Discover LOCAL MEETS GLOBAL FLAVOR P4

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Summer 2015

33

Halal Consumer

Trending

BREAKFAST AT DINNER P4
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Editor’s Note

Assalamu Alaikum

This year, the start of Ramadan almost coincides with the start of summer. Ramadan Mubarak!

The long, warm days make fasting more challenging and more rewarding. In “Fasting and Furious,” we share how athletes maintain their fast during training and provide valuable diet and routine tips to motivate you to get off the couch and keep active.

In “Breakfast at Dinner,” you will find how this trend is spreading as diners find pancakes and eggs a nice diversion from steak and potatoes in the evening. You may choose breakfast at suhoor (pre-dawn meal) time but you might consider it to break the fast in the evening. A lighter meal may help you concentrate better during taraweeh prayers (nightly prayers).

“Culinary Kids” offers up some ideas of how children can help out in the kitchen. This can also keep them busy and take their minds off their hunger. If kids are helping in the kitchen, be sure they are adequately supervised; the kitchen can be a dangerous place.

In “Cooling Cucumbers,” we learn they are a good source of hydration as well as vitamins and minerals. They also have a cooling effect, balancing out the heating effect of dates. There are also quite the variety available. Who knew there were burpless cucumbers?

We’ve all seen lecithin in the ingredient list of so many products. In “The Skinny on Lecithin,” you will learn where lecithin comes from and why it is used in so many food products.

You will also find a short summary of our 17th International Halal Food Conference. The three-day conference brought together industry leaders and government regulators to discuss opportunities and challenges facing the global halal food trade. Conference-goers shared many compliments with us as they left enriched with knowledge that will help them serve halal consumers better.

As usual, the issue also includes some delicious recipes. Give them a try and let us know how they turn out. Stay in touch and enjoy!

Sincerely,
Roger M. Othman managing editor
Assalamu Alaikum

IFANCA concluded the 17th International Halal Food Conference here in the suburbs of Chicago.

Over 115 people from 18 countries representing industry leaders, government regulators, Islamic scholars, and halal-certifying bodies were present as 37 speakers and panelists discussed and debated topics ranging from halal standards and regulations to gelatin and enzymes and even animal welfare and insects as food. In thirteen sessions spread over three days, attendees listened, questioned, and discussed these and other issues they face in understanding and producing halal-certified products.

It is interesting to note that Muslims spent over $1.3 trillion on food in 2013. That’s right, $1.3 trillion. The numbers spell opportunity for food producers, and we see that every day as more and more companies apply for halal certification. But it isn’t all rosy. The industry expressed their readiness to meet any set of halal specifications but they were concerned about having to meet different specifications for different geographic regions. They were also concerned about the acceptability of the halal certifications they receive. While they would like to see a single global halal standard, they realize that isn’t likely to happen any time soon. In lieu of that, they would like to see a global body that can accredit halal certifiers. Regulators also want to see a global body that can accredit halal certifiers. Regulators also want to see a single global halal standard, and they have been working on it for years. While there has been progress, they have yet to reach a consensus.

In the meantime, government bodies like the EU are working on their own halal standard, and non-Muslim bodies like SGS are trying to enter the halal certification field. This is not in the interest of the halal consumer.

Halal consumers need to engage with the industry and the regulators. Islamic scholars need to work with food scientists to ensure the resulting halal assurance system meets the needs of all parties. Consumers can no longer limit their concern to meat items. Today’s food industry is complex and even the simplest products have a multitude of ingredients sourced from all over the world. The only assurance consumers have that a product is halal is the certification of a competent and reputable halal-certifying body. Consumers must understand that food companies respond to consumer demand, not halal-certifier requests. If consumers ask for halal-certified products, they will likely get them. Halal-certification bodies do not influence the company decision to get halal-certified; they only help them achieve halal certification once they commit to the idea. The industry made it clear in the conference that they are listening to the voices in the market. Make sure your voice is heard and don’t limit yourself to meat.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Munir Chaudry president

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Food Trends

Breakfast at Dinner

By Naazish Yarkhan
Food trends are very similar to fashion trends. Butter was kicked to the curb when margarine arrived, only to win favor once again when trans fat, and with it margarine, acquired a bad reputation.

Sugar was a no-no up until high fructose corn syrup was deemed worse in the court of public opinion. Over the past few years, even the not-so-health-conscious know that kale, quinoa, and coconut water rule the roost among healthier fare. Spinach, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts, as wonderful as they were a decade ago, will have to wait their turn to reclaim their place at the helm of what's healthy. Yes, food trends, like fashion trends, come, go, and return.

While it’s not a food item or ingredient, one food trend that has a growing customer base for the past few years is breakfast foods. The demand is so prevalent that an increasing number of restaurants are serving it throughout the day. The food industry attributes this growing demand to consumers’ increasingly hectic lifestyle. Breakfast spells convenience and the foodservice industry is listening.

**McMuffins for Dinner: The Business of Breakfast**

Besides chains like Denny’s and IHOP, restaurants like Bob Evans, Cracker Barrel, and Old Country Buffet have joined the breakfast-all-day bandwagon. As of April 2015, even McDonald’s is testing all-day breakfast at select San Diego locations.

“The integration of breakfast elements in dinner meals is becoming more prevalent,” agrees John Schultz, executive chef, Global Xing Inc. “The egg, especially, is becoming more and more common at dinner.” Besides meeting consumer demand, “The highest margin in the restaurant business is in breakfast. It’s where you make the most money.”

Yes, breakfast is good business. “Throughout the recent recession and continuing today, the breakfast daypart has remained the one consistently bright spot in foodservice, growing year after year,” says John Howeth, senior vice president of foodservice & egg products at the American Egg Board based in Park Ridge, Illinois. “Interestingly, breakfast sandwiches have made a particularly strong showing with growth every year since 2009, led by double-digit increases at midscale and casual dining. Breakfast is the fertile ground for operator growth, especially with other dayparts stagnant or losing ground.”

