

IKAR V'TOFEL CHART

בס"ד

First determine: Is this an Ikar V'tofel combination?
There are 4 types of Ikar V'tofel combinations:

1 Both foods come up in 1 spoonful or forkful¹

Ex. Cholent containing meat, barley, and small² potatoes; Fruit cups (with small pieces); Meatballs mashed³ with spaghetti; Chicken stir-fry (with small pieces)



2 One of the foods is there ONLY to enhance the other

Ex. Potato with sour cream; Salad with dressing



3 You are eating the tafel food ONLY⁴ to get rid of the salty or spicy taste from the ikar food

Ex. Bland crackers eaten ONLY to get rid of the taste of very salty herring



4 Bread will cover any meal-type⁵ foods eaten within the same meal



Ex. Hamotzi on challah will cover chicken, salad, and kugel eaten later in the same meal

If you do indeed have an ikar v'tofel combination, next determine: Which food is the ikar? Which bracha should I say?⁶

1

FIRST ASK: Is there MEZONOS⁷ in the mixture?

*If yes, see the blue box on the bottom.
 If not, move down to Box #2.*

2

Which food are you MAINLY interested in eating?

Ex. Salad is the ikar, dressing is the tafel, so say **Ha'adamah**.

French fries are the ikar, ketchup is the tafel, so say **Ha'adamah**.

Peanut chew (if you are mainly interested in the peanut, say **Ha'adamah**. If the chocolate, say **Shehakol**.)

ONLY if you are interested in all parts equally, move on to the next box.

3

Which food is the MAJORITY?^{8,9}

Note: All foods of the same bracha are on the same "team."

Ex. Fruit cocktail (assuming that you are interested in eating all fruits equally) - If 70% of the mixture is Ha'eitz foods (apples, peaches, etc.) and 30% is pineapple then say **Ha'eitz**.

ONLY if there is no clear majority, move on to the next box.

4

Is there 1 bracha that can COVER¹⁰ all the foods?^{11,12}

Ex. Fruit cocktail (assuming you are equally interested in all fruits, and there is no clear majority) say **Ha'adamah** because it covers both the pineapple and the Ha'eitz fruits.

Ex. Peanut chew (assuming you want both the peanut and the chocolate) say **Shehakol** because it covers both.

THE END!

Mezonos (not including rice) is ALWAYS the ikar,^{13,14} UNLESS:

EXCEPTION #1:

If the Mezonos is there ONLY to hold the food together (not for taste¹⁵).

Ex. Gefilte fish made with matza meal is **Shehakol**.
 Ice cream in a tasteless cone is just **Shehakol**.

EXCEPTION #2:

If the Mezonos coating is very THIN

Ex. Schnitzel with a very thin¹⁶ coating, or fish sticks with a very thin coating are **Shehakol**.

EXCEPTION #3:

If the Mezonos is a LIQUID

Ex. Beer is made with barley, but since beer is a liquid, it is **Shehakol**.



NOTE A:

Mezonos cannot cover liquids.

Therefore, if you eat a Mezonos ikar food together with a liquid tafel food,^{17,18} you must say 2 brachos: **Mezonos** and **Shehakol**¹⁹
 Ex. Noodle soup,²⁰ Mushroom-barley soup.

NOTE B:

If it doesn't make sense to call the Mezonos food the ikar, then say 2 brachos.

First say Mezonos and eat some of the Mezonos food, then say the other bracha on the other food.

Ex. Salad with croutons. It doesn't make sense to call the croutons the ikar, so say **Mezonos** on the croutons, then **Ha'adamah** on the salad. Similarly: Chicken soup with just a few noodles; Ice cream in a cone (that has a good taste); Ice cream with a Mezonos topping; Ice cream sandwich; Cookies 'n cream ice cream... for all these, you would say both **Mezonos** and **Shehakol**.

