

# Keeping it Kosher

## Current landscape: An international powerhouse

The Kosher market is growing, and it's not just observant Jews who are driving this growth. As far back as 2016, market research firm Mintel found that "85% of the 11.2 million people who consciously sought out Kosher products did so for reasons other than religious beliefs." And that market just keeps growing. According to BBC business reporter Dave Gordon, "Led by growing demand in the US, the global Kosher food market is predicted to increase to almost \$60bn (±R876bn) of annual sales in 2025, up from \$24bn (±R350bn) in 2017. Given those vast figures, it is not surprising that a growing number of food businesses around the globe are seeking Kosher accreditation."

## South Africa follows global Kosher trends

Rabbi Dovi Goldstein of Kosher SA (UOS) says, "Over the last five years more than 200 new companies have become Kosher certified."

With increasing interest in Kosher foods from consumers, becoming Kosher certified makes good business sense, even for producers and retailers outside of traditionally Jewish areas. Rabbi Goldstein says, "We have made it as simple as possible. As long as brands have their compliance in order and buy their raw ingredients from Kosher certified companies, becoming Kosher certified is really straightforward. We also assist



companies with sourcing raw ingredients that are Kosher certified. We have created a tiered pricing structure to make it easier for smaller and start-up companies to enter the Kosher market."

## Factors driving market growth

**Tradition.** The Spruce Eats lists ten reasons for keeping Kosher, and tradition is top of the list. If you grew up in an observant household, you kept. People tend to stick to what they know, and keeping Kosher is no different. Keeping Kosher also

means that Kosher friends and family can eat in your home, so many non-observant families keep Kosher as a form of family bonding.

**Trust.** Trust is paramount, and consumers know that when it comes to the Kosher SA diamond, what's on the label is what's inside the packaging. Kashrut, the set of laws that governs Kosher food production, is very particular. In South Africa, the Kosher SA team keeps constant supervision over the production of Kosher foodstuffs. It is this close monitoring that drives non-Jewish consumers –

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whose religious, cultural, or dietary requirements overlap with those of Kosher requirements – to buy Kosher foods. Halaal and Seventh Day Adventist Christians both avoid pork, and they know that Kosher products will contain no trace of pork whatsoever. Lactose intolerant consumers and those that are allergic to dairy proteins also trust the Kosher SA diamond, as no meat products may contain dairy. Vegetarians are similarly guided by Kosher certification, as *parev* or 'neutral' foods are free of both dairy and milk. For lacto-vegetarians, they can be sure that any Kosher dairy products they buy are completely free of any meat, and that absolutely no cross-contamination has taken place.

**Faith.** At the heart of the Kosher market is, of course, the Jewish faith. The religious mandate for observant and orthodox Jews to keep Kosher means that these consumers remain loyal and will not be swayed by new products, or even special offers, on non-Kosher foods. For peace of mind, Kosher SA maintains an up-to-date website listing of Kosher-certified brands and products (<http://www.uos.co.za/kashrut/searchProductAll.asp>). They also offer a responsive WhatsApp helpline (063 693 9417) to assist consumers. It's good news for small businesses too, as Kosher SA certifies many small and niche brands in addition to well-known national and international brands.



**Buyer knows best**

As health- and quality-conscious consumers become more educated, and as the move towards ethical consumption grows, the need for transparency and accountability in the food production, preparation, and retail space increases, and Kosher certification provides this. It's fair to say that the question is no longer whether retailers can afford to offer Kosher products but rather, can they afford not to?

**Ethics.** The Torah forbids causing suffering to any living creature, and this means at times of ritual slaughter, too. For meat eaters with a conscience, this means Kosher meats can be considered to have been slaughtered as humanely as possible.

**Sources:**  
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[www.thespruceeats.com](http://www.thespruceeats.com)

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