

## Grinding items that do not grow from the ground

**Is it permitted to mash an egg on Shabbat? Is it permitted to mince meat?**

The **Rambam** writes that the prohibition of Grinding applies to **metal** (7:5):

Taking a strip of metal and shaving it in order to use its filings, in the manner of goldsmiths, is a subcategory of Grinding.

The *Minḥat Ḥinukh* (*Musakh HaShabbat, Toḥen* 4) concludes from the Rambam's example that Grinding applies even to items that do not grow from the ground. He adds that this is also implied by the **Gemara** in *Beitza* (7b) and the statement of **Rashi** (ad loc., s.v. *veha ka avid; Shabbat* 74b, s.v. *sheva ḥata'ot*) that crushing clods of earth is prohibited due to Grinding.

By contrast, the *Eglei Tal* (*Dash* 11) and the *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* 321:10) write that in this context dirt is perhaps considered something that grows from the ground, and the same applies to metal. It is possible that Grinding applies to items not defined as items that grow from the ground, but only if it is common to grind them.

The question of grinding items that do not grow from the ground is explicitly addressed by the *Terumat HaDeshen* (56):

Grinding applies to items that do not grow in the ground

The *Terumat HaDeshen*: One may be lenient with regard to items that can be eaten without grinding

QUESTION: In the case of someone who has difficulty chewing who wants to eat roasted meat, may they chop it finely with a knife before eating it?

ANSWER: It appears that it is permitted in such a case. It is not prohibited due to Grinding... this is not comparable to wood or fruit or bread, because they all grow in the ground, and therefore Grinding applies to them. By contrast, one may say with regard to meat, which does not grow from the ground, that all agree that Grinding does not apply to it...and as *Tosafot* explicitly state that Grinding does not apply to foods... One should not raise a contradiction against their opinions from the statements of the other great rabbis unless we have found that they argue with them explicitly...

Yet, it does not seem correct to permit chopping raw meat into very small pieces in order to feed it to birds based on this reason, since the meat is not truly edible... And if you say: If so, it should be prohibited [to cut up cooked or roasted meat for] someone who is incapable of chewing even cooked or roasted meat, this is not true, as we follow [the capabilities of] most people, who are able to chewing [this food]. Therefore, Grinding does not apply [here], even for someone who cannot chew it. By contrast, raw meat, which is not fit for any person... one should not permit [cutting it up].

According to the *Terumat HaDeshen*, since many *Rishonim* maintain that there is no prohibition of Grinding **with regard to foods that can be eaten in their current state**, as explained above (pp. 965–967), there are grounds to be lenient at least with regard to such foods **if they do not grow from the ground**. But perhaps the *Rishonim* would not be lenient in the case of foods **that cannot be eaten without grinding**,<sup>12</sup> and therefore it is prohibited to cut them up even if they do not grow from the ground.

12. As stated above, according to many *Rishonim* the prohibition of Grinding does not apply to items that can be eaten in their current state, without

Therefore, the *Terumat HaDeshen* rules that one may cut **cooked or roasted meat** into small pieces, since it can be eaten without cutting by one capable of chewing. He contends that it is permitted to do so even on behalf of someone who finds it difficult to chew their food, as the *halakha* is established based on the capabilities of most people. By contrast, one may not cut up **raw meat for birds**, even though the meat is not considered an item that grows from the ground, as that food cannot be eaten without it being cut up.



It is permitted to chop meat, even on behalf of those who have difficulty chewing, and even for eating later.

The *Shulḥan Arukh* (321:9) rules in accordance with the *Terumat HaDeshen*:

Practical *halakha*:  
Chopping meat

It is permitted to use a knife to chop cooked or roasted meat into very small pieces.

The *Rema* (ad loc.) and the *Mishna Berura* (32) cite the rest of the statement of the *Terumat HaDeshen*: It is permitted to chop up meat even for the elderly or children, who cannot eat the meat unless it is cut up, provided that most people can eat without it being cut up (*Mishna Berura* ad loc.). The *Rema* adds that one may not chop raw meat into very small pieces for birds, as they are unable to eat it if it is not cut up (*Rema* ad loc.).<sup>13</sup>

**cooking.** The *Terumat HaDeshen* suggests that perhaps even those *Rishonim* rule leniently only for items that can be eaten when they are whole (by chewing them), but the labor of Grinding does apply to items that require **grinding or chopping** even if they do not require cooking. His reasoning is that if it is impossible to eat something without grinding, the act of grinding changes the status of the item and turns it into food, and therefore that is a more severe case.

13. The *Rema* writes that since the birds cannot eat the meat unless it is cut, one renders it food by cutting it, and therefore this should be prohibited.

## GRINDING



It is permitted to mash cooked vegetables that have been somewhat softened and squashed. If one does so just before the meal, it is permitted to be lenient even with regard to soft vegetables that have not been squashed.

The *Mishna Berura* (31, 33) notes that this leniency, to chop up items that do not grow from the ground if most people can eat them without grinding, applies even if one chops them up for **later** consumption. If one does so to eat them **immediately**, one may be lenient even with regard to items that cannot be eaten without grinding. Nevertheless, as stated above, one may not grind **with a utensil that is designated**

**for grinding**, unless it cuts into slices or large pieces. Accordingly, it is permitted to slice eggs even for later use, but one may not grate eggs with a grater.

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The *Magen Avraham* (324:5) explains that according to the Rema it should be prohibited due to **Grinding**, as explained above. By contrast, the *Taz* contends (ad loc., 4) that the Rema prohibits this act not due to Grinding, but because of **the prohibition to produce food for animals on Shabbat** (see *Shabbat* 155a), as the *Terumat HaDeshen* himself notes later in that responsum. Accordingly, the *Taz* concludes that the Rema's ruling should be rejected, and that cutting raw meat for birds should be permitted, as according to the conclusion of the **Gemara** (ad loc.) it is permitted to prepare food for animals on Shabbat.

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## VARIOUS LENIENCIES CONCERNING GRINDING

