Introduction to Food Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): The Five Grains

Bread or *Mezonot*: Intended Use

Whether a food made of the *Five Grains* qualifies as bread (*ha'motzi*) or *mezonot* (*borei minei mezonot*) depends on whether the food was intended to be eaten as a meal or as a snack, as follows:

- Bread for a meal: Say *ha'motzi*.
- *Mezonot* (but you will eat a full meal): Say *ha'motzi*.
- A snack (including bread as a snack): Say *borei minei mezonot*.

NOTE Some foods may qualify as either *ha'motzi* or *mezonot* (such as pizza).

NOTE Whether the bread/*mezonot* was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by the food's intended use. "*Mezonot* " rolls on airline flights may still require the blessing of *ha'motzi* if you eat them as part of a meal.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to *mezonot*.

Bread/*Mezonot*: Amount of Five Grains Needed

In a non-bread food containing a mixture of grains, at least 20\% of the main ingredients must be from one of the *Five Grains* in order to require the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) of *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing:*al ha'michya*).
If at least 20\% of a bread's flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say a fore-blessing of *ha'motzi* (and *birkat ha'mazon* afterward if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE If you do not know the actual percent of each grain, such as in cereal, say *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*). But you should try to determine the actual amounts of the grains.

Bread/*Mezonot*: Mixtures with Other Foods

Normally, the fore-blessing for bread (*ha'motzi*), or for other cooked or baked foods made from flour (borei minei *mezonot*), will override the remaining foods in a food mixture.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to *mezonot*.

EXAMPLES Saying HaMotzi over Bread Mixture
Wash and say *ha'motzi* over bread and bread-mixture foods such as French toast, if at least one piece is more than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) in volume.
If no individual piece is at least 1.3 fl. oz., say *borei minei mezonot*.

REASON Being fried changes the French toast's status, even if the total of all of the pieces is more than 1.3 fl. oz.

Saying Borei Minei *Mezonot* over *Mezonot* Mixture

Say borei minei *mezonot* over:

- *Cholent* whose main ingredient is barley;
- Ice cream cone (ice cream + cone)—see "ice cream cone" for further details;
- Pie; and
- Cheesecake with any kind of crust.

NOTE Cheesecakes are sold in bakeries and not in cheese stores, indicating that the *mezonot* part is more important than the cheese part as regards fore- and after-

blessings.

© Copyright 2026 Richard B. Aiken | www.practicalhalacha.com