

ROSH HASHANA BEDIKAS TOLAIM GUIDE

תשרי תשפ"ז Updated

הנה מנהג ישראל לאכול כמה דברים בליל ר"ה לסימנה טובה, וביניהם יש דברים שצריכים בדיקה מתולעים. וכבר כתבו בספרים הק' שצריך לזהר בדברים שאוכלים לסימנה טובה שלא יצא שכרו בהפסדו ולא יכשל ח"ו באיסורי תולעים.



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BEDIKAS TOLAIM GUIDELINES FOR SOME FOODS COMMONLY USED ON ROSH HASHANA:

Black Eye Peas

Black eye peas are more prone to infestation than most other beans and peas, and their internal infestation is difficult to detect. If three peas in a bag are found to have any sign of infestation, the whole bag should not be used.

Signs of infestation: A hole in a pea, a dark stain showing through the peel, or small white particles (eggs) on the pea.

[Note: Some peas have natural dark spots or blemishes on the outer peel (besides the 'black eye' in the center), which are not a sign of internal infestation. It may be difficult for the average person to differentiate between the spots showing through the peel and the spots on the peel. When in doubt, take off the peel and check if there is anything inside.]

- Put the peas in a pot with an ample amount of water (about 3 times the volume of the peas), bring them to a boil, then turn off the flame, and leave the peas covered for about 3 hours. (Not all infestation can be detected without first boiling and soaking.)
- Spread out a handful of peas on the palm of your hand, and inspect them for signs of infestation. Turn the peas over onto the palm of your other hand, and inspect the other side of the peas as well. All the peas should be checked this way.
- ~ One may choose to precheck the peas (step 2) before boiling. This way, if signs of infestation are found, it will determine that the bag should not be used, without having to go through a lengthy boiling and soaking process. If no infestation is found, continue the process as above (steps 1 and 2).

Dates

Fresh: Fresh dates (that are sold on a twig) are generally not infested. It is advisable to make sure that there are no holes or signs of infestation (webbing, etc.) on the outside of the date. [The dates should be removed from the twig before Yom Tov to avoid a מפרק של שאלה]

- Dried:
- Cut each date open lengthwise, remove the pit, and inspect carefully around the pit. If one sees worms, beetles, or any signs of infestation (such as brown crumb-like particles), that date should not be used. (Small white particles are sugar crystals, and are not a sign of infestation).
 - The dates should then be held up against a light (or placed on a light box) for a more effective way to recognize the camouflaged insects.
 - ~ USA grown Medjool dates are generally less infested than other dates (Deglet Noor, etc.).
 - ~ Dates from Tunisia, Pakistan and Algeria have a high infestation rate of scale insects which are hard to detect. It is advisable not to use them at all. Dates from Eretz Yisroel may sometimes have scales (that are more noticable) on the outer peel. It is advisable to check each one for scales.

Figs

Fresh: If the indentation on the bottom of the fig is open, discard that fig. If the indentation is closed, cut off the stem on top, trim off the indentation on the bottom, and cut the fig in half. Each half should be inverted, (to resemble a yarmulka), and thoroughly inspected. If any worms

- (maggots) or black specks are seen, the fruit should be discarded. The worms may be very similar to the color of the fig.
- Some experience identifying these insects is necessary for this inspection to be effective. The outer peel of figs is infested with mites that don't come off even after soaking in soapy water and rubbing under a stream of water, and should not be eaten. One should either peel off the outer skin or scoop out the inner part with a spoon.
- Homegrown figs are even more prone to infestation, and should be avoided.
- Dried:** Dried figs are highly infested and the process of inspection is very difficult. Only someone who has experience checking figs should attempt such an inspection. One who is not an expert may eat dried figs only in the following manner:
- Scrape out and discard ALL inner seeds.
 - Cut out the hole at the bottom of the fig.
 - Wash the remainder of the fig (the skin) on both sides while rubbing it to remove any residue.

Fish Heads

White fish: White fish heads are free of concern.

Salmon/Baby salmon: Salmon heads [even farm raised] are commonly infested with salmon lice (small brownish parasites ranging in size from approximately 1-3 cm).

- The entire gills must be removed. (It may be easier to first cut the head in half before cleaning).

