

High Holiday APPEAL

Please partner with Chabad.org to help us continue to serve.

622 partners have joined

PLEASE DONATE

[Join Today!](#)

Thank you to: Mr. & Sra. Damian E Ilana Lask - \$18 - In honor of Chain Abrahan Menachem Mendel Acohen ben Zviva Anonymous - \$1



Login Ask the Rabbi Chabad Locator Tools Donate English ב"ה

JEWISH PRACTICE

LEARNING & VALUES

COMMUNITY & FAMILY

INSPIRATION & ENTERTAINMENT

Learning & Values Questions & Answers Yiddish Words Defined

What Does "Treif" Mean?



Treif (also written *trayf*, *treyf* or *traif*) is the Yiddish word that means "unkosher." It is an adaptation of the Hebrew word *treifah*, which describes something that has been mangled or torn asunder. Here's how this word came to mean "unkosher."

Treif in the Torah

In the Bible we read that an animal that has been mauled (*treifah*) is forbidden to be eaten, as all kosher meat and poultry must be killed by way of *shechitah*, kosher slaughter. As the verse says, "Flesh torn (*treifah*) in the field you shall not eat; you shall throw it to the dog[s]."¹

The meat of animals that die of other causes, natural or otherwise, is also forbidden, as we read, "He shall not eat a carcass or anything that was torn (*treifah*)."² Thus, the word *treifah* expanded to include all forbidden dead things.

Questions & Answers

[G d and Us](#)[Jewish Identity](#)[Life & Death](#)[Men & Women](#)[Marriage & Family](#)[The Torah](#)[Mitzvot & Jewish Customs](#)[Kabbalah & The Mystical](#)[Midrash](#)[On The Prophets and Scriptures](#)[Judaism on Medical Ethics](#)[Jewish Ethics & Morality](#)[Moshiach and the Final Redemption](#)[Torah & Science](#)[Miscellaneous](#)[The Court of Jewish Law](#)[Vedibarta Bam](#)[Yiddish Words Defined](#)[Ask "Rabbi Y"](#)

Features

[Ask the Rabbi](#)[Newest Questions](#)

Related Topics

- Yiddish (17)
- Kosher (233)
- Shechitah (28)

The *treifah* net extends even wider. Through carefully analyzing the verses, the sages understand that the flesh of an animal that has not died of its wounds, but is injured or unhealthy to the degree that it would die soon, is forbidden, even if someone performed *shechitah* on it before it dies. Such an animal is also included under the rubric of *treifah*.

The Colloquial "Treif"

In common parlance, anything that is not kosher is also called *treif*. So a mixture of milk and meat can be called *treif*, as is the flesh of a non-kosher species.

Then, moving beyond the confines of food, any action can be informally referred to as *treif*. This mirrors the use of the word "kosher," which literally means "fit," to refer more broadly to anything that is aboveboard or legit.

American Treif

Among some pious European Jews, America was known as *di treifine medineh*, "the *treif* land," because of the assumption that those who moved there would soon abandon traditional Jewish practices. All this was turned on its head one winter day in 1940 when the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, arrived in New York Harbor, having been saved from Nazi-occupied Poland. "*America is nisht andersh*," he declared, "America is no different." He then set about founding a string of Jewish institutions all across the American Northeast and Canada, which eventually gave rise to the thousands of Chabad centers all around the world and the Jewish renaissance they have created.

FOOTNOTES

1. Exodus 22:30.

2. Leviticus 22:8.

© Copyright, all rights reserved. If you enjoyed this article, we encourage you to distribute it further, provided that you comply with Chabad.org's copyright policy.

More in this section

- [What Does "Yarmulke" Mean?](#)
- [What Does "Goniff" Mean?](#)
- [What Does "Meshuga" \("Meshuggah"\) Mean?](#)
- [What Does "Schlep" Mean?](#)
- [What Does "Chazer" Mean?](#)

▪ [Milk and Meat \(33\)](#)

[Subscribe](#)

SUBSCRIBE

Subscribe to Rabbi Y

[More subscription options »](#)



[View All »](#)

You may also be interested in...



Kosher
Eating Jewishly

About Shechita

The Jewish Religious Humane Method of Animal Slaughter for Food



Waiting Between Meat & Dairy

20 Comments



Meat, Dairy and Pareve

The Kosher Kitchen

25 Comments

Start a Discussion



TODAY'S FEATURES



17 Rosh Hashanah Facts Every Jew Should...



Why Is the High Holiday Prayerbook Called a...



Why Wash Hands for Bread?



12 Instances of Shofar-Blowing in Jewish...



18 Empowering Contemplations For

DEPARTMENTS

- Jewish Practice
- Learning & Values
- Inspiration & Entertainment
- Community & Family
- Weekly Magazine

SPECIALTY SITES

- Video - Jewish.tv
- The Jewish Woman
- Jewish News
- Moshiach 101
- Jewish Kids Zone
- Kabbalah Online
- Israel - The Holy Land
- TheRebbe.org

TOOLS & RESOURCES

- Ask the Rabbi
- Jewish Calendar
- Daily Torah Study
- Subscribe
- Search
- Glossary
- RSS

QUICK LINKS

- Jewish Holidays
- Jewish Wedding
- Shabbat
- Kosher
- Parshah
- Jewish Prayer
- Jewish Audio

CHABAD LUBAVITCH

- About Chabad-Lubavitch
- The Rebbe
- The Ohel
- Chabad-Lubavitch News
- Chabad Locator

Subscribe to get our weekly magazine!

SUBSCRIBE



Chabad.org is a division of the Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center - Under the auspices of the Lubavitch World Headquarters in everlasting memory of our founder, Rabbi Yosef Y. Kazen, pioneer of Torah, Judaism and Jewish information on the web



