

Halal Food and Certification by IFI

Dietary regulations in Islam

Summary of dietary regulations

Food and drink have direct effects on our physical and spiritual state. Islam has prohibited certain types of food and drink. The prohibition of these things is due to their impurity and harmfulness.

The dietary regulations in Islam can be summarized as follows:

1. All things that Allah has created for humankind are permissible except what He has prohibited by an authentic and explicit text of the Qur'an and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.) Accordingly, the sphere of prohibited thing is very limited in Islam. This principle of natural permissibility applies to all human actions, transactions and behaviour with the exception of acts of worship which can only be done in the prescribed manner in accordance with the divine text.
2. Basically, four types of food have been deemed Haram "unlawful" for Muslims in the Qur'an. These are:
 - i. The flesh of a dead animal (carrion).
 - ii. Blood.
 - iii. Pig meat.
 - iv. Meat from any animal on which the name of someone other than Allah was invoked when it was slaughtered.
3. Intoxicants of any kind (alcohol, drugs etc.) are prohibited for Muslims to consume, even in small quantities. Alcohol should not form part of the ingredients of any food prepared for Muslims.
4. By implication, any product derived from the above prohibited food and drinks or any food containing ingredients from them will also be unlawful (Haram)
5. Animals permitted for human consumption under Islamic law include: cattle, sheep, goats, camels, deer, poultry etc. Carnivorous animals and birds of prey are not permitted. Animals permitted for human consumption must be slaughtered in a certain manner.
6. Fish and seafood is Halal for Muslims.
7. All vegetables are Halal and therefore, vegetarian food is acceptable to Muslims if it is free from alcohol and other Haram ingredients.

Rule of Thumb

In Islam, every thing is permitted (Halal) to consume except “A B C D I S” which are prohibited (Haram).

These are:

A: Alcohol and drugs B: Blood (Flowing or congealed) C: Carnivorous animals and birds of prey D: Dead animals / birds (that died of itself or died before slaughter.) I: Immolated food S: Swine and its by-products.

Quick Guide

Haram/Avoid - These are ingredients that are unquestionably Haram (prohibited).

Examples are lard, which is 100% pork fat, or gin, which is an alcoholic beverage

Bacon	Beer
Pork	Gin
Gammon steaks	Rum
Rashers	Scotch
Lard	Vodka
Animal Fat	Whiskey
Animal Shortening	Wine

Mashbooh / Doubtful (Source unknown) - These are ingredients that are likely made from non-Halal sources unless one is sure about the origin

Hydrolyzed Animal Proteins	Sausages
Shortening	Margarine
Fat	

The Islamic method of slaughter

Summary of conditions for Halal slaughter

Islamic law requires that animals intended for human consumption be slain in a certain manner. The conditions for Halal slaughter can be summarized as follows:

- The animal to be slaughtered must be from the categories that are permitted for Muslims to eat.
- The animal must be alive at the time of slaughter.
- The animal must be slaughtered by the use of a sharp knife. The knife must not kill due to its weight. If it kills due to the impact, the meat may not be permissible.
- The windpipe (throat), food-tract (oesophagus) and the two jugular veins must be cut.
- The slaughtering must be done in one stroke without lifting the knife. The knife should not be placed and lifted when slaughtering the animal.
- Slaughtering must be done by a sane adult Muslim.
- The name of Allah must be invoked (mentioned) at the time of slaughtering by saying: Bismillah; wa Allahu Akbar. (In the Name of Allah; Allah is the Greatest.)
- If at the time of slaughtering the name of anyone else other than Allah is invoked (i.e. animal sacrificed for him/her), then the meat becomes Haram "unlawful."
- If a Muslim forgets to invoke the name of Allah at the time of slaughtering, the meat will remain Halal. However, if he intentionally does not invoke the name of Allah, the meat becomes Haram.
- The head of the animal must not be cut off during slaughtering but later after the animal is completely dead, even the knife should not go deep into the spinal cord.
- Skinning or cutting any part of the animal is not allowed before the animal is completely dead.
- Slaughtering must be made in the neck from the front (chest) to the back.
- The slaughtering must be done manually not by a machine, as one of the conditions is the intention, which is not found in a machine.
- The slaughtering should not be done on a production line where pigs are slaughtered. Any instrument used for slaughtering pigs should not be used in the Halal slaughtering.

