

4 Facts about Muslims' Eating Habits



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Introduction

Stepping into a new religion opens up a whole new world. This new life requires new habits and perhaps leaving aside some old habits. Our choice of food, apart from our taste, may also be one of these habits that need a reconsideration. Islam wants us to have a better life, both physically and spiritually, therefore, Muslims are recommended to follow some guidelines in their eating habits. In what follows you will find out about four facts that Muslims observe in how and what they eat.

1. Muslims can eat some kind of meats

Like the followers of other religions who have specific slaughtering rituals, Muslims also have explicit rulings for slaughtering particular animals to make it lawful (*Halal*).

Lawful and Unlawful Meats

Allah does not mention what to eat, but excludes what is not lawful to eat and may be physically or spiritually harmful to human's body and soul.

According to Quran, you are permitted animals of grazing livestock, except for:

- Carrion
- Blood
- the flesh of swine
- what has been offered to other than Allah
- the animal strangled or beaten to death
- that which dies by falling or is gored to death

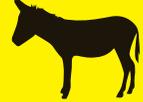
- that which is mangled by a beast of prey— barring that which you may purify —
- what is sacrificed on stone altars [to idols] (5:3).

Other than the mentioned meats all other kinds of meat are Halal (6:145).

Note that the above mentioned prohibited meats becomes lawful (Halal) while you are living in a difficult situation and following the rules of Islam will put you in extreme difficulty. A difficulty, as written in Islamic jurisprudence is when one's life is at risk, and there is no other food available but forbidden (Haram) meat.



Lawful (Halal) and Forbidden (Haram)meats

	Halal	Detestable (<i>Makruh</i>)	Haram
Sea Creatures	Fish that have scales 	_____	Other sea creatures and fish 
Land Creatures (Domestic or Wild)	Sheep  Cow  Camel  Deer  Zebra  Mountain goat  wild donkey	Horse  Donkey	wild predatory animals that are predatory in essence (e.g. lions, leopards, cheetahs, wolves) Animals with less sharp fangs (e.g. foxes, hyenas rabbits) Reptiles (e.g. snakes, mice, lizar Monkeys  Bears ds, hedgehogs, etc.) Elephants 
Birds	Birds that flap their wings more than they glide while flying.  Birds with gizzards and spurs at the back of their feet	_____	Birds that glide and spread their wings more while flying in the air instead of flapping their wings 
Insects	_____	_____	All insects

Can Muslims Eat Kosher?

«For every nation We have appointed a rite so that they might mention Allah's Name over the livestock He has provided them» (22:34).

Although Jews have their specific rules of slaughtering that have many similarities to the Islamic rulings, as there are minor differences in slaughtering of Jews and Muslims, therefore kosher meat is not lawful (Halal) for Muslims [8].



2. Muslims usually eat in Halal Restaurants

Finding restaurants of all types in all different parts of the world that serve Halal food is not a difficult job these days. From the Far West to the Far East we can see restaurants with a Halal label on their signs. But have you ever happened to ask the restaurant staff if the food is really Halal? And have you ever heard the firm reply "Yes, madam. Feel sure. Even our pork is Halal!" This point, my friends, is where our project of finding a real Halal restaurant begins.

Which Halal restaurants can we trust?

In some non-Muslim countries, the population of Muslims in some specific cities or specific areas of the town is quite noticeable. Often, in these areas, the number of Halal restaurants owned and run by Muslim managers is large. We could usually trust these restaurants as the managers care about the Islamic law, and therefore the food they serve. However, in some

western countries, my friends and I have come across restaurants in which their managers came from Islamic countries, and so we thought that the food would be Halal. But after some local investigations, we realized that the manager is not a practicing Muslim, and the food they serve is not Halal. Now, what do we do?

many non-Muslim restaurant owners serve Halal meat as well. Therefore, apart from the Halal label on their signs, they keep a certificate in the restaurants, usually hung on the wall some place all caring customers can see. From the Islamic law viewpoint, you can trust that and enjoy your meal in these restaurants [10].

Even in some coffee shops that serve sandwiches, the managers have provided an extra sandwich-maker for Muslim customers with which they do not roast pork and other non-Halal sandwiches.

Can we trust vegetarian or Halal food in non-Halal restaurants?

It often happens that our group of friends or colleagues decide to dine together at a fancy restaurant which may not be Halal. It is understandable that isolating yourself from the group may have some personal or social consequences. What can we do at these times?

First of all, we can remind the rest of the group that we only eat Halal food, and they may agree to dine at a Halal restaurant. But according to the Islamic law, if we did not have a choice, we should not be too harsh on ourselves, and we should trust the vegetarian or Halal food of non-Halal restaurants [11].

