

## An egg slicer

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited in *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* 6, note 12) asserts that even according to the stringent opinion with regard to a large knife designated for cutting, it is permitted to use an **egg slicer**, a device which cuts a peeled, hard-boiled egg with its multiple blades:



It is permitted to use an egg slicer.

This is not comparable to a cleaver . . .

as [a cleaver] is not an implement used during a meal; rather, it is designated for grinding. Alternatively, it is because it is a utensil that storeowners are accustomed to use in their work, and therefore it is prohibited due to weekday-like activities. None of this is true concerning an egg slicer, which comprises several normal blades and is like any implement used during a meal. Accordingly, it is possible that it is permitted to use this utensil for cutting a tomato, even though [a tomato] grows from the ground.

According to Rav Auerbach, all authorities agree that one may be lenient in the case of an egg slicer, as the two reasons to be stringent with a cleaver do not apply here:

1. This is a utensil for domestic use, not an implement of storekeepers, and therefore the issue of “**weekday activities**” does not apply to it.
2. This utensil comprises several normal blades, and therefore it can be considered a utensil designated for cutting, not grinding.

The *Iggerot Moshe* (*Orah Hayim* 4:74, *Tohen* 4) permits using a similar implement for a different reason:

Is it permitted to cut cheese or eggs with utensils designated for this purpose? In general, what are the principles of “weekday activities”?

ANSWER: According to what I have written, there is no prohibition at all in this, because this is only cutting into pieces, not cutting into very small pieces. The reason of “weekday activities” is not relevant: Is whatever one does to make an activity easier to perform considered “weekday activities”? Also, on Shabbat there is a need and [we have a] desire to be lenient. The “weekday activities” that the Rivash writes about is the fine grinding as one does on a weekday.

Rav Feinstein writes, in light of his statement cited above (pp. 973–974) that cutting into slices is not considered cutting into very small pieces and is not defined as Grinding at all, that there is no prohibition to use such an implement. Likewise, the concept of “weekday activities” does not apply here, as in his opinion that prohibition applies only to actions which in some way conform to the basic standards of the labor and yet which might be permitted for various reasons. It does not apply to actions that do not fit into the essential outlines of the labor at all. Consequently, since in his opinion cutting into slices is not included in the labor of Grinding, the issue of “weekday activities” is not relevant either.

A manual  
vegetable cutter

It can be inferred from the explanation of Rav Feinstein that a manual vegetable cutter, which contains several blades joined together, is considered a vessel designated for grinding, counter to the opinion of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Rav Moshe Feinstein rules leniently only with regard to cutting into slices, which he maintains is not like chopping into very small pieces and is not defined as Grinding. But if one uses an implement of this kind for chopping into much smaller pieces, which is generally defined as Grinding, he might well consider this as grinding with a utensil that is designated for that purpose.

In light of the above, on Shabbat, one should not use a manual vegetable cutter which chops into **tiny pieces**, to the extent that it is difficult to distinguish between, e.g., red pepper and tomato. Nevertheless, as stated, there are grounds to be lenient even with regard to chopping of this kind if it is performed **just before the meal**,

in accordance with the opinion of the Rashba. This leniency is limited to an implement that is not designated for grinding, as maintained by the Rivash, and it can be inferred from the explanation of Rav Moshe Feinstein that a vegetable chopper is classified as a **utensil designated for grinding**. As explained, the basis of the leniency of the Rashba is that chopping for immediate use is **part of the process of eating**, whereas using a chopping implement is considered **part of the process of grinding**, not eating.

With regard to **cutting food into larger pieces**, it seems that one may even use a non-industrial manual vegetable cutter. If the utensil produces large cubes of vegetables so that one can differentiate between, e.g., red peppers and tomatoes, it is not considered chopping into very small pieces. Therefore, this is not defined as Grinding, and there is no issue of weekday activities either. In particular, there are grounds to be lenient if one does the cutting just before the meal, as **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** maintains that a vegetable cutter is not considered a utensil designated for grinding, but merely an assembly of cutting blades. Therefore, one may be lenient with regard to immediate use, just as one may be lenient about using a knife to cut large pieces.

Nevertheless, the ruling here is not absolutely clear-cut. Although a vegetable cutter produces relatively large pieces, this might still fall under the category of “chopping into very small pieces.” It is also possible that this device is considered a utensil designated for grinding, which one may not use even just before the meal, as implied by the statement of **Rav Feinstein**, who is lenient only with regard to slices.



Chopping into very small pieces with a vegetable chopper is prohibited; one may be lenient and chop into larger pieces if this is performed just before the meal, but it is preferable to refrain from doing so.



One may not use a vegetable cutter on Shabbat.

Therefore, although there are grounds for leniency in this matter, it is preferable to cut up food with a knife.

Likewise, it seems that one should not use a slicer that comprises several blades that rotate through the use of a handle. In this implement, the **same blades** are used both for cutting into large pieces as well as for chopping into very small pieces, as determined by the number of times the handle is turned. Consequently, it is considered a utensil that is designated for grinding, which is prohibited even for immediate use.

As stated above, cutting into slices is certainly not classified as “chopping into very small pieces,” and therefore one may use an egg slicer or a cheese slicer.

Summary: How should one make a salad on Shabbat?

**IN CONCLUSION:** Preparing a salad with a **regular knife**: According to the basic *halakha*, it is permitted to cut even into very fine pieces, if one does so just before the meal. It is preferable to cut into slightly larger pieces.

As for preparing salad with a **manual vegetable cutter**, one may not use a cutter that has small blades that cut into finely-cut pieces, or a slicer that is likely to produce a finely-chopped salad. There are grounds to justify the practice of those who use an implement containing blades that produce larger pieces. This is not defined as “chopping into very small pieces,” especially if one does so just before the meal. In any case, it is preferable to use a knife.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, one may use an egg slicer or a cheese slicer.

11. On a Festival, one may certainly be lenient in this regard, as a salad prepared a day in advance may lose flavor. Therefore, one may cut the vegetables even with a utensil (see *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayim* 504:3; *Mishna Berura* 19).

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## VARIOUS LENIENCIES CONCERNING GRINDING

