



# **Halal** **pages**

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HALAL INDUSTRY  
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<b>Contents</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Halal Food Analysis</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Message</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Halal Cosmeceuticals: The Vogue And The Vague</b>	<b>50</b>
Minister of Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumer Affairs Malaysia		Ensuring Food and Other Consumer Goods to be Authentically Halal	
<b>Message</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Halal Issues In Pharmaceutical Products</b>	<b>56</b>
The Chief Executive Officer - TM Info-Media Sdn Bhd		Urgent Need to Have Modern and Efficient Production of Pharmaceuticals and Biopharmaceuticals	
<b>Foreword by Rector</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Synthetic Bone As A Solution For Halal Bone Grafts Implantation</b>	<b>64</b>
International Islamic University Malaysia About IIUM Halal Industry Research Centre		Demand For Bone Graft Has Been Increasing Steadily	
<b>Advertisers' Index</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Muslim-friendly Facilities In The Hospitality Industry</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>The Importance Of Halal In Islamic Law And Muslim Life</b>	<b>12</b>	Offering Facilities in Accordance With Religious Tenets	
Fundamental Principles and Cardinal Values Pertaining to Human Welfare		<b>The Dire Need For A Portal On Halal Matters</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Halal Meats And Frozen Foods:</b>	<b>18</b>	A One-Stop Source of Information On the Concept of Halal?	
The Halal Abattoir, Packaging, Storage And Handling		<b>Istihalah (Transformation Of Things) &amp; Halal Industry</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Halal Audit: An Overview</b>	<b>26</b>	Not Based Upon What It Was, But Based Upon What It Is	
Ensuring Compliance to Processes Toward Producing Halal Products		<b>Commenda Partnership (Mudarabah) – An Overview</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Halal Food Seminar 09</b>	<b>31</b>	Justice and Fairness in Undertaking Business Rewards and Risks	
<b>Halal Processed Food And Beverages</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>An Overview Of The Brunei Halal Industry</b>	<b>90</b>
Some Concerns on Food Additives and Ingredients		A 263-hectare Agro Technology Park to facilitate local and foreign halal businesses	
<b>“Veggie Gelatin”, Why Not?</b>	<b>36</b>		
Extensive Research to Explore the Potential of Malaysian Plants			
<b>General Guidelines For Halal Food Preparation</b>	<b>38</b>		
Unified Standard of Halal Certification is Important to Globalize Halal Products			

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# Halal Processed Food And Beverages

Some Concerns on Food Additives and Ingredients



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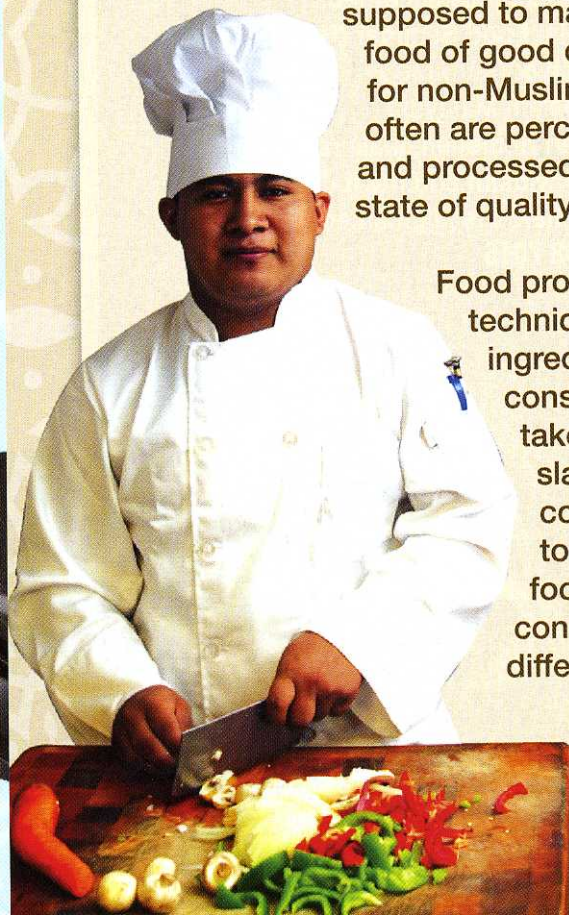
**I**slam is not merely a religion of rituals, but is a way of life. Rules and manners from the Islamic teachings govern the life of Muslims: individual and collective level. In Islam, eating is also considered as a matter of ibadah (worship) to God, just like ritual prayers. Muslims follow the Islamic dietary code and foods that meet the code are called halal (lawful, permitted). Muslims are supposed to make an effort to obtain halal food of good quality. On the other hand, for non-Muslim consumers, halal foods often are perceived as specially selected and processed to achieve the highest state of quality.

