

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 behavior with the exception of acts of worship that can only be done 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.
- No electric shock, bullet or any other means should be used before slaughtering. Using any such method may lead to the death of the animal before it is cut. Islam prohibits Muslims from eating any meat coming from an animal that is dead before slaughter. Muslims are also advised to avoid eating anything doubtful.
- 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. Animals slaughtered by apostates, idol worshippers, atheists etc. are not permissible. Animals slaughtered (not stunned prior to slaughter) by the People of the Book (Jews and Christians.)
- 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.

Why stunning Animals Prior to Slaughter cannot be accepted by Muslims?

Much of the current debate surrounding the issue of religious and "humane" slaughter focuses on the supposed barbarity of the former and the assumed decency of the latter. Both methods deserve closer inspection to assess the claims of both camps.

The Common Stunning Techniques are:

- The Captive Bolt Pistol - for cattle, calves and goats.
- Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) / Chemical Strangulation - for pigs.
- Electrical Stunning - for sheep.
- Electrified Water Bath - for poultry.

Scientific and medical research proves that stunning animals prior to slaughter is CRUEL and PAINFUL as many animals remain conscious and paralysed due to improper stunning, re-stunning, bone shattering, suffocation, strangulation, bruising, depressed skull fracture, etc. (Grandin, Blackmore, Schulze, and other researchers.)

It should be borne in mind that electricity is widely used around the world for torturing human beings (in prisons and detention centres), so how can we say with certainty that an animal stunned using electricity feels no pain?

In fact, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) in the U.K. in its June 2003 report stated clearly: "IT IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE PAIN AND DISTRESS DURING THE SLAUGHTER PROCESS IN AN OBJECTIVE SCIENTIFIC MANNER." (No. 194, Page 34)

So why then religious slaughter is criticised as painful and cruel to animals, when the

FAWC itself has got no objective scientific evidence to prove its assumption that the animal in religious slaughter "Feels significant pain and distress"?

The fact is that there is little or no pain in the religious slaughter (Schulze, Horder, Hill, Sir Evans, Burrow, Levinger, Bell, Openshaw, Hayhurst, etc).

Some of the inhumane effects of pre-stunning include:

- Many animals die before they are cut (Hillman, Lawton, Glen, Gregory). According to FAWC, one third of chicken die before slaughter. The new method of stunning today is: STUN TO KILL before slaughter, which means the food is less healthy for us, as more blood stays inside the carcass.
- Causes blood splash into muscles and more harmful blood stays inside the meat (Gilbert, Blackmore). Retained blood in meat is a major cause of food poisoning & infections. "Captive bolts should be discontinued in view of their detrimental effect on meat quality." (Marple, 1977.)
- Changes in the natural chemical constituents of the meat (Marple, Biala.) Spread of BSE, especially when the captive bolt pistol is used in cows (European Commission Study, 2002)
- Fails in at least 15% of cases, so repeated stunning is necessary, resulting in repeated torture and cruelty.
- Causes stress to the animal in at least 7 research studies.

Islam prohibits Muslims from eating any meat coming from an animal that is dead before the religious slaughter can take place, as well as the consumption of any blood in any amount. These two prohibitions may occur during stunning. Muslims are also advised to avoid eating anything doubtful. Furthermore, meat for human consumption should be natural wholesome and undamaged.

As it is Muslims hold the view that stunning is not only unnecessary but is cruel and painful to the animal, and moreover affects the draining of blood from the carcass thereby producing inferior quality meat.

According to animal physiology, the direct religious method of slaying animals for food is painless at the time of death and after the cut, because of the huge haemorrhage induced by cutting the jugular veins in the neck. As the cut is made, blood pressure drops considerably and so the brain is instantaneously deprived of its normal blood supply - this ANAESTHETISES the animal immediately.

For people of faith, especially Muslims, religious prescriptions are far more trustworthy than the declarations of the farm animal welfare groups. There is, after all, far more pressing issues that animal welfare organisations should be concentrating on, wherein the real cruelty to animals lies. For example:

- Battery Cage Factory farming (especially chickens.)
- Drugging (hormones and antibiotics.)
- Fox hunting, bull fighting, dog fighting, cock fighting etc.

