

# HALA FOOD IN EGYPT

## GLOBAL HALAL MARKET

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There are 1.6 billion Muslims in over 112 countries, creating substantial marketing opportunities for halal food products. While developed countries are seeing declining populations with shrinking families, Muslim nations are seeing rapid growth and large families. Islam is the second-largest religion in the world (after Christianity) and the fastest-growing. As of 2012, about 25% of the world population was Muslim; this is expected to climb to 30% by 2025. The global market for halal products is estimated at \$580 billion a year. Global halal trade is approximately \$80 billion or 5% of total trade of agri-food products. In accordance with religious requirements, all Muslims must eat, drink and take medicines that are halal, which is fuelling a large and growing demand for halal products. Considering population growth rates and increasing incomes, it is estimated that in the future, halal food may account for 20% of world trade in food products.

## DEFINITION OF HALAL FOOD

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Halal food is prepared following a set of Islamic dietary laws and regulations that determine what is permissible, lawful and clean. Halal regulations are almost 1400 years old. Traditionally, halal meat was always prepared and usually sold by Muslims. Halal foods were made from scratch at home and complex processed ingredients were not used. Today, Muslims continue to require food products that conform to acceptable halal standards. Permissible food categories include meat, poultry, fish, seafood, milk, eggs, fruits and vegetables. Halal food is defined as safe and not harmfully prepared, it does not contain non-halal and unclean ingredients and is processed and manufactured using equipment that is not contaminated with things that are unclear.

Food items that are prohibited (haram) under Islamic dietary laws include:

- Swine and boars.
- Animals improperly slaughtered
- Alcohol and intoxicants
- Dogs, snakes and monkeys.
- Carnivorous animals with claws and fangs such as lions, tigers, bears and other similar animals.
- Birds of prey with claws such as eagles, vultures, and other similar birds.
- Pests such as rats, centipedes, scorpions and other similar animals.
- Animals forbidden to be killed in Islam i.e., ants, bees and woodpecker birds.
- Animals which are considered repulsive generally like lice, flies, maggots and other similar animals.
- Animals that live both on land and in water such as frogs, crocodiles and other similar animals.
- Mules and domestic donkeys.
- All poisonous and hazardous aquatic animals.
- Any other animals not slaughtered according to Islamic Law.
- Blood.
- Contaminated Foods
- Foods containing questionable ingredients

## HALAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD PRODUCTS AND INGREDIENTS

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- Islamic law specifies halal requirements for food products and ingredients. Although there are some variations in interpretation of these requirements, they are generally minor. Meat and poultry are permissible under halal regulations; however animals must be of the halal species

- and must be slaughtered using Islamic methods. It is required that animals be slaughtered by a Muslim and that the name of Allah be pronounced at the time of slaughter. Humane handling must also be practiced and animal suffering minimized. All blood must be removed from the carcass. Stunning of animals is permitted providing it is not fatal.
- Fish with scales are acceptable by all Muslim groups. Fish without scales, shellfish and crustaceans are only accepted by some Muslim groups.
  - Animal-derived ingredients should come from animals slaughtered by Muslims or from fish. Milk and eggs of all acceptable animal species are permitted. However, there are restrictions on enzymes from animals, emulsifiers of animal origin and other functional ingredients.
  - All vegetable ingredients are halal except intoxicating ones.
  - A number of food products and ingredients are prohibited (haram) as their source is not normally indicated. These products include:
    - Gelatin
    - Glycerin
    - Emulsifiers
    - Enzymes
    - Dairy ingredients, whey and cheese (these depend on enzyme used, which is normally not indicated)
    - Animal protein/fat
    - Flavorings and compound mixtures
  - Preservatives are also questionable food ingredients, as well as other products used in the production of food including processing aids, lubricants, cleaning agents, sanitizers and packaging material.
  - Genetically-modified organisms and biotechnology raise new challenges for halal certification. Regarding transgenic foods, plant to plant gene transfer is acceptable; however, animal-to-plant or animal-to-animal gene transfer is questionable and may or may not be acceptable.
  - Alcohol is prohibited in Islam. Food items with alcohol as an ingredient or used in cooking are not allowed. This includes fruit essences (with alcohol naturally present) and alcohol used for technical reasons (for example extraction of flavours like vanilla).

