



# ***Halal*** ***pages***

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## Halal pages

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# General Guidelines For Halal Food Preparation

Unified Standard of Halal Certification is Important to Globalize Halal Products



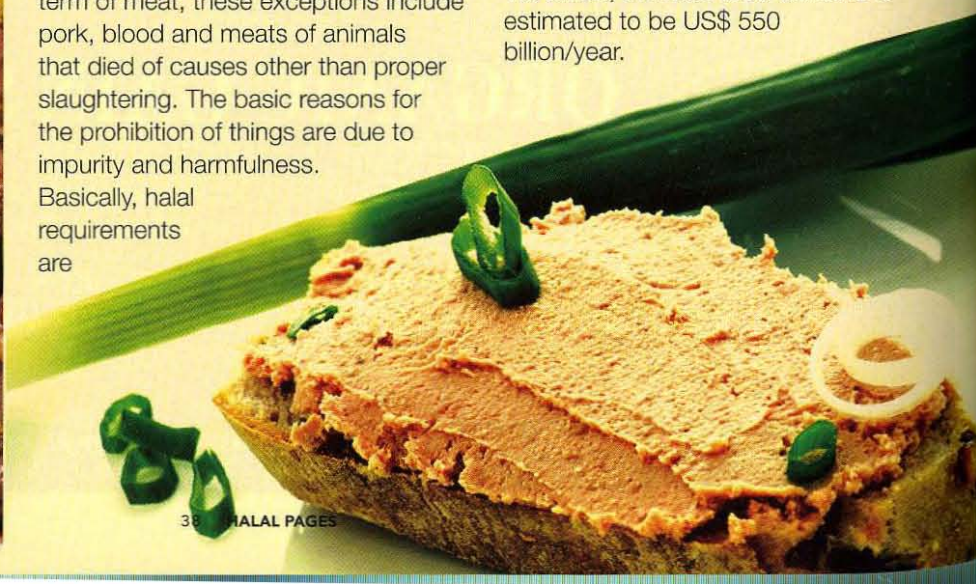
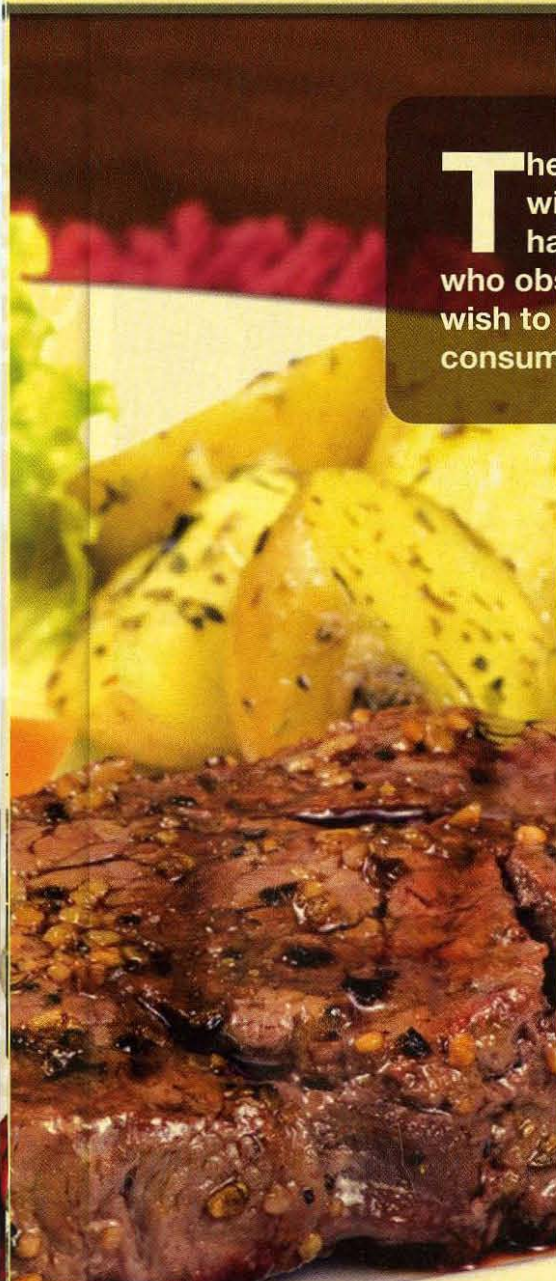
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**T**he demand of halal (permissible) food is increasing in tandem with the growing of Muslim population. Knowledge of the halal dietary laws is important to the Muslim populations who observe these laws and to food and beverage companies that wish to market their products to this population and to interested consumers who do not observe these laws at present.

