

Could You Pass the Conversion Test - Section #1 - Weekday Living:

Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #9 Brachos (Blessings) - Part 2 - The Basics

4. If you forgot to say a Brocha:

1. If you are eating and realize that you forgot to say a bracha, you must say a bracha on the remaining food. Even the food that is already in your mouth may **not** be swallowed before a bracha is said. So here is what you do:
2. If the food will still be **edible** after being removed from your mouth, then remove it and say the bracha. This applies to things like a hard candy, or even "chewable" food that was not yet chewed.
3. However, if the food would have to be discarded if removed from your mouth (e.g. a chewed-up piece of apple or meat), then you should push the food to **one side of your mouth** and say the bracha. Although the bracha will not be made with a completely empty mouth, this method is preferable to avoid wasting food.
4. If you are unable to push the food to one side of your mouth, as in the case of liquids, then you should spit it out. Although we don't want to waste food, in this case there is no alternative. Swallowing the drink would transgress the prohibition of eating without a bracha, which is considered worse than wasting food.
5. Once the food has been swallowed, you may no longer say a bracha on that food. (however, you must make an after blessing if you ate a sufficient quantity.) According to most opinions, a bracha said **after** you are finished eating would be a blessing said in vain, a *bracha levatala*.
6. Even if there is there is no more of the original food available, you can find another food that requires the same bracha as the food you just ate. The bracha on the new food will be retroactively effective on the food you previously ate as well.

5. Giving Food to Someone Who Will Not Say a Brocha:

1. Since it is prohibited for any Jew to eat without saying a bracha, you may not serve food to someone who does not say brachos. By doing so, you would be causing him to transgress the command "not to put a stumbling block before the blind."
2. But given as there is a general obligation to welcome guests with food and drink, what should you do on the occasion you have to host non-observant guests?
3. One approach is to pleasantly suggest that the guest says a bracha on the food (with a kipa on). This presents a nice opportunity to teach others how to say a bracha, and they are often happy to oblige.
4. A "lighter" version of this is to simply propose that the guest listen to your bracha, and answer "Amen."
5. If your guest would feel uncomfortable with either of these approaches, then:
 - Recite your own bracha out loud, and have the guest in mind as well.
 - Put the food in front of the guest, rather than hand it to him directly, thus minimizing your degree of causing a "stumbling block."

6. The Brochos on Produce:

1. The brachos recited on produce are "borei pri ha'aitz" ("Creator of the fruit of the tree") and "borei pri ha'adama" (Creator of the fruit of the ground). Generally speaking, Ha'aitz is said on fruits, while Ha'adama is said on vegetables, grains, and legumes.
2. Although for most fruits the appropriate bracha is Ha'aitz, not everything commonly referred to as a "fruit" falls in the halachic category of "pri ha'aitz" -- literally "fruit of the tree." In terms of blessings, the key definitions are:
 - **Ha'aitz -- the product of a plant whose trunk remains alive and produces fruit year after year**
 - **Ha'adama -- the product of a plant whose trunk withers after one year**

3. The banana plant, for example, which can grow to great heights, is not regarded as a "tree." Since its shoots produce fruit only once, and then become part of the central stem and no longer bear fruit, the bracha on a banana is Ha'adama. The same is true for pineapple.
4. Similarly, many "wild" plants, even though they produce fruit from year to year, are not considered trees. If only their **roots** remain and their **trunk** (or stem) dies out, they do not qualify for the bracha Ha'aitz. The bracha on strawberries and wild berries, therefore, is Ha'adama.
5. Conversely, many bushes and vines, even though they do not resemble a tree, are considered "trees." As long as their branches remain alive year round, the product of these plants receive the bracha Ha'aitz. This includes fruits such as blueberries and grapes.
6. If, however, a bush grows very close to the ground (within nine inches), common practice is to say Ha'adama on its fruit, even though it qualifies as a "tree." For this reason, the bracha on cranberries and wild blueberries is Ha'adama.
7. There are some fruits whose bracha is subject to dispute because it is unclear whether the plant qualifies as a "tree." The papaya, which grows on a tree that resembles a vegetable plant in numerous ways, is one such example. In such a case, you should say Ha'adama, since this bracha is a catch-all that covers tree-fruits as well.
8. Similarly, if you are unsure whether a particular fruit falls into the category of "pri ha'aitz" or not, and you are unable to find out, you should say Ha'adama on that fruit. The reason is because every fruit, even if it grows on a tree, is also a product of the ground. Therefore, the bracha "pri ha'adama" is an appropriate catch-all.
9. However, if you don't know which bracha to say because you didn't learn the halachot, you may not rely on this. Rather, you should go and learn the halacha (or ask an authority) and then say the proper bracha.
10. If you accidentally said Ha'adama on a fruit whose bracha is Ha'aitz, you may continue eating without correcting your mistake, so that the bracha will not have been in vain.
11. If, however, you said Ha'aitz on a vegetable (or even a banana), your bracha is invalid. Since vegetables don't grow on trees, "borei pri ha'aitz" is inappropriate and you must say a new bracha.