Thinking deeply of the verse “Then let mankind look at his food.” (80:24), one may realize the importance of the food we eat and its influence on the human soul. Therefore, if we intend to treat our souls and ascend the steps of spirituality, it is necessary to find food we are entirely sure is Halal.

3. Muslims eat Meats that Are Slaughtered in a Halal way

The Islamic slaughter: Rules and rituals

Now imagine we are in a far-away village, gathering with a group of friends. Of course, there are no butchers, nor a supermarket from which we can buy food. But there is a beautiful white lamb grazing in the field. How does it become lawful (Halal) to roast?

First of all, we have to buy it from the owner.

Don't forget that the animal must be Halal-meated [13].

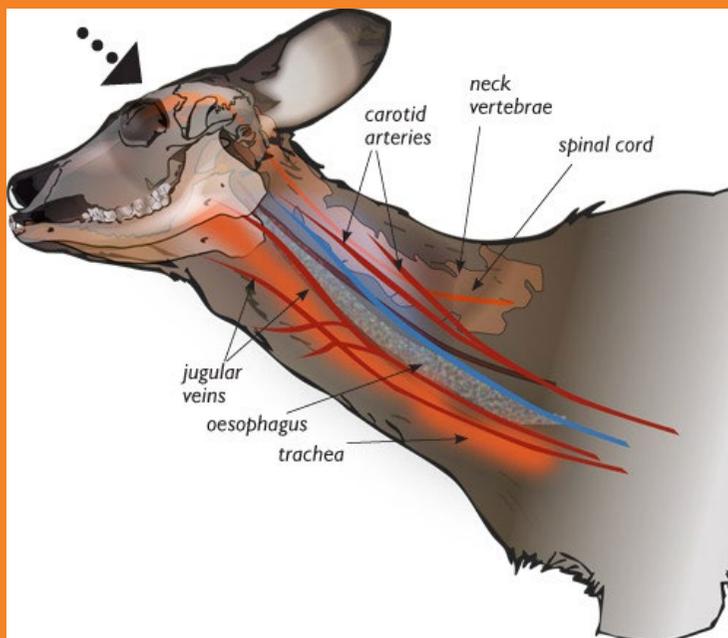
It is recommended to water the animal before the slaughter and do the slaughter job in a way that the animal feels the minimum pain and distress. And it is detestable (Makruh) to slaughter the animal in a place where other animals can see. It is also detestable (Makruh) to slaughter

that animal that one has brought up and has an emotional connection to it [14].

Then we have to make sure that we follow the rules as below:

1. It must be facing the holy Kaaba (Qibla) when slaughtered.
2. The person performing the slaughter must mention the name of Allah as he slaughters the animal.
3. The slaughtering must be done with sharp metal so that the animal does not suffer much, and it happens as quickly as possible.
4. It must be slaughtered with a specific method in which the four main veins (the throat, windpipe, and the blood vessels) are cut, without cutting the spinal cord.
5. The animal must show some sign of movement after being slaughtered, primarily if there was some doubt whether the animal was alive before being slaughtered.

6. There must be a natural emission of blood from the animal after the act of slaughtering [iv] [15].



that the nerve fibers to the heart could be damaged during the process causing cardiac arrest, stagnating the blood in the blood vessels [17].

There are still many scientific and spiritual reasons of which we are not yet aware. It is NOT impossible to find scientific reasons for God's orders and prohibitions, but it is always easier to trust Him and obey His rulings for a more beneficial life.

Some Benefits of Islamic Slaughtering

-The blood being drained entirely before the head is removed causes the emission of most of the blood which would serve as a suitable culture medium for microorganisms.

-It is said in Islamic law that the spinal cord must not be cut, and the scientific reason found for this law is



4. Muslims don't eat Pork

Religious Reasons:

Pork is forbidden in different Divine religions. For instance, the Bible says about pork: «And the swine ... he is unclean to you. Of the flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.» (Leviticus, 8-11:7). The same command is repeated in Deuteronomy, 14:8.

Christians often depict Satan in religious anecdotes in the form of a pig. The Gospel of Barnabas mentions that Pig is Satan personified and that the pig's body has the spirit of Satan. The present Bible among the Christians (Matthew 32-8 Marks 13-5, Luke :8 39-28) describes how Jesus thrust the soul of Satan inside the herd of swines and sent them towards the river [18].

In Islam, there are two primary sources for understanding the orders of Allah: the Quran and the Sunnah [19]. Both the Holy Quran and Sunnah have equal status as far as the obligatory laws (wajibat) are concerned. Both sources indicate that eating pork is forbidden [v].

