

Halal Food Options in US Higher Education Campus Cafeterias: An IFANCA White Paperⁱ

In 2010, IFANCA conducted its first, all-comprehensive USA College and University Halal Survey. The survey, which is the first of its kind, explored US university and college campus halal meal options and availability. It also inquires into young halal consumers' tastes, meal choices, and preferences. The data was collected from an electronic survey distributed through Muslim Student Associations (MSA) at 135 major universities and colleges across the United States. Approximately 1000 responses were received and the rate of completion of the survey was 85%. The survey was conducted between the Months of May and June, 2010.

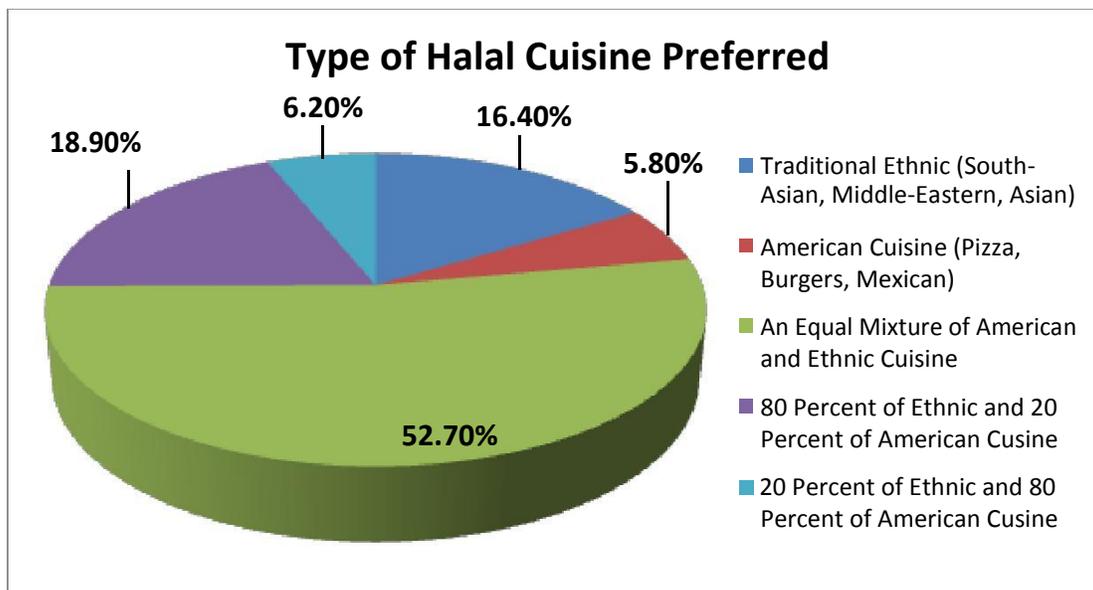
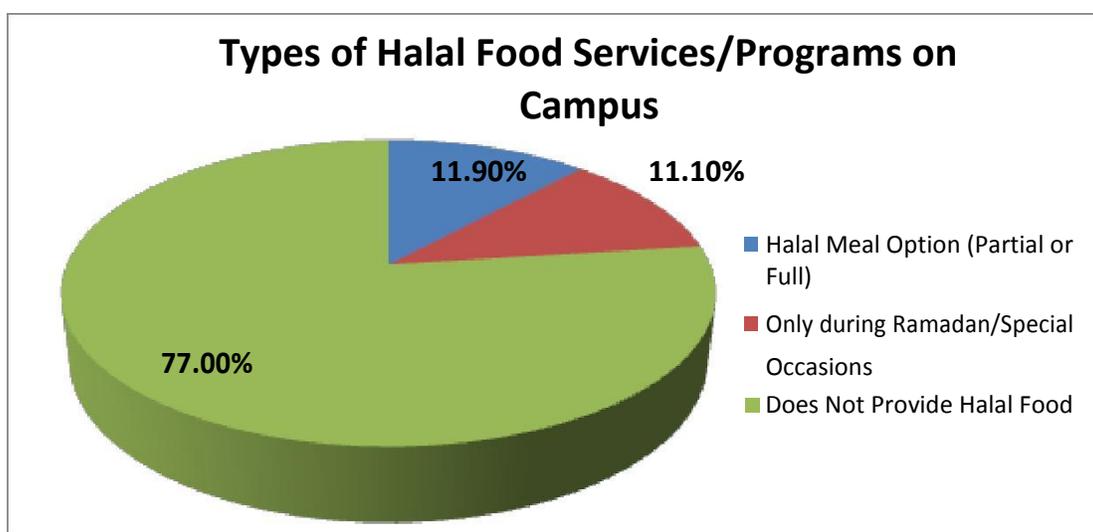
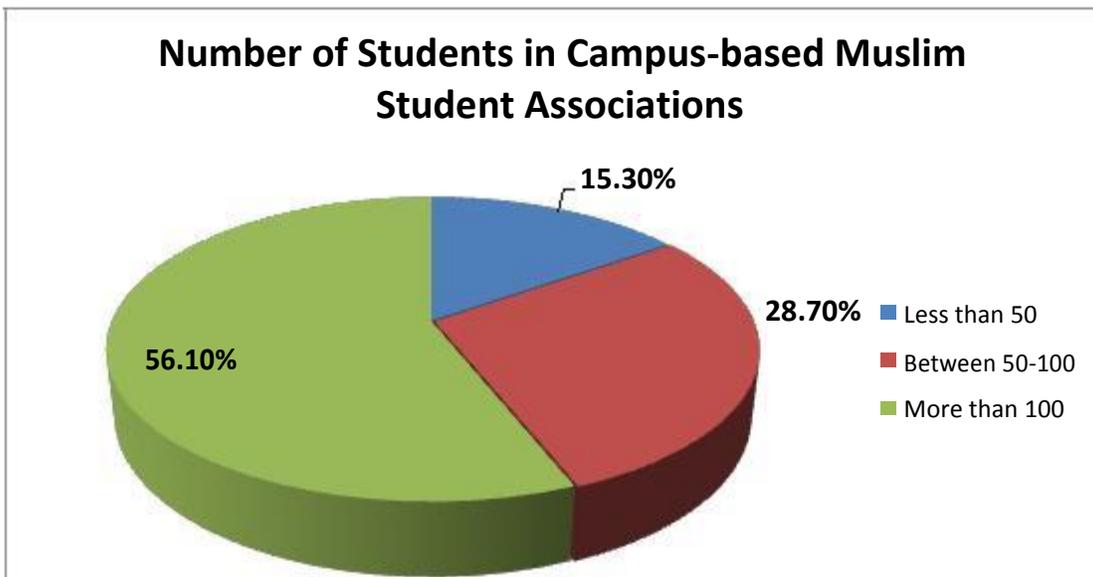
The impetus for the survey were issues such as those brought to light in the article, [“Equal Service for Equal Fees”](#), published in the Summer 2009 issue of the IFANCA publication, [Halal Consumer magazine](#). Muslim students, according to the article, even freshman who have no choice but to live in on-campus dorms, were not offered meals that adhered to their halal dietary needs. They were, however, charged the same fees, despite not being able to use the meal plan for more than salads, bread and vegetarian entrees. The article cites an example of one family who was able to petition for halal successfully at their son's university, Virginia Tech, but had little luck at the University of Maryland where their daughter was a student. Both institutions are Virginia State Schools.

