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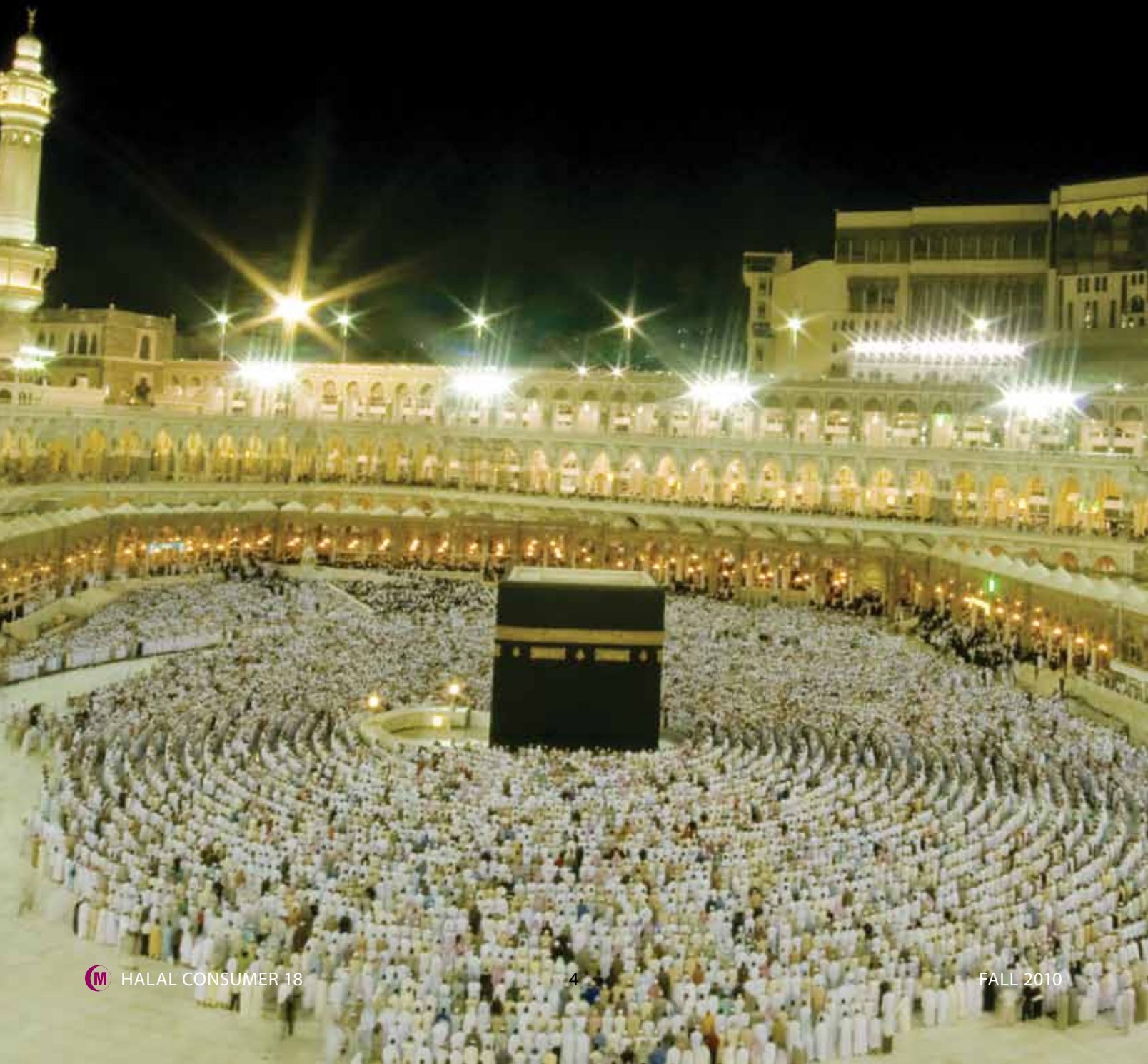
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The Benefits of Hajj

By Dr. Ahmed H. Sakr



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Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. A Muslim is expected to perform Hajj at least once in a lifetime if means allow him/her to do so. Allah revealed a Surah in the Qur'an called Surah Al-Hajj. In that chapter, Allah says the following:

Behold! We gave the site to Abraham, of the (sacred) House, (saying): "Associate not anything (in worship) with Me and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). And proclaim the pilgrimage among people; they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways. (22:26-27)

To write about pilgrimage (Hajj) is good, but to perform Hajj is more important. By performing Hajj, people will get to know more about their religion, and the history of the prophets who were there. To appreciate the Qur'an and the teachings of Qur'an, one should go to Mecca and visit the places where revelations were sent by God to Prophets Ibrahim, Ismail, and Muhammad (peace be upon them).

As far as the benefits of Hajj are concerned, Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage):

And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. They will come unto you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine: That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He has bestowed upon them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the unfortunate poor. (22:27-28)

Allah has explicitly mentioned the benefits of Hajj for mankind. These benefits are indefinite in number, in perspective, and in their dimensions.

These benefits are not restricted to one particular area, or to a particular time of history. The benefits that people may get from the performance of Hajj are much more than to be counted. These benefits are specifically good for the individuals who perform Hajj and for the Muslim community and the Muslim society as a whole. These benefits are good for people in this world and in the Hereafter.

BENEFITS

The following are some of the benefits for the individuals and for the Muslim society.

Individuals

Renewal of the remembrance of Allah and strengthening the relation between the individual and the

Read! In the name of your Lord Who created. Created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not. (96:1-5)

Creator. The chanting of the pilgrim is nothing more than a confirmation from the creature to Allah, i.e. by saying:

Labbaika Allahumma Labbaik... Labbaika La Sharika Laka Labbaik...

Remembrance of the Day of Judgment. During Hajj, the presence of few million people summoning at Arafah in one place, at one time and for one purpose, is an indication and a sign of a hereafter. Wearing two white towels reminds us of the shroud. Such type of remembrance is very important in making a person to remember death and the resurrection.

The performance of Hajj wipes out the sins of a pilgrim. This is a type of rejuvenation that helps a person not to lose hope in this world. On the contrary he would strive effectively to please Allah after his/her sins and mistakes are wiped off. It has been reported by Abu Hurairah that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever performs pilgrimage without uttering immodest speech or abusing others, he returns as though a new-born." [Muslim]

A person sacrifices through the performance of Hajj. He leaves his family, business, and country; he spends lots of money, time effort and energy; and he bears lots of difficulties due to travelling. All of these are for the pleasure and love of Allah. This type of sacrifice helps the individual overcome other difficulties in his daily life. The person who strives and sacrifices is more spiritually successful person than one who does not.

The performance of Hajj is a theoretical and practical training course for the following habits and manners: Patience, perseverance, humility, organization, management, tolerance, being sociable, kindness, sympathy, affection, sense of belonging, sense of intimacy, concern, helpfulness, watchfulness, etc.

Society

Bridging the gap between our present day and our history.

The first house of worship to Allah on earth was established in Mecca. Allah says in Surah (chapter) Al-Imran (The Family of 'Imran):

Lo! The first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Mecca, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples; wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's

guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whoever enters it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty to Allah for mankind, for him who can find afford the journey. As for him who disbelieves, (let him know that) indeed Allah is Independent of (all) creatures. (3:96-97)

Remembrance

- The first revelation from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came down when he was in Cave Hira at Mountain of Light in the outskirts of Mecca.

Read! In the name of your Lord Who created. Created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not. (96:1-5)

- Remembrance of the reconstruction of the Ka'bah by Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Ismail. It reminds us also of the reconstruction of Ka'bah whereby Prophet Muhammad helped in putting the blackstone in its place.

- Remembrance of Prophet Ibrahim trying to sacrifice his son, Ismail, for the pleasure of Allah.

- Remembrance of the place of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at Mecca close to the Ka'bah.

- Remembrance of Mother Hajar running between Safa and Marwa trying to locate water for her son, Ismail. Finally water sprang up from under Ismail's feet and now Muslims all over the world still drink from that well of Zamzam several thousand years later.

- Remembrance of the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Madina, the hiding in Cave Thaur, the difficulty in reaching Madina, the welcome that he received and the establishment of the first mosque in Madina called Masjid Qibaa'.

- The remembrance of the Mosque of the Two Qibla, Mosque of the Prophet, the Seven Mosques (Battle of the Ditch), Mosque of the Cloud (Ghamamah), Mosque of Abu Bakr and the like.

- The remembrance of the battlefields that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had to be in; i.e., Battle of Badr, Battle of Uhud, Battle of Khandaq, Battle of Khaibar, Battle of Hunain, Battle of Tabook, etc.

Establishment of equality among people of the world. Every one is considered to be of the same origin and of the same physical nature. They are equal in the sight of Allah, and no one is better than the other except through piety, sincerity and righteousness. However, no one knows who is better than the other except Allah; and no one has been appointed to judge who is better than the other. Allah says in Surah (chapter) Al-Hujurat (The Private Apartments):

O mankind! Beware! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another....(49:13)

During Hajj the concept of equality is put into action and into practice. The performance of the religious activities at the same time and at the same place, shoulder to shoulder is symbolic of everyone being equals. No one is recognized as a president or as a servant, but everyone is recognized as a humble human being submitting himself/herself to the same and the Only One God. No one is recognized on the basis of his color, sex, social or political position. All of them are recognized as Muslims submitting their will to the will of Allah. No one is to face the East or the West,

but each one is facing Allah Almighty. While everyone is directing himself/herself physically towards Ka'bah in Mecca, their intentions, their totality, their entirety and their wholeness are all towards Allah and for Allah.

