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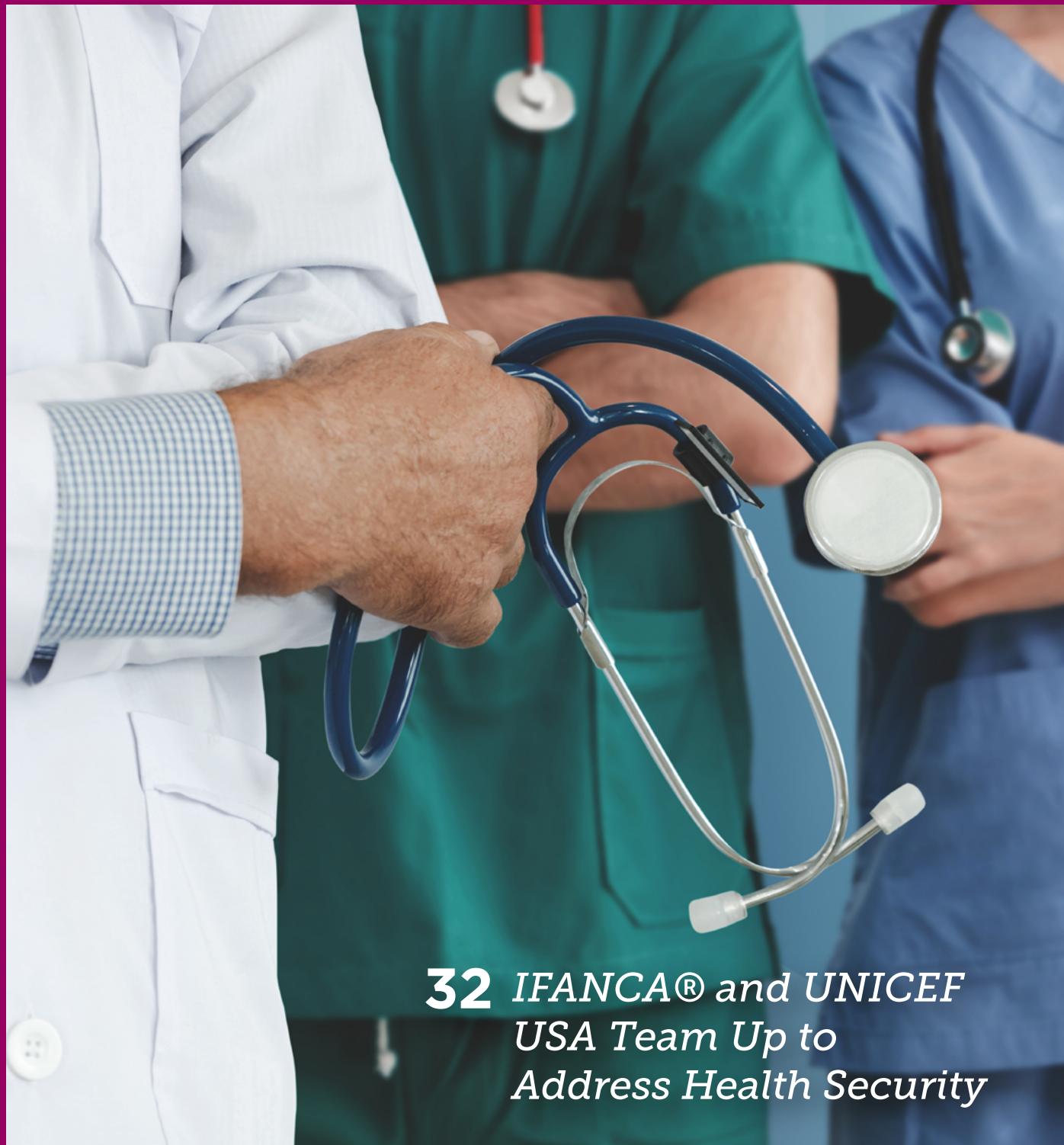
Winter 2021

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Halal Consumer

A Publication of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America

Magazine



32 *IFANCA® and UNICEF
USA Team Up to
Address Health Security*

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PASTA WITH GARDEN VEGETABLES: This delicious and robust meal has rotini pasta with peppers, mushrooms, zucchini and tomatoes. It is perfectly flavored with traditional Italian seasonings.

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FLORENTINE LASAGNA: A meal influenced by the tastes of Florence. Savor the combination of small lasagna noodles in a tomato sauce with Ricotta and Parmesan cheeses, spinach and pinto bean pieces which add texture and protein.

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ABOUT HALAL CONSUMER

Halal Consumer is a publication of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA®). IFANCA is a non-profit Islamic organization with the mission to promote halal food and the institution of halal. IFANCA objectives include making halal foods conveniently available, introducing halal to food companies and institutions, creating awareness of halal among consumers, and providing halal solutions to consumer needs.

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Editor's Note

Assalaamu alaikum,

As we wrap up another year of Halal Consumer® Magazine, we would like to take a moment to thank you for your support. From all of us at IFANCA®, we wish you the best for the upcoming year!

If you find yourself craving a snack while reading this issue, check out the spotlight on Enjoy Life™ Foods on [page 34](#). Besides learning about the company's history, you will also discover some of their products that are IFANCA halal-certified.

For those interested in the latest food trends, check out "Ube: The Powerful Purple Yam." Ube is a tasty purple sweet potato that you can incorporate into many recipes.

Functional beverages are another rising star in the world of food and nutrition. What makes these products unique is that they provide more than just hydration, as you will read about in the article on [page 8](#).

With the winter months often comes a desire for food that can both satisfy and warm you up. Making soups and stews is a great way to stave off the cold, so be sure to check out the delicious recipes from Chef Demetrios in his article on [page 16](#).

Certain foods, such as those we loved when we were children, can also provide us with a sense of warmth in the cold months. The article "What Makes Comfort Food So Comfortable?" explores why some foods cheer us up more than others.

Has anyone ever told you that doing crunches can give you six-pack abs? Have you ever heard someone say that you shouldn't lift weights if you don't want to look bulky? Learn the truth behind these myths and others in the article on [page 28](#).

Our mental health series continues with a look at post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The article "Reconsidering the Facts of Traumatic Stress" takes an in-depth look at the disorder and some of its symptoms.

More and more packaging is used each year, which is why some companies are looking at ways to make it more sustainable. Check out "The Environmental Price of Packaging" to learn about developments in this space.

Lastly, the article on [page 32](#) discusses how IFANCA has partnered with UNICEF USA to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and address vaccine hesitancy. This work is essential, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to team up with such a notable organization.

If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to us at halalconsumer@ifanca.org. Be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) as well. We would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Alison DeGuide **editor**

From the Publisher's Desk

Assalaamu alaikum,

The topic of sustainability arises almost daily in the media and social discussions. How important is it from a scientific and environmental viewpoint and, more importantly, from the Islamic perspective? Caring for the environment is referenced in the Quran in many places. It seems that the talk is easy, but the task is difficult, as highlighted here:

Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant. (Quran 33:72)

O children of Adam, take your adornment [i.e., wear your clothing] at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess. (Quran 7:31)

With continued concerns about excessive consumption, waste, water pollution, and climate change, the impact we have on the environment may be violating that trust placed in us by the Creator. That trust is a great responsibility, one we must take seriously, and everyone must do their part.

Renewable fuels, regenerative farming, carbon capture, and tree planting are some of the ways we are addressing sustainability. Companies have begun to incorporate sustainability into their business models. For example, PepsiCo has set a goal of spreading regenerative farming over seven million acres by 2030, sustainably sourcing 100% of their ingredients, replenishing water in local watersheds, reducing plastic use, and achieving net-zero emissions by 2040. Cargill is working with farmers to advance regenerative agriculture practices on ten million acres of farmland in North America by 2030. [The first electric self-propelled container ship was inaugurated](#) in Norway, the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization is providing farmers with information to sequester carbon](#), and more companies have set sustainability goals.

But this isn't just a responsibility of industry. As individuals, we can take actions to protect our ecosystem, such as recycling, composting food scraps, fishing and hunting for food, and reusing what we can. Let us all do our part to ensure the health of our planet. It is our joint responsibility.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Munir Chaudry **president**

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UBE

THE POWERFUL PURPLE YAM

By: Kelly Izdihar Crosby

IF YOU'RE A FOODIE WHO'S ALWAYS LOOKING for the latest fad, you might have noticed your Instagram feed turning purple. The social media platform has been inundated with pictures of purple desserts from boba tea to ice cream to brownies. They are all made from ube (pronounced "ooh-beh"), the latest vegetable on the culinary hipster scene. Ube, also known as a purple yam, violet yam, or water yam, is a staple of traditional and modern Filipino cuisine. This root vegetable originated in Southeast Asia but is now cultivated worldwide. Ube is a huge part of national identity in the Philippines, all thanks to its inclusion in many Filipino desserts. Its growing popularity in the U.S. is also due to more Filipino restaurants adding it to their menus for curious customers to enjoy.

