

## Halal Eating Establishments

---

The halal (food that is deemed permissible under Islamic dietary laws) food market has exploded in the past decade and is now worth an estimated \$632 billion annually, according to the Halal Journal, a Kuala Lumpur-based magazine, which constitutes about 16% of the entire global food industry.

One reason for the rise of the halal economy is that the world's 1.6 billion Muslims are younger and hence, seeking a more globalised lifestyle. Seeking to tap that huge market, non-Muslim multinationals like Tesco, McDonald's and Nestle have expanded their Muslim-friendly offerings and now control an estimated 90% of the global halal market<sup>1</sup>. As such, outlets serving these halal foods need to be aware of stringent requirements in the setting up for halal eating establishments, which in turn, require the owner(s) to be aware of the halal certification schemes. Eating establishments may be made up from the following types of retail food establishments: restaurants, stalls within a school canteen, snack bars, halal corners, confectioneries or bakery shops and stalls within food courts or its equivalent.

It is incumbent to note that halal eating establishments only serve halal food. Non-halal food/raw materials must not be stored, used, sold or brought in such premises. In Singapore, Muslim owners who have Muslim staff handling the food may not necessarily require the halal certification for their eating establishments. However, in a Muslim minority country like the US, obtaining halal endorsement reassures Muslims that their quality of food is not breached, and permissible within the Islamic framework.

Halal products are derived from animals and/or poultry that have been slaughtered according to Islamic law under the following statement, "Bismillahi Allahu Akbar." (In the Name of Allah. Allah is The Greatest) The animals and/or poultry are slaughtered by means of a sharp knife, cutting through the skin, jugular vein, and trachea to result in thorough bleeding of the carcass in preparation for dressing and evisceration in accordance with Islamic guidelines. Halal products and production are properly separated and properly identified.

In South East Asia, the Islamic councils of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia have reached a general consensus that all raw materials used must be halal and should be substantiated with certificates from endorsed halal certifying bodies (this is an absolute must for meat and poultry), product specifications, declaration letters and laboratory analysis reports<sup>2</sup>.

One such halal certification body which follows the high standards of these Islamic councils of these countries is the Halal Food Council International (HFCI) operating in the US. HFCI has obtained recognition from JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development, Malaysia), MUIS (The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore), and MUI (The Islamic Religious Council of Indonesia) under the name of Halal Food Council South East Asia (HFC–SEA). HFC–SEA’s main business is to certify meat and meat products in USA. HFCI strictly follows the guideline of halal as set by Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. This guideline appears in the Codex Alimentarius (1997) that has been approved by all Muslim countries in the world. This includes the standard of halal slaughter, halal food, halal cosmetics and halal usable goods.

Such analysis reports from accredited laboratories may be required upon notice by the local Islamic council or local Islamic food authorities<sup>3</sup> to confirm that the food does not contain non-halal raw materials, for instance, pork, animal derivatives and intoxicants. The most common types of ingredients that are most notably non-permissible are gelatin (excluding fish gelatin), lard and alcohol. The food sample(s) for testing must be taken by the test agency personally or by the Islamic council personnel from the applicant’s premises and may be sealed with security seals.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Carla Power, Time Magazine, May 14, 2009

2 pls refer to [www.muis.gov.sg](http://www.muis.gov.sg)

3 Applicants may refer to <http://www.zabihah.com/ai.php> for an extensive list of halal certification bodies.

4 Such cost for testing should be bore by the applicants.