**In Kitchens Near You**

And it’s not just restaurateurs who are serving breakfast at other times of the day. For the Hussain family, breakfast at dinner time started out as a joke, about six years ago. It is now a family tradition, occurring a couple times each month.

“I didn’t want to make dinner one night and thought if I offered breakfast for dinner the kids would pick cereal and we’d be done,” recalls Zeenat Hussain of Glendale Heights, Illinois, “but they got so excited and we ended up making pancakes from scratch, scrambled eggs, and cut up fresh fruit.” The menu varies: skillet eggs with potatoes and cheese, crepes with chocolate sauce, and pancakes are a favorite. Drinks are either milk or juice. “These are the kids’ breakfasts of choice. It’s a simple and fun way to change up a routine, and always so adventurous-sounding when kids get to say ‘we had breakfast for dinner last night!’” Plus, breakfast for dinner means it’s a night off for mom.

“I have a budding chef in Inaara and, of course, Nuha is eager to do as her elder sister does,” says Hussain.

“Yum! The foods are good and tastier when you are more awake,” Nuha, 11, adds.

“Yes, breakfast is our favorite meal so we just have it whenever,” says Nancy Antol from Elk Grove Village, Illinois. “Plus, it’s fast and easy to prepare.” The family “does a lot of pancakes and French toast for dinner” as well as “mash-ups” such as “Monte Cristos, fried chicken and waffles, scrambled eggs and noodles, frittata or quiche, corned beef hash, hash browns with anything, omelet-in-a-bag.”

Yes, omelet-in-a-bag, a camping staple, features on the Antol’s dining table. “[We] have all the diners write their names on their respective [resealable] bags in marker, pour eggs in, add omelet fillings, seal, [shake well], drop into a pot of boiling water, cook until firm, and turn out onto plates [to serve]. Come to think of it, I could use a raclette now!” she says. A hearty, rustic meal, raclette, is both a traditional Swiss breakfast dish as well as the name of the cheese that it’s made from. Other ingredients include boiled potatoes, pickled onions, and tomatoes.
Aalia Siddiqui of Atlanta, Georgia, on the other hand, prefers the convenience of cereal, sometimes five nights a week, rather than cooking for just one person. “I only cook on the weekend, when my husband is in town. As for eggs, I believe anytime is good for those!” Does she ever have traditional Indo-Pakistani breakfasts, like halwa puri, for dinner? “No Ma’am, Desi is only when we have company,” comes the quick retort.

With Ramadan around the corner, breakfast foods will be served at suhoor (pre-dawn meal before fasting begins) in my household, as always. Despite the longer days we anticipate, it’s too early in the morning for anything heavier, say my husband and children.

Eric Newman, vice president of sales for Organic Valley, an IFANCA halal-certified company, acknowledges the spike in sales of eggs, butter, cheese, and whole milk. “Collectively, breakfast foods are an important source of fat, calcium, and protein. A significant consumer trend is the awareness of fats and the quality of fats. With consumers’ realization that we needed more

“Yum! The foods are good and tastier when you are more awake.”

IFANCA (Islam Food and Nutrition Council of America) nominates DSM Nutritional Products as the company of the year 2015 for their strong commitment and achievements to the Halalness of nutritional ingredients. DSM preserves trust, ensuring integrity and quality in the Halal food industry.
omega-3 fatty acids for optimal health, there has been a shift away from trans fat and margarine, towards butter. Eggs are one of the best sources of protein. Egg whites, driven by the protein craze, are on a lot of menus,” he says.

“We've seen growth in consumption of whole milk based on the demand for omega-3s. Most school milk, however, is 1 percent because of the fear of fat, and it is unfortunate because kids need fat for brain and vision development. Fats also give you satiety, that feeling of fullness,” says Newman. “Organic whole milk, according to a study we did, has an even better omega-3 to omega-6 ratio. In fact, grass-fed whole milk has the perfect ratio—1:1 of each.”

**Is it Good for You?**

According to research published in *Medical News Today*, big dinners are bad news, even if it's the exact same foods and calories consumed at breakfast. In studies comprising women, “the 700-calorie meals, whether eaten for breakfast or dinner, contained the exact same foods, and included a dessert item such as a piece of chocolate cake or a cookie.” While most would not consider cake or cookies as part of a traditional breakfast, they can be comparable to a doughnut, Danish, or muffin. The results? “The women in the big breakfast group lost, on average, 17.8 pounds and 3 inches from their waist. The women in the big dinner group, on the other hand, only lost 7.3 pounds and 1.4 inches from their waist.” The big breakfast group also “had larger decreases in insulin, glucose, and triglyceride levels.”

Alas, while pancakes and syrup may be fun and convenient, and those eggs and hash browns the exact same you’d have at the start of the day, calories at dinner cling that much harder. If you’re not ready to give up that breakfast buffet in the evening, try to keep it simple and limit the menu. Apparently, for women, there is no escaping portion control, even on mom’s night off.

*NAAZISH YARKHAN* has bylines in more than 50 media outlets including *Chicago Tribune* and *Huffington Post.*
Muslim Athletes in Ramadan

By Muneer Shehadi

Fasting & Furious

Muslim Athletes in Ramadan
Have you ever used Ramadan as an excuse to be physically lazy? You wouldn’t be alone if you did. Many times we cite fasting as a reason to exert as little energy as possible. But when we look at Muslim athletes around the globe, we see the exact opposite.

These amazing individuals continue to meet the grueling, physical demands of their respective sports even while abstaining from food and drink. They are an inspiration and an example of what one can accomplish with the proper mental and physical strength. Let’s take a deeper look at how Muslim athletes maintain such high levels of performance during this blessed month.