Compared to an orange yam, ube has a sweeter, mellower taste with a slightly nutty flavor. Some describe the taste as a combination of vanilla and pistachio. The most common way to enjoy ube is by turning it into *ube halaya*, or ube jam. To make ube halaya, first boil purple yams and then peel, grate, and mash them. Next, add sugar, water, and condensed milk or coconut milk and mix them together. Then stir the mixture in a saucepan with melted margarine or butter until it thickens. Ube halaya can be served alone or topped with toasted coconut flakes or shredded cheese. It is often used to top *halo-halo*, a

Filipino treat made with sweetened beans, shaved ice drizzled with evaporated milk, fruit, and ice cream.

Adding ube to other desserts is where the fun begins! In the Philippines, ube halaya is added to cookies, candies, flans, breads, and cakes. *Ube macapuno* cake is a Filipino purple yam cake prepared with *macapuno*, or coconut preserves, along with purple yams and basic cake ingredients like flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. You can churn your own ube ice cream with heavy whipping cream, sweetened condensed milk, ube flavoring extract, and ube powder. Make some purple bread by adding mashed ube to your bread recipe for some extra nutrients. By replacing chocolate with ube, you can even create a purple version of chocolate crinkle cookies, a traditional American holiday treat.

While ube is served in a variety of desserts, it is not just a sweet treat. Ube's vibrant violet hue makes for an interesting conversation starter at the dinner table. Its mellow taste makes it great for soups and stir-fries as well. *Canh khoai mỡ*, or Vietnamese creamy purple yam soup, is a savory dish flavored with garlic, spring onions, and chicken or vegetable stock. Japanese purple stir-fry includes purple yams, along with purple cabbage, tofu, beetroot, and spinach, all sweetened with honey, sesame oil, and soy sauce. You can also try a roasted ube



mushroom salad or baked ube chips as a snack. Ube has given chefs around the world inspiration to make bold new recipes.

Like an orange yam, ube is packed with healthy carbohydrates, fiber, vitamin C, and potassium. [According to Susan McCabe, RD, in an article for Healthline](#), one cup of cooked ube provides twenty-seven grams of carbohydrates, four grams of fiber, 40% of the recommended daily value of vitamin C, and 13.5% of the recommended daily value of potassium. McCabe also says that vitamin C “keeps your cells healthy, boosts iron absorption, and protects your DNA from damage.” Vitamin C is also necessary for developing and repairing body tissue and helps facilitate the proper functioning of the immune system.

Potassium is another important mineral found in ube. [According to the article “How Potassium Can Help Control High Blood Pressure” from the American Heart Association](#), “foods that are rich in potassium are important in managing high blood pressure...because potassium lessens the effects of sodium. [...] Potassium also helps to ease tension in your blood vessel walls, which helps further lower blood pressure.”

Purple yams are healthy on their own and can make for a healthier dessert alternative. However, like any other

dessert, they must be eaten in moderation. [In an article for Men's Health](#) by Alisa Hrustic, Keri Gans, RDN, was quoted as saying, “At the end of the day, a dessert is still a dessert, most likely with too much added sugar, fat, and calories.” To maximize the health benefits, pair ube with other vegetables and proteins like white-meat poultry, lean beef, shrimp, plain Greek yogurt, or tofu. Ube is safe for anyone to eat. Just don't go overboard with those delicious desserts.

You can find fresh purple yams, or purple sweet potatoes, in local Filipino and other Asian markets. Ube jams, extracts, powders, and other processed goods can also be found in a Filipino mom-and-pop store or online. When storing your yams, keep in mind that they have a shorter lifespan than regular yams. For fresh purple yams, use them within a week or two of buying them. Keep them in a basket in a cool, dry place. Items like powders or extracts will have a longer shelf life. By using them, you'll always have some ube on hand to experiment and have fun with. 🍌

KELLY IZDIHAR CROSBY is a freelance writer and artist based in Atlanta, GA.

BEVERAGES THAT GO BEYOND HYDRATION

By: Alison DeGuide



ALMOST ALL OF TODAY'S BEVERAGES BOAST several different functions. Energy drinks are no longer the only drinks where the benefits are advertised right on the label. Supermarkets sell beverages imbued with special vitamins and minerals that promise everything from relaxation to an immunity boost. Though water will always remain the star of the show when it comes to hydration, functional beverages offer exciting options for quenching your thirst.

What exactly is a functional beverage? Though exact definitions vary, the consensus is that functional beverages claim to provide the consumer with specific benefits, such as increased energy, immunity, etc. Sports drinks are products in this category that have been around for a long time. Many were initially designed to help athletes perform better during an intense workout, but now there are types designed for pre-workout preparation and post-workout recovery. Energy drinks are another prominent player in the functional beverage category. These are typically filled with caffeine and other ingredients that promote wakefulness, and they can be found in many forms, including juices and tea.

Almost any existing drink can become a functional beverage when given the proper ingredients. For example, instead of regular bottled water, consumers can purchase water with added electrolytes. Coffee is getting infused

with all sorts of things, including collagen and probiotics. Tea, another major player in the wellness scene, is also getting a reboot. While classic types like black, green, and white are still the main players, many types of tea focus on specific health benefits rather than flavor. On-pack claims range from touting tea's energy-boosting abilities to its purported immunity benefits. Even milk, which historically has been fortified with vitamin D, is getting new formulations. Omega-3s and protein are two nutrients sometimes added to milk to increase its nutritional value beyond just providing a solid dose of calcium and vitamin D.

Even though the functional beverage market is not new, it is currently experiencing unprecedented growth. Much of this growth has been driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to increased consumer demand for beverages that could provide immunity benefits. Though functional beverages need not have an immunity component to be considered functional, these drinks, in particular, constitute a rapidly growing category. In the article "Drinking in the Benefits: Functional Beverages for Immune Health" published on the *KerryDigest*™ Blog, Erin Miller notes, "A recent global market report found that between 2016 and 2019—before COVID-19 further increased awareness—launches of products with an immunity claim grew by 9% in the juice category, 43% in flavored bottled waters and 32% in energy drinks." Since these are pre-pandemic statistics, it isn't a stretch to say

If you're not sure where to start, I recommend a cup of green tea. There's nothing like a hot beverage to warm you up on a chilly day, especially when it has the potential to provide health benefits.



that functional beverages focused on immunity will grow even more in the next year as more and more of us look for new ways to improve our health and ward off illness.

With the rapid growth of the functional beverage space, it can be tempting to overlook potential problems. One such issue is misleading advertising. A few companies faced this issue when their beverage products underwent scrutiny for their stated health claims. As a result, these companies faced lawsuits and had to undergo label changes. These controversies can serve as a warning to both consumers and manufacturers. For consumers, be sure to check the label to see if a product's ingredients match up with a brand's claims. It doesn't hurt to do your own research into the science behind certain ingredients, as well as research to see if the product is halal certified. See if there is robust evidence for a company's claims and make sure that there aren't any problems associated with the ingredients. For manufacturers, it is wise to avoid claiming that your product is healthy simply because you fortified it with extra ingredients. The last thing you want is for consumers to lose trust in your product just as the market is starting to take off.

Other concerns regarding functional beverages have to do with the ingredients themselves. For example, alkaline water (water that has a pH above 7) can be considered a functional beverage because of the many health benefits that producers claim it has. Because of its alkalinity, however, consuming it may come with certain risks. [In the article "What Is Alkaline Water—And Is It Better Than Regular Water?" for Women's Health Magazine, Locke Hughes spoke to registered dietitian nutritionist Kerry](#)

Gans about possible health problems associated with alkaline water. According to Gans, people with kidney conditions should not drink alkaline water. For others, drinking too much of it can result in alkalosis, a state where the blood in your body is too alkaline, which can result in serious symptoms. Though alkaline water is just one example of a beverage touted for its supposed health benefits, it serves as a reminder that not all added ingredients are safe for everyone.

If you decide to try a functional beverage, talk to your doctor first to ensure that it will not interfere with your medications or exacerbate existing health problems. That way, you can take part in a growing trend without worrying about the potentially adverse effects of whatever you are drinking. If you're not sure where to start, I recommend a cup of green tea. There's nothing like a hot beverage to warm you up on a chilly day, especially when it has the potential to provide health benefits. ^(M)

ALISON DEGUIDE is a content developer at IFANCA®, as well as the editor of Halal Consumer® Magazine. She holds a master's degree in public diplomacy from the University of Southern California, where she also did her undergraduate studies.