Establishment of Muslim Unity: During Hajj Muslims conduct a series of seminars, lectures, and workshops in different languages. Such educational talks are aimed at unifying Islamic thoughts among Muslims. During Hajj Muslims get to know one another, discuss their problems and come to some type of solution. The Hajj is a symbol of an international convention where a few million Muslims come from every corner of the world for the pleasure of Allah.

Economic Benefits: If one were to count the number of economic benefits of Hajj, he/she would not be able to do so as they are numerous. The benefits reach various segments of the Muslim Ummah. These benefits start with visas, travel agents, airlines, steamships, cars, buses, trains, customs, immigration, supermarkets, department stores, clinics, drug stores, hospitals, scouts, hotels, schools, universities, governments, and every department of the local country in Arabia. An endless number of

O mankind!

Beware! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another....(49:13)

benefits are included under this category and other categories. This proves the beauty of the meaning of the Qur'anic verse in Surah Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage).

That they may witness things that are benefits to them... (22:28)

The Concept of Unity of Muslims is based on the concept of (Tawheed) Oneness of God, (Taqwa) fear and obedience to Allah, and (Amal Saleh) good deeds in life with (Niyyah Sadiqa) good intention. In Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) Allah says:

O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam. And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren; and you were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to you: That you may be guided. (3: 102-103)

We hope and pray that every Muslim makes an effort to perform Hajj, that he/she will attain the benefits that Allah mentioned in the Qur'an.

Preparation:

Throughout history, Muslim scholars have written thousands of articles, books, and booklets about Hajj. Moreover, films, movies, video tapes and audio cassettes were prepared by governments, organizations, and individuals about Hajj. Different community centers conducted workshops for those who wish to perform Hajj. Here are some suggestions and tips to "Prepare Yourself for Hajj".

Many Muslims performed Hajj without knowing enough about its rules and regulations. With good intention, and without planning or preparation, they have made a series of mistakes in their performance of the Hajj. For every mistake, they should have made the compensation (Kaffarah). Similarly, when we pray five times a day, and we make a mistake, we have to make Sujood Al-Sahw (prostration for making a mistake). If we break our Wudoo' (ritual ablutions), we have to repeat the prayer, and so on.

Many of us do not know how to prepare ourselves properly for Hajj - spiritually, psychologically, socially, culturally, economically, etc. We did not have enough time to learn all what is needed to go and perform Hajj. A large number of Muslims were shocked when they arrived there. Even those who went with their own groups have been shocked at what they have seen and experienced.





Their worldly expectations were not met. The real problem is that we should prepare ourselves long in advance for the once-in-a-lifetime journey to the Holy Places that Allah has selected to be visited, to fulfill, and complete our Faith as Muslims.

Practical Considerations & Requirements

1. Intention
2. Halal money
3. Ihram dress
4. Valid passport, Visa issued from the country of origin.
5. Air ticket: it should be a round-trip ticket
6. Vaccination
7. If you are a female, you have to have a Mahram who is usually a male member of your immediate family such as father, husband, son or brother.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Try to go with a group who make arrangements with a Mu'allim (teacher). He will guide you spiritually throughout the trip.

Try to attend a workshop by a local community center to understand the rules and regulations about the day-to-day activities and rituals of Hajj.

Make sure you make a will, documented and left with an authorized person. You never know, you might die there and the family left behind should know how to handle themselves without you.

Try to take traveler checks. Limit the amount of cash you wish to take. If you lose your checks, you can recover your money

You should have safety pockets and safety belt to keep your money with you. Never leave your money in any hotel. Keep them with you.

Do not take food, water, or any cooking utensils with you. The Holy Places have every facility you need for living easily.

Although there is plenty of medicine there, and the pharmacists usually give medicine without physician's prescription, make sure you take your medicines with you.

If this trip is the first time for you, please do not take any of your children with you. It would be tough for them and for you too.

Children should be taken for 'Umrah first during December vacation. They will enjoy the trip and they will have good memories about the Holy Places.

Read guide books on Hajj and 'Umrah. Ask your guide to explain anything you do not understand.

Take your Qur'an. Keep yourself busy reading from it. Enjoy talking to Allah while reading the Qur'an.

Read a book entitled: *Al-Du'a' Al-Mustajab* (The Accepted Du'a'). Read all varieties of Du'a'.

Recite the Takbeer (*Allahu Akbar*); Tahleel (*La Ilaha Illa Allah*); Tahmeed (*Al-Hamdu Lillah*); Tassbeeh (*Subhan Allah*)...etc.

Recite the *Talbiyah* (*Labbaika Allahumma Labbaik*).

Remember, this is a spiritual journey. Do not worry about what you see wrong in other Muslims. You should be worried about yourself and whether Allah will accept your Hajj or not.

The celebration marking the end of the Hajj is called Eid-ul Adha (Feast of Sacrifice). During the Hajj you sacrifice your time, your effort, your money and your knowledge in helping other Muslims who are in Hajj.

Try to be patient as much as possible. The place in Mecca is over crowded especially by the Ka'bah during Tawaf and in Sa'iy. You move with a wave of others. There will be some Muslims who are ignorant and who do not

respect Sha'aa-irr (rituals) of Hajj. They may push without any respect to others. Take it easy...say: *La Hawla wala Quwata Illa Billah*.

When you arrive at Jeddah Airport, you are tired and exhausted. You want immediately to go to the hotel or to go in a hurry to Mecca to perform 'Umrah before Hajj. The authorities have to process visas for few hundred thousand individuals like yourself in one day. It will take time, as you may expect. Meanwhile, sit, relax, read Qur'an, make Zikr, Tassbeeh, Istighfar, and Talbiyah. Also try to extend your help to others within and outside your own group.

The weather may be too hot for you. Try to drink water regularly. You may need to use salt-tablets as well due to perspiration without noticing it. Try to be in the shade as much as possible. The heat of the sun may not be felt, but one may get sun stroke and meningitis which may lead to sudden death.

Try to be away from any heavy crowd. You may not know when a crowd of such a nature may push people over one another. At that time it would be difficult to stand up on you feet. Someone might step over you, and it would be difficult to stand up.

If your wife is with you, you may throw the pebbles in the Jamarat (throwing pebbles) on the three Shaitans on your her behalf during your stay of three days in Mina.

You might be confronted with situations where many individuals don't know how to handle themselves. They need someone to help them, to guide them, and to advise them. Try to be number ONE to render your services. They may not be able to speak English, Arabic or Urdu, so be their translator.

When you are in Mina living in tents, try to identify the location of tents and the direction so as to know how to come back to your tent. Everything looks alike. It is easy to get confused and end up lost. There is no way then to get back to your tent easily.

If you cannot do the animal sacrifice on the Eid day, give the money to someone to do it on your behalf. The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) which represents the Muslim sovereign states assumes this responsibility. The meat is then frozen and distributed later to the different parts of the Muslim world.

Final Remarks

Allah demanded that Muslims perform Hajj if means allowed them to do so. In Surah (chapter) Al-Imran, Allah says the following:

The first House (worship) appointed for men was that at Mecca: full of blessing and guidance for all the worlds. In it are signs manifest; the Station of Abraham whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty people owe to Allah (if they can afford the journey), but if anyone denies faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures. (3:96-97)

Muslims should recognize that they are going on a spiritual journey that necessitates hardship and sacrifice. It demands that they be patient. They should expect the least relaxation and the most rewards from Allah. They should expect less sleeping, less comfort, less eating, less riding and more walking on foot. They should expect too many people that over-crowd the streets, the hotels, the tents and every other place. They should transcend all these barriers, and remember the Day of Judgment when every human being is to be assembled and to be judged by Allah. Therefore, Muslims have to take it easy; and it is Allah Who

will inspire, motivate, and reward us to live in peace and harmony.

Muslims should be grateful to Allah that He allowed them to perform Hajj before they die. Millions of Muslims all over the world are yearning to perform Hajj. Some don't have money and others are too sick to take this journey. Still there are a good number of Muslims who have good health and extra money to perform Hajj, but due to the quota system their names are not selected, and therefore, they were prevented to perform Hajj due to the great demands of millions and millions of Muslims who want to perform Hajj.

Therefore, Muslims should be grateful to Allah for all the favors that He has bestowed upon them in performing Hajj. As it is known the more a person is thankful and grateful to Allah, the more Allah will bestow upon them His Blessings. Ameen (M)



From West to East, an Eid-Ul-Adha Feast

From the Kitchen of Aisha Kureishy

Chicken Patty Melt Appetizers

Servings: 6
Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound chicken boneless meat cut into ½" diced pieces
- Salt to taste
- Loaf of bread, sliced
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 large onions thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 4-5 teaspoons of Mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ block IFANCA halal certified Cabot cheese, sliced
- Vegetable oil as needed to fry onions and stir fry chicken

Directions

1. In a toaster, toast all bread slices.
2. In a large skillet, fry onions until golden brown, remove and set aside.
3. In same skillet, add diced chicken, garlic powder, salt and black pepper to make chicken filling.
4. Mix well and stir-fry chicken pieces until nicely browned and remove from skillet, leaving utensil on low heat.
5. Take two toasted slices at a time. Lightly layer with mayonnaise. Place in the skillet, on medium-low heat, mayonnaise side facing up.
6. Put a cheese slice on each toast. On one toast add cooked chicken filling, fried onions, and sprinkle some cumin seeds.
7. Place second hot toast over chicken filling.