**HISTORY**

The 2014 FIFA World Cup coincided with the month of Ramadan, and this had a major effect on many of the Muslim players. One such example is the Algerian national soccer team, led by Captain Madjid Bougherra, who was determined to maintain the fast despite the searing heat of the Brazilian summer. “Personally, I’m going to see what my physical state is, but I think I can do it,” Bougherra said in an interview with France 24. The Algerian team advanced to the second round for the first time in its history.

In 2012, the Olympics took place during the month of Ramadan for the first time since 1980. Somali 400-meter runner Zamzam Mohamed Farah told The New York Times she would observe the fast. “Ramadan is something we have to perform,” she said. “I’m just as fast and I will run and I don’t think it will affect me as an athlete.” She finished near the bottom of the race, but the takeaway is that she still trained and competed in an event as intense as the Olympics, not using Ramadan as an excuse to give up.

Perhaps the best example can be found in National Basketball Association (NBA) Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon. Olajuwon is one of the most accomplished players in NBA history. He is a 2-time champion, 12-time all-star, and the only player in NBA...
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history to win NBA Most Valuable Player (MVP), Defensive Player of the Year, and NBA Finals MVP in the same season. Yet while those feats are truly remarkable, perhaps the greatest testament to him was his ability to perform at incredibly high levels while fasting the month of Ramadan. During the 1995 season, Olajuwon won NBA player of the month in February, despite fasting the entire month as Ramadan began February 1.

So how exactly do these Muslim athletes do it? And can fasting actually be more of a benefit than a hindrance?

**DIET/ROUTINE**

How does one go through a 12–15 hour fast and still maintain peak performance? I spoke with former Southern Methodist University soccer player Omar Abdalla, who explained that having a specific routine and discipline is crucial in maintaining strong performance. “My Ramadan routine was difficult,” he said. “I would wake up in the morning, have *suhoor* (pre-dawn meal) consisting of a large quantity of eggs, dates, and milk to ensure enough energy during the day, pray *fajr* (dawn prayer), and then sleep for an extra 45 minutes before getting ready to head straight to practice.”

We can also find a great example in the Abdullah brothers, former Arizona Cardinals defensive back Hamza and current Kansas City Chiefs safety Husain, who have both gone through the rigors of the National Football League (NFL) while fasting the month of Ramadan.

Hamza spoke about his Ramadan diet routine in a 2010 interview with Yahoo Sports Shutdown Corner. “On a typical day, I’ll wake up at about 4:30 in the morning, and eat a normal-sized breakfast. Waffles, vegetarian sausages, and some eggs. Oatmeal or a protein bar in there, and then I start my fast. One important thing is hydration; I probably drink 200 ounces of water in the morning, and after I break my fast, I’m continually drinking throughout the night just to make sure that I’m hydrated and replenishing those fluids that I lost during the day.”

But that is only half of the routine. A complete Ramadan regimen must encompass not only the physical nourishment, but mental and spiritual nourishment as well. “My afternoons were spent going to class and staying mentally engaged, and a nap was absolutely essential either in the afternoon or right before the time to break the fast,” Abdalla explains. “Most importantly, I dedicated a portion of my day to reading and reflecting upon the Quran, in addition to performing the daily prayers and *taraweeh* (special night prayers in Ramadan).”

**HAKEEM OLAJUWON** is one of the most accomplished players in NBA history. He is a 2-time champion, 12-time all-star, and the only player in NBA history to win NBA Most Valuable Player (MVP), Defensive Player of the Year, and NBA Finals MVP in the same season.
Husain added that he would often fast from other things, such as music and video games, instead opting for spiritual nutriment. “People make extra prayers, which are called Tahajjud prayers (late night prayer), which are added at around 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. Also, during Ramadan, we read the whole Quran, which is broken up into 30 parts.”

**BENEFITS**
Contrary to popular belief, there are multiple benefits gained from performing physical activity while fasting the month of Ramadan. “Detoxification, physical exhaustion leading to mental strengthening and toughness, and reduction of body fat,” Abdalla explains when asked about such benefits.

It is impossible to speak of the physical benefits without also touching on the spiritual enhancements. “Awakening, sense of commitment, selflessness to others who are forced to fast due to lack of nutrition, extreme focus, and an overall peace and tranquility,” he continues.

The point about focus is further emphasized by Dr. Najee-ullah, who states that intermittent fasting can lead to stronger focus and concentration. If one is able to perform while depriving the body of necessary nutrients and hydration, then athletes will be on another level with all of the proper components available. “The main challenge is making sure the athletes are still getting what they need during the eating hours, which aren’t very long during the summer,” she says. “I am a huge fan of supplemental vitamins and minerals. Taken regularly with the proper diet, vitamins continue to provide sustenance to the body over time.”

**TEAMMATE REACTIONS**
“But you can at least drink water, right?” This is common refrain from teammates unfamiliar with the guidelines of the blessed month.

**MAINTAINING OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE**
Take the example of growing a garden. Months of planning and preparation are necessary to ensure a healthy garden so when the time for harvesting comes, there are plentiful crops. Such is how the Muslim is prescribed to be in the months leading up to Ramadan. Entering the month of Ramadan without preparation or an established routine will prevent the Muslim from blossoming, both physically and spiritually, just as a garden would not flourish without prepping the soil.

Dr. Muslimah Ali Najee-ullah, doctor of anatomy and health and fitness expert, works with many Muslim athletes and is currently training many sisters to run a 5k at the beginning of Ramadan. She echoes the importance of building prior habits and shares a few tips for Muslim athletes to maintain high levels of performance while observing the Ramadan fast:

**DON'T START ANY NEW ACTIVITY PLAN DURING RAMADAN.** Establish a physical routine two to three months prior to Ramadan so that activity can be maintained during the month.