FOOTNOTES:

1. This refers to a natural, subconscious spoonful/forkful - not the type where you are intentionally trying to separate one food from the rest.
2. If the potato pieces are large and you can pick them up by themselves (even if some barley is stuck on) then the potatoes require their own bracha of Ha'adamah, and the rest of the cholent (barley, meat, beans) will be covered with just 1 bracha (Mezonos). Similarly, if the pieces of meat are very large, they require their own bracha (Shehakol).
3. But if there is a plate of spaghetti with meatballs plopped separately on top, this is not an ikar v'tofel combination and would require 2 brachos (Mezonos and Shehakol).
4. In order to rely on this, one must be 100% sure that he is only eating the tafel food for the purpose of getting rid of the taste of the ikar food. Usually this is not the case. For example, if you eat crackers with herring, usually you like the taste of the crackers as well, unless they are completely bland and tasteless.
5. There are some foods that you might eat after bread which are not meal-type foods and are therefore not covered by the Hamotzi. For example, certain fruits or desserts may not be covered by the Hamotzi made on bread.
6. The reason why we do not say a bracha on the tafel food is not that it is so unimportant that it does not require a bracha at all. Every food we eat required a bracha. Rather, the reason is that the bracha we make on the ikar food covers the tafel food as well. For this reason, foods that were added to the ikar-tofel combination after you made the bracha will not be covered by your original bracha. For example, if you say Ha'adamah on a salad, start eating it, and then a few minutes later decide to add olives or nuts, the original bracha you made on the salad will not cover those new olives or nuts. You will need to say a new bracha on them. (This would not apply if you had the olives or nuts in mind when you originally said Ha'adamah on the salad, or if it is normal for you to add olives or nuts to your salad. In this case, the olives or nuts would not require a new bracha. Similarly, if you start eating french fries and a few minutes later add ketchup - and it is normal for you to eat your french fries with ketchup - then the ketchup does not require a new bracha.)
7. In this context, "Mezonos" refers to foods produced from the 5 grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, oats) - not rice.
8. It has to be a substantial majority, like 60%/40%, not like 51%/49%.
9. In a case where 1 food is present more than the other foods - but is still less than 50% of the total mixture, it is a machlokes what to do, so try to avoid this situation. For example, if you have stuffed cabbage containing 40% meat, 30% cabbage, and 30% rice, it is a machlokes whether meat is considered the majority or not.
10. Shehakol covers everything. Ha'adamah covers Ha'eitz (since trees grow from the ground).
11. It is preferable not to rely on this, so ideally one should try to add more to the mixture in order to make a clear majority.
12. In some situations, it is impossible to figure out which bracha is best. For example, sushi (assuming that you are equally interested in the rice, fish, and seaweed, and there is no clear majority) - there is no way to know if it would be better to say Shehakol or Mezonos, because either bracha could cover all 3 parts of the sushi. Similarly, Crispix cereal is half rice and half corn. Mezonos could cover the corn, but Ha'adamah could also cover the rice because some say that rice is Ha'adamah. In the case of Crispix, one can add a handful of cheerios to the bowl to make a clear majority of Mezonos.
13. Mezonos is always the ikar, even if it is the minority, and even if you like the other part of the food better.
14. Even though Mezonos is always the ikar, it is not necessarily the case that one must always say Al HaMichya after eating an ikar-vitofel combination that contains Mezonos. For example, if you eat a slice of cherry pie that is larger than a kezayis but does not contain a full kezayis of Mezonos, then you should say borei nefashos.
15. The following are examples of food combinations which require a Mezonos since the Mezonos is indeed added for taste: Onion rings coated in a flour mixture, potato knish, blintz, ice cream in a cone that has taste.
16. Shnitzel or fish sticks made with a thick coating would be mezonos.
17. Cereal with milk does not fall into this category because the milk is considered an "extreme tafel" to the cereal. Therefore, you can say just Mezonos to cover both the cereal and the milk. However, if you are very thirsty and are interested in the milk as well to quench your thirst, the cereal and milk would require 2 brachos (Mezonos and Shehakol)
18. If the liquid is absorbed in the Mezonos - for example, a cookie dipped in milk - it's a machlokes so try to avoid it. First make Mezonos on the cookie, then Shehakol on the milk, then you can dip the cookie into the milk.
19. The halacha is actually unclear in this situation about what to do. Therefore, it is best to do one of the following. Either: (a) Say Shehakol first on the liquid (eg. soup) and then Mezonos on the ikar (eg. noodles); or (b) Say Mezonos on the ikar (eg. noodles) and then Shehakol on a different food like a chocolate chip, to cover the liquid as well.
20. This refers to soup that was made to have noodles as the ikar. However, if you have regular chicken soup and you just drop in a few noodles or croutons, see NOTE B in the next box.