8. Gently press toasts together with spatula so cheese can stick to chicken.
9. Warm each side of the sandwich enough to melt the cheese slices.

10. Slice into triangles and serve!

Chef's Notes: You can serve Chicken Patty Melt appetizers with potato wedges or mashed potatoes. Don't forget ketchup!

Stir Fry Potato Wedges

Servings: 6-8
Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 4-6 medium potatoes (Approximately 2 pounds)
- 1 teaspoon fresh chives (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon halal steak spice mix
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Cut potatoes lengthwise into ten or twelve wedges.
2. Sprinkle salt, black pepper and steak spice mix. Mix well.
3. Sprinkle some water over potatoes and cover with a microwave safe plate. Make sure potato wedges do not overlap. Microwave for three minutes.
4. With kitchen gloves, flip the plates gently and nicely without dropping the wedges. You may use more water to keep potatoes soft and moist.
5. Microwave the wedges for another three minutes.
6. In a large skillet, warm oil on medium heat.
7. Add all the potato wedges to the skillet without splashing the hot oil.
8. Stir fry until golden brown on each side.
9. Cover the pan and leave the potatoes to sauté on low heat for five to ten minutes.

Pot Roast

Servings: 6-8
Prep Time: 20 minutes
Marinate: 4-6 hours
Cooking Time: 3 hours

Ingredients

- One goat leg (10-12 lbs.)
- 2 cups yogurt
- 2 tablespoons garlic paste
- 1 tablespoon ginger paste
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons fine ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon fine red pepper
- ½ cup pre-fried onions
- 4 tablespoons coriander powder
- 2 teaspoon cumin powder
- ¾ cup olive or canola oil
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

Directions

1. In a large pot add lemon juice to the raw goat leg.
2. Add all the ingredients to the yogurt and mix well.
3. Pour yogurt marinade over the meat and spread it well on all sides.

4. Cover meat and marinate in the fridge for a minimum of 4-6 hours.
5. At intervals, turn the meat in the pan to distribute the marinade evenly.
6. Warm oil on medium low in a separate roasting pan.
7. Discard surplus marinade and carefully transfer the goat leg to the pan containing the oil, cover and let it cook.
8. After 10 minutes, turn the roast and cook the other side.
9. Now add 3 cups of water and cook on medium heat until all the water becomes a thick gravy of spices, and roast is nicely brown and tender.

Chef's Notes: Make sure to turn the roast at intervals while marinating and cooking. Do not bake to ensure that it retains its juiciness. If you choose to bake it, it can be cooked at 400 degrees, in most ovens, for approximately 2 hours. Rotate at intervals.

More recipes continued on page 32



Halal Catering Goes Mainstream

By Naazish YarKhan

Like the Muslim community in most American cities, Chicago is awash in fund-raising dinners for various causes through winter, fall, and spring. Come summer, the socializing grows even more frenzied - fundraisers fall by the wayside because everyone is too busy either having or attending a wedding and its series of celebrations. Graduations and Ameen's, marking the completion of the first reading of the Quran, too, pack weekend after weekend. Yes, Chicago has two seasons - winter and party season! And keeping up with all these events, year-round, are caterers offering halal menus.

Twenty years ago, in large cities such as Chicago, USA and Toronto, Canada it used to be that if you were having a wedding or any special event, you'd gather your nearest and dearest and get many hands to cook for the event. Gradually, individual caterers who knew cultural food well and cooked it to perfection stepped in, taking party orders and serving halal. A single independent caterer would cook halal cuisine for 400 people on average, per wedding celebration.

But if trends in the halal food industry are any indication, all that is very 1990's. Outsourcing has come to banquet halls as well as Four and Five Star hotels, and we are not talking about the voice at the other end of reservations or customer service alone.

It began when banquet halls, slowly but steadily over the past 10 years, saw the opportunity for economic growth if they would permit outside catering. They got in on the action with a list of pre-selected halal caterers that clients, using their banquet halls, could choose to work with.

Scarborough, Ontario based event planner, Sadat Hussain Khan, is riding high on the success of a three day wedding extravaganza, with over 500 guests, at Chandani Convention Center in Mississauga, Ontario. "I was organizing three weddings that were close in dates and I took



all three families with me for the tasting at the same time, to the list of (halal) caterers the Convention Center had agreed to," says Mr. Khan. Wedding season is a busy time of the year, indeed.

In the last couple of years, Four and Five Star hotels, which once would never have allowed outside catering, too have seen business opportunities. Be it the Sheraton, the Hyatt or a Radisson, they are attracting halal consumers with promises of the perfect halal 'outsourced' menu. Ayesha Sayani, a community event organizer, responsible for helping manage the Zindagi Trust fundraiser in Dallas, Texas concurs. She said Galleria, Dallas, Double Tree, and Hilton Anatole were all willing to have outside caterers. In previous years, her venue for an event would have been a local community center - the route most often taken for halal parties a decade ago. "I have seen things changing," she says. "Hotels seem well aware that there is a demand for halal food and the one's I have spoken to have been very receptive to us having a halal menu. They have pre-approved lists of halal restaurants where

Continued on the next page...



Source: Oliveaire Artisan Events and Meetings, Chicago



Source: Facebook.com/DivineDesserts

we can cater from or they purchase the halal meat if they are preparing the meal themselves.”


The caveat? The hotels must have large banquet halls to be able to accommodate 400 - 800 guests, normal for a South Asian and Middle Eastern weddings.

Chicago-based Oliveaire Artisan Events and Meetings very existence reflects the opportunities in halal, especially when it comes to South Asian and Middle Eastern events. The company plans events and connects hotels including the likes of Hyatt Regency, O'Hare and Westin, Lombard, both in the Chicago area, to South Asian-American and Middle Eastern-American brides and grooms looking to have halal cuisine at their wedding.

“In the past three years, our volume of Muslim and Middle Eastern weddings and South Asian events have captured 45% of our annual business. Our community of 25 Chicagoland preferred venues accept outside catering options in order to provide religious and ethnic restricted meals. Oliveaire has approved halal caterers to provide meals for these events,” says Mahvish Bhatti, an event planner with Oliveaire.

Maggie Menozzi Sales Manager for weddings and large social events, at the Chicago Sheraton, has seen business rise by 50% since they allowed outside catering in 2008. The first year they took that path, they had 12-14 ethnic weddings. The following year they hosted 30 weddings. “The Sheraton does have a list of pre-selected halal caterers but are also willing to go with someone the bride and groom recommend,” says Ms. Menozzi. “We have a separate kitchen dedicated for special events and banquets. The halal food is brought in already prepared by the caterers to this specific kitchen and served out of it. The question of cross contamination does not even arise.”

“We work closely with the catering restaurants to maintain the integrity of the supply chain. If it is an ethnic menu, Sheraton will not necessarily offer to make the food on site, because there are outside caterers who excel in making those dishes. An American halal menu can be cooked on-site at Sheraton, with proper sourcing of halal meat and other ingredients,” Ms. Menozzi says.

IFANCA clients such as Cargill Better Beef, an IFANCA halal-certified company based in Canada, is a significant supplier to Muslim-owned halal meat stores, across North America. In recent years, businesses such as Restaurant Depot and Costco have begun carrying halal, as well. American Muslims have taken to organizing Eid and other parties at mainstream restaurants, and are guaranteed by restaurant management that halal alone will be served. Sushi Samba of Chicago, a hip and happening restaurant serving Japanese and Brazilian cuisine was the venue of a sold-out 4th of July gathering organized by the Council of American Muslim Professionals (CAMP), this summer. IFANCA is often approached by clients to assist them in selecting the right suppliers and caterers. IFANCA has also created guidelines to create halal compliant kitchens. 



Source: Oliveaire Artisan Events and Meetings



J&M® halal certified meals use only wholesome ingredients and have **NO MSG, NO SOY, and NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS OR COLORS**. Six varieties are gluten-free. Each meal is fully cooked and is conveniently packaged in either 10 oz. (283 g) microwaveable serving dishes or 8 oz. (227 g) travel and camping pouches. Reheat to eat in minutes.

LAMB & BARLEY STEW: Tender lamb, combined with barley, eggplant, red and green sweet peppers, zucchini and onions, create a true culinary delight! A scrumptious meal with a variety of textures, it is deliciously seasoned with herbs and spices of the Middle East.

CHICKEN MEDITERRANEAN: A hearty chicken meal with the flavors of the Mediterranean. Chunks of light and dark chicken with tomatoes, potatoes, chick peas and black olives in a tangy sauce.

CHICKEN & NOODLES: Chunks of light and dark chicken with Kluski noodles, peas, corn and carrots in a light sauce. A winning combination!

BEEF STEW: This satisfying stew is absolutely delicious. It has chunks of beef with chunks of potatoes, sweet peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, zucchini, chick peas and carrots in a flavorful sauce.

CHEESE TORTELLINI: Cheese-filled tortellini in a well-seasoned tomato sauce with the added protein of pinto beans. Excellent texture and flavor!

