Do I Have to Cover That?
Coffee Machines and Microwaves at Work

SECTION #1 - COFFEE

I. Utensils Used to Brew the Coffee

1. Would it be permitted to use certain utensils to make coffee?

2. Would it be permitted to use certain utensils to make coffee?

3. Would it be permitted to use certain utensils to make coffee?

II. Coffee Machines

4. Knowing Your Beans: The Kashrus of Coffee, Rabbi Boruch Beyer, Star-K Kashrus Administrator (Star-k.org)

Can you or can't you buy coffee from a vending machine? In a perfect world the machine would only vend black coffee and there would be no kashrus concerns. In the real world however, things are not so simple. Most machines vend several types of coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and even soup. In the older machines where many items were served through the same nozzle it was fairly clear that you could not purchase coffee from such a machine. The modern machines however are computer controlled and are very advanced. One of the big improvements is that each item has its own tubes and serving nozzels. Unfortunately, though, unless you know that this particular type of machine has separate mechanisms throughout, you cannot be certain that the items are not mixing or being dispensed from the same nozzle as a non-kosher item. Therefore, it is not recommended that you purchase any beverage from a hot drink machine without intimate knowledge of how the machine operates.

5. LO BASI ELLA L’ORER – KEURIG COFFEE MAKERS (OUKOSHER.ORG)

Can the Keurig machine be kashered?
The Keurig machine is mostly made of plastic. While there are differing opinions as to whether plastic can be kashered for Pesach (B’makom tzorech the OU is lenient), the
prevailing opinion is that for year round use one may kasher plastic. Therefore, if one purchased a used Keurig machine, they may kasher it by cleaning out the cup holder making sure it has not been used in 24 hours and then kashering by running hot water through the system.

In an office environment where it is not possible to idle the Keurig for 24 hours (i.e. the machine is used every day by co-workers with potentially non-kosher or dairy K-cups), one may be lenient to kasher the Keurig machine without waiting 24 hours. One should wipe out the cup holder all around (inside and underneath) with damp paper towels and then run hot water through the machine so that it touches all surfaces. I found that by ripping out the bottom of a Styrofoam cup and placing it over the bottom of the cup holder will cause the holder to fill with hot water. Kashering with irui is acceptable since the Keurig machine works through irui. The few ounces of hot coffee that run through these pipes do not qualify as an extended irui. In industrial settings we view the flow of product through the pipes as a continuation of the kli rishon, because the irui of hundreds of gallons of water for an extended period of time saturate the walls of the pipes such that they are no difanos mikareros. This obviously does not take place in a Keurig machine. Therefore, any non-kosher bliyos would not penetrate further than a k’dei klipa of the piping. By running a cup of hot water through the pipes there will definitely be more than shishim k’neged this k’dei klipa. Although Rema (O.C. 452:2 as explained by Pri Migadim) writes that the minhag is not to kasher ben yomo kailim even if one will have shishim, in a shas ha’dchak, one may be maik.

### III. Restaurants vs. Rest Stops

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It is not possible to make one universal statement about the kashrus of coffee prepared in a non-certified restaurant because each establishment is unique. Investigation has shown that theoretically, coffee served in a restaurant may be kosher even if the equipment used to prepare the coffee is washed in a sink together with other non-kosher items. However, there are numerous variables which impact the halachic status, such as the introduction of soap, the temperature of the water, the method of washing (kli rishon versus kli shaini) etc. Due to the uncertainty and ambiguity of each situation, as a general rule, the OU does not recommend the consumption of coffee prepared in a non-kosher restaurant.
7. COFFEE AT CONVENIENCE STORES, REST STOPS, AND KIOSKS
(OUKOSHER.ORG)

Can I drink coffee while on the road?

In contrast to the response given regarding coffee prepared in a non-certified restaurant, it would be permissible to purchase a cup of coffee from a convenience store, rest stop or kiosk. This is due to the fact that the kashrus concerns noted for the restaurants are not applicable to an establishment that does not make its own food or use industrial cleaning devices which tend to reach very high temperatures.

SECTION #2 – MICROWAVES

I. ריחא - Aroma

II. זיעא - Steam
III. What should we do halachah l' minim?

5. Star-k.org

Microwaving in the Workplace, Rabbi Tzvi Rosen, Star-K Kashrus Administrator; Editor, Kashrus Kurrents

Q. How can one use a regular microwave?
A. Since the chamber of a regular microwave does not get hot, food can be warmed uncovered if the following criteria are met:

1. The microwave - the ceiling, floor, and door and walls are completely clean of food particles, spills or residue.

2. No non kosher food is being microwaved in the microwave at the same time.

3. The floor or turntable is covered or the food is placed on a thick plate.

6. CRCWEB.ORG

Q: Is it permissible to cook kosher microwave popcorn (sold in a bag) in microwave oven that has not been kasherized?
A: Yes, you can use the non-kosher microwave for a bag of kosher popcorn and the only caveats are that (a) the microwave must be relatively clean of all residue and (b) if the bag rips open in the microwave, that whole batch of popcorn will not be kosher.