

Breakfast Brachos

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Breakfast is said to be the most important meal of the day. Just as one should make an effort to start the day off right with a nutritious meal, likewise, one should be careful to begin the day by making the correct berachos.

PANCAKES

If one eats a pancake as a snack, the proper berachos are mezonos prior to the eating and al hamichya afterwards. If one eats enough pancakes to qualify as a meal (the amount of food that the average person would eat for a regular meal, according to some poskim the food must equal the volume of four eggs) then the berachos would depend on how the pancakes were made.

Baked: (For halachik purposes, a food is considered baked if it was made in a pan with no oil, or a small amount of oil – just enough to prevent scorching) If the pancakes were baked they are considered to be pas habah b'kisin (part of the bread family). The rule of pas habah b'kisin is that if one eats a shiur k'veyas seuda (the amount of food eaten in a normal meal) he must wash, recite hamotzi, and bentch. It is important to note that only pancakes made with additional ingredients such as milk will have a status of pas habah b'kisin. Pancakes that are baked but made up of flour and water will be hamotzi even when eating a small amount.

Deep Fried: A batter that was cooked (submerged in a liquid) does not have the status of pas habah b'kisin. Based on this rule, if the pancakes are deep fried the berachos would be

mezonos and al hamichya even if one ate a shiur k'veyas seuda.

Fried: Pancakes fried in oil (less than the amount of oil used for deep frying, but more oil than the amount used to merely prevent scorching) will be subject to a dispute amongst rishonim whether frying falls into the category of cooking or baking. Therefore, if one eats a meal's worth of such pancakes he should wash and recite the beracha of hamotzi on a piece of bread.

PASTRIES AND DOUGHNUTS

If one eats enough pastries to qualify as a meal he must wash and bentch. However, the halacha with regards to doughnuts is different. Doughnuts start out as dough but, unlike pastries, they are then deep-fried which is viewed by halacha as cooking. Most rishonim are of the opinion that if dough is cooked it is not considered pas habah b'kisin. Therefore, according to these rishonim, a doughnut is not considered to be pas habah b'kisin. Accordingly, the beracha would always be mezonos and al hamichya even if one ate a shiur k'veyas seuda. In contrast, Rabbeinu Tam holds that cooked dough (unlike a cooked batter such as deep-fried pancakes) is considered bread. According to Rabbeinu Tam a doughnut would qualify as pas habah b'kisin. One who is a scrupulous person should avoid this sheilah and only eat a meal's worth of doughnuts after washing on a piece of bread. (Otherwise, one should make a mezonos and al hamichya.)

FRENCH TOAST

The halacha is that a piece of bread that is cooked in water still retains its status of hamotzi. If the pieces of bread are less than a kzayis, though, they lose their status as bread and the beracha becomes mezonos (even if one eats a shiur k'veyas seuda). (The Mishna Berura is uncertain whether it loses its status of bread even if it was cut up into small pieces after it was cooked, or only if it was cut up before it was cooked.) With regard to french

toast, the pieces of bread are usually greater than the size of a kzayis and will therefore retain their status of hamotzi even if they were deep-fried (which for halacha purposes is viewed as cooked). Even if one cuts a piece of (deep-fried) french toast (into a piece smaller than a kzayis) before putting it into his mouth, the beracha is still hamotzi as this is considered “derech achila” (part of the eating process). – [Chazon Ish 26:5]. Ordinary frying (less oil than used in deep frying, but more than is used to prevent scorching) on pieces of french toast that are less than a kzayis would be dependent on the dispute of the rishonim if frying is viewed as cooking or baking. In this situation one should avoid the sheilah and make hamotzi on a piece of bread. (If one cuts up a piece of fried french toast into smaller pieces before serving it he should ask a sheilah, - see Shaarei Beracha ch. 16 note 86.)

CEREAL AND MILK

The general rule is that a cereal that contains flour from one of the five grains (wheat, rye, spelt, oats, and barley) requires a mezonos. (If the cereal is pas habah b’kisnin and one eats a shiur k’vevas seuda of it he must recite hamotzi and bentch. Some poskim have ruled that Cheerios qualify for pas habah b’kisnin. Dayan Fuerst shlita points out that in fact Cheerios are first cooked to an edible state and then heated up only to dehydrate. As such, they are considered a cooked item and not baked and therefore the beracha will always be mezonos.) However, if the flour is not there for the purpose of enhancing the flavor of the cereal and is only added to cause the other ingredients to stick together, the beracha is then determined by the ingredient that is the majority. For example, if the majority ingredient is milled corn kernels (ex: Kellogg’s Corn Flakes) then the beracha would be haodama. If the corn was made into flour first, then the beracha would be shehakol. B’dieved if one made an haodama on a cereal whose main ingredient is corn flour he has fulfilled his obligation (O.C. Rema 202:7) When there are two primary ingredients that are both equal such as in Crispix (there are equal amounts of corn on one side, and rice on the other), one should make a mezonos on the rice side followed by an haodama on the corn side. (See Laws of Brachos

by R’ Binyamin Forst who holds that one makes a shehakol in this situation).

In most situations one should not make a beracha on the milk in one’s cereal bowl (even the little bit of milk that is left over after the cereal is finished). The reason is as follows: When one eats two foods together, if one of the foods is only there to be melafes (enhance) the flavor of the other food, there is no beracha recited on the food that is the melafes. (An exception to this is if the melafes (enhancer) is made from flour of the five grains in which case two berachos are required.) Generally, milk is added to cereal to enhance the cereal and no beracha should be recited on the milk. In an unusual situation, where one primarily wants the milk (ex: he is on a high calcium diet) and adds the cereal merely to enhance the flavor of the milk which he does not enjoy plain, one would only make a shehakol on the milk. If, in the above case, the cereal contains flour from the five grains then two berachos are required - a mezonos on the cereal and a shehakol on the milk.

If one wants both the cereal and the milk equally, whether or not two berachos are required is dependent on whether we view the cereal and milk as one food or two foods. Some poskim (V’zos Habracha in birur halacha 42-4) hold that in a bowl of cereal and milk since each spoonful contains some cereal and milk we view this mixture as “one food.” The rule of “one food” is that when both foods are equally desired and if one of the ingredients is flour from the five grains, then only a mezonos is recited. If flour from the five grains is not an ingredient, then a beracha is made on the ingredient that is the majority. Other poskim disagree and hold that solid foods mixed with liquids, as is the case with cereal and milk, are not considered to be one food. Therefore, if both the cereal and milk are equally desired, two berachos are to be recited - one on the cereal and one on the milk. (See The Laws of Brachos by Rabbi Forst p.224). For a final psak on the above issues one should consult his Rav.



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