat the *shiur* of a *kezayis* or more within four minutes.<sup>19</sup>

## Which Language?

The opinion of some *poskim* is that *bentching* can be recited in any language.<sup>20</sup> However, *loshon kodesh* is the most preferred language.<sup>21</sup> One is *yotzei bentching* even if he does not understand what he is saying only if he recites it in *loshon kodesh*.<sup>22</sup> It is worthwhile to invest time to understand the words of *bentching*.<sup>23</sup>

## Using a Siddur

The *poskim* say that one should be careful and *bentch* from a *siddur*.<sup>24</sup> It is noted that *Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* would use a *siddur* if it was readily available, but *bentched* by heart when it was not.<sup>25</sup>

## Hearing What You Say

Before reciting *birchas hamazon*, one should have in mind that he is fulfilling a *mitzvah d'oraisa* and say it with great *simcha*.<sup>26</sup> *L'chatchilah*, all *berachos* should be recited loud enough to hear. *B'dieved* one is *yotzei* as long as he actually said the words.<sup>27</sup> However,

15. Rivevos Ephraim 5:172:2.

16. Mishnah Berurah 184:22, Aruch Hashulchan 184:9. Refer to Ba'al Haturim Eikev 8:10, Otzros Ha'beracha page 185:2.

17. Mishnah Berurah 184:22. See Biur Halacha "kezayis."

18. Aruch Hashulchan 184:4, Yechaveh Daas 6:10, see Tzitz Eliezer 11:13.

19. Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Vezos Ha'beracha page 141. See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:41.

20. Rambam Hilchos Berochos 6:1, Shulchan Aruch 185:1, Levush 1. See Aruch Hashulchan 185:1.

21. Mishnah Berurah 185:1.

22. Aruch Hashulchan 185:4. See Shulchan Aruch Harav 185:1.

23. Birchos Habayis 41:43.

24. Be'er Heitiv 185:1, Mishnah Berurah 185:1, Vezos Ha'beracha page 140:3.

25. As related by Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. See Rivevos Ephraim 6:120:2.

26. Ben Ish Chai Chukas 1:2.

27. Rambam Hilchos Berochos 1:7, Shulchan Aruch 185:2, Levush 2, Aruch Hashulchan 9, Yabea Omer O.C. 4:18.



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many *poskim* say that he is not *yotzei*.<sup>28</sup> The *Biur Halacha*<sup>29</sup> explains that the stringent view does not mean that one is not *yotzei*, but that it is not the preferred method.

Merely thinking of the *berochos* is not permitted for a healthy person.<sup>30</sup> If one is in a noisy place, some say that it is not necessary to raise his voice until he hears the *beracha*.<sup>31</sup> However, if possible, one should try to say the *beracha* loud enough that someone next to him will be able to answer *amen*.<sup>32</sup>

## Out Loud

It is a good idea to *bentch* out loud, because this arouses concentration, and one will not forget the various additions to *bentching*, such as *ya'ale v'yavo*.<sup>33</sup> The *Chayei Adom*<sup>34</sup> says that one should *bentch* with fear, concentration and *simcha*.

## Bentching is Comparable to Shemonei Esrei

When one *bentches* he should be in the same mind set as when he *davens shemonei esrei*.<sup>35</sup>

Many *poskim* say that one cannot answer *amen* or other *devarim sh'bekedusha* during *bentching*.<sup>36</sup> One may not make finger motions during *bentching*.<sup>37</sup> These rules do not apply after the fourth *beracha* of *hatov v'hameitiv*.<sup>38</sup> Others say that one should avoid any *hefsek* until after he has finished *bentching* if possible.<sup>39</sup> The *Chazon Ish* *zt"l*<sup>40</sup> was of the

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Refer to Pischei Halacha (Berochos) 1:footnote 21, see Piskei Teshuvos 185:footnote 18.

28. Sharei Teshuva 1, Birchei Yosef 2, Levush 2. The Ben Ish Chai Chulas 1:7 says if one *bentched* without hearing what he said he should eat more and *bentch* again while hearing the words.

