

Squeezing Fruit

Is it permitted to squeeze an orange or apple?

May one squeeze a lemon into a cup of tea or onto a salad?

Is it permitted to suck the juice out of grapes?

May one soak up the oil absorbed in fried chicken cutlets (schnitzel)?

Which fruit may one not squeeze?

The **mishna** states (143b):

One may not squeeze fruit on Shabbat in order to extract liquids from it. And if liquids seeped out on their own, it is prohibited to use [the liquids] on Shabbat.

The prohibition of squeezing fruit is included under **Extracting**, which is a subcategory of **Threshing**. Just as in threshing one removes the food (the kernel) from the item in which it is encased (the husk), so too in squeezing one removes the **juice from the fruit in which it is found**. The Sages ruled that juice that emerges from a fruit on Shabbat, even if it does so on its own, is prohibited on that Shabbat.¹

The **Gemara** notes that by Torah law the prohibition of squeezing applies only to **olives** and **grapes** (145a):

Squeezing fruit is prohibited by Torah law due to Threshing

The prohibition of squeezing by Torah law applies only to olives and grapes

1. The details of this prohibition will be discussed on pp. 751–753.

One may not squeeze olives and grapes, and one who squeezed them unwittingly is liable to bring a sin-offering [*ḥatat*]. . . Rav Ḥiya bar Ashi says that Rav says: By Torah law, one is liable only for treading on olives and grapes.

Three levels of the prohibition of squeezing

It can be inferred from the **Gemara** (143b and onward) and statements of the *Rishonim* that squeezing **berries and pomegranates** is prohibited by rabbinic law because people are accustomed to squeezing these fruits, whereas it is permitted in the case of fruits that are not ordinarily designated for squeezing. The **Rambam** rules accordingly (21:12):

Extracting [renders one] liable due to Threshing, and one who squeezes olives or grapes is liable due to Extracting. Therefore, it is prohibited to squeeze berries and pomegranates, since some people squeeze them like olives and grapes, lest one ultimately squeeze olives and grapes. Nevertheless, other fruits, such as quinces, apples, and crabapples, may be squeezed on Shabbat, because they are not designated for squeezing.

Accordingly, there are three statuses with regard to squeezing:

1. **Grapes and olives** may not be squeezed by Torah law.
2. **Berries and pomegranates**, which some people squeeze, may not be squeezed by rabbinic law.
3. **Other fruits**, which are not normally squeezed, may be squeezed.

Why does the Torah prohibit squeezing only grapes and olives?

Why is it prohibited to squeeze only olives and grapes by Torah law?

The *Rishonim* offer several explanations for this *halakha*:



Squeezing olives is prohibited by Torah law.



Squeezing pomegranates is prohibited by rabbinic law.

Rashi writes: “Pressing other species is not [considered] their normal use, and it is not a labor” (145a, s.v. *devar Torah*). In other words, the leniency exists because it is uncommon to squeeze other fruits; only grapes and olives are typically squeezed by most people. How does common practice affect the existence of a prohibition by Torah law? *Tosefot Rid* explains that when one squeezes a fruit that is not ordinarily squeezed, it is considered performing a labor in an **unusual manner** (144a, s.v. *soḥatin*).

Rashi: Other fruits are not ordinarily squeezed

By contrast, the **Rashba** (145a, s.v. *lemeimeihen*) and the **Ritva** (ad loc., s.v. *lemeimeihen*) maintain that the difference is due to the fact that the prohibition of Threshing applies specifically when one extracts **drink from food**. In the case of **olives and grapes**, which are commonly squeezed, the liquid which emerges from them has the **status of a drink**, and therefore one who squeezes them is considered to be extracting drink from food. By contrast, all **other types of fruit**, which are generally designated for eating, rather than squeezing, retain their status as **food** even in liquid form. Consequently, one who squeezed them is considered to have extracted **food from food**, and therefore is not liable for Threshing.²

The **Ran** also writes that only olives and grapes contain liquids that are categorized as drink, but he provides a different reason (61a, Rif, s.v. *kevashin*). He suggests that there is an **essential halakhic determination** here, not connected to common practice: **Only the juice which emerges from olives and grapes has the status of a drink**, and therefore only in these cases is the action defined as

Peri Megadim, following the Ran: The juice of other fruits is not classified as a liquid