VEGETARIAN STEW: A meal perfect for vegetarian and hearty eaters alike! With macaroni, vegetables, potatoes, barley, lentils, peanuts and seasonings, this meal has great taste and a variety of textures.

LAMB & LENTIL STEW: Tender lamb joins a medley of tomatoes, lentils, onions, chickpeas, zucchini and red and green sweet peppers. Aromatic herbs and spices invite all to taste and enjoy this truly delicious meal.

MY KIND OF CHICKEN: A favorite combination! Chunks of light and dark chicken with brown rice, peas and carrots in a mild sauce.

CHICKEN & BLACK BEANS: A flavor from the southwestern states, this meal has chunks of light and dark chicken with delicious and nutritious black beans, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet peppers, corn and kidney beans. Simple seasoning brings out its full flavor.

OLD WORLD STEW: Chunks of beef, with brown rice, tomatoes, zucchini and pinto beans. The sauce is seasoned with the aromatic flavors of the Middle East.

FLORENTINE LASAGNA: This meal has small lasagna noodles mixed with a deliciously seasoned tomato sauce. In the sauce is Ricotta cheese, Parmesan cheese, spinach and pinto bean pieces to add more protein without meat. A meal influenced by the tastes of Florence.

PASTA WITH GARDEN VEGETABLES: This delicious and robust meal has rotini pasta with a pepper, mushroom, zucchini and tomato medley. It's perfectly flavored with traditional Italian seasonings.

DHABIHA HALAL حلال



Halal certification is by the Islamic Food & Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA)

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Halal Foods at Hospitals

by Tayyaba Syed

Imagine walking into a restaurant that has the feel of a Northern Michigan lodge. Your food is cooked to order fresh from any of the restaurant's seven different chef-manned stations. Fresh does mean fresh in this restaurant, because you will not find any freezers, deep fryers or canned goods in the facility. It only serves certified organic produce, and here is the best part: it even serves halal meat. So where is this too-good-to-be-true eatery you ask? The restaurant is called Henry's Café, and it is located inside the Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital (HFWBH) in Michigan. Yes, you read that right: hospital.

The hospital opened its doors in March 2009, not only to patients but to the community-at-large. On average, the restaurant serves eight hundred people daily, 25% of whom come here for no reason except to enjoy a meal. West Bloomfield has a very diverse demographic, and the hospital wanted to make sure everyone felt welcome. The hospital administration accomplished this by meeting with focus groups comprising area residents of various ages, ethnicities, religions, and races in order to determine the needs of the community.

"We wanted the hospital to offer total care from a wellness perspective, sick care perspective, and spiritual care perspective," said HFWBH Director of Public Relations and Marketing, Carey Chesney. "This way customers get their unexpressed needs met easily. They might not be comfortable asking for a diet that meets their religious/spiritual needs but are glad it is available," he points out.

In Ramadan, the hospital sponsored a community iftaar. Over 200 physicians from around the Metro Detroit area attended it. The hospital served halal food and let the physicians know that it was readily available to their patients and staff on a daily basis and not just during Ramadan. This garnered the support of local physicians who in turn began referring their Muslim patients to the institution.

"By bringing quality products, more Muslims are attracted to the hospital," Dr. Zahid Sheikh, who has been with Henry Ford Hospital for over 15 years, shared in an interview with Halal Consumer. "From a business perspective, one should be willing to offer great service for the consumer who is purchasing the product. That is what HFWBH has accomplished by respecting our ethical values and accommodating our needs," he adds.

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Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital, West Bloomfield, MI

Ghalib Abbasi, an Information Systems Pharmacist Specialist at HFWBH, suggested that they make "halal" more apparent on Henry Café's menu by putting an H enclosed inside a circle next to halal-friendly items. Further, if questions are asked regarding the halal menu, the kitchen and restaurant staff are well-informed and well-trained to explain and understand the concept of halal to customers.

"The hospital is very open and accepting of the Muslim community and staff," shares Abbasi. "The display and explanation of what foods are halal are very precise. I think it is great what HFWBH is doing for us, and we need to take full advantage of this kind of opportunity," he adds.

HFWBH also wanted to teach the community the right way to eat. It is both a hospital and a wellness center that offers tools and shares means that individuals can use to live and feel healthier. By offering halal meat on the menu, the hospital is encouraging the importance of eating healthy.

"What we are doing in essence is teaching people how to live and eat healthy," notes Frank Turner, the Executive Chef and Director of Food and Nutrition at the hospital. "Halal meat is healthy and at times even non-Muslims ask for the halal menu at Henry's," he says.

Turner also shared other ways HFWBH is promoting good health to the community. "People eat at Henry's to be healthy and also seek lifestyle improvements from our

wellness center, Vita, learn how to cook right from our chefs in our 90-seat Demonstration Kitchen, and even learn how to shop healthy at our farmer's market."

Muslim residents of the Metropolitan Detroit area are fortunate to have HFWBH. However, to meet the needs of Muslim senior citizens who are home-bound, Michigan started its first halal Meals-on-Wheels program for those in the Detroit area. It is a pilot program serving 20 or so seniors in Dearborn, Michigan, and parts of Wayne County. Every two weeks, an ample supply of halal meals from a halal-certified vendor are shipped via FedEx in coolers, to members of the program. According to Arab Detroit News, "The meals, which cost about \$7 to prepare and ship, include entrees such as Chicken Biryani, Lentil Stew with Ground Lamb, and Italian chicken." That is a great halal selection to enjoy in the comfort of one's home for seniors who otherwise may not have been able to shop for or prepare their own meals.

Advocating for senior centers that meet the dietary and cultural needs of the aging South Asian population is a priority for the American Association of Retired Asians (AARA), and its founder, Dr. Talat Razvi, of Darien, IL. "For the elderly, psychological issues compound the physical ones and having food that adheres to their religious requirements is really important," she says.

Detroit is setting a great example for other communities in the United States, but it is not the only town catering

Continued on next page...



to Muslims' halal food needs. When awareness is created and the need is presented properly, then action can be taken accordingly. That is what was done at St. Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey recently. The hospital has three maternity units and one of its obstetricians approached the food service



Henry Ford Culinary Institute Demonstration Kitchen

department to look into options for halal food for her Muslim patients. Since then, for the last year, the hospital has offered a variety of IFANCA certified J&M Ready-to-Eat Halal Meals to its Muslim patients.

Debbie Signorelli is the food service manager at St. Peter's University Hospital. When Halal Consumer asked her if it was difficult to start a halal food program at the hospital, Signorelli responded that it just depends on the availability of distributors. "We are open to learning about other halal distributors in order to offer a variety of meals to our Muslim patients," Signorelli says. "Right now we are only working with one supplier, so the choice is limited for our patients," she adds.

If more Muslims ask for halal foods at their local hospitals, and in nursing homes, it won't be such a far-fetched idea in the near future. Organizations such as IFANCA exist to help institutions connect the dots between suppliers of halal products and training institution staffers on creating halal kitchens. Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital and St. Peter's University Hospital are just some of the institutions who have begun the journey. Patients, here, can now request a halal diet, thus making the stay at the hospital relatively less stressful. Remember to ask for halal and it will only be a matter of time till it is ubiquitous. (M)

Did You Know?

1. The food buying power of American Muslims is estimated at U.S. \$20 billion annually.
2. A 2007 report from the global ad agency JWT, describes the Muslim market thus: "It's young, it's big, and it's getting bigger."
3. 59% of Muslim adults in the U.S. have a college degree, compared with only 28% of all American adults. Surveys show that median family income among America's Muslims exceeds the national figure of \$55,800." Studies also show that one in three Muslims earns more than \$75,000 per year. - Business Week, Jan. 2007.
4. In the manufacture of halal cereal and confectionary, ingredients of concern are gelatin, mono and diglycerides, cream liquor, L-cysteine and various emulsifiers; such as polysorbates, sodium steroyl lactylate.
5. For halal certification, all ingredients and materials must be halal suitable, including sanitation chemicals, release agents, pan grease and lubricants.
6. The States of Illinois, New Jersey, Minnesota, California, Michigan, New York, Georgia, and Texas have passed Halal Food Bills to protect halal consumers from fraudulent usage of the term 'halal'. However, the enforcement of those laws is in limbo, thus making third party certification by organizations such as IFANCA even more vital.

Universities Giving Lip Service to Halal?

By Maryam Funmilayo

Some US colleges and universities have become trail-blazers in their efforts to offer halal food services for their Muslim students. Campuses with halal food service kitchens or halal dining halls include Virginia Tech, Harvard University, Dartmouth College, Yale University, New York University, Texas A & M, and others. The question is, are some of these efforts little more than giving lip service to halal?

Mount Holyoke College, in South Hadley, Massachusetts, is an all-women college where four percent of the student body is Muslim. In the year 2000, Muslim and Jewish students approached the administration, noting that they were outgrowing the small student-run kitchen they shared in the Religious Life building. They wanted a dining hall that catered to their religious dietary needs. Students, faculty and staff, as well as religious advisors came together to discuss logistics. The end result was a proposal – a new Halal-Kosher Kitchen. Ms. Hennessey, Director of Dining Services at Mount Holyoke, says that creating a Halal-Kosher Kitchen was expensive and challenging. Meat and dairy products do not mix according to kosher dietary laws whereas according to halal dietary laws, the mixing of meat and dairy is not a big deal, she says. According to halal dietary laws, alcohol, pork, and their by-products are not consumed so changes were needed to create a kitchen that was both kosher and halal, in order to suit students' dietary religious needs, says Ms. Dale Hennessey.