**WORK OUT DIRECTLY BEFORE IFTAR (FAST-BREAKING MEAL), AFTER IFTAR, OR BEFORE SUHOOR.** If at all possible, avoid exercising outside during peak hot hours of the day, especially during the summer months.

**A PROPER DIET IS CRUCIAL.** Eat well-balanced meals for suhoor and iftar, full of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and vitamin supplements. Avoid processed foods and sugary sweets, especially during iftar.

**HYDRATION IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL!** Drink plenty of water during the non-fasting hours, and keep water by your bed to drink intermittently during the night. It’s strongly recommended that athletes continue to drink their recommended minimum amount of water during eating hours. The amount of water one should ingest is half of his or her weight in ounces, e.g. a 120-pound person should drink 60 ounces of water per day.

**ONE MUST LISTEN TO HIS OR HER BODY.** Showing signs of exhaustion or dehydration is a symbol to scale back and reduce workloads. Professional athletes have a team of people invested in their physical well beings, but average people don’t and have to be mindful of what their bodies are telling them.
“Respect and extreme awe,” Abdalla tells of his teammates’ reaction when he explains to them that nothing, including water is allowed during the fast. “They couldn’t believe the mental strength it requires to be able to perform in Ramadan.”

Robert Horry, former teammate of Olajuwon, spoke to The National about Olajuwon playing during Ramadan, saying, “There are 48 minutes to a game and for you to play 42 minutes of that 48 and not even be able to take a sip of water, that is just phenomenal.”

Hamza adds, “One of my teammates, Michael Adams, recently told me, ‘Hamza, you seem like you’re really at peace.’ And I like to think that’s the benefit of fasting. You’re never too high or too low.”

INSPIRATION AND REFLECTION
The willpower and discipline to completely abstain from physical nourishment while competing with such intensity is truly astonishing. The one common belief is that, although the body isn’t receiving the nutrients during the day, God is providing the sustenance for these athletes to fulfill the extreme physical demands of their sport.

“I want to test my limits as a man spiritually and physically,” says Hamza. “I want to see if I can go through the same struggles that people go through every day. There are people fasting right now who aren’t doing it by choice.”

“I’m putting nothing before God, nothing before my religion,” Husain told the Associated Press in 2010. “Football is something I choose to do, not something I have to do. So I’m always going to fast.”

The strength of such exemplary athletes as Hakeem Olajuwon, the Abdullah brothers, and the many other professional and recreational Muslim athletes who continue to fast during physical exertion is the essence of “mind over matter.” When one can control such basic needs as food and water while pushing the body to physical limits, it is truly an amazing thing. So next time you feel the fatigue of fasting trying to take over and prevent you from being strong and active, remember these athletes for some inspiration.

MUNEER SHEHADI is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) from the Chicago area. He has a BA from the University of Illinois and his interests include sports, research, Islamic studies, and food.
Cooling Cucumbers

By S. Raheel Haque

Summertime is right around the corner—a time to soak up the sun on the outside and keep cool on the inside. What better way than to crunch into a crisp, cool slice of cucumber, nature’s own Freon® (minus the toxins). Many cultures and medical healing traditions around the world and throughout history have used cucumbers in one way or another to assist the body in what it does best: regulate. Even our very own beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) used to consume this blessed vegetable.

The properties of cucumbers are what make them such a sensational snack. Created to contain around 95 percent water, it’s not a coincidence that these veggies grow primarily during the summer months. They also pack a considerable nutritional boost. According to the Food and Drug Administration, just one cup of cucumbers contains a daily value of 8 percent vitamin A, 20 percent vitamin C, and 4 percent each calcium and iron. These values may vary depending on the type of cucumbers you consume.

Properties

- They contain 95% WATER
- They grow primarily during SUMMER MONTHS
- NUTRITIONAL BOOST
  - 8% VITAMIN A
  - 4% IRON
  - 20% VITAMIN C
  - 4% CALCIUM

I can almost hear the question coming…

“Wait, there are different types of cucumbers?”

Yes, it’s true, most home gardeners categorize them into four types: slicing, pickling, specialty, and burpless cucumbers. They range in looks from long, straight, and green, to short, round, and yellow. Slicing and pickling cucumbers are named after the atrocities they face after being picked. Specialty cucumbers are known for their unique colors and shapes. One in particular, the lemon cucumber, is small, round, and yellow, closely resembling a lemon. If you have trouble properly digesting cucumbers, I would suggest the burpless variety, which has the unique quality of being easy to digest.
By S. Raheel Haque

Cucumber

Summertime is right around the corner—a time to soak up the sun on the outside and keep cool on the inside. What better way than to crunch into a crisp, cool slice of cucumber, nature’s own Freon® (minus the toxins). Many cultures and medical healing traditions around the world and throughout history have used cucumbers in one way or another to assist the body in what it does best: regulate. Even our very own beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) used to consume this blessed vegetable.

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These different qualities, colors, flavors, and textures are all part of God’s signs. It is quoted that the past generations said, “… O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions.” [Moses] said, ‘Would you exchange what is better for what is less?’” (Quran 2:61). What is considered to be “less” in this verse (cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions), is exactly what we are striving to implement in our diets on a daily basis in order to bring ourselves into a state of good health.
It is even noted in a hadith that the Prophet (PBUH) “…ate Qith’thaa (cucumbers) with dates” (Shamail Muhammadiyah). The relationship between these two foods being eaten together may not make sense to the average person, but according to Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s Medicine of the Prophet and practitioners of Unani medicine, commonly used in the Muslim world, cucumbers have a cooling effect that dates balance out with their opposite quality of heat.