Generally, all things created by God (Allah) are permitted, with a few exceptions that are prohibited (haram) by clear and definite injunctions in the authentic sources according to Muslims: the Qur'an and Prophet Mohammad traditions (sunnah). In term of meat, these exceptions include pork, blood and meats of animals that died of causes other than proper slaughtering. The basic reasons for the prohibition of things are due to impurity and harmfulness. Basically, halal requirements are

in accordance with the conventional quality standards (ISO, HACCP, Codex, GHP, GMP, etc). Therefore, halal products are typically also viable for non-Muslim consumers.

With an estimated population of 1.6 billion, the halal food demand is estimated to be US\$ 550 billion/year.

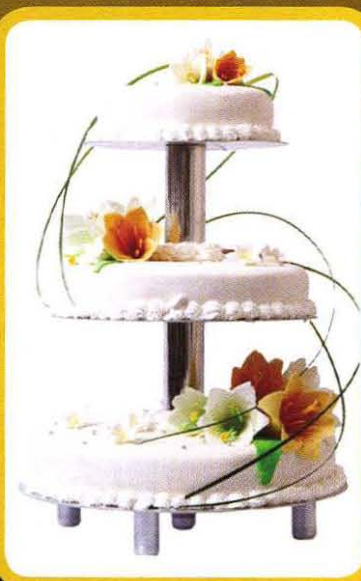




The increase of global meat demand is affected by the increasing population, increasing meat consumption and perhaps also by the decreasing meat price. Requirements for meat exporters to comply with halal requirements and to provide halal certificate lead to the growth of halal meat supply. The unified standard of halal certification is important to globalize halal products as well as for consumers' convenience. This short essay provides some general guidelines for halal food preparation and production.

Basically, there are four types of food preparation or production.

1. **One-Off Production.** This method is used when customers make an order for something to be made to their own specifications, for example a wedding cake. The making of One-Off Products could take days depending on how intricate the design is and also the ability of the specialist making the product.



2. **Batch Production.** This method is used when the size of the market for a product is not clear, and where there is a range within a product line. A certain number of the same goods will be produced to make up a batch or run. For example, the bakers at a certain bakery will produce a certain number of chicken bakes. This method involves estimating the amount of customers that will want to buy that product.

3. **Mass production.** This method is used when there is a mass market for a large number of identical products, such as, chocolate bars, ready meals and canned food. The product passes from one stage of production to another along a production line.

4. **Just In Time.** This method of production is mainly used in many food outlets in shopping malls where all the components of the product are there and the customer chooses what they want in their product and it is made for them fresh in front of them.

Foods are broadly classified into four groups to establish their halal status and to formulate guidelines for halal preparation or production:

#### 1. **Meat and Poultry:**

Only halal animals are allowed for consumption by Muslims. These animals should also be healthy and must be slaughtered by a sane adult Muslim while pronouncing the name of God. A sharp knife must be used to

#### 2. **Fish and Seafood**

With regards to fish and seafood products, there are different



cut the throat in a manner that induces thorough removal of blood and quick death. Islam places great emphasis on humane treatment of animal. However, these are only desirable actions and mishandling of animals does not make the meat haram. Stunning of animals before nonreligious slaughtering is generally accepted in certain countries like the US and Canada where methods of stunning is generally non-lethal. In many European countries, the type and severity of stunning usually kills the animals before bleeding, which makes it unacceptable as halal meat, and thus unsuitable for Muslims.