7. The Shehakol Blessing:

1. The brocha recited on all foods that **don't grow** from the ground is "shehakol nih-yeh bid-varo."
2. This includes foods such as : meat, fish, eggs, dairy products ,sugar and salt ,water, tea, beer ,bee honey and even hydroponic vegetables (e.g. alfalfa sprouts)
3. Mushrooms primary sustenance is taken from moisture in the air, not from the ground -- and therefore the bracha is Shehakol.
4. If you said Shehakol on **any food**, even foods that have their own prescribed bracha, the bracha is still valid. Of course, you should not rely on this and substitute Shehakol for the appropriate bracha when it can be determined. In certain cases of doubt, however, you may say Shehakol even though you're not certain that it is the correct bracha, since Shehakol covers everything. However, when possible, it is best to avoid the doubt by eating the food within a bread meal, where the bracha Hamotzee on the bread covers the entire meal.

8. Altered States of Food:

1. The brachos for fruits and vegetables are "borei pri ha'aitz" and "borei pri ha'adama," respectively. These brachot are appropriate when eating a fruit or vegetable in the way that it is **normally eaten**. If, however, you eat a fruit or vegetable in an **unusual state**, you say **instead Shehakol**.
2. Produce that is **normally eaten raw** receives a "borei pri..." **bracha only when eaten raw**. However, if you go ahead and cook such a fruit or vegetable, the bracha becomes Shehakol. Cucumbers, for example, are a vegetable that most people eat raw. So the bracha on a cooked cucumber is Shehakol.
3. Similarly, on any food that is slightly spoiled or rotten, the bracha is Shehakol.

4. If cooking a fruit or vegetable does **not** lower its quality, then the bracha remains Ha'aitz or Ha'adama, even though it is usually eaten raw. For example, a dish made of cucumbers cooked in a sweet and sour sauce would get the bracha Ha'adama.
5. Fruits or vegetables that are eaten **both** raw and cooked receive a "borei pri..." bracha in either state. The bracha on tomatoes, broccoli, or carrots, for example, is Ha'adama, whether eaten raw or cooked. So too, both raw and cooked apples get Ha'aitz.
6. Any fruit or vegetable that is usually eaten **cooked** receives a "borei pri..." bracha only when it is cooked. If eaten raw, its bracha is Shehakol. Accordingly, if you want to eat a raw onion (like one would eat an apple) you should say Shehakol. Since most people cook (or fry) onions before eating them. This rule applies to any situation where the fruit or vegetable is in a state where most people would not eat it, such as a whole lemon or raw corn.
7. Similarly, on a **vegetable** that is **not fully grown** (but is fit to eat) you should say Shehakol, since it is not yet considered a "pri." A **fruit** that has not yet developed, however, gets the bracha Ha'adama. In other words, both an underdeveloped vegetable and an underdeveloped fruit have their bracha "reduced one level." Even if the undeveloped fruit or vegetable is improved by cooking or roasting, the bracha remains Shehakol for a vegetable, and Ha'adama for a fruit.
8. Whether a particular fruit or vegetable is "normally" eaten raw or cooked is determined by the local practice. If a specific vegetable is eaten only raw in one country, and in another country they only eat that vegetable cooked, then the bracha will change in accordance.
9. If you are merely **visiting** a foreign country, you should say brachot in accordance with the practice of your homeland, not the local custom. If, however, you move to a new location, then you become subject to the local practice.