The world of modern day nutrition and natural medicine has a slightly different, and clearly more technical, view of the beneficial qualities of cucumbers. Dr. Denis Marier, naturopathic doctor and clinician at the National University of Health Sciences, based in Lombard, Illinois, says cucumbers have many components that “…assist in long term health, including a flavonol called fisetin, which helps in fighting Alzheimer’s and diseases of the brain; vitamin C, beta carotene, and quercetin, which are antioxidants; B vitamins which are anti stress and increase energy levels; and potassium for general heart health.” He went on to add, “Ayurvedic medical practitioners and traditional Chinese medical practitioners use cucumbers for their cooling effect, and spas will even put cucumbers in drinking water to decrease reflux and heartburn.” Dr. Marier also reinforced the importance of consuming the peel and seeds of cucumbers, as well as other fruits and vegetables, when feasible, as many of the nutrients lie there.

Get Your Fill of Cucumbers

After learning about all the benefits of this vegetable, we have to take another step in order to incorporate it into our diet. So, where do we begin?

SALAD

Of course, salad is an option, but that doesn’t really satiate the desire for creativity, now does it?

INFUSION SMOOTHIE

How about infusing it into your water? Placing a few slices in a pitcher ought to do it. It’s also a great addition to your juice or smoothie.

SALAD

High water content and mild flavor make it the perfect base to which you can add stronger flavors like kiwi, banana, or pineapple.

BEAUTY

If none of these options work for you, you can always lay a slice over each eye. You won’t get the hydrating and energizing effects of consuming it whole, but you might just lighten any dark circles and puffiness forming under your eyes!

CUCUMBER + DATES

S. RAHEEL HAQUE is a student of Naturopathic Medicine, currently studying at the National University of Health Sciences (NUHS). He aspires to master complementary and alternative medicine as well as study the traditional Islamic sciences.
MAKING NUTRITION WORK

We’ve learned that to truly nourish lives, we need to deliver the nutrition people need. As part of our 50-plus consumer brands in 100 countries around the globe, we’re proud to make Halal-certified nutritional products, and to support the mission of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America through its annual Halal Food Conference.
Ever wonder how salad dressings and chocolate bars stay so creamy? Or how a stick of margarine maintains its smooth texture? If it were not for an essential ingredient called lecithin, many of the food products we’ve come to enjoy might not exist.

Lecithin (pronounced les-uh-thin) is a blend of naturally occurring oils and fats present in animal and plant sources, such as beef liver, steak, eggs, whole grains, corn, and peanuts. Worldwide, commercial forms of lecithin come from egg yolks and soybeans—one of the major agricultural crops produced in the United States.

We’ve all heard the adage, ‘oil and water don’t mix.’ Soy lecithin, made from soybean oil, is the most cost-effective and widely used additive in the food industry. Dr. Mian Riaz, director of the Food Protein R&D Center at the Texas A&M University System, says the reason lecithin is a popular food additive is because it is an excellent emulsifier, which keeps fat and water particles from separating.

“Emulsifiers help to process food,” says Dr. Riaz. “Mostly [lecithin] is added to smooth the process. It helps to maintain the food matrix as it is and doesn’t let the fat out from certain particles, [creating] an emulsion.” Mayonnaise, for example, is an emulsion or stable mixture of fat and water. Some other examples of emulsions are salad dressings, chocolate, milk, and ice cream.

Food additives like lecithin are used to maintain or improve appearance, texture, freshness, and safety. While lecithin adds smoothness to creamy sauces, candies, and baked goods, it also gives packaged products a longer shelf life and it is often used to prevent sticking as seen with many nonstick cooking sprays.

Despite some consumers’ concerns on the safety of food additives, Dr. Riaz, says that lecithin is not harmful and that consumers should not be concerned whether it is bad for their health.

“We don’t want the consumer to be scared,” adds Dr. Riaz. “[Lecithin] is just part of the additives used in the food industry. It is one hundred percent safe.”

According to Dr. Riaz, lecithin is actually good for overall health. One reason is because it contains choline, which is believed to support brain, liver, and heart health. Dr. Riaz recommends taking one lecithin supplement or a spoonful of lecithin oil or powder per day to help increase concentration and avoid dementia.

In addition, some findings have suggested lecithin may help lower cholesterol levels and improve the cardiovascular system.
In a 2011 study published in the journal *Epidemiology*, researchers found the use of lecithin supplements was also associated with reduced breast cancer risk.

While concerns regarding safety should not be overlooked, the proverbial question for Muslim consumers is whether lecithin is a halal food ingredient or not. Dr. Javed Rashid, IFANCA technical director, believes the answer is simple. He says the food product label must indicate that the lecithin is made with soy (as in “soy lecithin”) or another plant-based source like sunflower, cotton, or grape seeds, and not derived from an animal source.

“Most of the labels of products with lecithin do declare it as soy lecithin [and] not just lecithin,” says Dr. Rashid.

The primary reason soybean must be stated on food product labels is because it is considered a major food allergen, especially amongst babies and children. Consequently, the federal Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) requires all packaged foods containing soybean as an ingredient to list the word “soy,” “soya,” or “soybean” on the label.

“Since lecithin is considered a functional ingredient, it must be declared on the [ingredient] label,” says Dr. Rashid. He points out that such mandatory labeling indirectly benefits the halal food consumer as well.

Muslim consumers may be cautious when it comes to soy lecithin that has been enzymatically modified. Dr. Riaz says that sometimes soy lecithin is modified with enzymes or processed with other ingredients, making it difficult to determine its halal status, as these enzymes and other ingredients could come from non-halal sources. Therefore consumers should pay close attention to labels indicating “enzymatically modified soy lecithin.”

With the ongoing push for less processed foods and more transparent food product labels, the future of lecithin and other food additives remains unknown. The ample supply of soybeans, however, guarantees that ingredients like lecithin will remain inexpensive to produce and readily available.