"The former Wilder Dining Hall was converted and the kitchen was completely redone. New equipment was purchased and dining staff members were trained on everything from separating dairy and meat items to scrutinizing ingredients like vanilla and mustard just to double check if they were free of alcohol," Ms. Hennessey elaborated.

By 2001, a Halal-Kosher kitchen was up and running. Since then, typically, five entrees are served for lunch

and five different entrees are on the menu for dinner. Any full board student is free to eat here and the entrees aren't simply American, South Asian or Middle Eastern fare. They run the gamut from Lamb with Dried Fruit, Persian Chicken in Walnut Sauce, Baked Eggs with Herbs, Chana Masala, Bulgur Pilaf, Sweet Orange Rice, Lubyi bi Zyat (Green Beans), and Date Nut Pastries. The recipes are reflective of the tastes of a very international student body. However, despite all these efforts, nine years down the road, halal meat is yet to be actually served in this "Halal-Kosher" Dining Hall, as of this writing.

"This comes as no surprise," says Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, President IFANCA. "Universities often wrongly assume that Kosher is adequate for Muslim students. Organizations such as IFANCA can come in and offer training for food service staff and we can introduce universities to halal meat suppliers. It's unfortunate that Muslim students have to make do with Kosher when halal is so widely available."

Requests for halal by Muslim students have led the school to consider introducing halal, albeit in a measured manner. Halal meat, from Fall 2010, will be served twice a week. It may also be offered during Ramadan.

Ironically, when offering advice to other colleges and universities who are considering a Halal-Kosher kitchen for their students, Ms. Hennessey says it is not impossible. She points out that success depends on the space available at the school, thoroughly researching students' needs and working with what is available. Mount Holyoke being a small college, administrators worked with limited space to start the Halal-Kosher facility. "It was indeed a challenge," she adds, "but it did work out fine." Muslim students may not quite agree with that conclusion. After all, it has taken nine long years since the inception of the Halal-Kosher dining hall to actually serve halal meat here. (M)

Americans Searching for Halal: IFANCA at NRA Show

By Naazish YarKhan

A May 22, 2010 session titled “Reach Over 9 Million Muslim-Americans Searching for Halal Meals” was the first ever panel at the National Restaurant Association’s annual show that addressed Muslim dietary needs. The presenters included Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, President of IFANCA; Mr. Don Tymchuck, Founder and President of Med-Diet Laboratories, Inc.; award winning Chef at North Shore Holiday Inn, Mahmood Yousaf and Maggie Menozzi, Catering Sales Manager, Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers.

Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, one of the world’s foremost authorities on

halal food ingredients, in his presentation at the panel, outlined the history of halal in the USA. He noted that in the 1970’s no one had heard of halal outside the Muslim community. In the 1980’s Muslims opened “mom and pop” stores where they sold the meat that they slaughtered themselves. He added that, internationally, the 80’s were also a time when large corporations began exporting meat to the Middle East. It was in the 90’s that the trend of Muslim butcher shops and grocery stores continued, even as halal restaurants began to mushroom. During those years, he said, food service went global with McDonald’s and KFC leading

the way. It was after the year 2000 that American universities, hospitals, the military and prisons began offering halal programs. Several states passed laws against fraudulent claims of halal. Stating that this decade would see halal go mainstream in foodservice and restaurants, Dr. Chaudry identified several IFANCA halal certified clients that sold retail and/or food service products ranging from Cheese (Cabot, Kraft, Saputo, Simons) to Sauces (Tabasco and Heinz) and desserts (Carol’s Cheesecake, Love & Quiches Desserts).

What's In It (Halal) For Me?

Mr. Tymchuck began the session by urging the audience to ask “What’s in it (halal) for me?”

He elaborated that halal was the diet of choice of the 9 million Muslims in America, a large “affluent, educated” market comprising “professionals and business owners”, whose dietary needs were barely being met by mainstream food manufacturers and restaurants. He reiterated that given the need for the food industry and businesses to attract new customers and expand their market share, it was time to cater to Muslims in America and offer halal. This did not mean that the entire menu needs to be changed. The shift could be as simple as adding halal options to the catering menu or substituting halal chicken for non-halal in a current recipe or even a new approach such as starting a halal food cart, as is done in downtown Manhattan. He pointed out that many companies



Don Tymchuck, President, Med Diet, Inc. and Chef Mahmood Yousaf, Holiday Inn, North Shore Chicago share the stage with IFANCA and Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, at the NRA Show

are rushing to have their products certified as gluten free while few companies even knew about the much larger potential for halal-certified products. It is estimated that there are three times as many Muslims in North America as there are gluten-intolerant people.

Halal at the Holiday Inn, Chicago North Shore

Award winning Chef Mahmood Yousaf, has spent the last 4 years bringing halal cuisine to Chicago’s diverse Muslim Community at the Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore. Specializing in American, South Asian, Middle Eastern and Continental Fine Dining Cuisine, Yousaf has honed his culinary craft for over three decades at the Hyatt, Hilton International, and Holiday Inn Hotels. He noted that often times those who are not familiar with halal don’t realize that halal refers to the same animals, be it cattle, goat, sheep, chicken – consumed by most Americans, with the exception of pork. He also clarified the misconception that halal always refers to curry or even ethnic meals. He reiterated that any cuisine could be halal so long as there is no alcohol or pork/ pork by-products in it, and the meat is that of a halal or permissible animal, slaughtered in the name of God and according to Islamic guidelines. The Holiday Inn, under his guidance, has three kitchens, one of which is the halal kitchen. Labeling and storage is very important and staff is duly trained. Taking every measure to ensure that halal standards are maintained, he said, cements trust between the hotel and its halal consuming guests.

Halal Menus at Five Star Hotels

Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers allows for outside catering ensuring that weddings are as traditional or as contemporary as the bride and groom would like it to be. “We do have a service charge for it, but we are open to brides and grooms suggesting a caterer whose food they’d like to have served as long as the caterers have all their licenses. Or they can pick from a list of halal caterers that we suggest,” says Maggie Menozzi, Sales Manager for weddings and large social events, at the Sheraton. As for halal food prepared on the premises at the hotel, that too is possible and the menu is contemporary American, halal food. The Sheraton pays the caterer themselves.


Maggie Menozzi, in her presentation, noted that she had seen business rise by 50% ever since she brought outside caterers into the fold. “Two years ago, we had 12-14 weddings of which one or two were Indian, Pakistani weddings. In 2009, we had 30 weddings, 12 of which were Indo-Pakistani,” she says. The Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers is home to the largest ballroom in the Midwest, and is ideal for larger weddings that are typical of the 500



IFANCA President, Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, addressed the audiences at the National Restaurant Association's Annual Show in May.

to 800 sized guest list of the average Muslim wedding. These are great revenue generators because “unlike an Indian or Pakistani wedding, an average American wedding is just about 150 to 200 people,” she said. Further, South Asian weddings are rarely a one-day affair and include two to four days of festivities. “The Sheraton is large enough to accommodate each of those parties in different rooms unlike a smaller place where the same room as to be redone each time.”

With such large numbers of guests per wedding, and with halal caterers on the Sheraton list recommending the hotel to brides and grooms, word-of-mouth more than suffices for advertising, she says. Halal weddings do not serve alcohol and that too hasn’t been a barrier to profits. “They usually have something else instead that adds to revenue such as an extensive dessert line and juice beverages called ‘Mock-Tails’ in lieu of alcohol, served at the wedding.”

Presentations such as these given at the NRA Show, it is hoped, will heighten manufacturers’ awareness of the market potential which will lead to increased halal production and availability. 

HALAL HAPPENINGS

IFANCA Booth at Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Food Expo 2010 in Chicago, July 17-22

IFANCA offered IFT attendees insights into their halal certification and information services from July 17th to 22nd, 2010, at the annual Institute Food Technologists Food Expo 2010, at its booth # 5101.

Interest in growing halal markets and halal certification has been expanding tremendously. "In the past 4 years, Datamonitor has noted that the number of global halal product launches has increased by 150 percent. The traffic we saw at the IFANCA booth reinforced that data," said Maria Omar, IFANCA Media Relations Director.

Visitors to the booth included current clients, companies interested in learning more about the certification process, and organizations whose certifications were in process. "Our food technologists, Zeshan Sadek, Mujahed Khan and Dr. Masood were right there to answer technical questions. The fact that questions

revolved around specific halal technical inquiries, speaks volumes on the strides IFANCA has made in promoting halal for the past 25 years in the global food industry," said Ms. Omar. "The interest is higher than anything we have seen in the past 10 years for halal food ingredients," said Dr. Chaudry. He estimates an 80% percent growth in halal certification of ingredients and food products since 2005 for US and global halal markets. This increase for US halal market ingredients may reflect the overall estimated \$170 billion US dollar purchasing power of American-Muslims. Dr. Chaudry has estimated that the purchasing power for food items alone may well exceed \$20 billion US dollars.

"An overwhelming majority of the companies on the floor that were halal-certified, or who had displayed their halal certification symbols, were IFANCA clients," said Ms. Omar. "The display of halal-certification symbols (at the booths) signifies that the food industry understands the importance consumers give to credible third-party halal certification. It's a development in the right

direction, for the halal industry overall."