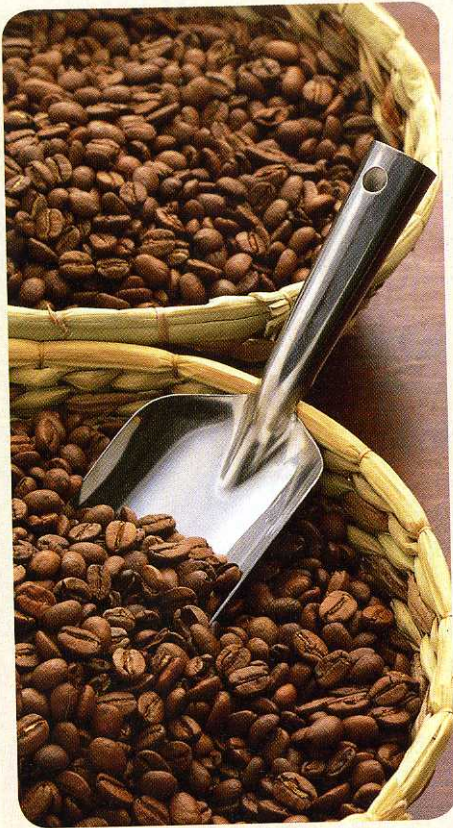
Food processing is the methods and techniques used to transform raw ingredients into food for human consumption. Food processing takes clean, harvested or slaughtered and butchered components and uses them to produce marketable food products for human consumption. There are several different ways in which food can be processed and produced.

The benefits of food processing include toxin removal, preservation, easing marketing and distribution tasks, and increasing food consistency. It also increases seasonal availability of many foods, enables transportation of delicate perishable foods across long distances, and makes many kinds of foods safe to eat by de-activating spoilage and pathogenic micro-organisms. In many modern families, adults are working away from home and therefore there is little time for the preparation of food based on fresh ingredients.

To produce high quality processed food and beverages, food additives are normally added. They are incorporated into food and beverages with several purposes; as the followings:

- to improve the nutritive value of food and beverages, such as the addition of vitamins;
- to enhance the flavor of food and beverages;
- to maintain the appearance, palatability and wholesomeness of most foods;
- to maintain desired consistency in certain food products, such as the addition of emulsifiers, stabilizers and thickeners;





- to control the acidity or alkalinity in many processed food and beverages.
- to obtain desired and characteristic color to certain food and beverages etc.

There are more than 2,000 types of food additives, both natural and synthetic, available in the market and used in various food and beverage industries. Sugar, salt, honey, vinegar, corn syrup, yeast, citric acid, black pepper and mustard are examples of natural

additives, while monosodium glutamate (MSG), sodium nitrate, butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), ethylenediaminetetraacetate (EDTA), saccharine, synthetic vitamins and hormones are the synthetic ones.

In the context of halal food, the use of food additives is one of main concerns in food and beverage processing. Any food ingredients or additives to be used in food processing must be produced or extracted from halal sources. To understand whether certain food additive is acceptable for Muslim or not, the food manufacturers as well consumers need to understand chemical characteristic of each, the source of the additive and how the additive is produced. If it is derived from plants, it is definitely halal. However, if it is obtained from animal, Muslim consumers have to ensure that the additives are derived from halal animal properly slaughtered according to Islam teachings.

The following are examples of the many food ingredients that can raise issues for Muslim consumers. Many amino acids available in the market, such as L-Glutamine and L-Taurine, are in doubtful (shubhah or mashbooh) status because they can be derived either from plant or animal. Carmine, the red colorant aluminium lake of carminic acid is also doubtful because the coloring pigment can be obtained from dried bodies of a female insect. Emulsifiers, mono and diglycerides are also doubtful as they can be obtained from animal fats. Pyridoxine, a water soluble Vitamin B is also doubtful as it is normally extracted from liver, eggs and meat.

Apart from halal, the food additives must be *toyyib* (safe and wholesome). Sometimes the dangers from these additives are possibly tangible. The presence of nitrates in meat products may be hazardous to human health. Nitrates were used to prevent microbial growth that could lead to botulism (a deadly food-borne illness) and to make cured meat looks pink-red and fresh. Most preserved meats contain nitrates which can be converted into a carcinogen (cancer causing agent) in the body. Examples of meat products that are typically pink-red in color due to the nitrates include salami, bologna, pepperoni, hotdogs and corned beef. The injection of DES (diethylstilbesterol) female hormones in beef and chicken may increase homosexuality in male children. The intake of excessive saccharine may also lead to cancer. The use of cyclamates in rats in high doses were correlated with cancer production. Some dyes in foods were found to cause cancer in lab animals. Caffeine in diets may produce deformities in the fetus of expecting mother. Hence, the production of food that is halal and *toyyib* is very important for consumers

in general, and Muslim consumers in particular.