2. The primary category of the prohibited labor of Threshing is removing grain from the husk, i.e., **food from waste**. By squeezing fruit, one removes **liquid from food**, not from waste. Nevertheless, this act is a subcategory of Threshing since the liquid is different in nature from the food; there is therefore the **creation of a new entity** and its removal from the covering in which it grew. By contrast, when one removes **food from food**, even if the food being removed was previously covered and hidden, this is not considered the creation of a new entity, but mere preparation of food, and therefore there is no prohibition due to Threshing. Another ramification of this issue will be discussed below, with regard to the issue of squeezing fruit **onto** food (see also p. 716, concerning removing legumes from their pods).

removal of drink from food, which is prohibited due to Threshing. The *Peri Megadim* understands the opinion of the Ran in the same manner (*Eshel Avraham*, Introduction to 320).

According to this explanation, the unique *halakha* of olive oil and grape juice for purposes of Threshing is related to their status in other contexts. For example, some authorities maintain that olive oil and grape juice are the only liquids subject to the requirement to separate **teruma and tithes** by Torah law; similarly, grape juice has **its own blessing**, “Who creates fruit of the vine.”

In the case of olives and grapes, squeezing is the completion of the creation of the fruit

It is possible that the *halakha* that by Torah law Threshing applies only to these two liquids stems from the very concept of the labor of Threshing itself. As explained, Threshing is the completion of the forming of the fruit. With regard to other fruits, the forming of the fruit is completed when it is taken from the tree, from which point onward it is merely prepared for consumption. In the case of olives and grapes, by contrast, their harvest does not conclude the process of forming, or preparing the food for consumption. Rather, their juice has a significance that **exceeds the significance of the fruit itself**, as can be seen in the context of the *halakhot* of tithes, and by the fact that there is a unique blessing on grape juice. Therefore, it can be stated that the preparation of these fruits is completed only when the juice is extracted. Consequently, their squeezing is prohibited by the Torah due to Threshing. The *Shevitat HaShabbat* suggests a similar idea in his Introduction to the Labor of Threshing, 2, citing the *Pe'er Etz Hayim*.³

A practical ramification: Squeezing other fruits nowadays

These two interpretations affect the *halakha* of squeezing other fruits nowadays, when **most fruits are also squeezed**. Some types, especially citrus fruits, are cultivated mainly for their juice. Is squeezing these fruits now prohibited by Torah law?

3. The *Meiri*, citing the “great ones of the generations,” cites another explanation for why squeezing is prohibited by Torah law only in the case of olives and grapes (145a, s.v. *ma she’amru*). He claims that it is because the liquid is concentrated within grapes and olives, whereas the liquid is merely absorbed within other fruit. A similar rationale is offered by the *Peri Megadim* (*Eshel Avraham*, Introduction to 320, end of 5).

According to the first opinion, that of Rashi, the prohibition by Torah law with regard to olives and grapes is **because they are generally squeezed**. Accordingly, one does violate a prohibition by Torah law by squeezing these fruits nowadays. According to the second opinion, that of the Ran, the prohibition of olives and grapes is based on the **status of the liquids which emerge from them**; therefore, squeezing other fruits would that that still not be prohibited by Torah law.

It is hard to resolve this dispute conclusively, but in any case there is at least a prohibition by rabbinic law with regard to other fruits. While fruits that are generally never squeezed may be squeezed, it seems that there are no fruits of this kind today, as all fruits are squeezed to a greater or lesser extent.