Customary and Desirable Practices When Slaughtering

- Water should be offered to the animal before slaughter, and it should not be slaughtered when hungry.
- The knife should be hidden from the animal, and slaughtering should be done out of sight of other animals waiting to be slaughtered.
- Animals should be killed in a comfortable way. Unnecessary suffering to them must be avoided.
- The knife should be re-sharpened before slaughter.

Storage, Processing and Transport of Halal Meat

- Meat chilled or frozen for export to Muslims should be stored in separate cold stores other than those in which pork or other non-Halal meat is stored.
- Meat minced or processed for Muslims should not be minced in the same machines used to mince pork or other non-Halal meat.

Halal Meat in Dublin & Ireland

Halal meat is, at present, available at several Muslim shops in Dublin, including the shop of the Islamic Foundation of Ireland (within the premises of the Dublin Mosque and Islamic Center on South Circular Road, Dublin 8. Tel. 01-4538336.)

There are Halal shops in other cities in Ireland. All other meat available elsewhere is killed by being "stunned" and, is not suitable for Muslims to eat.

All cuts of pork (pig-meat) are Haram. These include such names as bacon, ham, gammon steaks and rashers. Also all types of sausages, including beef sausages, contain pork and therefore are forbidden. Many foodstuffs contain fats from animals, including the pig and so it is important to read the "Ingredients" label before buying anything. Foods containing "animal fat", "lard", "shortening", or just "fat" are not suitable to be eaten by Muslims.

Foodstuffs containing "vegetable oils", "vegetable shortening", and of course butter are safe to eat. Margarine is often made from animal fats unless otherwise stated.

COMMON FOOD INGREDIENTS AND ADDITIVES

Opinions on the permissibility of food ingredients and additives made from animal sources

Listed on the following pages are common food ingredients and additives that many food products contain. Some of these ingredients and additives can be made from animal or plant sources or produced synthetically. There is an agreement among Muslims regarding those, which are made from plant or produced synthetically that they are Halal. However,

there is disagreement regarding the permissibility of those made from animal sources if the animal is not slaughtered according to Islamic rite or if the source is from pig. Since most product labels do not indicate the source, it might be necessary to contact the manufacturers if you want to find out about the source.

FIRST OPINION

According to this opinion all food ingredients and additives derived from animals which were not slaughtered according to Islamic rite or from the pig are Haram and not suitable for Muslim to consume. Any food ingredient or additive containing alcohol or produced with the use of alcohol is Haram and unsuitable for Halal use.

SECOND OPINION

This opinion is based on the Shar'iah rules of Al-Istihalah (transformation) and Al-Istihlak (assimilation or consumption.) This opinion is adopted by the Islamic Organisation for Medical Sciences, Kuwait, (www.islamset.com.)

Al-Istihalah (transformation) is defined as "changing the nature of the defiled (Najis) or prohibited substance to produce a different substance in name, properties and characteristics." This includes transformation through chemical reaction or burning. Examples for transformation through chemical reaction include the manufacture of soap from oils and fats.

As for Al-Istihlak it refers to "the blending of a small amount of a prohibited or defiled substance with a dominant clean and permissible one resulting in the obliteration of the prohibited or defiled substance altogether."

Imam Ibn Taymiyah said: "The defile things which Allah has prohibited such as carrion, blood and pig meat and the likes if they drop in water or a liquid and were completely assimilated so that their particles were dispersed and disappeared in the liquid, there is no longer carrion, blood or pig meat (meaning that the prohibition no longer applies to the new substance), and if alcohol was dissolved in a liquid and it vanished and disappeared; whoever drinks the new liquid is not drinking alcohol."

In its certification of Halal products, the Islamic Foundation of Ireland follows an inclusive approach, which satisfies the needs of all Muslim customers. It follows the first opinion which states that:

All food ingredients and additives derived from animals which were not slaughtered according to Islamic rite or from the pig are Haram and not suitable for Muslims to consume, and

Any food ingredient or additive containing alcohol or produced with the use of alcohol is Haram and unsuitable for Halal use.

In this way the certification of Halal food and ingredients is done to the standards approved by all certifying Muslim authorities in Europe, the Middle and the Far East.