- Cruel transportation.
- Commercial drug testing and experiments on animals.
- Torture, blindness, bruises, injuries, daily physiological abuse, torture and discomfort: including castration, maternal deprivation, interference with sexuality and fertility, cloning, tail docking, embryotomy, and hysterectomy.

According to Islam, all these horrific types of animal cruelty are forbidden. The Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are full of instructions and guidance on the welfare and the rights of animals. These teachings were introduced before animal welfare or rights organisations were established!

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 is a shop in Cork and another in Galway that sell Halal meat. 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 produced from animals which were not slaughtered according to Islamic rite or from the pig are Haram and not suitable for Muslims to consume. Any food product, 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 produced 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 product, 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.

List of common food ingredients and additives

Substance	Description	First Opinion	Second Opinion
Acetic Acid	Occurs naturally in plant juices and can be prepared synthetically and can be obtained from animal tissues.	Halal if it is made from plant sources or synthetically. If it is made from animal tissues, then it will not be Halal	Halal and Suitable for Muslim to consume. Acetic acid from animal source is not available in markets.
Adipic Acid	Occurs naturally in beets and can be prepared synthetically.	As the source is plant, it is Halal.	Halal.
Agar Agar	Naturally occurs as seaweed, used in place of gelatine	As the source is plant, it is Halal.	Halal.
Beta-apo-8-Carotenal (C30) (Apocarotenal) (E160e)	An orange/yellow colour derived from plants but may utilise gelatine or lard to dissolve in water.	If lard or gelatine made from animal (other than fish) is used then it will not be suitable for Halal use.	Products containing this additive are Halal regardless of the source of the additives
Carmine / Cochineal (E120)	A colour obtained from a dried female insect, cochineal.	It is not suitable for Halal use.	Products containing this additive are Halal.
Casein	A protein of milk used in the manufacture of cheeses. It is precipitated by acid or by animal or vegetable enzymes.	If animal enzyme is used then it will not be suitable for Halal use.	Halal
Chocolate Liquor	Syrup made from chocolate and used for chocolate flavoured products. It is not liquor or alcohol but because it is a liquid it is called liquor.	It is suitable for Halal use.	It is suitable for Halal use.
Dextrose (corn syrup)	Made from starch, used as a sweetener or colouring agent.	As the source is plant, it is suitable for Halal use.	As the source is plant, it is suitable for Halal use.
E153 – Carbon Black	A colour obtained by charring bones, meat, blood, wood, vegetable etc.	If charred from wood or vegetables then it will be suitable for Halal use.	Halal, regardless of its source.
E322 Lecithin	An emulsifier originally obtained from egg yolk but commercially prepared from Soya bean oil	It is suitable for Halal use.	It is suitable for Halal use.