Some Examples of Companies with Halal-Certified Functional Beverages

COMPANY	PRODUCT
4Life®	Tea4Life®
Abbott	Pedialyte® Sport - Lemon Lime, Fruit Punch
Arbonne®	InnerCalm Adaptogenic De-Stress Powder
Melaleuca®	Sustain® Sport - Lemon Blast, Raspberry Lemonade, Ruby Red Grapefruit
Nu Skin®	G3 Juice
Sunrider®	Calli® - Cinnamon, Regular, Mint

Why Is Comfort Food So Comfortable?

By Husna T. Ghani



DURING THE COLD WEATHER MONTHS, OUR minds turn to eating more than we should, especially comfort foods. What does the term “comfort food” even mean? Doesn’t all food provide comfort because the flipside would be starving? Well no, not really. [According to an article by Cari Romm in *The Atlantic*](#), comfort food is food that soothes us and gives us solace. Romm notes that one of the earliest print references to comfort food was in an article for the *Palm Beach Post* in 1966 about stress eating and the types of foods eaten to deal with stress.

Comfort foods are what we associate with a warm, cozy feeling or a nostalgic, happy memory. You can imagine comfort food as a hug for your gastrointestinal system. It can be a hot bowl of chili on a cold, wintery night to warm your soul. It can be fresh-from-the-oven chocolate chip cookies that you remember making with your grandmother. It doesn’t even have to be warm: that mint chocolate chip ice cream could be calling your name as well.

There are several common traits of comfort foods. First of all, the preparation must be simple. Remember, you are trying to alleviate stress, not exaggerate it by julienning things and summoning your inner Martha Stewart. Second, comfort foods are usually higher in calories and/or carbohydrates: think mac and cheese or mashed potatoes with pools of butter. Third, comfort foods make us

feel better. If you aren’t feeling well, had a tough or draining day, dealt with cold and bitter weather, or even feel the need to celebrate something, comfort food satiates.

What does comfort food do that makes us, well, comfortable? The answer is dopamine! If you paid attention in biology class, you may remember that dopamine is the “feel good” neurotransmitter (a chemical made and released by the brain). Dopamine affects the reward center of the brain and hence makes you feel better. [According to Nora D. Volkow et al. in the journal article “Reward, dopamine and the control of food intake: implications for obesity” in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*](#), “[c]ertain foods, particularly those rich in sugars and fat, are potent rewards that promote eating (even in the absence of an energetic requirement) and trigger learned associations between the stimulus and the reward (conditioning).”



With year three of the global pandemic starting soon, we need to make healthier choices that give us comfort while also prioritizing our health.

What do they mean by “learned”? Jog your memory to a time when you were a child and fell off your bike or had a bad day at school. Chances are that afterwards, you were given something with a high sugar or fat content. Consuming foods that you love or crave releases dopamine, and the release of dopamine makes us feel good. In order to get that feeling, we look to those foods again and again. Your brain then associates that food with comfort.

Now that you are an adult, you may want to make healthier versions of your favorite comfort foods. It's not as arduous of a task to try to create more nutritious versions of these staples than to train ourselves to find comfort in healthier food. With year three of the global pandemic starting soon, we need to make healthier choices that give us comfort while also prioritizing our health. I'm not suggesting you try to make sliced cucumbers your new best friend; however, you can make your palate a bit more discerning than a seven-year-old in a mall food court.

There are some examples of comfort foods made healthier. Do you love pizza more than pizza loves you? Now cauliflower crust pizza is all the rage. Are mashed potatoes your go-to spud? Try mashed sweet potatoes to get a boost of vitamin A. With chili season upon us, try swapping the beef in your chili with ground chicken or even make a multi-bean version with some extra veggies. I used to think butternut squash soup could not be made without heavy cream and a lot of salt. I swapped those ingredients with a few tablespoons of lentils blended with some jalapeño, and it changed my life. You can find my recipe for it on [page 22](#).

Have you jumped on the bone broth bandwagon yet? A cup of hot bone broth on a cold, wintery morning will not only give you loads of nutrition for very few calories, but it will also satiate enough to forego that cup of hot chocolate from time to time. If you are still in dire need of a cocoa-like drink, try heating up a cup of any Organic Valley® halal-certified milk product and add some vanilla flavor and a swirl of Forever Bee Honey®. Trust this chocolate: you will love this warm, caffeine-free indulgence!

What about desserts? Give your chocolate chip cookie recipe a new twist with some almond flour and oats and swap in organic coconut oil instead of butter to discover an even better flavor profile. Years ago, people discovered mayonnaise made chocolate cake richer. Try substituting Cabot® 10% Greek Style Yogurt instead, and you won't look back.

While comfort foods provide us with strong gratification, we do not need to make ourselves feel uncomfortable after that initial high comes crashing down. Let's use common sense in our gastronomical decisions. Moderation is key. Make positive, gradual, consistent changes. This is not only the key to success for our health but also the key to success in our faith. 🕌

HUSNA T. GHANI has an MBA and an MEd. She is a former science teacher and is currently a strategy consultant in the spheres of communication and education. When she isn't doing her day job, she focuses on dessert-making and saving the world, one pastry at a time.



Reconsidering the Facts of Traumatic Stress

By Asma Jarad



LET'S START BY MAKING ONE THING CLEAR: mental health matters. We need to be mentally stable to lead a productive life, achieve our goals, create and maintain healthy relationships, and bring peace to those around us. In other words, mental health benefits both the individual and the community at large.

One common mental illness that many people suffer from is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many of us know PTSD as it pertains to those who have survived or witnessed major traumatic events such as war, combat, serious accidents, sexual violence, or severe injury. However, there are different types of PTSD or psychological trauma that can happen to anyone. [According to Julian D. Ford, author of *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Scientific and Professional Dimensions*, "PTSD is a psychiatric disorder that affects as many as one in fourteen adults and adolescents at some time in their lives and as many as one in 100 children before they begin kindergarten."](#)

It is normal for people to experience stress after trauma. Having such a reaction has nothing to do with an individual's strength or weakness. Stress responses may last for days or linger for years. However, for most people receiving proper care, reactions and symptoms of PTSD will gradually decrease over time.

A while ago, I was preparing to bake my favorite cookies. I had the dry ingredients in the bowl, and it was time to add the wet ingredients. I'd made these cookies countless times before, so I didn't need a recipe or step-by-step instructions. As I opened the can of condensed milk, I decided not to use a spatula for some bizarre reason and instead rubbed my index finger along the edge of the can. Not realizing how sharp it was, I nicked the nerve and immediately lost sensation in my finger.

Now, you might think that's not a big deal and wonder how this relates to PTSD. The truth is, I had to pause several times to type out these last few sentences. Each time I did, I gripped my injured finger, curled my toes, and sunk a little lower in my chair. These reactions are nothing I can control; they simply happen.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

When we experience trauma, our brains sometimes hold onto that memory not necessarily as a form of punishment but to teach us a lesson. Were you driving while sleepy? Your brain warns you not to get behind the steering wheel unless you're refreshed and caffeinated. Do you want to chop up a salad? You will see the sharp knife, and your brain will remind you of the dangers associated with sharp objects. Did you think your finger could substitute as a spatula? Don't do it!

Although indications of PTSD may begin immediately after a traumatic event, a diagnosis is only made when symptoms cause significant distress, interfere with one's routine, and last for at least one month.



Most people are survivors of trauma, and they recover over time. However, some symptoms of trauma do not resolve on their own or get worse. Individuals who experience continued symptoms may develop PTSD and require advanced care. For these people, trauma memories proceed to feel like they are happening in the present: their brains activate fight-or-flight mode even when they are safe.

According to Bradley D. Grinage in a journal article for *American Family Physician*, “[t]he lifetime prevalence of PTSD in the United States is 8 to 9 percent, and approximately 25 to 30 percent of victims of significant trauma develop PTSD.” Here are four subcategories associated with this disorder:

1. **Comorbid disorder** describes two or more conditions occurring to the same person. Since severe PTSD commonly occurs with other psychiatric disorders, comorbid disorder implies interactions between the mental illness and another condition, often drug abuse, alcoholism, self-harm, etc., that worsens the outlook for the patient. Treatment for this disorder requires immediate and prolonged attention from multiple healthcare professionals.
2. **Complex stress disorder** is caused by multiple or repeated trauma. This is common in domestic violence cases, war-torn regions, etc. Those with this disorder will often exhibit emotional instability, intense rage, panic, or depression. Treatment involves intensive psychotherapy (also known as psychological therapy or talking therapy) and medication.
3. **Uncomplicated stress disorder** is often linked to one specific traumatic event instead of multiple events or repeated events. People with this disorder may experience moodiness, flashbacks, and nightmares that affect their daily routines. Treatment requires psychotherapy and medication.
4. **Acute stress** occurs in people exposed to what is or what feels like a life-threatening event, such as the death of a loved one or a natural disaster. This disorder can often be treated with psychotherapy or medication.