29. 62:3 "v'im lav," see Shulchan Hatohar 185:1 in zer zahav. Refer to Yabea Omer ibid.

30. Magen Avraham 1, Elya Rabbah 2, Machtzis Ha'shekel 1, Be'er Heitiv 1, Aruch Hashulchan 10. The Mishnah Berurah 185:2 says one is not *yotzei* entirely.

31. Halichos Shlomo Tefillah 22:4, Sharei Ha'beracha 10:footnote 20 quoting this as being the opinion of Harav Vosner Shlita.

32. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Machtzis Hashekel 6:9, Rivevos Ephraim 1:39:2, Be'er Moshe 3:1 Tzitz Eliezer 11:2.

33. Mishnah Berurah 185:3.

34. 47:13.

35. Shulchan Aruch 183:8, Levush 8, Rav Akiva Eiger 1, Mishnah Berurah 30. Some say it is not exactly like *shemonei esrei* (opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt"l* quoted in V'sein Beracha page 311:footnote 27, see Shulchan Aruch Harav 185:5).

36. Chesed L'alafim 183:6, Mishnah Berurah 30, Aruch Hashulchan 183:8, Kaf Hachaim 183:45, Betzel Hachuchma 4:42.

37. Aruch Hashulchan 183:8

38. Aruch Hashulchan 183:8. Refer to Shar Ha'tzyion 24.

39. Pri Megadim M.Z. 189:1. See Ben Ish Chai Chukas 1:3.

40. O.C. 28:3. See Ketzos Hashulchan 45:badi 12, Oz Nedberu 6:49:2.

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opinion that one may answer to *kedusha* and *borchu* in middle of a *beracha*, and *amen* is permitted in between *berochos*. However, the custom follows the stringent opinion.<sup>41</sup>

When someone is *bentching*, his neighbor should be careful not to disturb him. Therefore, one should avoid conversing with another while someone else is *bentching* close by.<sup>42</sup>

One should be properly dressed while reciting *bentching*.<sup>43</sup> Wearing a bathrobe is unacceptable.<sup>44</sup> Some say that it is proper to wear a hat and jacket.<sup>45</sup> The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*<sup>46</sup> says that doing so brings one to fear of *Hashem* and will increase concentration during *bentching*. The *Chazon Ish* *zt"l* only wore a big *yarmulke* and did not wear a hat for *bentching*. The *Stiepler zt"l* only wore a hat without a jacket.<sup>47</sup>

### Standing vs. Sitting

One should sit during *bentching*.<sup>48</sup> The *Levush*<sup>49</sup> says that this aids concentration. One who *bentched* while standing, walking, or with *kalos rosh* was *yotzei*,<sup>50</sup> but it is not a good thing to do.<sup>51</sup> One should sit for the fourth *beracha* even though it is *d'rabbanan*, in order not to treat the *beracha* with disrespect.<sup>52</sup>

### The Nusach of Bentching

In the context of *bentching*, the *Torah* mentions, food, the land, and good. The three *berochos* correspond to these three things. Moshe composed the first *beracha* of *bentching*,

41. Refer to Rivevos Ephraim 1:148, Yabea Omer O.C. 1:11.

42. V'sein Beracha page 310.

43. V'sein Beracha page 312:footnote 29.

44. V'sein Beracha page 311. See Rivevos Ephraim 5:106, Ashri Yiladito 1:page 216:28.

45. See Meseches Berochos 51b, Bach 183, Magen Avraham 5, Elya Rabbah 16, Machtzis Ha'shekel 5, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 44:6, Mishnah Berurah 11, Salmas Chaim 181:page 51, Ohr L'tzyion 2:13:3. The Halichos Shlomo Tefillah 2:73 is lenient for a *cholah* not to put the jacket on all the way, rather over the shoulders is fine. Refer to Vezos Ha'beracha page 140:4, who quotes from the Chazon Ish *zt"l* that the jacket may be worn on the shoulders even not for a *cholah*, see Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 207:7. The Aruch Hashulchan 183:4 holds there is no need for a jacket, see Tzitz Eliezer 13:13. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita says not wearing a hat and jacket while *bentching* is something that one should grow out of as he matures (Refer to Doleh U'mashka page 111).