### **Food Safety and Sanitation**

A number of measures ensure the safety and cleanliness of halal foods and have helped build the perception in certain markets that halal food is safer. Halal food preparation includes safety controls such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety systems. Furthermore, allergen and chemical control is achieved through the identification of cross contaminants and allergens, as well as the declaration of all ingredients. Additional safeguards include careful employee training and halal food laws and regulatory requirements.

### **Certification**

Halal certification allows access to growing export markets that require certification. Meat must be certified as halal by an accredited Thai halal certifying body (Central Islamic Council of Thailand, **CICOT**). Thai certifying bodies must be recognized in the export market(s) in question. No standard certification exists and certification requirements vary by country. Thai exporters need documentation as Thailand is not a Muslim country. Some importing countries require government approval of halal certifying agencies. Thai Exporters should check with importing governments to determine which organizations are recognized as halal-certifiers for specific products. Certification requirements vary by country and product.

## CONDITIONS AND REGULATIONS OF HALAL FOOD IMPORT:

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- The exporter must obtain a Certificate of Islamic Slaughter from a member of an Islamic Center or Islamic organization. This certificate must accompany products labelled Halal. The Egyptian Embassy in Thailand in Bangkok must authenticate the certificate.
- Halal labelling is a responsibility of the exporter.
- General labelling must be in Arabic and English and include storage temperatures on all meat products, production and expiration dates, and metric net weight.
- Additional requirements include country of origin, producer's name, name of the slaughter plant, date of production, importer's name and address, and the name of the approved Islamic organization on a label inserted inside the bag or wrapping for fresh/frozen products.
- All products must be shipped direct from the country of origin.
- It is permitted to import boneless frozen meat from countries which epidemic situation permits
- Consignment should be accompanied with a **veterinary certificate** indicating that meat was taken from epidemic, contagious or common disease-free animals coming from disease-free areas and farms, that the meat was examined before and after slaughter and that its validity for human consumption was proved. Consignment should be free from hormones, harmful substances, pesticides, residues of drugs or medicines. In case of countries which have animals cases of Mad Cow disease, veterinary certificate should stipulate that the meat does not have any residues of spinal cord or roots of big nerves and that the method of removing such parts has been effected in a way that never causes to contaminate meat with the vertebral column.
- The age of the animal the source of the meat should never exceed two years and the sex masculine
- Meat product should be in accordance with the Egyptian Standard Specifications. As for poultry and its products, an approval should be issued through the sector of Animal & poultry Wealth Development at the Ministry of Agriculture.
- **(This product produced according to the Islamic Rules)** this phrase should be written on each package of the animal products (Except: Fish).

## THAI OPPORTUNITIES

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Significant opportunities exist for Thai companies wishing to enter the halal food market. Consumers are seeking a wide-range of certified-halal products in varied food categories, not just meat. Strong demand for new or differentiated halal products that are not already in the market also exists.

There is growing concern for food safety and quality in halal markets. This is an area where Thais may have a competitive advantage given that Thailand has a reputation as a supplier of safe and high quality products. Consumers are also demanding genuine halal products, as there have been a number of incidents globally where food marketed as halal fails to meet halal requirements.

Potential markets for halal products include halal/ethnic specialty stores, supermarket chains and the foodservice market (universities, schools, prisons, restaurants, airlines and the military). There is increasing demand for halal suppliers from European hypermarket and superstore chains. Halal products are also growing in popularity among Non-Muslim consumers due to humane animal treatment concerns and the perception that halal products are healthier and safer.

Potential halal products include food, consumer products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, leather goods, as well as services. There are also enormous export opportunities in value-added halal food, with Thais well-positioned to enter this market due to an abundant water supply and high quality standards.

## **THE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES IN CHARGE OF HALAL FOOD**

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### **Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, General Authority of Veterinary Services**

Tel: (202) 3361727

Fax: (202) 3361727

Website: [www.agr-egypt.gov.eg](http://www.agr-egypt.gov.eg)

### **Ministry of Health, The Central Laboratories of The Ministry of Health**

Tel: (202) 7941076

Fax: (202) 7924156

Website: [www.mohp.gov.eg](http://www.mohp.gov.eg)

### **Ministry of Foreign Trade & Industry, General Authority of Imp. & Exp. Control**

Tel: (202) 5774046

Fax: (202) 5766971

Website: [www.goeic.gov.eg](http://www.goeic.gov.eg)