In practice, squeezing all fruit is prohibited at least by rabbinic law



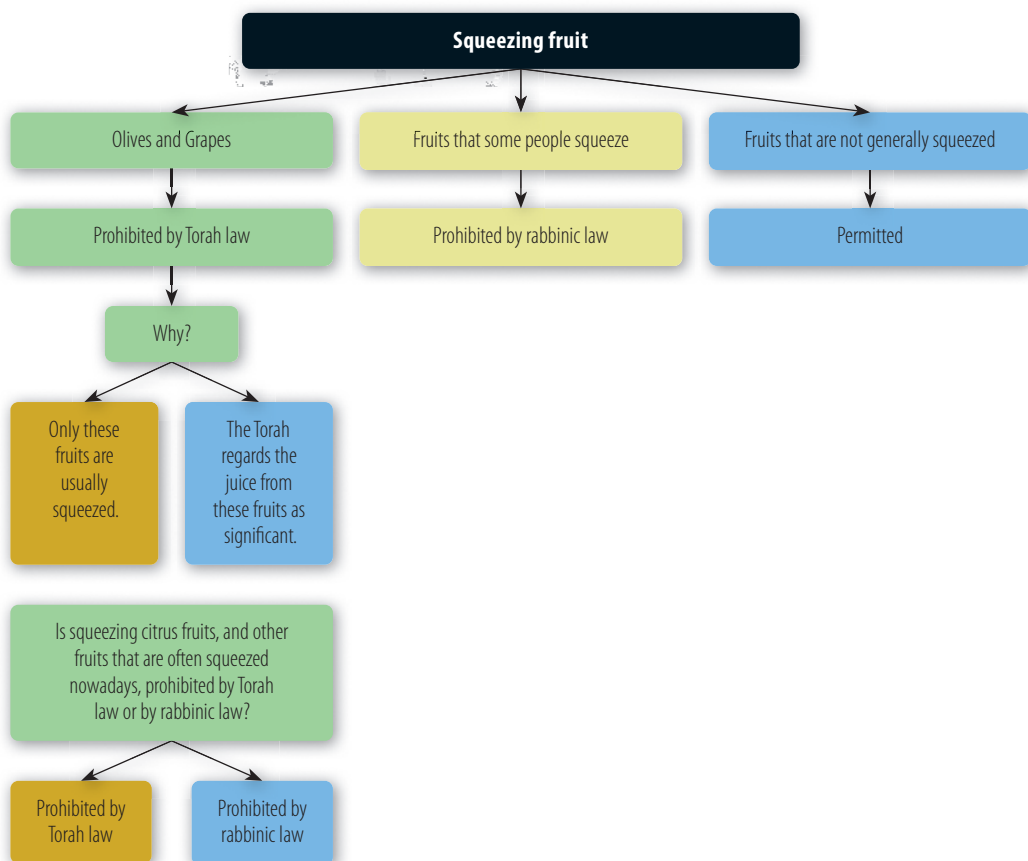
Squeezing citrus fruits is prohibited; some hold the prohibition nowadays is by Torah law, whereas others hold it is by rabbinic law.

IN CONCLUSION, it is prohibited nowadays to squeeze any fruit or vegetable for its juice. The squeezing of olives and grapes is certainly prohibited by Torah law; the squeezing of other fruits which are commonly squeezed is prohibited either by Torah or rabbinic law; and squeezing fruits which are squeezed by few people is prohibited by rabbinic law.⁴

Summary

4. As noted, the Gemara rules that one may squeeze fruit which is not ordinarily squeezed. Here too there is a dispute: Does the *halakha* follow what people **commonly do**? If so, when a given species is not usually squeezed for its juice, it may be juiced on Shabbat, because the liquid is not considered a drink. This is apparently the opinion of the **Rif** (60a) and the **Rambam** (21:12; see *Beit Yosef* 320), as well as the **Ramban** (144b), the **Rashba** (ad loc.), and the *Yere'im* (274), among others. Alternatively, perhaps those who squeeze the fruit in order to drink its liquid thereby demonstrate that **they consider it a drink**. Therefore, such squeezing is prohibited even if it is not commonly done, and it is permitted to squeeze the fruit solely for the purpose of improving its taste. This is the opinion of **Rashi** (144b, s.v. *keRav Hisda*) and **Tosafot** (ad loc., s.v. *hakhei namei*).

Squeezing fruit that people generally do not squeeze



Nowadays we squeeze most types of fruit, and in some cases most of the fruit is produced to be squeezed. Consequently, produce should not be squeezed on Shabbat. Depending on the fruit or vegetable, this will be a prohibition by either Torah law or rabbinic law.

The *Shulḥan Arukh* (320:1) rules leniently concerning this matter. By contrast, the *Bah* (320, s.v. *ve'ika litmoa*) writes that in light of the opinion of *Rashi* and *Tosafot*, “one should not rule leniently to allow squeezing any fruit for its juice, God forbid; not as written in the *Shulḥan Arukh*.” This is also the ruling of the *Taz* (320:1), the *Hayei Adam* (14:3), and others. By contrast, the *Magen Avraham* (320:1) and the *Shulḥan Arukh HaRav* (320:1) write that according to the basic *halakha* one may be lenient, but the custom is to be stringent. The *Beur Halakha* writes that since the majority of *Rishonim* rule leniently on this issue, one does not need to be stringent, except in a place where the local custom is to be stringent (320:1, s.v. *mutar*).

In practice, this dispute has very limited application, as nowadays virtually all fruit and vegetables are squeezed to some extent.