Although indications of PTSD may begin immediately after a traumatic event, a diagnosis is only made when symptoms cause significant distress, interfere with one's routine, and last for at least one month. Remember that since everybody is different and each person has unique levels of tolerance and modes of coping, symptoms can vary over time and from person to person. Here are some common symptoms as described in the article “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)” from Mayo Clinic:

- **Intrusive memories** are repeated, unwanted, distressing thoughts of a traumatic event. Re-experiencing symptoms involve reliving the traumatic event. These memories may come when a person least expects them. An action may trigger the memories, such as when a combat veteran hears fireworks. Reliving the event may cause intense feelings of fear, helplessness, and horror as real as when the event occurred. This is also known as getting flashbacks.
- **Avoidance** is trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event and places, activities, or people that remind a person of the traumatic event. A person may also avoid going near places where the trauma occurred or seeing, smelling, or hearing reminders of the event. Numbing the symptoms is another way to avoid a traumatic event. In other words, individuals with PTSD may numb their feelings and avoid expressing emotions. Avoidance also involves losing interest in activities a person once enjoyed. Some people find that they try to distract themselves to avoid thinking about the traumatic event, and some forget or become unable to talk about the event.
- **Changes in physical and emotional reactions** include being quickly startled or scared, having trouble sleeping and concentrating, irritability, anger, and feelings of guilt or shame. A person may also be prone to self-destructive behavior, such as driving too fast. People with PTSD may find themselves frequently on guard for signs of danger.

WITH EVERY AFFLICTION, THERE IS A CURE

In the video “Prophet Muhammad's Approach to Mental Health,” Dr. Rania Awaad from the Yaqeen Institute tells us that even the best of creation—the prophets who had the strongest faith and conviction—felt grief during their lifetimes. Dr. Rania points out, “There are many examples

where the Prophet Muhammad [Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH)] himself experienced intense sadness. One of them was a year-long episode of bereavement after the death of his wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu Talib. His grief was so intense that historians coined this period of time of his life the 'ammul huzn,' or the 'year of sadness.'"

Despite the commonality of mental health ailments, we are reminded that there is always a remedy. The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged us to deal with mental health challenges by acknowledging that they exist and seeking medical advice and intervention when necessary. As Muslims, we believe that wellness is a gift from God, and we are thus encouraged to look after our health—both physical and mental. One form of treatment is seeking the guidance and advice of trusted, knowledgeable religious leaders and psychological experts.

Increasing awareness of how trauma affects mental health has resulted in greater attention to the quality and accessibility of treatment. Many treatments have a track record of success in the medical world. These include cognitive behavioral therapy, prolonged exposure therapy, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy. In addition to these behavioral interventions, individuals can also be prescribed medication. In some cases, a combined treatment plan of both behavioral therapy and medication is recommended.

MOVING FORWARD

In the end, when it comes to physical and mental health concerns, there should be no shame in reaching out to health professionals and those around us for support. Our duty as Muslims is to maintain our health and remove the stigma surrounding mental health disorders. PTSD is a major disorder that affects people of every age range and walk of life. Today, treatments are widely available and can be highly effective for those who require them.

Life is unpredictable, and mishaps or trauma can and will happen. Sometimes these incidents will pull the rug out from under us, leaving us feeling dismayed, terrified, vulnerable, and isolated. These experiences can shake us to our cores, but we must remember that there is a path forward. The fact that we feel anxious doesn't mean we're still in danger. Many people suffer from traumatic stress, recover over time, and move on. Others require long-term treatment and a longer road of recovery. It's not often an easy road, but so long as you are on that road, you will reach the destination. 🕌

ASMA JARAD is a Chicago-based writer, editor, and communications strategist. Her works are published across multiple forums, ranging from health and food trends to Islam in America.

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Soups and Stews

By Chef Demetrios Haralambatos

CHEF DEMETRIOS HARALAMBATOS is the Corporate Executive Chef of Kontos Foods Inc.

SOUPS AND STEWS ARE NOT ONLY CONSUMED during the cold weather; they are also consumed year-round. In some cases, they may be made in under an hour, and you can make adjustments quite easily. Spices may be eliminated, changed, and even doubled. If the soup or stew is too thick, you can add additional stock or water. Also, if you are making a stew and find that you are out of carrots but have broccoli, go ahead and substitute! I won't tell anyone.

Best of all, you may refrigerate a soup or stew for up to five days or freeze it for up to six months. Nothing is better than warm bread to help sop up the soup or stew, so be sure to serve it with your favorite naan, baguette, or focaccia!

Here are a few chef's notes to help you make the best soup or stew possible.

If a recipe calls for:

- **Legumes (lentils, beans, and the like):** You may elect to use dry rather than canned. In this case, after opening the package, spread the dry legumes on a cookie sheet or counter and remove any stones, sticks, or foreign objects. Then proceed with the recipe preparations.
- **Stock or broth:** You may use store-bought stock, liquid stock, soup paste, or even bouillon cubes. However, make sure that the product is halal certified before you use it. You can also make your own stock or broth using the recipes [in the "Soups & Stews" article in the Winter 2019 issue of Halal Consumer Magazine](#).
- **Canned ingredients (tomatoes, beans, stock, vegetables):** Try to purchase ingredients that are labeled "low sodium" or "no added salt."

Lastly, I always recommend using a large heavy-bottomed stockpot, ceramic stockpot, or Dutch oven, as they hold the heat well and will not burn the ingredients at the bottom when at a simmer.

BROCCOLI CHEDDAR SOUP

Ingredients

4 tablespoons butter
1 onion, chopped
¼ cup flour
2 cups halal chicken stock
kitchen salt
freshly ground black pepper
1 large head of broccoli, finely chopped
1 large carrot, grated
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
2 cups whole milk
3 cups halal shredded cheddar

Directions

1. In a stockpot over medium heat, melt the butter.
2. Add onion and cook until soft, about 3 minutes.
3. Whisk in flour and let it cook for about 2 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. Add chicken stock and season the mixture generously with salt and pepper.
5. Stir in broccoli, carrots, and celery.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low.
7. Let simmer until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes.
8. Add milk and bring to a simmer until the soup has thickened.
9. Stir in the cheddar.
10. Serve with a baguette.

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup celery, chopped
- ½ quart vegetable stock
- 1½ quarts halal chicken stock
- ½ pound cooked halal chicken breast, chopped
- 1½ cups egg noodles
- 1 cup carrot, sliced
- 1½ teaspoon dried basil
- 1½ teaspoon dried oregano
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Place butter into a stockpot over medium heat and melt.
2. Sauté onion and celery in the butter just until they are tender and the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.
3. Pour in vegetable and chicken stock.
4. Bring to a boil.
5. Stir in chicken, noodles, carrot, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper.
6. Return to a boil, then reduce heat.
7. Simmer 20 minutes before serving.



CHILLED PEACH SOUP

Ingredients

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon fresh mint leaves, chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups half-and-half cream
- 10 fresh peaches, sliced

Directions

1. Place sugar, mint leaves, cinnamon, and half-and-half in a bowl. Stir until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is fully combined.
2. Add sliced peaches and transfer to a saucepan.
3. Cook over medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. If necessary, lower the heat to prevent scorching the cream.
4. When peaches are soft and tender, remove the mixture from heat.
5. Allow to cool, then transfer to a blender or food processor and blend until completely smooth.
6. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
7. Serve chilled.



EGYPTIAN LENTIL SOUP

Ingredients

- 3 cups halal chicken stock
- 1 cup red lentils
- 1 Roma tomato, quartered
- 1 carrot, quartered
- 1 small onion, quartered
- 4 cloves garlic, quartered
- 1 cup water
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cracked black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander

Directions

1. Place chicken stock, lentils, tomato, carrot, onion, and garlic in a stockpot over medium heat.
2. Cook until vegetables and lentils have softened, about 20 to 25 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and let the mixture cool to a lukewarm temperature.
4. Blend vegetable and lentil mixture with an immersion blender until smooth.
5. Stir water, cumin, salt, pepper, and coriander into the blended mixture, then warm over medium heat.
6. Serve with bread like naan or pita.