46. 44:6.

47. Orchos Rabbeinu 1:74:page 83.

48. Tosfas Meseches Berochos 51a "v'hilchasa," Shulchan Aruch 183:8, Shulchan Aruch Harav 183:13, Mishnah Berurah 31, Aruch Hashulchan 183:8, Ben Ish Chai Chukas 1:4. Refer to Yisroel B'mamadam 17:27.

49. 183:9.

50. Aruch Hashulchan 183:8.

51. Levush 183:9.

52. Mishnah Berurah 183:31, see Shar Ha'tzyion 37 who seems to be unsure about this point.



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and *Yehoshua* composed the second *beracha*.<sup>53</sup> The third *beracha* was composed by *Dovid* and *Shlomo Hamelech*.<sup>54</sup> The fourth *beracha* of *hatov v'hameitiv* is not a *d'oraisa*.<sup>55</sup> The end of the fourth *beracha* is *al yechasreinu*.<sup>56</sup> Although we do not generally answer *amen* after our own *berochos*, *amen* is recited after the *beracha* of *boneh* to separate between *berochos* which are *d'oraisa* and *d'rabbanan*.<sup>57</sup>

The *harchaman's* that are recited after the fourth *beracha* are *tachnunim*, just like we say *tachnunim* after *shemonei esrei*.<sup>58</sup> Although we do not ask for personal needs on *Shabbos*,<sup>59</sup> the custom is to recite the *harchaman's* even on *Shabbos*.<sup>60</sup>

*Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l* is of the opinion that one may skip from the end of the fourth *beracha* until the end of *bentching*.<sup>61</sup> However, why would one want to decline all those *berochos*?<sup>62</sup>

### **Migdol and Magdil**

The widespread custom is that on *Shabbos*<sup>63</sup> (and *Yom Tov*,<sup>64</sup> *Rosh Chodesh*,<sup>65</sup> *Motzei Shabbos*,<sup>66</sup> *Chol Hamoed*<sup>67</sup> and *Chanukah*)<sup>68</sup> we say *migdol*, and during the week (and on

53. Tur 187, Shulchan Aruch Harav 187:1.

54. Levush 188:1, Shulchan Aruch Harav 187:1.

55. Tur 189, Shulchan Aruch 189:1, Aruch Hashulchan 189:1, Kaf Hachaim 189:1. Refer to Aruch Hashulchan why there is a fourth *beracha* in *bentching*. See Prisha 189:1.

56. Elya Rabbah 189:1, Aruch Hashulchan 189:7.

57. Shulchan Aruch 188:1, Mishnah Berurah 188:2, see Pri Megadim M.Z. 51:2.

58. Aruch Hashulchan 189:7. See Tur 189 who questions the recital of the *harachaman's*.

59. Refer to Shulchan Aruch 306.

60. Darchei Moshe 188:4, Shulchan Hatohar 186:6. See Massei Rav Hachodesh 19 who argues.

61. V'sein Beracha page 304:footnote 5. See Lekutei Maharich page 246 (new) who says if one has an *o'nes* he does not have to say the *harachaman's*.

62. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. See Aruch Hashulchan 188:3.

