

### **A solid food item: Is a hot potato on a plate considered a secondary vessel?**

A solid food item is a dry item that maintains its heat independent of the walls of the vessel in which it was heated. When hot liquid is poured from a primary vessel to another vessel, its extensive exposure to the air and to the vessel cause it to cool; therefore, it is considered a secondary vessel. But when transferring a solid item, e.g., a potato, from one vessel to another, its exposure to the air and its contact with the vessel are minimal; therefore, it maintains its heat for an extended period.

In light of that distinction, the authorities disagreed whether transfer of a solid item from one vessel to another alters its status with regard to the prohibition of Cooking. According to the **Maharshah** (*Yam Shel Shlomo*, *Hullin* 7:44) and others, a solid item continues to have the status of a **primary vessel** even when it is in a secondary or a tertiary vessel, while according to the **Rema** (*Yoreh De'at* 105:3) and others, a solid item that was transferred into a secondary vessel is considered a **secondary vessel**, and if it is transferred into a tertiary vessel, it is considered a **tertiary vessel**. According to those who rule **stringently**, the reason a secondary vessel does not cook is that its walls are cold, while the solid item has no walls to cool it. Perhaps it might even be considered as though **it has its own heated walls**. Those who rule **leniently** hold that Cooking applies only when there are walls that preserve the heat, and the **solid item is not considered to have heated walls**.

**The halakha:** The *Mishna Berura* (318:45) rules stringently and considers a hot solid item a **primary vessel**, while **Rav Ovadia Yosef** (*Halikhot Olam* 4:50) rules leniently that one may consider a solid item a **secondary vessel** (pp. 354–356).

### **In what cases may one be lenient with regard to a solid item?**

Since the halakhic status of a solid item is subject to dispute, the authorities ruled leniently in several cases:

1. Food cooked by means of a solid item in a secondary vessel is not prohibited *bediavad* (after the fact).
2. A liquid that cooled: One may be lenient and place it on a solid item. Therefore, it is permitted to place ketchup on meat that is extremely hot.
3. A dry item that can be poured, e.g., rice, is not considered a solid item. The same is true with regard to a solid item with sauce.
4. One does not need to be stringent in the case of slight, incidental contact between a solid item and other food on the plate. Therefore, there is no problem if a vegetable salad touches a hot potato on the plate.
5. It is permitted to sprinkle salt, even if it is uncooked, on a solid item (pp. 357–360).

### **Cooking after cooking: Is it permitted to heat a cooked item?**

From a **mishna** (145b) it is clear that on Shabbat it is not prohibited to cook an item that was already cooked. According to the **Rambam**, **Ramban**, and **Rashba**, and many other *Rishonim*, this *halakha* applies to all types of food. By contrast, the **Rosh** (3:11) understands that according to **Rashi** (34a, s.v. *mishēhashekha*) this *halakha* applies only to dry food, but it is prohibited to cook liquid that cooled. **Rabbeinu Yona** and others agree. The ruling in the *Shulḥan Arukh* (318:4) is in accordance with the stringent opinion that there is cooking after cooking with regard to a liquid that cooled. Therefore, it is prohibited to cook a liquid that was cooked before Shabbat and cooled (pp. 363–367).

### **What is the difference between a dry item and a liquid?**

Why is a dry item considered cooked even if it cooled, while a liquid that cooled is no longer considered cooked? One possible explanation is that the prohibition of Cooking is **creating food** by means of heat. There is a distinction between a dry item and a liquid with regard to its status as food after it cooled. There are people who are

content to eat dry food even when it is cold. By contrast, people are not content to eat liquid food after it cools, compromising its status as food; therefore, heating it is considered a new act of cooking.

Alternatively, one could say that the definition of cooking is **transformation of a raw item into a cooked item**. Dry food that was cooked undergoes a chemical change, and even after it cools, the change remains intact; therefore, it is still considered cooked. By contrast, in the case of a liquid the primary chemical change created through cooking is diffusion of the molecules. When the liquid cools, the molecules become more concentrated, and the chemical structure is restored to its previous state; therefore, the liquid is again considered a “raw” item, and it is prohibited to cook it again (for a similar explanation see *Hazon Ish* 50:9, s.v. *veyesh*).

One could also explain that, generally speaking, the change in a dry food is evident even after it cools, and everyone can see that it was cooked, while in a liquid that cooled, the change is less evident; therefore, it is not considered cooked (*Tehilla LeDavid* 318:33) (pp. 367–368).

### When is a liquid considered to have cooled?

A liquid that cooled is not considered cooked. At what temperature can it be said that the liquid has cooled?

From the *Shulhan Arukh* (318:6) it is clear that at the moment that the temperature of the liquid drops below *yad soledet* it is already considered to be cold, and one may not reheat it. Just as the cooking that is prohibited is heating the liquid to a temperature of *yad soledet*, so too, the cooked status lapses when the temperature of the liquid drops below *yad soledet*.

**The Rema** (318:15) rules leniently and determines that as long as the liquid **has not completely cooled from its original cooking** it is permitted to recook it (provided that the problem of “looking like Cooking” is resolved and one does not place it directly on the fire). What is the rationale for the opinion of the Rema? According to the *Eglei Tal* (*Ofeh* 14; 55:5), fundamentally, the Rema rules

in accordance with the opinion of Rashi that a liquid that cools loses its cooked status, and there is a **prohibition by Torah law of cooking**. Yet, in his opinion, as long as the cooked item did not cool completely, it did not lose its cooked status. The *Hazon Ish* (37:13; see also 31) holds that fundamentally, the Rema rules in accordance with the opinion of most of the *Rishonim* that by Torah law **there is no prohibition of cooking after cooking at all**, even in the case of a liquid that cooled completely. Yet, the **Sages** were stringent and determined that it is permitted to cook a liquid that cooled only if it remains slightly warm, so that it will be evident that the liquid in question was cooked, and people will not mistakenly learn to be lenient and cook even a liquid that was not cooked at all.

Therefore, **Sephardim** who remove hot soup from a hotplate and wish to put it back on must be careful that the temperature of the soup **not drop below the temperature of *yad soledet***, which, as a stringency, is 160° F (71° C), (in addition to all the other *halakhot* of returning, which will be enumerated below). **Ashkenazim** may put the soup back even if its temperature is no longer *yad soledet*, **provided that it did not completely cool**. If it completely cooled, it is prohibited to return it. According to the *Eglei Tal* it is a prohibition by Torah law, while according to the *Hazon Ish*, it is a prohibition by rabbinic law (pp. 368–376).

### **What is considered a dry item that it is permitted to heat?**

According to the *Minhat Kohen* (2:2, condition 2), the majority is the determining factor: If the majority is dry, the cooked item is considered dry, and this is also the ruling of **Rav Ovadia Yosef** (*Responsa Yabia Omer* 7, *Orah Hayim* 42:6–11). According to the straightforward understanding of the *Shulhan Arukh* (318:15) and the *Mishna Berura* (318:32), the cooked item is considered dry only if it contains no sauce. Even according to their opinion, for the item to be considered dry it is sufficient to pour off the sauce (taking care not to violate the prohibition of Selecting), and there is no need to dry it.

With regard to a **thick cooked item** (e.g., mashed potatoes or



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cholent), according to **Rav Moshe Feinstein** (*Iggerot Moshe, Oraḥ Ḥayim 4:74 Bishul 5*), if it is capable of keeping its form without the support of the walls of the pot, or if it does not pour out of the pot, it is considered dry (pp. 378–382).