

Halal Food Guidelines

and how they relate to SNAP-Ed



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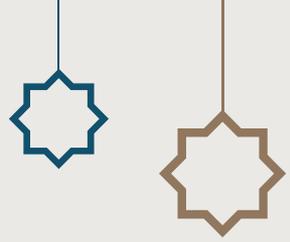




He has only forbidden you to eat carrion, blood, swine, and what is slaughtered in the name of any other than Allah. But if someone is compelled by necessity—neither driven by desire nor exceeding immediate need—they will not be sinful. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

—Quran 2:173

Defining Terms



Halal

- Halal means “permissible” in Arabic
- Refers to foods allowed under Islamic Dietary Laws
- Governed by laws/rulings laid out in the Quran/Hadith
- Includes both ingredients and preparation methods

Haram

- Haram means forbidden – not Halal

Makrooh

- Makrooh means “disliked” not explicitly Haram, still permissible (Ex: Shrimp, wine vinegar)
- Can vary by different interpretations of faith



Basic Halal Guidelines



Meat

Meat must be slaughtered according to Islamic rites (Zabihah)

No Pork or pork-by products

Fish is exempt from this

Only specific animals are considered halal



Alcohol

No alcohol or intoxicants

No cross contamination with non-Halal items (this rule applies to all Haram foods- Ex: Pizza)



Commonly found Haram foods to avoid:



Gelatin

Commonly found in the following foods:

- Yogurts
- Certain Candies or Jams
- Vitamins



Non-halal Meats

- Pork
- Any meats not slaughtered in the non-Zabihah way
- Commonly found in: cold cuts, canned chicken, etc



Lard or Animal Fats

Commonly found in: Tortillas

- Butter is fine as it comes from milk



Animal Rennet

- Commonly found in certain cheeses



Alcohol

Commonly found in extracts
A note on vanilla and other popularly used extracts (almond, lemon, etc)

- The majority of scholars have declared vanilla permissible as a small amount is used that does not intoxicate, however many community members may feel uncomfortable consuming it



Alternatives:



Gelatin

- Yogurts: ShopRite or Wegmans Brand
- Vegan brands



Non-halal Meats

- Vegetarian alternatives as a protein source: hummus, greek yogurt, nut butters
- Canned fish



Lard or Animal Fats

Butter, oil, margarine

- Butter is fine as it comes from milk



Animal Rennet

- Vegan cheeses
- Brand: BelGioso Vegetarian Parm, all Cabot Cheeses are halal
- Most soft cheeses (Mozzerella, etc. are halal)



Alcohol

- Alcohol free extracts easily available
- Imitation Vanilla
- Vanilla bean Paste

- Wine Vinegars also considered permissible but may make community members uncomfortable depending on their school of thought



Halal Friendly Food Bank/SNAP Ed Practices



Label

Clearly label halal or vegetarian food options



Train

Train volunteers/staff on halal handling



Store

Store foods to be served to a halal eating population separately to prevent cross-contamination



Offer

Offer halal options in client-choice models



Where to purchase Halal Meat for a class:



R1

My Bazaar Halal Meat, Egg
Harbor Township, NJ

Madina Grocery and
Produce, Atlantic City, NJ



R3

Walmart, Linden, NJ

Chops and Steaks, North
Brunswick, NJ

ShopRite of South Brunswick-
look for Crescent Brand-
check the app!



R4

Brothers Halal Meat,
Paterson, NJ

Al-Saidah Supermarket, West
New York, NJ

Look for products containing the IFANCA or Halal Symbol: may not be as widespread in traditional grocery stores but things are changing
When in doubt, buy vegetarian or vegan



Special Considerations for Ramadan

Class timing

Many people are more sleep deprived during this month, consider moving the class or doing it earlier in the day when they have more energy.

For kids classes: think about doing the series after Ramadan

Ramadan 2026: Feb 17-March 19

Ramadan 2027 Feb 7- March 8

Portable/disposable foods

Provide ziplocks or containers for participants to take things home in or mise en place with a recipe printout so they can eat after breaking fast

Increased demand for Halal options

Some people want to eat more halal during the month

Cultural or occasionally familiar use for foods

Highlighting the versatility of a food to be used for breaking or starting the fast

التاريخ



Other considerations



Islam is not a monolith

Many Muslims, like all religions, have varying degrees of “religiousness”, some people may practice things less or more than you may be familiar with, feel free to always ask on how to better accommodate!



Culture vs Religion

Islam spans a large geographic region, culture has heavily influenced peoples interpretations of religion as well as how they eat
Ex: Washing meat, celebratory foods, etc



Unfamiliarity with American foods

Many families, especially immigrants, may not be aware of certain types of vegetables or foods, take some time to explain and expose if needed in a class.
Ex: hot dogs, peaches



Mindful eating as an Islamic practice

Islam encourages mindful eating (FSK/FSA!) and discourages overeating

The recommended way to eat by Muhammad (S) was to divide your stomach into thirds, for food, water and air respectively and to eat respectfully and mannered when sharing a meal



Other best practices for engaging with the Muslim Community



Languages

When possible, try to provide material in other commonly used languages by many Muslims:

R1: Bangla, Urdu

R3: Urdu, Arabic

R4: Pashto, Urdu, Arabic,
Bangla

Community Partnerships

Islam is rooted heavily in community, many mosques have pantries and their own feeding and health programs for community members, consider networking with them as a PSE site! Many full-time schools can also be DE-

Eligible!



Zakat- Charity

One of the core tenets of Islam is Zakat, or charity. Zakat is a contribution of a small portion of assets/yearly income to help those less fortunate. Many Muslims/Islamic oriented sites will be happy to engage in SNAP-Ed work as it deeply ties into their beliefs

On the other hand, there may be community members who may feel ashamed or nervous from being Zakat givers to Zakat recipients at a pantry, like all neighbors, treat them with dignity and respect.



Thank you!