E422–Glycerine/ Glycerol	It is a clear, colourless, sweetish and viscous liquid obtained from the hydrolysis of fats and oils. It can be from animal, plant or prepared synthetically.	If source is plant, then it is suitable for Halal use.	Products containing this additive are Halal regardless of the source of the additives
E471–Mono and Di-glycerides of fatty acids	Source may be animal or plant depending on the glycerol used.	If source is plant, then it is suitable for Halal use.	Products containing this additive are Halal.
E472 (a-f) Acid esters of Mono and Di-glycerides of fatty acids	Made from animal or plant.	If source is plant, then it is suitable for Halal use.	Products containing this additive are Halal regardless of the source of the additives
E476– Polyglycerol Esters of Polycondensed fatty acids of castor oil	It is prepared from castor oil and glycerol esters.	If it is made using animal product then it will not be suitable for Halal use.	Products containing this additive are Halal regardless of the source of the additives.
E621– Monosodium Glutamate	It is made from Japanese seaweed, sugar beet pulp and wheat gluten.	Source is plant, and therefore, suitable for Halal use.	Halal, from plant source.
Gelatine	A gelling agent made from either animal or plant.	If the source is plant then it is suitable for Halal use.	Halal, results from the transformation of Collagen.
Gaur Gum	It is a thickener and/or stabilizer	It is made from plant therefore it will be suitable for Halal use	Halal
Lactic Acid	It can be produced from corn, soy, sugar cane, beet sugar, whey or by synthetic process.	If produced from whey then one has to check the source of rennet used. If the rennet used is from animal source then it will not be Halal.	Halal
Pectin	A gelling agent made from fruits. Commercially it is made from Apple pulp. It is used in preparation of jams, jellies and similar foods.	It is suitable for Halal use.	Halal, from plant source.
Pepsin	A digestive enzyme found in animal stomach. Commercially it is prepared from pig or calf stomachs.	It is not suitable for Halal use.	Cheese produced by pepsin (negligible amount) are Halal regardless of the source of pepsin
Rennin (Rennet)	An enzyme used in the production of cheese. Rennet added to milk gives	If produced from calf stomach then it will not be suitable for Halal use if the animal was not	Cheese produced by using rennet (in negligible amount) are Halal

	cheese and a by-product called whey. It is produced from calf stomach, plants and microbe.	slaughtered according to Islamic rite.	regardless of the source of rennet (<i>Istihlak</i> , assimilation rule.).
Whey (Powder, Solids, Liquid)	It is a liquid that remains after the coagulation of the casein of milk. The coagulation of milk takes place with the use of enzyme rennet	If the source of rennet is not Halal, then it will not be suitable for Halal use.	Halal (<i>Istihlak</i> , assimilation rule.)

CERTIFICATION OF HALAL MEAT / PRODUCTS BY IFI

Introduction

Ireland is well known for its beef and dairy production, and has, for many years been a leading exporter of Halal meat to Muslim countries. Unfortunately, following the BSE crisis beef exports to Muslim countries have completely stopped.

At present small shipments of lamb are being exported to Muslim communities in Europe. However, on the other hand there is a growing export trade of dairy and food products to Muslim countries.

The Islamic Foundation of Ireland has been involved since 1980 as the certifying authority for Halal meat exported from Ireland to Muslim countries. In 1985 a separate department within the Foundation, the Halal Meat Section, was set up to oversee the supervision and certification of Halal meat. At some stage there were over thirty slaughter men and supervisors employed by the Halal Meat Section.

Current Situation

At present the Islamic Foundation of Ireland only certifies dairy products, children formulae and other food products and ingredients manufactured by various Irish food companies that are exporting to Muslims countries and Muslim communities around the world.

The Islamic Foundation of Ireland is recognised as the sole Halal certifying authority in Ireland by Kuwait Municipality (Notice No. 46/83.) and by the General Secretariat of Municipalities in the United Arab Emirates.

The latter sent a delegation to Ireland to investigate the Irish Islamic institutions that are involved in the authentication of Halal products to the United Arab Emirates. Upon the recommendation of the delegation the Municipality decided:

- To continue its recognition of the Islamic Foundation of Ireland as the only certifying authority of Halal products to the United Arab Emirates.
- To refuse authentication by the Bray Islamic Society, the Islamic Centre of Ireland and the Muslim Centre of Islamic Society Dublin – as these are commercial offices and not Islamic institutions.

CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURE OF HALAL CERTIFICATION

Meat Certification

The Islamic Foundation of Ireland issues Halal certificate for meat exports from Ireland. The following conditions are necessary for the issuance of Halal certificates:

