



WISCONSIN SCHOOL NUTRITION

IN A NUTSHELL

Halal Meals in the USDA School Nutrition Program

This document is not intended to be an instruction on halal dietary law. It is designed to provide a general overview as it relates to meals provided in the USDA school nutrition programs.

Halal Diets

The term, “halal,” means permissible or lawful. It is used to describe food products that are allowed to be consumed by Muslims according to Islamic dietary law. Persons following a halal diet are not allowed to consume pork products. Other meat products must be slaughtered and prepared in accordance with Islamic dietary law. Halal diets also do not permit alcohol, products that contain alcohol, or products containing ingredients that use non-halal animal-derived products. This includes items such as rennet that is used to make cheese, gelatin, or other food bonding ingredients.

Observance may vary between communities, so it is important to work with the family to understand their specific beliefs and practices regarding the types of foods that are permissible. This helps to build trust and shows a commitment to a culturally respectful and inclusive environment.

Halal Menu

What to Purchase

Purchase certified halal foods, especially meat, to ensure Islamic standards of slaughter and processing of meat and poultry are used.

The following foods are generally considered halal if they do not come into direct contact with non-halal ingredients:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables in their natural state
- Grains and legumes, such as: rice, wheat, lentils, and beans
- Nuts
- Fish and most seafood products
- Dairy products, such as: milk and cheese, unless combined with non-halal ingredients
- Beverages, such as: water, juices, tea, and coffee, unless they contain alcohol
- Eggs from halal animals, such as chickens or ducks

Where to Purchase

Many of the items being served are likely halal, offering a convenient option for those who follow halal dietary guidelines.

Additional halal foods may be found at:

- Food distributor – many food distributors carry halal certified foods. They will indicate this on their website or have staff that can help you identify halal certified food.
- Local supermarket
- Local ethnic specialty grocer

- Online ethnic retailer

Note: [Crediting](#) documentation showing how individual food items contribute to the Child Nutrition Program meal pattern is required.

Making a Menu

Halal meals can be provided upon request or provided to all students. Offering halal foods to all students provides a culturally inclusive environment, reduces the chance of cross contact, and may increase participation.

Keep ingredient labels available for families to identify foods that are not acceptable, as levels of observance may vary between communities.

Service

Providing a halal certified entrée to all children is the best way to create a culturally inclusive environment. For example, if hot dogs are on the menu, provide a halal certified beef hot dog to all students.

If providing halal meals to specific students upon request, work with the family and student to identify strategic and respectful ways to serve the halal meal.

Food Storage and Preparation

Store and prepare certified halal foods separate from non-certified halal foods. Safely storing and preparing halal foods can be accomplished the same way it is for allergen free foods.

Storage

Provide halal specific storage containers and clearly label them to indicate the product is halal. Additionally store halal food items separately such as in a dedicated space or on a separate shelf.

Preparation

Prepare halal specific foods separate from foods that are not permissible to ensure there is no cross contact. When preparing generally permissible food such as fruits and vegetables, ensure they do not come in contact with non-permissible food. This can be accomplished by washing, rinsing, and sanitizing preparation areas, cutting boards, and utensils.

USDA Waiver for Ramadan

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has provided the option for State agencies to apply for a Ramadan Waiver. Under the waiver approval, SFAs may offer meals to students to consume in a non-congregate setting, adjust the time of meal service, and serve meals in high schools without using offer versus serve during Ramadan.

Information regarding a Ramadan waiver will be provided through SNT Bulletins.