FISHERMAN'S STEW

Ingredients

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 large white onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh garlic, chopped
- 2½ cups crushed tomatoes
- ¼ cup tomato puree
- 3 bottles (8 ounces each) clam juice
- 4 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds
- 1 pound white fish (pollock, haddock, hack, or monkfish)
- 2 cans (6 ounces each) of chopped clams with juice
- 1 can (6 ounces) of crabmeat
- 1 pound fresh mussels
- ¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped

Directions

1. Place a large ceramic stockpot or Dutch oven on your stove over medium heat. Then add olive oil and allow it to heat up for 1 minute.
2. Add the onion and garlic and allow them to cook until soft and translucent, about 2 minutes.
3. Add the crushed tomatoes, tomato puree, clam juice, oregano, and fennel seeds and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Add the white fish, chopped clams, crabmeat, and mussels, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Allow the mixture to simmer until the fish is cooked all the way through, about 15 minutes.
5. Remove the stockpot from heat. Add chopped basil by stirring it gently into the stew.
6. Serve with warm crusty Italian bread or a side of pasta.



MINISTRONE SOUP

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 onions, chopped
- 5 carrots, sliced
- 2 cups celery, chopped
- 2 cups halal chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 4 cups tomato sauce
- 3 zucchini, quartered and sliced
- 2 cups baby spinach, rinsed
- 1 cup canned kidney beans, drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) green beans
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- salt and pepper
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup pasta shells
- 2 tablespoons halal Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions

1. Place your stockpot over medium-low heat. Add olive oil and garlic and cook for 2 minutes.
2. Stir in onions and sauté for 5 minutes.
3. Add carrots and celery and sauté for 2 minutes.
4. Pour in chicken broth, water, and tomato sauce and bring to a boil, stirring frequently.
5. Reduce heat to low. Add zucchini, spinach, kidney beans, green beans, oregano, basil, salt, and pepper.
6. Simmer for 30 to 40 minutes.
7. Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil.
8. Add pasta and cook until tender.
9. Drain water and set aside.
10. Once the pasta is cooked and the soup is heated, place 2 tablespoons of cooked pasta into individual serving bowls.
11. Ladle soup over the top of the pasta. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top.
12. Drizzle with olive oil and serve. ©



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Ube Casserole

By YaQutullah Ibraheem Muhammad, MS, RDN, LD

Servings: 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds ube or purple sweet potatoes (about 4)
- ½ cup unsalted butter or coconut oil
- ½ cup coconut sugar or stevia
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla flavoring

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Wrap each individual ube with foil. Bake for about 1 hour or until soft.
3. Remove ube from foil and let them rest until they are cool enough to handle.
4. Peel and discard the ube skins.
5. In a mixing bowl, combine ube with butter or coconut oil, coconut sugar or stevia, salt, and vanilla flavoring. You may use a food processor to purée ube to the desired smoothness.
6. Transfer the ube mixture to a 2-quart casserole dish or 7" x 11" Pyrex® baking dish.
7. Sprinkle coconut sugar over the top of the dish.
8. Bake immediately or cover with Saran™ wrap and refrigerate overnight. If refrigerating, be sure to remove from the refrigerator an hour before baking to allow the casserole to heat to room temperature.
9. Heat the oven to 350°F.
10. Cover the top of the casserole with foil and bake for about 30 to 45 minutes.
11. Remove foil, turn on the broiler, and broil the top of the casserole for about 2 to 5 minutes until the sugar begins to caramelize.
12. Remove the casserole from the oven and serve immediately.

*Note: This dish is served well as a tasty side for any roasted protein entrée.
Try it with fish or your choice of protein. ©*



Spicy Citrus Wassail

By YaQutullah Ibraheem Muhammad, MS, RDN, LD

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups unsweetened pineapple juice
- 4 cups apple cider
- 1½ cups apricot or mango nectar
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 3-inch cinnamon sticks
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- ½ teaspoon whole cardamom seeds, crushed
- apple slices (optional for garnish)
- cayenne pepper or turmeric (optional for garnish)

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan.
2. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce heat.
3. Simmer the mixture uncovered for about 15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture. Discard the cloves and cardamom seeds.
5. Transfer punch to bowl.
6. Garnish the punch with additional cinnamon sticks and apple slices (optional). You can also decorate the bowl by wetting the rim and brushing it with cayenne pepper or turmeric (optional). ©



Husna's Jalapeño Butternut Squash Soup

By Husna T. Ghani

Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium butternut squashes
- 2 to 3 tablespoons red lentils
- 6 to 7 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cube halal chicken stock
- 1 to 2 tablespoons halal steak seasoning
- 1 jalapeño pepper, chopped (add more if you dare!)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Organic Valley® organic whole milk
- salt and black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Peel and cube the butternut squash. Add to a medium pot with just enough water to cover the squash.
2. Add lentils, garlic, chicken stock, and steak seasoning and boil until squash is softened, approximately 25 to 35 minutes.
3. Add chopped jalapeño and boil for 5 more minutes.
4. Use an immersion blender or conventional blender (make sure your blender is heat resistant) to blend the mixture until puréed.
5. In the pot with the squash purée, add butter and milk. Stir until well blended.
6. Taste the mixture and season with salt and black pepper, if needed.
7. Garnish with your choice of toppings and serve with toasted sourdough bread on the side. Enjoy! 🍴



Shrimp and Okra Gumbo

By: Chef Demetrios Haralambatos, Executive Chef of Kontos Foods Inc.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- salt and pepper to taste
- cayenne pepper to taste
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 pounds chopped okra (frozen is okay)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup celery, chopped
- ½ cup green bell pepper, chopped
- 12 cups water
- ½ cup green onions, chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. Season the shrimp with salt, pepper, and cayenne to taste and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large stockpot over medium heat.
3. Add the okra and sauté for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the tomato paste, tomato, onion, garlic, celery, and green bell pepper and sauté for an additional 15 minutes.
5. Add the water and season the mixture to taste. Then bring the mixture to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 45 minutes.
6. Add the shrimp and simmer for an additional 20 minutes.
7. Add the green onions and stir thoroughly.
8. Serve over rice with crusty French bread. 🍴

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS

You may wish to add crabmeat and some hot sauce (or offer hot sauce on the side). You can also garnish the dish with some freshly chopped flatleaf parsley.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PRICE OF PACKAGING

By Taskeen Khan

WHAT DO EGGS, ONLINE DELIVERIES, LIPSTICK, and medicine all have in common? They are all kept safe by packaging! Packaging is found absolutely everywhere, and though it is important, not all of its effects are positive. It's time to untape the box, pull back the layers of tissue paper, take out the packing peanuts, and dive into the world of packaging.

[The Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) reports that in 2018](#), packaging and containers made up 28.1% of all municipal solid waste (MSW). MSW is everything that we get rid of, including both garbage and recycling. Once packaging material is disposed of, it travels one of four paths: it can go to the landfill, be recycled, be combusted for energy, or escapes the waste management system and gets into the environment. Combusting materials for energy creates electricity but also generates ash, which is taken to landfills.

[According to the EPA](#), in 2018, 9.8 million tons of glass were generated specifically for packaging. To put that into context, that is the equivalent weight of 65,334 blue whales. Of that glass, 31.3% was recycled, 13.4% was combusted for energy, and 55.4% went to landfills. Though glass can be endlessly recycled, recycling rates in the U.S. are low, as glass is often contaminated by food waste and other non-recyclable items. Additionally, glass needs to be sorted by color (due to variations in melting points) to be recycled. Any glass that breaks and can no longer be sorted or ends up at a recycling facility that does not recycle glass goes straight to the landfill.

Steel and aluminum are also common packaging materials. Most steel packaging comes from canned foods, and aluminum is in everything from the pull-tab seal on a bottle of ketchup to the silver foil covering chocolate. [According to the EPA](#), paper and paperboard are also heavy hitters in the world of packaging and containers, making up 14.3% of all MSW in the U.S. in 2018. The EPA notes that corrugated boxes specifically were “the largest single product category of MSW in 2018” and were responsible for 11.4% of MSW.

Wood is another common packaging material primarily found in pallets and crates and used in international trade. Though wood packaging can be converted into wood chips or mulch, the bulk still ends up in landfills.

Plastic is also a popular packaging material. Despite its bad reputation, plastic does have a few environmental benefits. Because of its light weight, transporting plastic requires less fuel than transporting other heavier packaging materials. Plastic also helps keep food fresh, reducing food waste. Still, there are significant drawbacks. [A 2016 World Economic Forum report](#) found that though 14% of plastic packaging is recycled, only 5% makes it through

sorting and reprocessing. Of the plastic recycled, most is converted into low-value materials that cannot be recycled again.