- The Company and the I.F.I. enter into an agreement whereby the I.F.I. agrees to issue certificates in respect of beef/lamb slaughtered by the company according to Islamic rite subject to the standard conditions and procedure set out by the Islamic Foundation of Ireland.
- The Company shall not during the currency of the agreement in respect of Lamb slaughtered in the Republic of Ireland enter into an agreement with any other agency wherever situated purporting to issue Halal Certificates.
- The company shall employ only slaughter men who are currently registered with the I.F.I. If the I.F.I. suspends a Slaughter man for breach of the regulations governing his conduct the I.F.I shall either give one month notice in writing of the suspension to the Company where after the I.F.I shall not issue Certificates in respect of meat slaughtered by this slaughter man or alternatively shall immediately suspend the slaughter man and provide or accept a suitable replacement.
- The wages of the slaughter man shall be negotiated between the Company and the slaughter man.
- The slaughter man must keep a daily record of the carcass numbers of the animals which they have slaughtered and this record must be available for inspection at all times during business hours by the I.F.I supervisor (as appropriate.)
- If the Company also slaughters beef/Lamb otherwise than in accordance with the Islamic Rite then the I.F.I. shall require that a registered supervisor approved by the I.F.I. be present to inspect the carcass after slaughter.
- The Company must also ensure that the approved supervisor is in attendance at the de-boning and packing process after which he shall stamp the boxes with the stamp of the I.F.I. The supervisor shall also be present at the loading of the meat for shipment. The costs of supervision shall be incorporated in the certification fee.
- Where the Company slaughters only according to Islamic Rite and stores no other meat otherwise slaughtered, then the I.F.I. may permit the registered slaughter man to certify the meat. No other meat should be imported from another plant outside the all-Halal slaughtering company without the prior knowledge and approval of the I.F.I. The I.F.I. shall conduct spot checks wherever deemed necessary.

- The Halal Certificate shall only be issued if the foregoing regulations have been complied with in full and the certificates from the supervisor in respect of loading furnished to the I.F.I. office together with the appropriate fee.

Halal Certification of Dairy and other Food Products

A Halal certificate issued by the Islamic Foundation of Ireland is an assurance that a particular product has been investigated and found to conform to the Islamic dietary regulations and is therefore, suitable for Muslims to consume.

As part of the investigation process all the ingredients, additives, colours, processing aids and catalysts are examined to ensure that the product is not derived and does not contain any non-Halal substance.

The certification will be done to the standards approved by the certifying authorities in Europe, Middle and the Far East. According to this standard:

- All food ingredients and additives produced from animals which were not slaughtered according to Islamic rite or from the pig are Haram and not suitable for Halal consumption/use.
- Any food product, ingredient or additive containing alcohol or produced with the use of alcohol is Haram and unsuitable for Halal /consumption use.

All production/processing sites are visited by two officials of the Islamic Foundation of Ireland to carry out the necessary inspection to ensure that all certified products conform to the Islamic dietary regulations.

During the visit the officials will check:

- The components used in the processing.
- Source of components.
- The manufacturing/processing of the product.
- Packing of the product.
- Storage and despatch of the product.

The company will be asked to provide information such as specification sheets, flow charts etc. All the ingredients, additives, colours, processing aids and catalysts used are examined to ensure that the product is not derived and does not contain any non-Halal substance. The inspection will be done in complete confidence and no information will be passed to any third party.

If the Islamic Foundation of Ireland is satisfied that the product meets the Islamic dietary regulations then a Halal certificate is issued which is normally valid for one year and renewable on a yearly basis. The Halal certificate issued by the Islamic Foundation of Ireland is widely accepted.

The cost of the Halal certification for dairy and food products consists of the following:

- An initial fee of €1500-00 for site inspection to cover the travel, the administration and other expenses involved.
- An annual certification fee. This is currently charged at €300 per year for each product.

A proper record system of all the plants accredited and the certified products manufactured by these plants is kept on file for reference.

It is intended that once a product is Halal certified, the company and product are listed on our website, <http://www.islaminireland.com>. Anyone interested in Halal products can check the website and find the details.

There is an increasing demand for Halal certified products. A Halal certificate is a guarantee that products comply with the Islamic dietary requirements. Halal certification can enhance the marketability of your products. If you are exporting or planning to export to Muslim countries then the Halal certificate will allow you to meet one of the important requirements by the importing countries.

If your product is used as an ingredient by your customer then it will help your customer obtain Halal certification and therefore, maintain your customers and may also increase your sales.