Demand for Halal Foods is Increasing Says Meat Trade News Daily

According to the Meat Trade News Daily, Feb. 2010 issue, in an article written by Dr. Mian Riaz, Director, Food Protein R& D Center, Texas A&M University, "demand for halal foods is increasing, not only in the U.S., Europe and Canada, but also in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, North Africa and Australia. (The) Halal consumer market/trade is the fastest growing in the world. The global halal food market is currently valued at \$635 billion per year. Besides Muslims, other segments have joined the ranks of halal consumers, as these types of foods gain worldwide recognition as being safe and hygienic. Non-Muslim consumers like them, because of their additional safety and sanitation features, making them less likely to be cross-contaminated. Therefore, there is tremendous economic opportunity for food manufacturers to meet the needs of all consumers of halal food products."

Also according to a report, in an estimation by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "there are about 1.57 billion Muslims in the world today, and they comprise 23% of the global population of 6.8 billion. Over 60% of them live in Asia, and one-fifth in the Middle East and North Africa. More than 300 million Muslims live as minority communities. In Europe, there are an estimated 38.1 million Muslims, while about 1 million live in Canada, comprising 3.1% of the population. There are varying estimates of the Muslim population in the U.S., but most surveys place it at

around 8 million." The article was also published in January 2010 by Prepared Foods magazine.

World Halal Research Conference – Inspiring Innovation through Halal Research, June 23-25, 2010

Halal sausage, halal hamburger, halal pizza, halal hot dogs, halal beef jerky, halal gyro meat. Walk into an ethnic store that sells halal meat and we've come to expect these products. What's more, today, halal meat can be ordered online and delivered to your home the very next day. Not bad for a nation where 25 years ago, Muslims had to either seek out the one Muslim store in the entire state that sold halal meat or had to visit the local farmer to slaughter a goat for their dinner, themselves.

These are just a sample of the many innovations in the halal world that Dr. Mian N. Riaz, PhD., Director Food Protein R&D Center at Texas A&M University discussed at the World Halal Research Conference, this year. He shared some of his insights with Halal Digest.

"Halal innovations, in the last 8-10 years, are in the area of new ingredients, new stunning methods, new development in pharmacy products, improved marketing with new halal food products," he says. "They extend to the latest biotechnology techniques to develop halal products, new certification methods and ultimately, with the development of the right software, will help find halal products in the market." Some researchers, he adds, have started looking into the carbon foot print for halal food production models.

Dr. Riaz elaborated that enzymes and gelatin substitutes are some recent ingredients developed for halal food production. Several new stunning methods, and slaughtering

equipment, have been adopted to facilitate halal meat slaughtering in the USA and new medicines and vaccines have been developed so as to avoid the use of porcine enzymes and ingredients.

Further, "new research points towards vegetarian beef being produced in laboratories using biotechnology. This meat is made from the cells of animals and proliferates inside of a growth chamber. Meat is eventually formed from the multiplying cells," says Dr. Riaz. If the past decade is a yardstick, we may have a new source of meat in the coming years.

At several universities Nutrition and Food science students learn about religious food (halal) and many campus cafeterias offer halal foods. New software in cell phones and GPS' can now guide consumers to halal grocery stores and restaurants. The food industry will eventually start looking into making halal greener. Yes, if these are its indicators, the time for halal has arrived.

IFANCA at 1st International Halal Business and Food Expo 2010, July 23- 25

Dr. Muhammad M. Chaudry, President IFANCA was a speaker at the Global Halal Forum, held during the 1st International Halal Business and Food Expo, organized by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the Indonesian Council of Ulama, a leading halal certifying body. The expo also included, Training on Halal Assurance System and an International Meeting on Halal Standards.

Halal Food Service Growing in the West

Consider this: Quick, France's second biggest fast-food retailer, has 362 restaurants all over the country. As of September 2010, 22 of them will

offer halal-only menu's. Yes, it's not even ten percent of the total number of Quick restaurants but can we imagine that same percentage of McDonalds or Burger King's going halal in the USA this year?

The Quick chain chose its 22 restaurants based on which ones oversold fish burgers (fish is naturally halal) relative to average national sales for the product. The other factors were pin-pointing outlets where pork product sales were slow, and as importantly, knowing which outlets saw a



drop in business during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting.

The Quick decision to embrace halal is purely economic. "First and foremost, I'm an entrepreneur and a business owner. My goal is to increase sales and satisfy my clients. It's clear I have clients that I am satisfying more since we went Halal," said one franchisee, Eric Azan, speaking to DW-World.De. Azan has converted one of his six Quick franchises in Montreuil to a halal-only establishment. Sales doubled on average here,

Continued on next page...



Maria Omar, Director, Media Relations, IFANCA at IFT



IFANCA was represented by Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, President (far right) at the 2nd Annual American Muslim Consumer Conference

during the test phase. With 20 new full-time staffers, hired specifically to handle the extra business, Azan is all set to greet halal consumers with a smile.

France's second largest supermarket chain, Casino, too has learned that it can pad its bottom line if it offers halal products. For months now, spicy ready-to-eat chicken wings, halal pate, and mock ham made from turkey have graced its shelves. Casino's own halal product line goes by the brand name Wasilla. In fledgling efforts, some US grocery chains have recently begun carrying a limited number of halal products.

"Five and a half billion euros are going to be spent on these kinds of products this year in France," said Abbas Bendali, the head of Solis, a market research firm specialized in ethnic niches, in an interview with DW-World.De. "There are five million potential customers. So this is more than a niche, this is a real consumer segment."

American Muslim Consumer Conference Draws Large Numbers, Oct. 30th 2010

The second annual American Muslim Consumer Conference (AMCC) was held on Saturday, October 30st, 2010 in New Brunswick, NJ.

Researchers, entrepreneurs, marketing and advertising executives from corporate America convened to discuss and explore the rapidly growing and untapped American-Muslim Consumer markets, its scope, markets, its trends, and opportunities. This conference provided American businesses and executives with useful insights, information, and opportunities on how to access and attract the American-Muslim market. IFANCA was represented by Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, President, as one of the panelists.


"Muslims want to be acknowledged in mainstream media....consider advertising in a Muslim media outlet. Say Eid Mubarak or Ramadan Kareem during the holidays. The Muslim community will respond. When we see an ad we like we send it to our friends and share it with each other," said Mohammed Abdullah, director of the event.

Entrepreneur Magazine said American Muslims have the buying power roughly equal to the state of Indiana. However, "reaching them requires an understanding of their culture, beliefs and preferences. Muslims are more interested than most Americans in seeing advertising that acknowledges them," it says. Muslims are a neglected market with huge potential for brands who are

willing to connect with them online and offline.

The average annual household income of a Muslim family in America is \$75,000, and is pointing the way towards branding relevant to this consumer group. AMCC Objectives include creating awareness as to the American Muslim market, its purchasing power and understanding ways to effectively market products and services to it.

Entrepreneurs and companies who are interested in reaching the American-Muslim market as well as researchers and executives looking to learn about the American-Muslim market were in attendance. The Who's Who list of attendees included speakers, James A. Kocsi, District Director, U. S. Small Business Administration, P. Miles Young, CEO, Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, Steven Pilchak, General Manager, Best Buy, and others.

Details at www.americanmuslimconsumer.com 

Corrections from HC 17: In the article titled The Significance of Milk – Choose What is Natural (Page 20) 1. Supplication or dua after drinking milk should have begun as: *Allahumma barik lana fihi wa zidna minhu...*

IFANCA Halal-Certified Company News



American Halal Co. Launches IFANCA Certified Saffron Road Brand, distributed exclusively by Whole Foods

The Saffron Road brand of Indian entrees sold at Whole Foods contain only 100% Natural Ingredients and uses pasture raised, humanely treated livestock with a guarantee of 100% vegetarian feed and no hormones. Saffron Roads' mission is to offer All Natural halal certified foods which are also holistic, sustainably farmed, and antibiotic free. American Halal Co. markets All Natural Halal Certified food under the Saffron Road brand which was launched in Ramadan and sells its products into select natural, specialty, and gourmet retail channels in the United States.

Adnan Durrani leads the company as "Chief Halal Officer". Mr.

Durrani is a serial entrepreneur having founded Vermont Pure Spring Water and was the principal financial partner for Stonyfield Farms Inc. The rest of the Company's management and Board represent a team of proven entrepreneurs at building premium food brands.

"We are blessed to have IFANCA on board as our halal certification agency. IFANCA's standards, professionalism, integrity, and acceptance worldwide is unmatched. Indeed, it's no coincidence that IFANCA is the go-to halal certifier for 2,200 consumer companies. Now our line of Saffron Road halal cuisine will be in good company with major food companies like Pepsi Co., Nestlé, Kraft, etc. We feel privileged to have been awarded IFANCA's full endorsement of our Saffron Road Indian entrees," commented Adnan Durrani, Chief Halal Officer of American Halal.

For a complete list of halal certified Saffron Road products, go to www.ifeanca.org.

IFANCA Client, Nestlé, is "Role Model" for Islamic Branding, reports WARC News

As reported by WARC News, "Nestlé is the leading multinational company for developing marketing strategies for Muslim consumers." WARC is a leading supplier of information, knowledge, insight and data to the global marketing, advertising, media and research communities.