Scientific Reasons:

The present-day science of parasitology has proven some severe diseases in human beings caused by the bacteria and germs found in pork:

-Pork is the primary carrier of many germs and parasites such as *Faciolopsis buski*, *Paragonimus*, *Clonorchis sinensis*, *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* [23]. Moreover, Dr. Joseph Mercola has cited the following diseases caused by pork: Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), the Nipah Virus, Porcine Endogenous Retrovirus (PERV) and Menangle Virus [24].

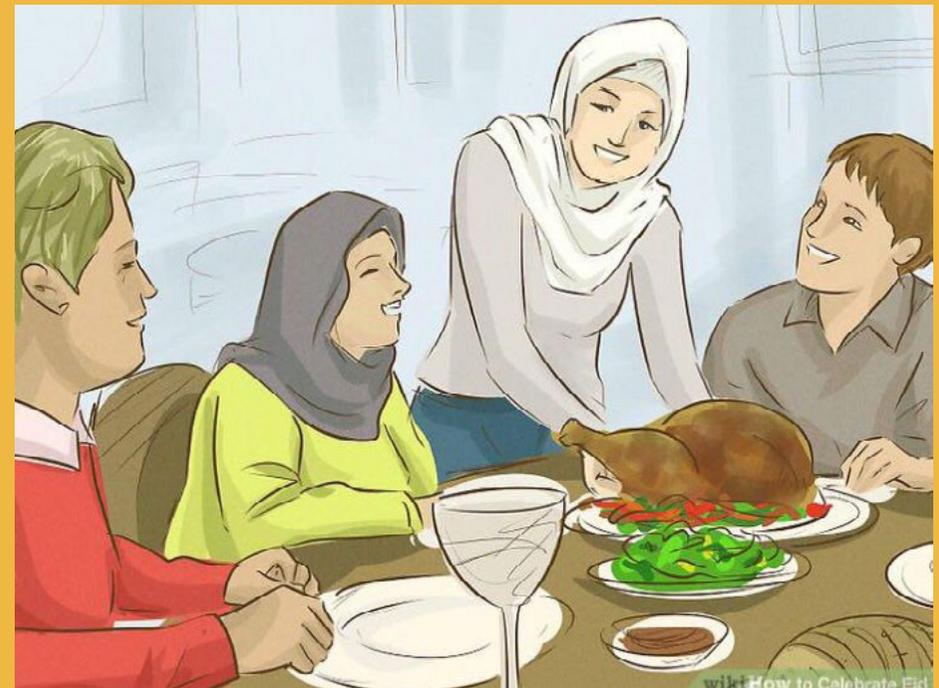
-Other diseases caused by eating pork include dysentery, trichinosis, tapeworm, roundworm, hookworm, jaundice, pneumonia, suffocation,

intestinal obstruction, acute pancreatitis, enlargement of liver, diarrhea, emaciation, stone formation in liver, cancer, anemia, high fever, hindrance of growth development in children, typhoid, lameness, heart trouble, abortion, sterility, and sudden death [25] .

-It is important to note that despite hard efforts in medical science, many of the pig parasites cannot be eliminated by antibiotics, drugs or vaccines.

Some people assert that by present-day means it is possible to eliminate all these parasites and make pork devoid of them. Even so, according to the established law of Islam, the meat of every animal bears the traits of that animal and, using the glands and the hormones secreted by them, influences the conduct of those who consume it. Thus, consuming pork may transfer the attributes of sexual depravity and indifference towards the affairs of the womenfolk of the family - the most obvious traits of the male members of this species - into the person who consumes it. [26].

So since the scope of science and the knowledge of human beings are limited, there might be other harms still undiscovered. However, even if human beings find some way of eliminating all the physical and spiritual harms of something, it does not mean that the forbidden (Haram) law of God becomes permissible (Halal).





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Salam Islam is an attempt to pave the way for those who are willing to step in the path of holy religion of Islam and embrace light and happiness. In order to help you in this journey, we provide you with clear-cut and comprehensive contents ranging from the most basic tenets of Islamic beliefs, introducing the axioms – e.g. monotheism (Tawhid), prophethood (Nubuwwah), etc. - as well as practical principles such as prayer (Salat) and fasting (Sawm), etc., to the most useful guidelines for an Islamic way of life including lifestyle, family and women’s concerns. In addition, we are sincerely willing to share the experiences and stories of those who are newly embraced Islam. This website, has no commercial purposes and appreciates any support or assistance and is open to your feedbacks regardless of your religion or beliefs. If you had any questions, you can contact us through info@salamislam.com.

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