

דיני עירוב תבשילין
SOME LAWS CONCERNING ERUV TAVSHILLIN
(PREPARING FOOD ON A YOM TOV FOR SHABBOS)

1. Although it is permitted to cook on Yom Tov for Yom Tov, it is not permitted to bake, cook or prepare food on a Yom Tov openly and deliberately for the next day. This applies even if that next day is a Shabbos, whose holiness is greater than the holiness of Yom Tov.
2. This prohibition was enacted by our Chachommim to safeguard the special holiness and spirit of the Yom Tov. They saw a threat to the sanctity of Yom Tov in the very fact that, with the exceptions of cooking food and carrying what is necessary for the Yom Tov, the Torah prohibits Melochoh on Yom Tov. With Melochoh forbidden, people have much time on their hands on Yom Tov. At the same time, as said, the Torah explicitly permits us to cook food on Yom Tov. Our Chachommim were concerned that people would come to utilize the Yom Tov to do all their cooking, to put it away for year round use — after all, there’s nothing else to do, is there? — and they were apprehensive that in time, Yom Tov would be robbed of its sanctity and become something like a Jewish National Cooking Day. They therefore forbade any cooking that was not for the Yom Tov itself. (They did not forbid cooking at all on Yom Tov as a Rabbinical decree because the Chachommim will not generally make a decree to forbid completely that which the Torah explicitly permits.) Nevertheless, they did curtail the cooking that may be done on Yom Tov and they said that although it is permitted to cook even much food on Yom Tov, they stipulated that this can be only for the Yom Tov itself, with any left-over food permitted to be used on the following days.
3. This is the basis of the Eruv Tavshillin, a means whereby food cooked on Yom Tov can be used for the Shabbos which immediately follows the Yom Tov. (Any leftovers from the Shabbos is obviously permitted on the following days.)
4. Thus, if Yom Tov occurs on a Friday and one needs to prepare food on the Yom Tov for the Shabbos (as invariably is the case) then an Eruv Tavshillin has to be set, that is, arranged, before the start of the Yom Tov. If Yom Tov is Thursday and Friday, then the Eruv Tavshillin has to be set on the Wednesday evening, before the commencement of Yom Tov. If Yom Tov is Friday and Shabbos, then the Eruv Tavshillin has to be set on Thursday evening before the start of the Yom Tov.
5. “Setting an Eruv Tavshillin” means that one sets aside a dish of cooked food together with a baked bread or cake or Matzoh. These items are regarded as being the start of the preparation and cooking of the Shabbos food, started before the Yom Tov, and any further food preparation during Yom Tov for Shabbos is considered as

merely the continuation of the initial preparation which was on the weekday before the Yom Tov. Thus the cooking for the Shabbos was not done entirely on Yom Tov and the dignity of Yom Tov is upheld — Yom Tov has not become merely the day of preparation for Shabbos.

6. At the same time, the institution of the Eruv Tavshillin also ensures that the Shabbos will not be treated disrespectfully, with the cooked food for Shabbos after a Yom Tov being only the leftover cooked food of the Yom Tov. Through the Eruv Tavshillin, therefore, our Chachommim ensured that the Shabbos is honoured with food cooked especially for the Shabbos. This comes about because for the Eruv Tavshillin we have to use some of that food especially cooked for Shabbos — as said, the Eruv Tavshillin arrangement implies that we are merely completing the cooking for Shabbos but that that cooking was started on the weekday preceding the Yom Tov and that food has indeed been prepared and set aside for the Shabbos. On Yom Tov, we are merely “topping-up” the cooked food of the Shabbos.
7. When setting the Eruv, the appropriate Brochah is recited. After the Brochah, the declaration is made, as follows:

“By means of this Eruv, it is permitted to cook, bake, fry and to prepare food on Yom Tov for Yom Tov use and also if it will be used for Shabbos, and similarly to extend a fire on Yom Tov for use on Yom Tov and also if this will be for use on the Shabbos, and other permitted preparations on Yom Tov, for us who dwell in this house and indeed for all those who dwell in this town who might — this one time — have forgotten to make their own Eruv.”
8. If the head of the family sets the Eruv Tavshillin, all members of the family are released from the obligation of individually preparing it. When two families eat at the same table, then as long as each family does not eat its own food exclusively, they only need the one Eruv Tavshillin.
9. The cooked food and the bread of the Eruv must be kept until the cooking, baking, extending fire and other preparations one is making on the Friday before the Shabbos are completed. (The custom generally prevails that the Eruv food is eaten at the Se’udoh Shlishis on the Shabbos afternoon.) The preparation of the food on the Yom Tov should not be done late on Yom Tov day but well before Shabbos commences. Otherwise, the cooking on the Yom Tov is blatantly not for Yom Tov use and the dignity of the Yom Tov is in danger of being compromised. However, if things were delayed and hardship would be caused if one did not have cooked food for Shabbos, one may cook and prepare food until shortly before the start of Shabbos and this leniency applies all the more so on the second day of Yom Tov.
10. When Yom Tov is Thursday and Friday, although the Eruv Tavshillin is set immediately prior to the first day of the Yom Tov, nevertheless any cooking that is for Shabbos must be done on the second day of Yom Tov, that is, on Friday.