

## ***Fasting Rules***

### ***Animal Products***

**U**nless otherwise indicated, the Orthodox do not eat animal products of any sort on a fast day. This includes parts of any mammal or bird (beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, etc.), or fish. In addition, animal byproducts are also avoided (such as lard, eggs, cheese, milk, etc.).

**T**he reasons for this are clear from the background information presented above. Note that it was not until after the time of the Great Flood in the time of Noah that God gave man animals for food: “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.” (*Genesis 9:3*)

**N**on-dairy substitutes (e.g., margarine and coffee creamer) and meat substitutes (e.g., soy burgers) that are totally vegetarian in character may be allowed on a fast day. They do not violate the “spirit” of the fast if they are totally free of animal products. One should, however, avoid unhealthy or rich-tasting – rather than natural – substitutes.

### ***Olive Oil***

**O**live oil is avoided on fast days also. Why olive oil and not all oil? The answer is simple.

**O**live oil is avoided for the simple reason that a dove brought an olive branch back to the Ark of Noah to indicate God’s mercy on the world after the Flood. On fasting days, we set aside olive oil in anticipation of God’s sign of mercy.

**O**ther vegetable oils may be substituted for olive oil on a fast day, although again this should be done in moderation so that they are not used in an unhealthy or frivolous manner.

### ***Wine***

**W**ine is also avoided on fast days, as also is hard liquor.

**T**he reasons for abstaining from wine is, in part, because it was given to man as a sign of God’s mercy: “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, to bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine makes the heart of man glad. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengthens man’s heart.” (*Psalms 103:14-15*)

### ***Exceptions for Olive Oil and Wine on Feast Days***

**O**live oil and wine may be allowed on certain feast days if the feast falls on a fast day or during the fasting periods.

### ***Fish***

**F**ish is generally avoided on fast days, since these may be considered with the animals as being outside the foods given in the Garden of Eden. The Orthodox normally consider as “fish” those with backbones (trout, catfish, bass, salmon, etc.).

**S**hellfish (shrimp, crab, lobster, clams, etc.), however, as well as reptiles (e.g., turtle) and amphibians (e.g., frog legs) may be allowed on a fast day. Fish may be allowed on certain feast days if the feast falls on a fast day or during the fasting periods.