There are some advantages of adhering to the slaughtering procedure required by the Islamic teachings called (Dhabh). The recommendation to use a sharp knife/blade will shorten the slaughter action time and seems to inflict less pain than stunning. The Dhabh method also allows rapid and efficient bleeding of the animal. Blood being enclosed in a closed circuit can be removed faster by cutting the blood vessels.





schools of Islamic jurisprudence as well as the cultural practices of Muslims living in different regions. Fish with scales are accepted by all denominations and groups of Muslims. Some groups do not consume fish without scales, such as catfish. On the seafood products, the difference of opinions among Muslim scholars includes the acceptability of mollusks (clams, oysters, and squids) and crustaceans (e.g. shrimps, lobsters, and crabs). The requirements and restrictions apply not only to fish and seafood, but also to flavors as well as ingredients derived from such products.

### 3. **Milk and Eggs**

Milk and eggs from halal animals are also halal. Milk predominantly comes from cows and eggs from hens. All other sources are required to be labeled accordingly. Milk is the raw materials for many products, such as cheese, butter and cream, while eggs is used in bakery products or sometimes extracted for production of other food ingredients such as emulsifier, certain amino acids, etc.

### 4. **Plant and Vegetable Materials**

All foods from plants are basically halal, except for khamr (intoxicants) and those that are poisonous. However, in food processing plants, animal and vegetable products sometimes are used in the same plant which can cause cross-contamination. Therefore, food manufacturers need to observe that proper cleaning procedure is used and segregation between halal and non-halal materials is properly performed.



Other aspects of Halal Food Preparation that need proper attention by the food manufacturers are:

1. **Food Ingredients:** Food ingredients are one of the important subjects of concern. Among the ingredients that need to get careful attention include gelatin, glycerine, emulsifiers, enzymes, alcohol, animal fat and protein, and flavorings. Food ingredients can be derived either from plants or animals. They are classified as natural or synthetic materials.
2. **Cleanliness and Cross Contamination:** In the process of halal food preparation, all possible sources of contamination (physical, chemical and microbial) must be avoided. Islamic food laws are based on cleanliness, sanitation, and purity. All utensils must be clean and free of contamination from any unlawful or harmful substances. Cross contamination is another issue for the Muslim consumers. Most processed foods undergo many steps in their journey from raw materials to market; beginning with the tankers which transport the raw ingredients, possible problems may arise. Additionally, the production lines need to be properly cleansed since many manufacturing plants produce both halal and non-halal food items using the same equipment and production line.
3. **Quality Assurance Guidelines:** Some well-known standard procedures for quality assurance in food production might be useful in executing halal production procedure that sometimes varies from one country to another. Among them are Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for Use of Term Halal, HACCP, etc. Halal Guidelines established for specific countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, could be also taken as references.
4. **Packaging:** Packaging materials are also questionable as to their halal status. While a plastic, microwaveable container may appear acceptable, the source of some of the ingredients used to

create the plastics may be hidden. In many cases, stearates are used in the production of plastic containers. Metal cans are also suspect. The formation and cutting of cans sometimes require the use of oils to aid in their manufacturing. Such oils can also be derived from animal. Steel drums could be used to carry foods containing pork or pork fats which, despite rigorous cleaning practices, could remain in small amounts to contaminate halal products otherwise thought pure.

5. **Labeling:** Labels are for the benefit of the consumer and should be descriptive, clear and meaningful. Unfortunately some ingredient labels do not list the origin of the ingredients. For example, magnesium or calcium stearates are used in the manufacturing of candy without explanation of their origin. Chewing gum is a product which raises a number of questions. A typical chewing gum wrapper reads "gum base sugar, corn syrups, flavour and softeners." What does a consumer understand by gum base or softeners? Industry players need to be more specific on labels. Hidden ingredients present another serious problem for the Muslim consumers. Chocolate is one example. European companies can use up to 5% vegetable or animal fat to cut the cost of cocoa butter in their product and still able to label it pure chocolate. The flavouring may have several ingredients which are not halal. If alcohol is part of the food composition/formulation, then alcohol must be listed.
6. **Laboratory Analysis:** Proper laboratory facilities are required to ensure the halal status of foods available in the market. In the halal industry, the policy governing all aspects of halal from the authority/government is needed.

It is hoped that this short essay is a primer to all concerned with halal and the halal industry, especially the food manufacturers, food outlets, food handlers and distributors as well as the relevant authorities and consumers.