



# The Importance of Halal Food

With the growth of the Muslim consumer market, there is a need to understand better the terms used to describe the many services, needs, and practices related to this segment of consumers. Understanding these concepts, terms, and definitions will help stakeholders to navigate the segment better. One of the most important terms to grasp is “Halal,” an Arabic term that holds deep significance in Islamic culture.



### What is the meaning of Halal (حلال)?

The term “Halal” is commonly used in the Arabic language to indicate permissibility or acceptability. Within the Islamic faith, Halal refers to actions and behaviors that are considered permissible according to Islamic teachings. Conversely, “Haram” denotes actions or behaviors that are forbidden within the context of Islam.

### What is the meaning of Halal food?

Halal food is any food deemed permissible under Islamic law, as defined in the Quran. The Islamic dietary laws specify that all food and beverages are considered Halal unless they are explicitly stated as forbidden. These laws guide Muslims around the globe in identifying what foods are Halal, thus fulfilling their dietary requirements in accordance with Islamic teachings. Muslims worldwide accept the Quran as the book of perfect direction and bearing for humankind and believe the Quran to be the last disclosure of God.

God says in the Quran (a translation)

- “Eat of the good things which We have provided for you.” (Quran 2:172)

- “Eat of what is lawful (Halal) and wholesome (Tayyib) on the earth.” (Quran 2:168)

- “O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.” (Quran 2:168)

Although some specific teachings vary, the consensus is that food/drinks must be free of pork, alcohol/intoxicants, poisons, harmful ingredients, or unhygienic elements. Any meat must be slaughtered in accordance with the methods prescribed under Islamic law known as Zabihah.

### Islamic Dietary Laws

The method of slaughtering animals for meat in Islam is known as Zabihah. It is considered the most humane and purest way to slaughter animals for consumption. This process is integral to Islamic dietary laws, including prohibitions against consuming pork, alcohol, and other intoxicants.

What is Muslim-friendly food or Halal-friendly food?

In some cases, these terms are used by restaurants to indicate that the food is suitable for Muslims to consume. However, these terms do not convey the level of assurance Muslims require. The food has to be either Halal (permissible for consumption) or not Halal (not permissible for consumption). It cannot be ‘permissible-friendly’.

### Health Benefits of Eating Halal Food

Increasingly, people are recognizing the health benefits of eating Halal food. Halal meat is often considered cleaner and healthier because of the strict Zabihah slaughtering process, which ensures that most blood is drained from the veins.

### Halal and Tayyib: Beyond Just Permissible

The Quran not only instructs Muslims to eat Halal but also Tayyib. The literal translation of Tayyib is good/clean/wholesome. It is commonly used by Muslims to refer to food, but often that of a higher quality or purity, such as organic or even simply healthy food. It also encompasses universal concerns such as being natural, environment-friendly, eco-ethical, non-cruelty to animals, socially responsible, and reducing over-consumption. Thus, food can be Halal (made of permissible ingredients) but not Tayyib.

### What is Halal Meat?

There are minor differences of opinion within the Islamic law on which animals are considered Halal, but the general consensus is that all seafood is Halal, and those herbivorous land animals are Halal provided they have been slaughtered according to Islamic rulings of Zabihah.

### What foods are Haram or non-Halal in Islam?

All foods and beverages are considered Halal except for those that are explicitly forbidden in the Quran, as listed below:

- Alcohol and other intoxicants, such as narcotics
- Dead animals that were not slaughtered
- Blood
- Pork
- Meat that was slaughtered for idols
- All carnivores with teeth, such as lions and tigers
- All winged creatures that have claws, for example, birds of prey, hawks, vultures, falcons, and so on
- Domesticated donkeys, mice, scorpions, snakes, frogs
- Any animal that has died (except fish and sea creatures) before being slaughtered in the Islamic manner

### What are the conditions for food and drinks to be Halal?

For the food or drink to be halal, it must also fulfill the following parameters:

- It does not contain anything that is haram in Shariah law (as outlined above)
- It was not prepared, processed, or contaminated with anything haram
- It was not prepared, processed, transported, or stored using any facility contaminated by anything haram.
- It does not contain najis (unclean) material according to Shariah law
- It must be safe for human consumption, non-poisonous, non-intoxicating, or non-hazardous to health.
- It must not be prepared, processed, or manufactured using equipment that was contaminated with najis or haram foods according to Shariah law
- The meat(s) must be slaughtered as per Islamic rites.