Further, while researching information for another article, [“Universities Give Halal Lip Service”](#) which is to be published shortly in [Halal Consumer magazine](#), it came as no surprise that, at some universities, kosher kitchens were being passed off as kosher-halal kitchens, without any halal meat being served at all. For instance, Mount Holyoke at South Hadley, Massachusetts undertook the high costs associated with segregating dairy from meat in their kosher kitchen, but had yet to locate a distributor for halal certified meat despite the Halal-Kosher dining hall's inception in 2001. At the time of this writing, plans were afoot to introduce halal meat twice a week and possibly during Ramadan from fall 2010 onwards, almost ten years after the inception of the Halal-Kosher Kitchen at Mount Holyoke.

Survey Findings Overview:

- More than 56% of students surveyed answered that there were more than 100 Muslim students on campus.
- 29% survey takers estimated that there were between 50-100 Muslims on campus. These figures were based on attendance of Muslims at Muslim events on campus. Many estimated that the number of actual Muslims on campus to be higher than the attendance seen in Muslim-oriented campus events.
- More than 77% of all survey takers testified that there were absolutely no halal meal services available on campus.
- Many reported that they cooked in their dorms or on-campus residences, or resorted to vegetarian meals in cafeterias and off-campus eateries.
- Nearly 12% of campuses surveyed had partial halal meal services.
- Survey takers had a variety of insights to offer. Some indicated that some universities did provide halal meals on important days of the Islamic calendar; that partial halal meal services did not offer a good variety of meals; or had halal meals that lacked taste and/or quality.
- 11% of campuses offered halal meals only during important Islamic months (such as Ramadan).
- 53% of students voted for halal meals that comprised of an equal mix between ethnic (Middle Eastern or South Asian), as well non-ethnic, American (hotdogs, tacos and pizza) food choices.

Graphs:



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