AYSHA HUSSAIN is a New York-based writer and journalist. Aysha was featured in *The New York Times*’ “We, Myself and I,” and her work has been published in *Newsday* and *Muslim Girl*.
Most of us are trying to eat healthier not just meals, but snacks, too. No matter your circumstances, whether you are a singleton living alone, a professional, a stay-at-home parent...there really are never enough hours in the day. So it can be hard to create from-scratch home-made meals for dinner or avoid snacking on the go. Saffron Road products to the rescue!

In June 2010, Saffron Road’s initial four products hit store shelves with IFANCA’s Crescent-M symbol. Today, there are over 50 products available, all halal-certified by IFANCA, in over nine thousand mainstream grocery and natural markets in the United States, in addition to retailers like Target and Costco.

Why halal certification? Founder and CEO Adnan Durrani explains, “Saffron Road’s mission is to offer all-natural halal-certified foods which are also holistic, sustainably farmed, and antibiotic free. We are a big proponent of making sure to get third party certifications of all and any of our claims. We never self-claim anything on Saffron Road’s products. Hence, getting halal-certified was a ‘must-have’ for Saffron Road.” He adds, “Also, our consumers look for halal authenticity, integrity, and transparency—so the best way for us to demonstrate this, as well as for us to insure all our products follow strict halal dietary and ingredient protocols, was to get officially halal-certified by a reputable certifier.”

On choosing IFANCA as that certifier, “IFANCA is the leading and most trusted certification organization for halal products among US Fortune 500 Companies. Also, we were encouraged by the fact that IFANCA has high integrity—that it is a totally independent certifier, not associated or owned by any halal manufacturers.”

Since all Saffron Road products have been certified halal from the beginning, it’s not easy to say exactly what the effect of halal certification has had on the demand for their products, but Durrani says, “We know our major retailers prefer it.”

Knowing that offering only halal products was the brand mission for Saffron Road, “all products were developed with that in mind, so for us obtaining the certification was not difficult.” Durrani admits, “However, it did require us to be very selective in terms of our supply, sourcing, and manufacturing facilities—especially since we are also one hundred percent hand-slaughtered, antibiotic free, and hormone free.”

Saffron Road makes extra effort to communicate with halal consumers in a variety of ways. They are very active online, across social media, as well as in the Muslim community. “We work with popular websites and bloggers like zabihah.com, My Halal Kitchen, Fauzia’s Kitchen Fun, The Muslim Ad Network, etc.” Durrani continues, “We also attend consumer events like AMCC (American Muslim Consumer Consortium) and ISNA’s (Islamic Society of North America) Annual Convention each year. And, we give back through organizations like Islamic Relief USA and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.”

Each year during Ramadan and Eid, all Saffron Road products are on price promotion at many of their retailers. Last year, Saffron Road partnered with Whole Kids Foundation to help bring salad bars to underprivileged schools through the Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools program. For every Saffron Road product purchased during Ramadan at Whole Foods Market, Saffron Road donated five percent (approximately $0.25 per item) to Whole Kids Foundation with the goal to help fund salad bars in impoverished areas of the United States, especially schools with large percentages of under-represented kids of color. “As a result of the very successful give back initiative,” Durrani proudly states, “we were able to grant four salad bars—one for each of the middle schools in the Peoria, Illinois, school district.”

Got a question or comment? Call 877-425-2587 or email info@saffronroadfood.com
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WE MAKE SURE THE FOOD YOU SERVE IS HALAL.

ISLAMIC FOOD AND NUTRITION COUNCIL OF AMERICA:
In matters of halal, we take the doubt out of doubtful.

The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, IFANCA, is working with the world’s food producers to ensure what you eat is halal and healthy.

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*The Crescent M® and IFANCA are registered trademarks of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) and appear on IFANCA halal-certified products internationally.
Black Bean and Cucumber Summer Salad

By YaQutullah Ibraheem Muhammad MS, RDN, LD

SERVINGS: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 English cucumbers, diced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 (15-ounce) cans corn, drained
- ½ red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 ½ tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon cilantro
- 1 cup green olives
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Drain all ingredients well.
2. Mix all ingredients in large bowl and serve!

Note: Eat salad by itself or add on the side as a salsa or to a taco salad.
Bombay Breakfast Wrap

by Saira Mohiuddin

SERVINGS: 4-6

INGREDIENTS
- 8 organic eggs
- 4 large Vidalia onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons ginger paste
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 2 jalapeno peppers, sliced
- 4 spring onions, sliced
- 2 roma tomatoes, chopped
- ½ cup Organic Valley® Organic Pasteurized Sharp Cheddar Cheese, finely shredded
- 4 large flour tortillas

DIRECTIONS
1. Heat large cooking pot over medium heat; add olive oil, butter, and onions.
2. Sauté onions until caramelized, about 20 minutes, then add garlic and ginger paste.
3. Add chili powder, turmeric, sea salt, and pepper to onions and mix. Make 8 divots in onion-spice mixture.
4. Crack eggs into bowl then carefully add to onions. Cover and cook on low heat for 5 minutes.
5. Add cilantro, jalapenos, and spring onions; gently stir eggs. Chop cooked egg whites and leave yolks whole.
6. Place tortilla on plate; add two yolks to each wrap. Sprinkle tomatoes and cheese over eggs.
7. First fold in the sides, then roll the tortilla upwards.
8. Cut in half and serve immediately.
Chicken Roulade

by Saira Mohiuddin

SERVINGS: 4-6

INGREDIENTS
- 4 pounds halal boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- ½ bunch parsley, chopped
- 1 bunch basil, chopped
- 4 sprigs oregano, chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 teaspoons sea salt
- cracked black pepper
- 4 teaspoons honey
- zest of 1 lemon
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- 8 ounces Mariposa Dairy Black Pepper Goat's Milk Cheese, sliced ½-inch thick
- 1 (12-ounce) jar roasted red peppers

