

Cooking in Dormitories

Can I cook on *Yom Tov*?

Absolutely! One of the major distinctions between *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* is that on *Yom Tov*, the *Halacha* permits the performance of *melachot* which are necessary for the preparation of food. Included in this is cooking, whether it be on a stovetop or in an oven. Fresh food may thus be prepared for a *Yom Tov* meal. However, it is still forbidden to start a new flame on *Yom Tov*.

How can I cook on *Yom Tov* if I can't start a fire?

In many Jewish homes, it is a common practice to leave the oven and one (or more) of the burners on throughout the entire *Yom Tov*. Once the oven/flame is on, one is permitted to adjust it as needed for the cooking/heating process. For obvious safety reasons, however, the University of Pennsylvania does not allow the dormitory ovens or burners to be left on unattended for any period of time.

How can I cook in my dorm over *Yom Tov*?

It is extremely important for many reasons that we all follow the University's regulations concerning this matter. In this circumstance, **one is permitted to ask a non-Jew to turn on one's oven or burners when needed for cooking**. The reason for this is that the prohibition against starting a fire on *Yom Tov* is rabbinic in nature. The prohibition against asking a non-Jew to do something forbidden to a Jew on *Yom Tov* is also rabbinic in nature. Two rabbinic prohibitions together are classified as a "*shevut deshevut*" which is permitted *bemakom mitzvah* (when done for the purpose of a *mitzvah*) like cooking for a *Yom Tov* meal.¹ Please keep in mind that this ruling applies on *Yom Tov* only; creating a fire on *Shabbat* is prohibited by the Torah and the leniency thus does not apply.

Who should I ask?

In order to accommodate our *Yom Tov* needs, **Rodin has hired an extra staff member to be on duty in the lobby who will be available for turning your oven on as needed**. Once the oven is on, you may adjust the temperature as necessary for the cooking/heating process. When you are finished, simply inform this person that you no longer need anything on and he/she will turn everything off. One is allowed to ask the Rodin staff member to shut off the flame because, while there is obviously no *mitzvah* associated with extinguishing the flame (which is prohibited on *Yom Tov*), the Rodin staff member will not be doing it for you, but rather in compliance with the University's policy.

How should I ask?

It is better to **avoid directly instructing** the Rodin staff member to do anything; simply inform him/her that you are ready to cook or that you are finished.

What can I cook?

It must be stressed that **one may prepare food on *Yom Tov* only if it will be eaten on the same day of *Yom Tov* on which it is being prepared** (this applies even if no actual *melacha* is being done). It is thus forbidden to prepare food for the second day of *Yom Tov* on the first day. One may eat (and heat up) first day leftovers on the second day as long as one did not intentionally prepare the food on the first day with that in mind.

Regarding preparation on *Yom Tov* for *Shabbat* which follows immediately, please see other sheet. Please feel free to speak to me with any questions.

¹ The *pesak* regarding this specific case is endorsed by Rabbi Hershel Schachter of Yeshiva University, and can also be found in Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen, *The Laws of Yom Tov* (ArtScroll 1997), pp. 97-98.