Regular Matsa vs. Matsa Shemura

The Matsa is a special bread made of a flat dough. The dough is prepared exclusively with flour and water and without yeast. The flour usually comes from wheat, but technically, the Matsa could also be made from barley, oats, rye or spelt flour. The most sensitive issue in the preparation of the Matsa is time. To avoid the fermentation of the dough, the entire process of processing from the moment the flour is brought into contact with the water until the Matsa is removed from the oven, takes less than 18 minutes.

There are different types of Matzot. For example, we have regular Matsa and Matsa Shemura. The difference between these two Matzot has to do with the level of supervision (shemira). Specifically, from what point of the elaboration process the supervision begins.

REGULAR MATSA

Supervision of the normal Matsa begins from the moment the flour is produced. To ensure, for example, that the flour is kept in a dry place because moisture causes the flour to be fermented and turn into Chamets . In addition, it must be verified that the water to be used to make the dough is at room temperature level, because if the water is warmer, for example, it would accelerate the fermentation process. Once the dough is made for the Matsa, it cannot be left to rest. Any piece of dough that has been left unattended for over 18 minutes is Hamets, and if that piece of dough gets mixed with the dough for the next Matsot, it might affect the Kashrut of all of Matsot’s production! After a batch of Matsot is produced, and before producing the next batch, the machines are thoroughly inspected and cleaned. These are some examples of the supervision to which regular Matsa production is

subjected.

MATSA SHEMURA

In addition to observing the same rules for the supervision of the regular Matsa, in the elaboration of the Matsa Shemura supervision begins from the time the grains of wheat are harvested in the fields. The grains, which are harvested when they are still fresh, are examined carefully to ensure, for example, that there are no broken grains, something that would lead to premature fermentation. The supervision includes also making sure that there are no sprouted grains, which would also accelerate the fermentation process. In the case of Matsa Shemura the grain is selected and monitored when is harvested, at the time of transportation and when is finally stored, to ensure that it is safe from moisture. All this additional supervision implies more labor, and that is why the Matsa Shemura is substantially more expensive than the regular Matsa.

Obviously, both the regular Matsa and the Matsa Shemura, are Kasher for Pesach. However, the Halakha indicates that we have to use of Matsa Shemura during the first two nights of Pesach (in Israel, only the first night), when we say the Berakha al akhilat Matsa. Why? Because during the two nights of the Seder eating Matsa is a Mitzvah. As it is written in the Tora (Exodus 12:17) □□□□□ □□ □□□□□□, *"and you should watch (= strictly supervise) the Matzot."* During the other days of Pesach, there is no obligation to consume Matsa Shemura, because during the rest of Pesach there is no formal commandment to eat Matsa, only to refrain from eating Chametz.