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease a 9 x 13-inch pan.
2. Pound each chicken breast until each breast is approximately ¼-inch thick.
3. Mix herbs, garlic, olive oil, sea salt, cracked black pepper, honey, lemon zest, and apple cider vinegar together. Add chicken breast to mixture and marinate in the fridge for at least 1 hour.
4. Remove chicken breast from marinade and lay lengthwise onto a cutting board. Spoon a little of the herbs from the marinade onto the breast. Layer 1 or 2 roasted pepper on top of breast, and then layer 2 half-slices of goat cheese.
5. Roll breast with filling upwards, while tucking in the sides.
6. Cut three 12-inch strands of butcher’s twine. Tie breast with a simple knot and start at the top of breast; tie the second string towards the bottom; and finally, the third string should be tied in the middle. Repeat for each chicken breast.
7. Heat pan on medium-high; add olive oil. Sear each side of roulade for approximately 3 to 4 minutes. Add butter. Bake in oven for 10 minutes. Allow to rest for 5 minutes and remove string with scissors before slicing roulade.
Chocolate Hazelnut Mixed Berry Smoothie

By YaQutullah Ibraheem Muhammad MS, RDN, LD

SERVINGS: 2

INGREDIENTS
1½ cups Organic Valley® Organic Lowfat 1% Milk
2 small bananas
4 tablespoons chocolate hazelnut spread
½ cup frozen strawberries
½ cup blueberries
½ cup blackberries
½ cup raspberries

DIRECTIONS:
1. Place all ingredients in blender and process until smooth.
2. Serve in a glass with a straw and a few peppermint leaves for garnish (optional). ☀️
Features

Culinary Kids

By Nadia Malik
At four years old, Eliana de Las Casas remembers creating her first recipe. For Valentine’s Day, she wanted to combine strawberries and cream cheese on bread and cut the sandwich into a heart shape.

De Las Casas wasn’t proficient at spelling yet—and the ingredients were simple ones—but that first foray into cooking spurred her love for the craft. She started helping her family with meals, and then was encouraged by her mom to write a food blog. That turned into cooking tutorials for children at the age of eight. Now the 14-year-old is known as Kid Chef Eliana, has her own weekly radio show that features interviews with renowned chefs, and is in a full-time arts school in New Orleans on the way to receiving a culinary education.

“I’ve always had a passion for cooking,” she says. “I loved being in the kitchen with my mom. I always wanted to help with something.”

De Las Casas is representative of a generation of children who have found a love of cooking and have cultivated it beyond just assisting their families with daily meals. Competitive cooking shows featuring children, such as MasterChef Jr., Kids Baking Championship, and Rachael vs. Guy: Kids Cook-Off, have opened the doors to the younger set becoming enthusiastic about creating their own recipes.

“Those [shows] are really fun,” says Arshia Ahmed, who lives in Naperville, Illinois. “The competitors are like 9 or 10 years old, really close to [my son’s] age. He likes watching and seeing the different kids his age.”

Seven-year-old Ibraheem was inspired by watching the televised contests to help his mother make chicken teriyaki, which included measuring out ingredients, following the instructions of the recipe, and learning about using the stove.

“It takes away the fear of ‘Oh the stove is hot; I can’t handle this,’” Ahmed explains. “I think it lets [kids] experiment, too.” Ibraheem has always been interested in science and chemistry, so working with food is just a natural extension of that curiosity for him.

“The education goes beyond the culinary technique,” continues Elena Marre, founder of The Kids’ Table, a cooking school in Chicago offering classes for children as young as two years old. “Combining flavors, knowing how you would mix them up—take these concepts, and adjust them for seasonality.”

Having young kids learn about what goes into their meals is also an easy way to help teach them about nutrition, according to Sherrí Hansen, owner of Louisiana-based Culinary Kids, which also offers cooking classes starting at age two.
Hansen held a *Ratatouille*-themed Friday movie night for one of her classes as an opportunity to give parents some time off. They were amazed when they found their children enjoying the sliced eggplant, zucchini, and tomato dish that was featured in the film.

“Parents were floored, wondering how we got their children to eat eggplant,” she adds. “If a child has control and can make choices and be trusted by a grownup, then they’re definitely going to taste what they make. Odds are, it’s going to become their special recipe.”

Marre says her business was sparked by the fact that her son stopped being a picky eater when he was involved in the cooking process. Plus, this interest in throwing together meals lends to a natural activity that families can do together.

That’s the push de Las Casas always wants to make with kids her age. “It’s important for kids and their families to cook in the kitchen together,” she explains. “To eat dinner together really brings the family together. Dinner is the time when you’re telling everyone about your day.”

The cooking competitions on television, even the ones not featuring young contestants, are also a safe viewing option for parents, and it gives them something they can enjoy with their kids. Menka Berry and her husband, who live near Indianapolis, watch *Chopped* with Inaya, 12, and Arshia, 9. Berry has been encouraging her daughters to help in the kitchen since they were young, and they’ve advanced into making some of their own recipes.

“I like making up my own concoctions,” Arshia explains, which includes mixing together ice cream with oranges, a banana, and cookies. Inaya has graduated into making a Boston Crème cake for her mother’s birthday, a recipe she calls her toughest endeavor. She’s also taken to imitating Berry’s cooking style and improvising on pasta dishes.

“I know a lot because my mom is always pointing out every single flavor in what we eat,” she says. “I’ve seen her make pasta recipes from just putting stuff together.”

Of course, when novices are first starting off with items like sharp knives and hot stoves, it’s important to have the right supervision and instruction, especially when motor skills are still developing. Hansen recommends starting off with kid-friendly knives with dulled edges and working on simple tasks.

