

Q&A from the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

Meal Prep

HaRav Shraga Kallus

October 16, 2024

Q Is all food preparation permitted on Yom Tov?



A Generally, *melacha* for *ochel nefesh* is permitted on Yom Tov, but there are exceptions; here are several of them:

One may not prepare food for the next day. For example, if you will need ten pieces of chicken at most for today, you may not make fifteen—unless you are cooking in a single pot, in which case no additional *tircha* (bother) is required. Even activities that do not involve *melacha* may not be done for the next day. But many *poskim* allow food to be removed from the freezer on the first day of Yom Tov in order that it be thawed by the second (see Mishnah Brurah 667).

Melechess ochel nefesh is permitted only if it's *shaveh lechol nefesh* (of equal benefit to all); any *melacha* from which most people would not benefit is forbidden. The Pnei Yehoshua wrote two hundred years ago that smoking is *shaveh lechol nefesh*. Today, the practice is much less common, making it difficult to consider it *shaveh lechol nefesh*, even if smoking could be permitted generally.

The Magein Avraham and Mishnah Brurah say one should ideally not lower a flame on Yom Tov, because this is not a positive need. Rather, if a dish requires less heat, make another flame (by transferring an existing one). But R' Moshe Feinstein maintains that lowering the flame is preferred.