63. Taamei Haminhagim (Shabbos) 377:page 174.

64. See Tzohar 9:page 489.

65. Elya Rabbah 187:1, Aruch Hashulchan 189:7.

66. Ben Ish Chai Chukas 1:19, Kaf Hachaim Palagi 31:59, Chesed L'alafim 189:page 346, Kaf Hachaim 189:11, 300:14.

67. Lekutei Maharich page 249 (new).

68. Shulchan Aruch Hamekutzar 32:9.

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*Purim*,<sup>69</sup> and at a *siyum* where bread is served)<sup>70</sup> we say *magdil*.<sup>71</sup> However, the *Boruch Sh'omar*<sup>72</sup> says that the whole concept is a mistake. One *posuk* is from *Tehillim*<sup>73</sup> (*magdil*), and one *posuk* is in *Shmuel Bais*<sup>74</sup> (*migdol*). The letters *bais shin bais* were printed (before *migdol*) in the margin of the *siddur*, which stands for *Shmuel Bais*. However, people misunderstood it to mean that *migdol* is only recited on *Shabbos*. In essence, however, there is only one *nusach*, and *magdil* is never recited. Others disagree with this.<sup>75</sup> It is not a simple matter to say that all the *poskim* who discuss the difference between the weekday and *Shabbos bentching* with reference to *migdol* and *magdil* were in error.<sup>76</sup>

## Using a Cup (of Wine etc) for *Bentching*

There is a discussion in the *poskim* if one needs to *bentch* on a cup of wine.<sup>77</sup> The accepted custom is to use a cup.<sup>78</sup> However, it depends on how many people are present. The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>79</sup> maintains that if one *bentches* alone he should *bentch* with a cup,<sup>80</sup> while others only require it for a *zimun* (at least three people *bentching*). Although it may be a preferred *mitzvah* to *bentch* with a cup even while alone,<sup>81</sup> the custom of many is to use a cup when *bentching* with at least with three people.<sup>82</sup> However, this is not an obligation.<sup>83</sup> The purpose of the wine is to honor the *mitzvah*.<sup>84</sup>

69. See Tzohar 9:page 490.

70. Kaf Hachaim 189:11.

71. Avudraham page 326, Darchei Moshe 189:1, Magen Avraham 189:1, Shulchan Aruch Harav 188:4, Chesed L'alafim 189:page 346, Mishnah Berurah 189:5, Aruch Hashulchan 189:7, Kaf Hachaim 189:11, Shulchan Hatoahr Zer Zahav 187:footnote 156. See Yeshurin 6:pages 759-762, Tzohar 9:pages 486-487. Refer to Otzer Kol Minhagei Yeshurin page 19.

72. Pages 214-215. This is the opinion of Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita as well. Refer to Heichel Rashi page 97.

73. 18:51.

74. 2:22:51.

75. Refer to Piskei Teshuvos 189:3:footnote 9. See Vuvim L'amudim pages 281-292 in great depth.

76. Tzohar 9:page 495.

77. Refer to Rambam Hilchos Berochos 7:15, Bach 182, Aruch Hashulchan 182:1, Kaf Hachaim 182:1.

78. Tur 182.

79. 182:1.

80. Refer to Magen Avraham 1.

81. Rama 182:1, Aruch Hashulchan 182:3, Tehilla L'Dovid 182:1. Refer to Eishel Avraham Butchatch 182.

82. Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 182:1, Ben Ish Chai Shelach 1:16, Mishnah Berurah 182:4, Shar Ha'tzyion 182:3, Aruch Hashulchan 182:1, Ohr L'tzyion 2:46:20, see Malbushei Yom Tov 182:1, Be'er Heitiv 182:1. Others did not use a cup even when *bentching* with three people (Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 83:73 quoting the custom of the Steipler zt"l and the Chazzon Ish zt"l).