- Rinse the head thoroughly with water while rubbing all surfaces (inside and outside), including all cracks, crevices and folds, and under and around the tongue. Inspect the head to make sure it is clean.
- If someone wants to avoid the checking process, they may just rinse the head and cook it in a separate pot, take a small piece from the flesh of the head, and visually inspect it before eating to make sure there is no foreign object on it.
- Carp:** Carp heads may be infested with very small transparent insects called Argulus that are very hard to detect. There is no known method to clean infested carp heads properly, and they should not be used unless checked by an expert.

Leek

Leek is usually infested with thrips. Thrips in leek are camouflaged and difficult to detect. Although older thrips are usually black or brown, young thrips can be white, yellow, or light green, identical to the color of leek. The young thrips are found in every part of the

- leek. Leaf miners can also be found in the dark green part of the leek.
- Cut off and discard the upper green leafy part [see picture].
 - Cut off the very bottom part of the leek with the roots.
 - Discard the outer layer.
 - Cut the rest of the leek in half (lengthwise), separate the layers, and remove the loose thin plastic-like skin between the layers (since that's where the thrips tend to hide).
 - Place the leek in a bowl of soap water for a few minutes. (The water should contain enough liquid soap for the water to feel slippery). Agitate the leek a few times while soaking. The bowl should not hold too many leek at a time, so that the water can reach all parts of the leek. Make sure that all the leek is immersed in the water. (A plate or weight can be placed on top of the bowl to help keep all the leek below the surface of the water).
 - Rinse both sides of each layer under a strong stream of water while rubbing it. (Rubbing dislodges the grip of the thrips, and the strong stream of water rinses them off).



Pomegranates

Pomegranates sold commercially are generally free of infestation. If there is a hole on the outside (similar to a round drill hole), one should cut open the fruit and follow the hole to ensure that there are no worms. Any inner part that is decayed should be discarded. Dark/brownish areas inside the fruit are not a sign of infestation.

Spinach

Spinach is usually highly infested and difficult to check. It is recommended to use only fresh baby spinach leaves, and only leaves that are smooth and don't have deep folds.

- Check the leaves against a light (or on a light box) for leaf-miners. Discard any leaves that have signs of leaf-miners.
- Soak in soapy water for a few minutes. Agitate a few times while soaking.
- Place leaves on a flat surface and rub each leaf well with a soapy sponge. Make sure to reach all dents and crevices.
- Rinse each leaf very well under a stream of water. Make sure the water stream reaches all dents and crevices.

Honeycomb

In recent years, honeycomb has become a more popular item. Honeycomb is prone to infestation which requires special expertise to check. Therefore it should be used only if the production was overseen by a hechsher that specializes in bedikas tolaim.

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ומצינו עוד בדברי הפוסקים, שבדברים שקשה לבדוקם וחושש בהם משום תולעים עדיף לא לאוכלם כלל, וכ"כ בספר אחרות רבינו [ח"ב עמ' קעד אות ז'] שהסתייפלע רצ"ל לא אכל רוביא משום שצריך בדיקה מתולעים. ובאופן זה אפשר לקיים ה"סימן" ע"י ראייה לבד, וכמ"ש הבן איש חי [שנה שניה פרשת נשא, אות ח, בא"ד] בענין מין ירק שקשה לבדוק 'ירק בראש השנה יבואו אותו על השלחן לראותו בלבד בשביל הבקשה שבהם', עכ"ל. וכן מבואר בכף החיים [סי' תקפ"ג סק"ו] שהביא הגריסא בגמ' הוריות [יב]. יחא רגיל למחז' במקום למיכל, ושכן הוא בערוך ובכלבו ובב"י, וכתב וז"ל, ונפק"מ במי שאינו יכול לאכול, או שחושש באיזה מין משום תולעים, די בראיה אחד, עכ"ל.

כתב הג"ר חיים פלאג'י זצ"ל בספרו מועד לכל חי [סי' יב, אות כ] על האוכלים דגים שיש בהם תולעים בלי בדיקה בליל ר"ה, וז"ל, 'ומה גם בליל ר"ה דבאים לומר על הדגים שירבו זכיותינו כדגים דנהפוך הוא להרבות את העונות ור"ל'. וכיו"ב כתב עוד בספרו כף החיים [סי' כד אות לג] בענין מין מסויים שיש בו תולעים, 'דאין זה סימנה טבא אדרבה סימן רע כיון דאיכא למיחש לתולעים', עכ"ל.