The World Economic Forum report also noted that each year, 32% of plastic packaging ends up outside the waste management system. According to the report, each year at least eight million tons of plastic are leaked into the ocean, and the majority of that is packaging. The report explains that this is “equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean per minute” and is expected to increase “to two [trucks] per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050.” The report notes that the plastic isn't just floating in the ocean, harming wildlife, tourism, and fishing and shipping industries: it is also leaching 225,000 tons of additives each year. As water filters through the gills of fish, these leached chemicals enter their bodies and are later absorbed by animals up the food chain who eat them, which includes humans.

The world of packaging can seem bleak, with the landfill being the final resting place of most materials, but that is changing both on large and small scales. Amazon has set up a “Frustration-Free Packaging Program” that encourages vendors to use minimal packaging, and small businesses are making similar changes. Last month, I was thrilled to see the prints I ordered from an independent artist were packaged in compostable mailers, as were the seeds I bought from a small garden business.

Most of the advances in packaging are not technology-based but rather changes in how companies have addressed their packaging. For example, Dove now makes all of its plastic bottles in North America and Europe from recycled material. Though recycled plastic is not new, it is innovative to use it exclusively. Another example is the brand Häagen-Dazs® providing ice cream in steel contain-



Though consumers with more financial flexibility may be picking up the cost of greener products, low-income communities are the ones truly paying the price of packaging waste. Most landfills are built in low-income neighborhoods, [which] are far more likely to be hurt by the detrimental effects of pollution...



ers that can be returned and refilled, reducing the use of single-use ice cream packaging. Steel containers are nothing new, but using them for ice cream is.

Etsy, a platform that hosts the shops of independent creators, has also included packaging improvements in its sustainability efforts. Through Etsy's "Planet-Friendly Packaging" program, packaging made from recycled materials is available for sellers to purchase. Allbirds is another company working to make its packaging greener. It focuses on using recycled cardboard certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) for its packaging. Most recycled cardboard comes with no way to verify if it is genuinely recycled. The FSC certification helps Allbirds ensure the material it uses is 100% recycled material.

This shift in packaging is largely due to consumers. [According to IBM's 2020 Research Insights report](#), "[n]early six in 10 consumers surveyed are willing to change their shopping habits to reduce environmental impact. Nearly eight in 10 respondents indicate sustainability is important for them. And for those who say it is very/extremely important, over 70 percent would pay a premium of 35 percent, on average, for brands that are sustainable and environmentally responsible." However, it is important to recognize that not all consumers have the ability to pay a premium for sustainability. Though consumers with more financial flexibility may be picking up the cost of greener products, low-income communities are the ones truly

paying the price of packaging waste. Most landfills are built in low-income neighborhoods, and low-income communities are far more likely to be hurt by the detrimental effects of pollution than their higher income neighbors.

For Muslim consumers, the choice to shop green is often based in faith: Anas reported Allah's Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) as saying "Never does a Muslim plant trees or cultivate land and birds or a man or a beast eat out of them but that is a charity on his behalf."—Sahih Al-Bukhari, Book 10, Hadith 3769. Muslims are encouraged to cultivate a verdant world, not one that is overriden with packaging waste, which is toxic to not only ourselves but also to flora and fauna.

It is important to consider the big picture when deciding if packaging changes are beneficial for the environment. For example, reusable steel containers are heavier than traditional ice cream containers. Does the additional fuel needed to transport them cancel out the environmental benefits of reusable packaging? Is more energy used to create traditional ice cream containers or steel ones? How much energy goes into cleaning the reusable containers? Are the cleaning solutions environmentally friendly?

Even technological advancements to packaging should be viewed with a grain of salt. For example, bioplastics (plastics made from renewable sources of biomass, such as food waste and plants) and compostable plastics

Muslims are encouraged to cultivate a verdant world, not one that is overridden with packaging waste, which is toxic to not only ourselves but also to flora and fauna.




sound great. Unfortunately, most bioplastics and compostable plastics require an industrial composter to break down and won't decompose if they find their way into the environment. Additionally, [as described by Zoe Cormier in the article "Turning Carbon Emissions into Plastic" from BBC Earth](#), creating bioplastics often has a greater carbon footprint than creating traditional plastics. Cormier also notes that if a bioplastic is added to your recycling, it may be considered contamination, rendering everything else in the bin unrecyclable. Sadly, I may not have as much of a reason to be excited by the compostable mailers I received as I thought I did.

Though technological advancements must be carefully researched before they are lauded as solutions to sustainable packaging, there are exciting innovations on the horizon. Researchers are developing infrared sensors which can tell different types of plastic apart in order to allow for better sorting and more efficient recycling. Scientists are also working on marine neutral plastics specifically made to break down in marine environments.

The future of packaging may seem bleak. There is no "silver bullet," and each solution comes with its own drawbacks. Instead, it is important that we look for "silver buckshot": a variety of solutions, working together from different angles, to make packaging more sustainable. We don't need to wait for corporations to change their ways or for new technology to be developed. As individuals, we can create a more sustainable future on our own.

Learn the rules of recycling, especially since a single non-recyclable piece of packaging can contaminate an entire recycling bin. Reuse everything you can. If you recycle your glass pasta bottle, chances are it will end up in a landfill; turn it into a pencil holder, vase, container for storing dry goods, or cup for water, and you can prevent that. This also saves you from buying a new pencil holder and all the packaging that comes with it. Also, hold brands accountable, especially when it comes to claims of sustainability. If your local fast food restaurant has switched to compostable take-out salad containers, let them know that this doesn't actually do much for the earth.

Packaging is convenient, but in 2018 alone, more than 82 million tons of packaging and containers ended up in MSW. That has to change. It is time to unpack our relationship with packaging and open the box to a greener future. 

TASKEEN KHAN has a bachelor's degree in integrative biology and a minor in sustainability, energy, and the environment from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is passionate about science education and communication, as well as research.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand gripping a dark, metallic kettlebell. The hand is wearing a black wristband. The background is dark and out of focus, showing parts of a person's legs and feet.

Ten Common Exercise Myths Debunked

By Ali Othman, NSCA-CPT®

WHEN LOOKING FOR HEALTH AND FITNESS advice, be sure you know the information originated from a trusted source before accepting it as the standard. Find an expert in the field and ask your questions. An expert will point you in the right direction and steer you clear of common misconceptions that continue to spread across the internet. The health and fitness industries are no stranger to these misconceptions. Discover the truth behind ten common myths so that the next time you hear one, you can set the record straight.

Myth: You can turn fat into muscle.

Fact: Fat and muscle are different in many ways, all the way down to the cellular level. Muscle tissue is active: it moves and works as our organs function and our bodies move. Muscle burns calories because movement requires energy. Fat tissue is, in large part, a storage mechanism for energy and vitamins. Body fat plays an essential role in many of the body's daily functions, such as regulating metabolism, maintaining hormonal balance, and promoting neurological function.

By eating a healthier diet and exercising properly, you can build muscle and reduce body fat at the same time. This might give the illusion of turning fat into muscle, but there are two different processes at play. The same is true for the reverse. When a body builder stops exercising due to age or injury, muscle mass decreases and body fat likely increases. However, the muscle itself will not turn into fat.

Myth: Doing crunches will give you a six pack.

Fact: Sadly, crunches alone are not the magic answer to a chiseled six pack. Crunches work the abdominal muscles, the muscles that form the six pack, but they only work the muscles in a single direction. The abdomen is composed of many intertwined muscles wrapping around the spine, ribs, pelvis, and internal organs. Rather than concentrating on one set of muscles, do exercises that work the entire core and strengthen and tone all the muscles harmoniously. Add some exercises that move the trunk side to side and in a twisting motion. For example, the Russian Twist requires constant flexion of your abdominals in order to keep your feet off the ground while simultaneously working your core muscles in several directions.

As you build your six pack, you'll need to cut some body fat as well; otherwise, all your hard work will be hidden under a motivation-killing layer of fat. Dedicate some of your workouts to fat-burning sessions by keeping your intensity around seventy percent of your maximum ability throughout the session. Combine these with dedication to a diet without much excess, and you have the recipe for toned abs.

Myth: You should do cardio before your weight training.

Fact: Base your answer to this myth on your goals. For those who are trying to build muscle or strength, hit the weights first because your training should focus on moving your muscles until you can't any longer. Before you call it a day, spend your remaining energy doing cardiovascular training. This order of training will result in the desired increase in strength or muscle mass while also accommodating your heart health routine.

For those with a goal of weight loss, fat burning, or overall wellbeing, move to the cardio section first. Whether it is cardio equipment, group classes, or circuit training, your workouts should be focused on keeping your heart rate in your target zone. After each workout, hit the weights with your remaining energy.