Miles Young, CEO of Ogilvy & Mather, a keynote speaker at the Oxford Global Islamic Branding and Marketing Forum at the Saïd Business School, Oxford University, acknowledged Nestlé as having recognized Muslim shoppers as a significant market. "Nestlé is probably the role model for doing this properly. It has done it out of conviction – there's a commitment in everything the company does.." He added that "50% of the potential audience in the so-called "next 11" emerging economies are Muslim." However, he pointed out that just using religious connotations as a badge without understanding what it means to be a brand could be a recipe for failure. For instance, he said, Mecca Cola had been targeted to Muslim consumers without success. Brand owners must think "seriously about how they are perceived by Muslim customers."

Olympia Food Industries Sells Halal Gyros Like Hot Cakes

Chicago is home to all five of the major gyro manufacturers in the USA, including IFANCA

Halal-Certified Olympia Food Industries, makers of gyros, Mediterranean pastries, pita breads and various other food items for distribution to restaurants and supermarkets. The origins of this company, however, are in the restaurant industry. Company President Andre Papantoniou and his brother had first set up a restaurant on Sheridan Road in 1971. Their business later changed into a pita company and finally came to include gyros as well. Gyros alone are responsible for half of Olympia's revenue and are available in retail markets all over the United States.

IFANCA Halal-Certified Client, American Bakery, Unwrapped

For lunch on-the-run, there is nothing simpler than wrapping dinner leftovers in some fresh Lawash Flatbread. And more than just individual consumers think that is a great idea. Dearborn, Michigan based American Bakery, the makers of IFANCA halal-certified Lawash Flatbread, Pita bread and Pita chips are suppliers to schools, universities, supermarkets and restaurants. Their Lawash is available in white or whole wheat and is available in flavors ranging from spinach to tomato. Their Pita Chips, too, tease the taste buds in flavors that include



BBQ, Onion, Cinnamon Sugar to Zataar. Their distributors include I&K, C&S Wholesale Grocers, Gordon Food Service, Lipari, SuperValu, Sysco and U.S. Foods. Their products can be found at Busch's Fresh Food Markets,

GFS Marketplace, Meijers, Krogers, Spartan Food Stores, TOPS Markets and more.

Is Your Baby the Next Gerber Baby?



Source: Mujahed Khan

IFANCA Client, Gerber Products Company, a major international stakeholder in the baby food industry, offering more than 190 products in 80 countries, is currently running its Gerber Generation Photo Search for children under 48 months. Visitors to www.gerber.com/photo can upload pictures of their babies and toddlers and once approved, the picture is posted to the Gerber Generation Gallery. Here, pictures with the most votes proceed to the next stage.

Gerber baby food products that are IFANCA halal certified include Good Start 2 Supreme Soy DHA & ARA and Good Start Supreme DHA & AEA.

According to the company, "DHA & ARA are fatty acids, or lipids, found naturally in breast-milk. They're important components of Baby's healthy brain and eye tissues. During the third trimester of pregnancy, Mom passes DHA & ARA to Baby. After Baby is born, Mom can provide DHA & ARA to Baby by breastfeeding or giving her formula with added DHA & ARA." Gerber products are labeled in 16 languages.



English Biscuit Manufacturers Mixes Treats with Social Responsibility

IFANCA halal-certified English Biscuit Manufacturers (Private) Limited, based in Pakistan, is a producer of high quality biscuits. Besides its domestic market, English Biscuit Manufacturers exports its products in special sea worthy packing to USA, Canada, UK, Middle East and African countries.

EBM, strongly vested in being socially responsible, also supports education, especially for females and adults and has sponsored several programs such as the Garage School, Clifton Karachi, the CHAEF (Children Health and Education Foundation) School and the Shaheen KG School in Kala Shah Kaku, Lahore. Further, the company has initiated an in-house literacy program for its employees by the name of Ujala. Regular donations and fundraising activities have also become part of day-to-day business at EBM. English Biscuit Manufacturers is an ISO 9001:2000 & ISO 14001:2004, IIP (Investor in People) and HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) Certified Company.

For a list of IFANCA halal certified products for all these companies, visit www.ifanca.org

Kontos – IFANCA Halal-Certified for Your Kitchen, Restaurant or Pastry Corner

Whether you're preparing dinner for your family, lunch for a hundred restaurant patrons, or those special desserts for the pastry counter, Kontos (www.kontos.com) has the finest products for your culinary needs. From flatbread, gyro and meat products and fillo dough to Mediterranean delights, Kontos has something for you, all conveniently available at your closest grocery store. Look no further, for your next party!

Bruschetta & Toasted Flatbread

Bruschetta Ingredients:

- Red and yellow grape tomatoes, diced
- Onion, finely diced
- Fresh basil leaves, chopped
- Garlic, finely chopped
- Vegetable oil
- Black pepper (optional)
- Balsamic Glaze* (optional)

Flatbread Ingredients:

- Kontos Flatbread**
- Butter, softened or olive oil
- Fresh herbs, finely chopped (basil, parsley, oregano, or rosemary)

Bruschetta Directions: Combine tomato, onion, garlic, and basil with a little oil. If preparing in advance, refrigerate in covered container until ready to serve. Serve with prepared crispy flatbread wedges (see below).

Toasted Flatbread Wedges Directions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Brush Kontos Flatbread with butter or oil. Place on a baking sheet and sprinkle with herbs. Heat in oven for about 2 minutes (or longer if you prefer them crispier). Cut into 1 to 11/2 inch strips or wedges and place in serving basket. To add a spicy zip, sprinkle flatbread with red pepper flakes, white or black sesame seeds, and/or cracked black pepper.

***Balsamic Glaze:** 1 cup Balsamic vinegar, 1/4 cup water, 1/4 cup brown sugar. Combine and reduce by 50% over medium heat while stirring constantly.

Quick & Easy Pizza

Ingredients:

- Kontos Pizza Parlor Crust
- Pizza sauce (or spaghetti sauce with dried oregano added)
- Mozzarella and cheddar cheese, shredded
- Suggested additional toppings: Fresh basil, artichoke hearts, pepperoni, crumbled sausage, and/or sliced mushrooms, peppers, onions, and olives

Directions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Spread sauce over **Kontos** Flatbread almost to edge. Sprinkle cheese over sauce and add your favorite toppings. Bake on a baking sheet until cheese melts (about 4 minutes). For a crisper pizza crust, place directly on oven rack. Slice into wedges and serve.

Hygiene Products for Hajj Pilgrims

By Tayyaba Syed

Each year three million Muslims come together and perform the hajj in Mecca. In this blessed microcosm, pilgrims dress alike and are prohibited from using scents or perfumes of any kind. When it comes to personal hygiene products, besides scents, pilgrims must also avoid other impermissible ingredients such as harmful chemicals, haram animal products, and/or alcohol. There are options labeled “organic” or “natural,” but how many of these would actually also be halal?

Amina Chaudary, like others intending to complete the hajj, looked for scent-free hygiene products that would be permissible, but in vain. She was not satisfied with the available choices. The seed for creating a line of scent-free products was planted. A few years later, she

developed a line of hygiene products branded as Labayk™ (www.labaykproducts.com), which were specifically for Hajj. These include shampoo, face/hand/body all-in-one wash, moisturizing lotion, deodorant, and hand sanitizer. They come in two sizes suited for air travel and at this time are available only as a kit.

“Our products are IFANCA halal certified and made with natural ingredients, including some that are plant-derived,” Amina Chaudary stated. “We even made use of foods such as honey, pomegranate and olive oil, that are mentioned in the Quran, to formulate our products. Since we only use the mildest ingredients, the products are safe and effective on all skin types. The Labayk™ sanitizer is made with no alcohol or essential oils and still kills 99.99% of bacteria,” said Amina Chaudary. (M)



Brand New Concept: www.HalalHealthy.com

Halal observing students on campus, even those who have no choice but to pay for food service as residents of on-campus dorms, don't always have access to halal meals. Or, if you're a halal consumer but live in Wisconsin or North Dakota or almost any town that's not by a big metropolis like Chicago, LA or NYC, ensuring halal often means a 30 mile drive to the nearest halal grocery.

To fill this void, HalalHealthy.com, a division of IFANCA Client Med-Diet Labs, has come up with a brand new concept: halal certified products that can be purchased with a single click. HalalHealthy.com's range extends from naturally halal products such as dates to 100 % halal certified

ready-to-eat meals, 100% halal certified high protein instant beverages, beef jerky and even spices, all delivered to your door. Orders are currently being accepted.

“HalalHealthy.com makes it easier to keep halal even when a halal grocery store is nowhere nearby,” said Mr. Tymchuck, Director of HalalHealthy.com which is based in Minnesota. HalalHealthy.com has introduced a Variety Pack which offers a seven day supply of halal goodies and many traditional foods, even for Suhoor and Iftaar. It is available in three cuisines: South Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean/African. The Variety Pack comes with “Healthy Fasting Guidelines for

Ramadan”, which have been developed by dietitians. It comprises both naturally halal products and 100% halal certified ready-to-eat foods.