83. Igros Moshe Y.D 3:52.

84. Levush 182:1, Mishnah Berurah 182:1. In addition to being *al pi kabbalah* (Levush ibid).



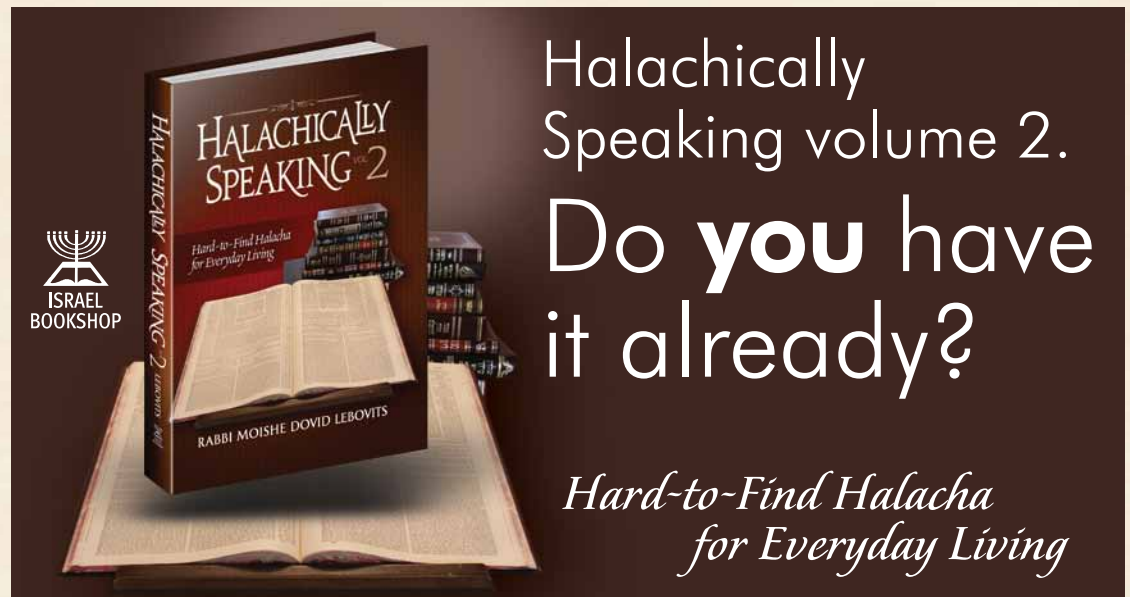
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The *Aruch Hashulchan*<sup>85</sup> says that in his days they did not use a cup since wine was expensive. However, today this reason is not valid.<sup>86</sup>

Some people are *makpid* to *bentch* with a cup on *Shabbos*, and not during the week. One reason is that one is in a rush during the week, as opposed to *Shabbos*.<sup>87</sup>

### Vomited

There is a discussion in the *poskim* whether one is required to *bentch* if he vomited. One who forgot to *bentch* and threw up much later should still *bentch*.<sup>88</sup>



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85. 182:1.

86. Refer to Piskei Teshuvos 182:footnote 8.

87. Rivevos Ephraim 1:50:6.

88. Refer to Ben Ish Chai Chukas 1:13, Rivevos Ephraim 8:418:page 263, Shevet Hakehasi 5:40, See Kaf Hachaim 184:34, Ketzos Hashulchan 44:badi 3.



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## POLICY/ UPDATES

### PAS YISROEL LIST CHESHVAN 5771

Any questions regarding this list should be addressed to Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits at 1- 201-837-0500 ext 127 or [mlebovits@kof-k.org](mailto:mlebovits@kof-k.org)

Company Name	Comments
Anthony and Sons	Except PC# 1207 and 2167
Automatic Rolls of Baltimore	All
Automatic Rolls of New Jersey	All
Bake – Rite	All
Bread Alone Inc.	All
Canada Bread	Only when the letters PY appear in the lotcode
Certified Bakery	All
Crispy Bagel Co.	All
Food For Life	Except for the pita
Gabila Food Products Inc.	All
H and S Bakery	Except Sandwich Flats and English Muffins
Hauswald's	All
Joey's Fine Foods	All
Kerry Ingredient Co.	Only a few items call the KOF-K

Company Name	Comments
Marathon Baking	All
Mid Atlantic Baking	All
Nanas Cookie Co.	All
Oberlander Bakery	All
Orthodox Baking	All
Ottenbergs Bakery	All
Pas Yisroel	All
Schmidt Baking	All
Scottos Pastry & Bakery	All
Streits	All
Sunrise Baking Co.	All
Tofutti Brands Inc.	All
Tri State Buns	All

Please note: It is advisable to refer back to our website periodically since the items on this list are subject to change



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