“You already have the best cooking tools attached,” she continues. “Your hands can be used tremendously.” For parents, it’s an opportunity to reiterate hand-washing and sanitation skills; once those are down pat, young helpers can tear apart lettuce or shred cooked chicken for salads. Four-year-olds love measuring and mixing, which can extend to assisting in making a dressing to use as a dip for vegetables.

Hansen says a general guideline is that an 11-year-old should be able to handle a standard 8-inch kitchen knife if they’ve had the proper safety instruction drilled into them. Starting in a realm parents are comfortable in can also teach them lessons on letting go, Hansen adds.

“One of the biggest hurdles parents have to overcome when they have children in the kitchen is our adult fear of being cut and burned,” she explains. “[Kids] want to take that risk; they want to test themselves. They want to try harder.”

De Las Casas pushed herself to write a cookbook when she was 10. A quick search of the Internet shows hordes of pre-teens taking advantage of technology and putting out instructional videos and websites that reflect their culinary passion. And that’s the lesson that these young chefs are teaching adults—their skills are pretty amazing if they’re allowed to experiment and develop them.

NADIA MALIK holds a degree in journalism and is a former reporter for a Chicago-area newspaper. She has written for websites and publications and has also worked for several non-profit organizations.
Halal certification is by the Islamic Food & Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA)

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Preserving the Trust:
Ensuring Integrity in the Halal Food Industry
Schaumburg, Illinois, played host to an illustrious group of people that play a critical role in the quality and production of the halal food you eat.

The 17th International Halal Food Conference attracted speakers and attendees from as far away as Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Indonesia for three days of presentations and discussions on the challenges and opportunities in the global halal food trade: an enormous enterprise with a total annual turnover of over $1.3 trillion! That’s right, trillion dollars!

In 13 separate sessions spread over the three days, 37 different speakers addressed topics ranging from halal standards and regulations to specific ingredients like gelatin, enzymes, and residual alcohol. Squeezed in between were sessions on the Islamic perspective on animal welfare and the consumption of insects as well as an appreciation banquet that allowed community members to mingle with the industry representatives.
In the standards and regulations sessions, the Indonesian, Pakistani, GSO, and SMIIC standards were discussed. The effort to consolidate into one standard is ongoing and, though slow, progress is being made. Industry would like to see one global standard to facilitate the easy exchange of goods while regulators need to ensure their local needs are satisfied. Consumers have not exercised much of a voice on the subject, relying on their country regulators to enforce the regulations. Halal-certifying bodies have set their own standards or chosen to follow the importing country standard as appropriate. The need for a global accrediting body was a recurring theme expressed by the industry.

On the critical ingredients discussed, the short supply of halal gelatin is limiting the production of halal-certified nutritional supplements as well as some processed foods. Enzyme suppliers can meet any halal standard, but they would like a global standard so their products will be acceptable anywhere in the world. And when it comes to residual alcohol, regulators would like to
have a zero tolerance level while industry explains that, though achievable, it will compromise flavor. As a result, most importing countries allow a small amount of residual alcohol from non- _khamr_ (intoxicant) sources to remain in halal-certified products.

All in all, the conference made for lively discussions, and attendees expressed their satisfaction with the very informative sessions.

We take this opportunity to salute the Companies of the Year: Amway’s Nutrilite division and DSM. Both companies earned the award for providing Outstanding Service to the Global Halal Food Industry and Customers. Nutrilite is the world’s number one selling vitamin and dietary supplements brand and they produce over 70 IFANCA halal-certified products. DSM is a global science-based company active in health, nutrition, and materials providing innovative solutions to nourish, protect, and improve performance in global markets.

Congratulations Nutrilite and DSM; you are a model that others can emulate!

For the first time, we presented the Crescent-M award to Dr. Edison J. Geromel of the Coca-Cola Company and Dr. Thomas Vollmuth of Wrigley, a Subsidiary of Mars, Inc. in appreciation of their Long Time Support to Halal. Their dedication and contributions to serving halal consumers is much appreciated. Congratulations gentlemen and thank you! We thank our sponsors: Nutrilite, the Coca-Cola Company, Abbott, Pepsico, DSM, Maple Lodge Farms, Organic Valley, Advanced Food Products LLC, Baskin Robbins, Cargill, Firmenich, Schreiber, Thunder Ridge Beef Company, and Wrigley. We thank our speakers and panelists from around the world. Your insight and experiences help us all improve the halal offering. And we thank the attendees who also came from around the world and contributed their thoughts, questions, and experiences. Together you all contributed to the success of the conference. Your thanks and praise inspire us to continuously improve the conference experience.
### HALAL-CERTIFIED PRODUCT LOCATOR

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Not all of the company products are halal-certified. Look for the Crescent-M logo on the product label or verify the certification using the Certified Products listing on www.ifanca.org.
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<td>Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and restaurants throughout the United States and Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Valley</td>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>Cropp Cooperative/ Organic Valley</td>
<td>Supermarkets throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POM Wonderful</td>
<td>Beverages / Beverage Concentrates</td>
<td>POM Wonderful, LLC</td>
<td>Supermarkets throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruits Processed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saffron Road</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>American Halal Co., Inc.</td>
<td>Target, Whole Foods, Kroger, Publix, HEB and various markets throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snack Food</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visit their website to locate a store near you: <a href="http://www.saffronroadfood.com">www.saffronroadfood.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appetizers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrider</td>
<td>Personal Care Products</td>
<td>Sunrider International</td>
<td>Visit their website for distributors: <a href="http://www.sunrider.com">www.sunrider.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nutritional Supplements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toms of Maine</td>
<td>Personal Care Products</td>
<td>Toms of Maine, Inc.</td>
<td>Department stores, supermarkets, and drugstores throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonderful</td>
<td>Pistachios and Almonds</td>
<td>Paramount Farms</td>
<td>Supermarkets and drugstores throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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