Separating weight training and cardio into two sessions is another option if it fits into your schedule. When you separate the routines, you don't have to split your attention between the two. For those with limited time, combine weight training and cardio into one fast-paced resistance training session that works your muscles while keeping your heart rate sky high.



Weight training will tone and shape your muscles; that is true. But adding a well-rounded weight training routine to your exercise plan will not make you look bulky.

Myth: Cardiovascular exercise machines are the best way to lose weight.

Fact: Cardio machines are the go-to equipment for weight loss, but they are not necessarily the best choice for everyone. Running, skiing, climbing, and rowing are terrific exercises that require using most major muscle groups. They are, however, limited by repetitive motions and lack of variation. Most people can walk or ride an exercise bike without thinking about the exercise.

Try exercises that require continued focus, working the mind and body together as one unit. A new routine or group exercise class that requires you to anticipate your next move might hit you harder than the usual incline treadmill run.

Myth: Lifting weights will make you look bulky.

Fact: Weight training will tone and shape your muscles; that is true. But adding a well-rounded weight training routine to your exercise plan will not make you look bulky. Body builders and athletes spend their entire lives working towards the bulky look. It's not something that happens suddenly or by accident.

Lifting weights is the best tool to reshape your body. You can't lose fat in a targeted area, but you can train a muscle group that will reshape the area. The gluteus maximus, or glutes, can be lifted and tightened with a weight training routine. Working the muscles of the upper and outer back gives the torso a V-shape and creates the illusion of a slim waistline. With proper elongating movements, you can work your muscles, increase your flexibility, and make yourself look thinner. You can lift, tuck, and round the curves with a weight training routine. Everyone who is capable should consider incorporating one into their lifestyle.

Myth: Women shouldn't lift weights.

Fact: Weight training helps develop and maintain muscle strength and slow bone loss. These two factors play important roles in quality of life as we age, as both muscular strength and bone density steadily decrease throughout adulthood. Women are especially susceptible to age-related bone density loss, so a weight training routine is strongly recommended. Strong bones are the framework of our posture and help prevent fractures in case of a fall. Strong muscles help maintain coordination, keep us from falling, and can cushion the bones during certain falls. Ladies, strength is in style.

Myth: You should stretch before your workout.

Fact: Stretching can improve a joint's range of motion, which creates a healthier environment for your muscles and connective tissue and a happier you. Stretching, however, shouldn't be confused with a pre-exercise warm-up. Instead of stretching before a workout, warm



If you had an unplanned high-calorie meal, don't let it wreck the rest of your day. Use it as motivation to increase your exercise intensity later that evening or the next morning.



up the mind and body with some light activity that gradually increases in intensity. This can include jumping jacks, shadow punches, or simply walking. You can also do a movement specific warm-up that targets the area that you are about to train. If today's workout is the stair climber, you might want to get on the equipment and begin at a lower intensity, gradually working your way up to your regular exercise intensity.

Before a workout, the objective is to get blood flowing through muscles that may be shortened and tight from inactivity. This prepares the muscles and connective tissue for the intense movement of exercise. Incorporating different types of stretching into your daily routine is recommended, but always be sure to warm up muscles before stretching them.

Myth: A scale is the best tool for measuring your fitness progress.

Fact: For those who are trying to gain or lose weight, the scale is the correct standard of measurement. For most other health and fitness goals, however, the scale is not always the best measuring tool. Try using any of the following to check your exercise progress:

- **Body fat:** A measurement of the body's composition that indicates what percentage of your body is composed of fat. Men and women have different body fat needs. Men want to be under twenty-five percent body fat, while women should stay below thirty-two percent.
- **Body mass index (BMI):** A broad measurement of height and weight. An individual is classified as overweight or obese at a BMI of twenty-five or above. A result at or above twenty-five means that a person is likely to have a high amount of body fat. The test, however, does not account for people with an above average level of muscularity, such as athletes.
- **Resting heart rate (RHR):** In general, a low resting heart rate implies that the heart is functioning efficiently. A healthy RHR falls between sixty and one hundred beats per minute. Our cardiovascular system is stressed by age, diet, and lifestyle, and over time, a person's RHR



can change. Regular cardiovascular exercise is a good way to maintain a healthy RHR.

- **Fit of your clothing:** This is usually the first noticeable change that comes from starting a new exercise program, and it can be one of the most satisfying as your body begins to transform. Use this as a boost of self-confidence and motivation.


Myth: Carbs are evil.

Fact: Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose and used as the body's primary source of energy. Eaten at the proper time and in the right amount, carbohydrates are a staple of a balanced diet. Simple carbohydrates are easily digested and provide the body with an almost immediate energy source. Because they are digested so quickly, simple carbohydrates cause a spike in blood sugar that triggers a release of insulin, moving sugar into the cells to be transformed into energy.

This is a fast process with simple carbohydrates, which can leave you feeling lethargic and hungry. Complex carbohydrates, like those found in whole-grain fiber and starchy vegetables, are digested more slowly and provide the body with a sustained energy source without the extreme spike in insulin. These types of carbohydrates

are needed for optimal body function and should be a part of all healthy diets.

Myth: It's all or nothing.

Fact: Instead of judging your eating and exercise habits each time you slip, try looking at your habits in terms of your overall lifestyle. If you had an unplanned high-calorie meal, don't let it wreck the rest of your day. Use it as motivation to increase your exercise intensity later that evening or the next morning. Cut a few calories from tomorrow's food intake, and before the end of the week, you're back on track. Things like missing workouts and eating too much pizza happen, so plan your health and fitness goals with these in mind. Aim for moderation in your diet and dedication to your exercise. Keep these fundamentals in mind so that the next time you hear an exercise myth, you can set the record straight once and for all. 

ALI OTHMAN is an NSCA-certified personal trainer with over a decade of experience in the health and wellness industry. He also works in the Technical Department at IFANCA® and manages IFANCA business activities in South Korea.



IFANCA® and UNICEF USA Team Up to Address Health Security

By Asma Ahad and
Alison DeGuide

AT IFANCA, OUR MISSION INVOLVES PROMOTING nutrition equity and health security. Our organization was founded in 1982 to help companies meet the needs of halal consumers, and our core mission was, and continues to be, making halal accessible for everyone. This includes enabling access to halal products so that halal consumers can feel food and health secure while simultaneously preserving their core religious values.

At IFANCA, we want to increase access to nutritious food and critical pharmaceuticals for halal consumers around the world to ensure the future health security of the global population. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic represents the biggest threat to the health of people worldwide, which is why we turned our attention to the global COVID-19 vaccination effort. We want to bring attention to the pressing health needs of the Muslim population, a task that requires us to look at the aggregate factors harming an individual's wellbeing.

[In the article “Covid-19 Vaccination Efforts in Muslim Nations Try to Overcome Halal Concerns” in the *Wall Street Journal*](#), Saeed Shah and Jon Emont note that a study of opinion on vaccines in 149 countries published

in the *Lancet* medical journal in September 2020 demonstrated how vaccine hesitancy remains a serious issue in the Muslim world. According to the study, seven of the ten countries with the lowest trust in vaccines are Muslim-majority countries. Therefore, for us at IFANCA to live up to our mission of promoting health security among halal consumers, these findings mean that our role requires us to examine the reasons why some Muslims remain vaccine-hesitant.

To achieve this mission, we partnered with UNICEF USA to support UNICEF's ongoing work with the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) initiative that delivers needed vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics to vulnerable populations around the world. As part of this partnership, IFANCA is providing UNICEF USA with a \$3 million grant over the next five years. However, our goal is not limited to supplying UNICEF USA with financial support. Rather, we seek to share with UNICEF USA the concerns of the Muslim community as a whole. UNICEF has unrivaled expertise in vaccine procurement and distribution, while IFANCA's expertise is in raising awareness of halal consumers' concerns. Through our partnership, we can work together and use our combined




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expertise to improve health security for children and their communities.

We want to foster a dialogue about why individuals remain vaccine-hesitant, both regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and vaccines in general. In order to do so, IFANCA seeks to build a coalition of non-profit organizations, community leaders, religious scholars, and scientific experts to bring the concerns of halal consumers to the table. Our team of esteemed religious scholars and food industry experts are able to engage with relevant actors across the spectrum, such as the pharmaceutical industry, health professionals, and consumers. Without knowing the exact reasons for vaccine hesitancy among members of our

community, we cannot work to allay their fears. This coalition will help us identify the areas of concern, as well as brainstorm possible solutions.

Vaccines are responsible for saving millions of lives, but they are only successful when individuals agree to take them. Please join us to make health security a global priority. Your ideas, partnership, and resources can help us achieve this goal. Now is the time to give the Muslim community a voice in discussions of food and health security. 

