

Russian Orthodox Official Warns Eating Potato Chips Is 'Sinful'

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"The Church has laid down a strict rule — sin is that which harms human health," Bogdasarov said.

Orthodox believers should shun unhealthy foods such as potato chips and products made by corrupt manufacturers because they are sinful, Moscow Patriarchate deputy speaker Roman Bogdasarov was cited as telling the Interfax news agency by the RBC news website on Sunday.

"The Church has laid down a strict rule — sin is that which harms human health," Bogdasarov said.

Problematic products include foods containing "various trans fats, alcoholic beverages of poor quality, potato chips, energy [drinks] — everything that negatively affects a person's health," he was cited as saying in the report.

Genetically modified products are also included on the list, Bogdasarov said, adding they "not only severely harm a person, but also their offspring."

The Orthodox official added that even seemingly healthy products could fall into the red zone "if the price ... includes a bribe or kickback for a corrupt official," he said.

The purchase of products should not help pay for the manufacturer's "yacht or villa in the Canary [Islands]" because it adds a "spoonful of tar" to the final product, he was cited as saying.

The diet recommendations come several days after Public Chamber member Vladimir Slepak wrote a letter to Russian Orthodox Church leaders proposing the introduction of an Orthodox equivalent for the Muslim halal and Jewish kosher religious food labels, Interfax reported earlier, citing the Public Chamber's press service.

"Such an approach would ... not only confirm the high quality and safety of the product, but would assess its advantageous impact on people's spiritual and physical health," Slepak was cited as saying.

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