HalalHealthy.com used the July 2 - 5, 2010 ISNA Convention to announce the launching of this e-commerce venture, in what was perhaps the first such initiative for a mainstream company. This mega-event attracted over 30,000 Muslims with more than 2000 attendees visiting the Halal Healthy booth. Over 1600 visitors to the Halal Healthy booth received free issues of the IFANCA flagship publication, Halal Consumer, and several hundred signed up for a subscription to it.

“More than 1,000 people filled out surveys providing vital data concerning the halal products and related site content that they'd like to see at HalalHealthy.com. We value these inputs because they will shape our website and its future offerings,” said Don Tymchuck, President of Med-Diet.

Besides the survey, “We had inquiries from attendees who wanted a Variety Pack when they were travelling on business and needed a halal meal to end their fast, and we had professionals commenting on it being an ideal pack to have when they were working overtime and couldn't get home for dinner,” said Naazish YarKhan, Managing Editor, Halal Consumer magazine, who was at the booth. (M)



IFANCA News

IFANCA Welcomes Nadia Durrani

Nadia Durrani joined the organization as a Food Technologist, and will examine ingredients used in food products, to validate whether they are halal or not. Her goals include educating companies and consumers alike about food ingredients that are permissible in Islam. She believes that working for IFANCA allows her to gain professional experience as she fulfills a religious obligation.

Nadia Durrani received her Bachelors of Science in Nutrition from Benedictine University in May 2009. She has also worked with St. Alexius Medical Center for the past four years in the Nutrition Services Department. She has volunteered for a local mosque with their administrative duties and performs community service by creating diet plans for the elderly based on their medical conditions.

IFANCA Welcomes Mahmood Mohiuddin

Mr. Mohiuddin joined IFANCA this past summer as a Customer Service Specialist. His past professional work experiences include working as a Senior Research and Development Engineer with Cardinal Health and Engineering Specialist with Baxter Health Care. Mr. Mohiuddin currently holds a MBA from Roosevelt University and MS in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology. He is the recipient of numerous academic and professional recognitions, Six Sigma Certified, and a Licensed Professional Engineer.

Mr. Mohiuddin seeks to streamline the halal certification process and specifically would like to make the customer service experience insightful and engaging. His top priority is exceeding customer expectations.

"IFANCA gives me the opportunity to facilitate the development of halal markets, globally, with strict adherence to stringent processes and Islamic values," commented Mr. Mohiuddin.

Besides his position with IFANCA, Mr. Mohiuddin volunteers much of his time at his local Mosque as a Sunday School Teacher and Community Leader.

IFANCA Board and Staffers Donate over \$20,400 to Pakistan's Flood Victims

September, 2010 - Death and destruction following the July floods in Pakistan have been deemed worse than the combined catastrophes that were Katrina, the Tsunami and the 2005 Earthquake in Kashmir, Pakistan, according to CNN. While the international community's response was lethargic during the initial weeks of the flooding, the halal community was abuzz with efforts to raise funds to help the victims. IFANCA employees and its Board of Directors donated \$20,400 to the IFANCA Relief Fund which in turn channeled 100 percent of the donations to organizations on the front lines of flood rescue and rehabilitation efforts in Pakistan.

"Natural disasters are tests – both for the victims and those physically removed from it," said Dr. Farhat Quadri, IFANCA's Director of Community Service. "The victims undoubtedly have challenges but we, too, will be held accountable for the actions we took, or didn't take, to help our brothers and sisters in their time of despair." The IFANCA Relief Fund was just one of the many fundraising efforts for flood victims towards which staffers and the IFANCA Board contributed donations. To donate via PayPal, visit www.sabeelpantry.org, click on "Donate" and mention "Floods" to earmark your donations.

IFANCA Preparing for Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive for Chicago's Needy

IFANCA is gearing up once again to participate in the 10th Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive sponsored by Sabeel Food Pantry and AMAL (American Muslims for Activism and Learning). Last year, over 600 Turkeys were distributed to needy families at Emmett Till Academy High School on 65th and Champlain in Chicago and to families in Marquette Park.

"...The Muslim community of Chicago has risen to a need every autumn - to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves celebrate Thanksgiving, the national holiday that all Americans, regardless of faith, share in celebration. Together, we have given thousands of turkeys over these years to families who would otherwise go without," said Dr. Jihad Soshara, AMAL Board Member.



Besides co-sponsoring the drive, Sabeel Food Pantry, an IFANCA operation at 3031 W. Belmont Ave. has served the community since 2003. With the help of community volunteers, the pantry coordinates and distributes the turkeys. Sabeel is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization in the state of Illinois; all contributions are tax deductible. To donate via PayPal, visit www.sabeelpantry.org, click on "Donate" and mention 'Thanksgiving Turkey Drive' to earmark your donations. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Farhat Quadri at f.quadri@ifanca.org.

IFANCA Celebrates Eid with Staffers and Their Families

September 10, 2010 - IFANCA hosted an inaugural Eid party for staffers, their families and the community, at its recently purchased property, Sabeel Center, at 8800 W. Ballard Rd. in unincorporated Maine Township, Illinois.

The facility is being remodeled to house a community center and a library, and will be used to host interfaith activities for all and any members of the neighborhood.

As reported in the local press, Dr. Chaudry said, "Some of our programs are for everybody. The library and reading room is for the whole area. Anybody who walks in can utilize that. The basis of our organization really is, right from the start, non-denominational." Although Islam is at the heart of both the center and IFANCA itself, the building will not be used for regular worship, the report added. While it is not a mosque, night prayers were scheduled here during Ramadan, which ended on September 10, 2010. 🕌

From East to West ~ An Eid-UL-Adha Feast continued from page 11

Lemon and Black Pepper Rubbed Chicken Cutlets



Servings: 6-8
Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound chicken breast (about 4-6 pieces)
- 6-8 whole lemons
- 1-2 tablespoon(s) ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- Half teaspoon nutmeg (or Garam Masala) optional
- 1 cups bread crumbs
- 3 eggs
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds (optional)
- 1/2 cup olive or canola oil

Directions

1. Slice each chicken breast in the center. With a heavy rubber mallet gently tap meat on each side without tearing or breaking it. Now place all the flattened chicken pieces aside.
2. In a bowl, squeeze lemons and save the cut up lemons.
3. Add and mix all dry spices in the lemon juice.
4. Now take one cut up lemon at a time and gently dip it in lemon juice, and rub that on each side of the chicken piece.
5. Warm the oil in a skillet on medium heat.
6. Beat the eggs in a bowl and dip the chicken breasts in it.

7. Then coat each chicken breast with breadcrumbs on both sides.
 8. Fry each side evenly to a nice brown.
 9. Garnish the chicken cutlets with sesame seeds.
- Chef's Notes: You can serve these with soy as well as a sweet and sour sauce. The recipe can be easily prepared with sprayed oil and it will turn out just as tasty as deep fried cutlets. Alternatively, it can be baked at 350 - 375 degrees for 40-50 minutes. Don't wrap it with foil to ensure that it is crispy. You can bake it further if you want it crisper.

Sheer Khurma (Sweet Vermicelli with Milk)

Servings: 4-6
Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup vermicelli crushed to about one inch pieces
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/2-3/4 cup sugar or 1 small condensed milk can (or to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon kewra (essence)-optional
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/4 cup coarsely crushed almonds or pistachios-optional

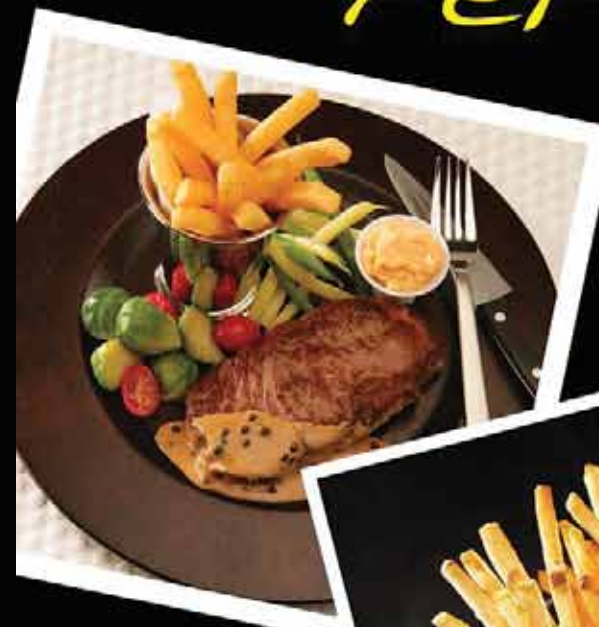
Directions

1. In a skillet warm butter and add the cardamom seeds.
 2. Add the vermicelli to hot butter and lightly brown the vermicelli for a few minutes.
 3. In a separate pot, combine whole milk, whipping cream, sugar and vermicelli. Gently stir for a few minutes so that sugar is dissolved.
 4. On medium heat, bring milk mixture to a boil while stirring at intervals to avoid liquid from sticking to pan.
 5. After first boil reduce the heat to minimum and let mixture thicken to your desired consistency.
 6. Add kewra and stir well.
 7. Add some crushed nuts to the desert and some to garnish the desert.
 8. Cool it down and then chill. It is now ready to serve.
- Chef's Notes: Some people like to eat or serve this desert warm.

About the Chef-

Aisha Kureishy is a Halal Consumer reader and, according to all those who've had her cooking, she's also a culinary expert. She also paints, writes and enjoys photography. Ms. Kureishy and her husband live in Dallas with their young children. (M)

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