ASMA AHAD is the director of halal market development at IFANCA. She spearheaded the effort that led to IFANCA's partnership with UNICEF USA and continues to work to promote nutrition equity and health security for all.

ALISON DEGUIDE is a content developer at IFANCA, as well as the editor of Halal Consumer® Magazine. She holds a master's degree in public diplomacy from the University of Southern California, where she also did her undergraduate studies.



Spotlight on Enjoy Life™ Foods

EVER SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2002, ENJOY LIFE Foods has been dedicated to meeting the needs of consumers with food allergies and other dietary restrictions. All its products are free from fourteen common allergens: wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, casein, soy, egg, sesame, sulfites, lupin, mustard, fish, shellfish, and crustaceans. Its products are also certified gluten-free and non-GMO, and many are halal certified as well. Most of the company's products are manufactured at their bakery in Jeffersonville, Indiana, the largest allergy-friendly bakery in the United States.

Enjoy Life is constantly working to improve its products, which is why the company changed its packaging in 2021 to contemporize the Enjoy Life logo and make product messaging clearer to customers. The team at Enjoy Life also works hard to keep in touch with customers. They are open to hearing ideas, answering questions about ingredients, and helping consumers make sure that a product meets their needs. Enjoy Life Foods also supports transparency and uses different on-pack claims and third-party certifications to let consumers know what is and isn't in its products. The company also wants to make it easy for consumers to learn about a product's ingredients, and its website has an online [glossary of ingredients](#) with information about what each item is.

Enjoy Life takes the risk of cross-contamination extremely seriously and has a stringent process designed to ensure that all products remain free from

potential allergens. The first step is sending a survey to ingredient suppliers to learn about what potential allergy risks come from their production facilities. According to Enjoy Life representatives, this allows the company to "design [its] on-site lab program to use proven testing methods to test individual lots of received ingredients as an assurance that they do not surpass detectable thresholds of allergens." Enjoy Life also ensures its personnel are well trained in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and has strict requirements about what food employees can bring into the building. These processes and restrictions are designed to ensure that all Enjoy Life products remain gluten-free and free of the fourteen major allergens.



"[A]dding halal certification provides assurances to those keeping a halal diet—typically Muslim—that our products meet their dietary restrictions and have an agency they trust doing the overseeing,"

Enjoy Life Foods is also committed to sustainability. This commitment involves making each step of the production process more sustainable through actions such as creating purchasing guidelines to help ensure sustainable sourcing from vendors, implementing employee sustainability tools, measuring waste reduction, and rewarding improvements in reducing waste. Company representatives also note that “the environmental management systems at Enjoy Life Foods LLC are one of hundreds of Mondelez Global LLC manufacturing facilities around the world that have now achieved third-party certification to ISO 14001, a premier global standard that helps companies reduce environmental impacts.”

Enjoy Life Foods serves halal consumers by ensuring products that meet halal qualifications are certified by IFANCA. “[A]dding halal certification provides assurances to those keeping a halal diet—typically Muslim—that our products meet their dietary restrictions and

have an agency they trust doing the overseeing,” said company representatives. This emphasis on halal certification also allows the company to make its products available to more consumers while demonstrating that it understands and values the needs of those following a halal diet. Halal consumers can find a list of IFANCA halal-certified products from Enjoy Life Foods in the table below. To purchase Enjoy Life products, check out the [store locator on their website](#) or order their products online and have them sent straight to your doorstep. Enjoy! ®

Some ENJOY LIFE FOODS Halal-Certified Products

BREAKFAST OVALS

- Apple Cinnamon
- Berry Medley
- Chocolate Chip Banana
- Maple Fig

CHEWY BARS

- Caramel Blondie
- Carrot Cake
- Lemon Blueberry Poppy Seed
- SunSeed™ Crunch

CHOCOLATE PROTEIN BITES

- Dark Raspberry
- Dipped Banana
- SunSeed™ Butter

CRUNCHY MINI COOKIES

- Chocolate Chip
- Double Chocolate
- Vanilla Honey Graham

HOLIDAY SOFT BAKED COOKIES

- Apple Cider Donut
- Peppermint Bark

SEED & FRUIT MIX

- Mountain Mambo®

SOFT BAKED MINI COOKIES

- Chocolate Chip
- Double Chocolate Brownie
- Snickerdoodle

HALAL-CERTIFIED PRODUCT LOCATOR

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.

HALAL-CERTIFIED PRODUCT LOCATOR

Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
Cabot®	Cheese	Cabot Creamery	Supermarkets throughout the United States
Campbell's®	Food Products	Campbell Soup Company	Supermarkets throughout Canada
Casa Grande Farms Green Mountain Farms® Hahn's®	Dairy Products	Franklin Foods Inc.	Supermarkets, discount stores
Desi Natural™	Dairy Products	Desi Fresh Foods™	Visit their website: desifreshfoods.com
Dr. Chen® Kandesn® Oi-Lin® SunBreeze® Sunrider® SunSmile® SunTrim® VitaShake®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetics • Food Products • Nutritional Supplements • Personal Care Products 	Sunrider International	Visit their website for distributors: home.sunrider.com
Elecare® Ensure® Glucerna® Pediasure® Pedialyte® Similac® ZonePerfect®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant / Baby Food Products • Nutritional Supplements 	Abbott	Supermarkets and drugstores throughout the United States and Canada
Enfagrow® Enfakid® Enfamil® Enfapro®	Infant / Baby Food Products	Mead Johnson B.V.	Department stores, supermarkets, and drugstores throughout the United States
Enjoy Life®	Snack Food	Enjoy Life Natural Brands	Supermarkets, convenience stores, drugstores
Flipz® Turtles®	Candy / Chocolate	DeMet's Candy Company	Supermarkets, drugstores, discount stores
Fruitfull® Happy Indulgence®	Food Products	Happy & Healthy Products Inc.	Supermarkets, convenience stores, mini marts, gas stations

Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
Godiva	Candy / Chocolate	Godiva Chocolatier	Company stores, department stores, supermarkets, gift shops, and drugstores throughout the United States
Golden Bonbon™	Candy / Chocolate	Asti Holdings Ltd.	Visit their website: www.goldenbonbon.com
Impossible™	Food Products	Impossible Foods Inc.	Grocery stores and select restaurants throughout the United States
J&M®	Food Products	J & M Food Products Company	Visit their website: www.halalcertified.com
Kontos®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bakery Items Bread 	Kontos Foods, Inc.	Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and fruit & vegetable markets throughout the United States
La Yogurt®	Dairy Products	Johanna Foods, Inc.	Supermarkets, fruit/vegetable markets, discount stores
Love & Quiches Gourmet®	Brownies and Cakes	Bello LLC, dba Love and Quiches	Visit their website for outlets: www.loveandquiches.com
MAYA™	Cosmetics	Maya Cosmetics	Visit their website: www.maya-cosmetics.com
Melaleuca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutritional Supplements Personal Care Products 	Melaleuca, Inc.	Visit their website for distributors: www.melaleuca.com
Mountain High™	Dairy Products	General Mills	Supermarkets throughout the United States
My Own Meal®	Food Products	My Own Meals, Inc.	Visit their website: www.myownmeals.com
National®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dessert Mixes Food Products Sauces & Dressings, Condiments Spices & Seasonings 	National Foods Limited	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States and Canada
Natural Delights®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Products 	Datepac, LLC	Kroger, Meijer, Publix, Walmart, Whole Foods, and various markets throughout the United States

Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
Nestlé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverages / Beverage Concentrates • Dairy Products • Drink Mixes • Dessert Mixes • Food Products 	Nestle Pakistan Ltd.	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States
Nutrilite™	Nutritional Supplements	Access Business Group, LLC	Visit their website for distributors: amway.com/en_US/nutrilite
Olympia® Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat Bread • Gyros 	Olympia Food Industries, Inc.	Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and restaurants throughout the United States and Canada
Organic Valley®	Dairy Products	Organic Valley	Supermarkets throughout the United States
Peek Freans	Bakery Items	English Biscuit Manufacturers (Pvt.) Ltd.	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States and Canada
POM Wonderful®	Beverages / Beverage Concentrates	POM Wonderful, LLC	Supermarkets throughout the United States
Saffron Road™	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetizers • Food Products • Snack Foods 	American Halal Company, Inc.	HEB, Kroger, Publix, Target, Whole Foods, and various markets throughout the United States Visit their website to locate a store near you: saffronroad.com
Tom's of Maine	Personal Care Products	Toms of Maine, Inc.	Department stores, supermarkets, and drugstores throughout the United States
Wonderful Pistachios®	Pistachios & Almonds	Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds	Supermarkets throughout the United States

WE MAKE SURE THE FOOD YOU SERVE IS HALAL.



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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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