

## Serving Muslim Patrons Following a Halal Diet:

# A Quick Halal Guide for Nutrition and Foodservice Professionals

The word, halal, meaning permissible in Arabic, is often used to describe the dietary guidelines followed by those of the Muslim faith. This reference sheet provides basic information for nutrition and foodservice professionals on the halal diet and how to serve Muslim patrons in foodservice operations.

*Tip: While all Muslims will consume halal food, please be aware of variations in levels of adherence to the halal diet as well as of cultural variations in ethnic cuisine. For optimal customer satisfaction, check with individual patrons before making assumptions on what food may be considered appropriate.*

### Haram (Prohibited) Foods

Prohibited (Haram)	Examples
Pork	Pork meat, gelatin, lard, and enzymes of pork origin (often used to make cheese)
Alcohol	Wine, brandy, rum, vodka, beer, champagne, & other alcoholic beverages; extracts (such as vanilla extracts); alcohol-containing batters & sauces

### Halal (Permissible) Foods and Substitution Ideas

Permissible (Halal)	Examples and Substitution Ideas
Meats and Proteins	Other meats, including beef, lamb, and poultry are considered halal as long as they are slaughtered according to Islamic law ( <i>dhabihah/zabihah</i> ). In the absence of halal meat, fish (with scales) provide a safe substitute. Other protein-rich foods such as beans, nuts, and seeds are also halal.
Dairy	Dairy is generally considered halal*. However, yogurts containing gelatin and cheeses containing animal-based enzymes are not permissible. Greek and other yogurt not containing gelatin, as well as halal-certified cheeses, such as some <a href="#">Cabot brand cheeses</a> , may be used as substitutes.
Fats & Oils	Butter, margarine, oils, and other fats (other than lard) are generally halal unless they have been exposed to non-halal foods (for example, oil used to fry pork chops; or non- <i>zabihah</i> meat; would be rendered haram and should not be used to fry halal foods)*
Cooked Dishes	Vodka, wine, and other alcoholic beverages are commonly used in sauces, sautés, and other cooked dishes. Though some alcohol is cooked off, small traces remain rendering the dish haram. Possible substitutions in these dishes include vinegar, lemon juice, and vegetable broth.
Snacks, sweets, cakes, chocolates, and candies	Jell-O snacks, puddings, gummy candies, and marshmallows typically contain gelatin and are not considered halal*. Items with fish gelatin or that are halal certified can be used as substitutes. If making items from scratch, substituting gelatin with fruit pectin will usually produce the desired consistency and texture. Certain cakes and chocolates contain liquor or rum. Cakes and chocolates without liquor/rum are generally halal*.

\*Third-party halal certification by a credible organization is one efficient way to confirm halal status of processed foods. Look for halal certification symbols (for example, the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America uses  to indicate halal certification). You can also ask the manufacturer to provide their actual halal certificate. Some companies post their actual halal certificates online; make sure these certificates are current and not expired. For meat products, ask for batch certificates.

### Want to Learn More?

For comprehensive information on the halal diet, please refer to resources by the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America at [www.ifanca.org](http://www.ifanca.org) and [www.youtube.com/ifanca4halal](http://www.youtube.com/ifanca4halal).

For food and nutrition guidance for the Islamic month of Ramadan, please e-mail Muslims in Dietetics and Nutrition at [info@muslimdietitians.org](mailto:info@muslimdietitians.org) or visit [www.muslimdietitians.org](http://www.muslimdietitians.org).