

Halal Consumer

A Publication of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America

Magazine

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Fermenting Foods for Future Fare





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

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

CHEESE TORTELLINI: Cheese-filled tortellini are simply delicious in a well-seasoned tomato sauce, with the added protein and texture of pinto beans.

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.

DHABIHA HALAL حلال



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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,

Continuing the spotlight on physical fitness, this issue presents “Let’s Get Hard Core”, providing insight into the “core” muscles that control our movements, posture, and disposition. Before starting a new exercise routine, get cleared by your physician.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in America; and it can affect people at any age. “Take Charge of Your Heart Health” offers some do’s and don’ts for maintaining a healthy heart.

Alcoholic beverages are a “no-no’ in a halal diet, but various fermented foods, like yogurt, are acceptable and can be beneficial to a healthy gut. “Fermenting Foods for Future Fare” discusses the types and benefits of fermented foods.

An ancient food mentioned in the Quran, “Garlic” reviews the forms, uses, and benefits of this popular flavoring plant.

Though most calves grow up eating grass, what does it mean when a label says “Grass-fed”? Read “Grass-Fed” to learn the actual meaning and what else is in the marketplace.

Consuming proteins is essential to maintaining good muscles and strength. Does that mean we have to eat meat? Not necessarily. “Protein—More Than Meats (The Eye)” delves into alternative sources of protein that can meet the recommended daily requirements.

Finally, be sure to try out the recipes and share your comments with us [email](#), [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#).

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Roger Othman *editor*

From the Publisher's Desk

Assalaamu alaikum,

For many, eating some form of animal protein on a regular basis is normal. Most enjoy a barbecued steak or burger at a family picnic, a juicy hot dog at the ball park, a spicy hot wing appetizer, or a nice grilled salmon dinner. For some this is regular fare; for others an occasional indulgence.

We know that consuming proteins is necessary to provide the amino acids needed to build and maintain healthy muscles; but do they have to come from meat?

According to a 2018 Gallup Poll, the percentage of Americans who consider themselves to be vegetarians or vegan has not changed much in the last twenty years. Despite concerns about animal welfare, the environment, personal health, or other reasons, most Americans still consume animal proteins regularly. Yet, plant-based products are experiencing a healthy growth rate. What does it all mean?

It means that though most of us enjoy that steak or burger, we are cutting down on the animal flesh without totally abandoning it. This makes sense with the increased offerings of alternate proteins. We already have plant-based products resembling

meat to the point that some veggie-burgers even bleed! In addition, non-dairy milk products and egg substitutes have been around for years. For those that want the taste of real meat without having to kill an animal, lab grown meat will be here soon.

Humans are very industrious; always looking for something new. Food, palates, and consumer preferences constantly change; but nutrition requirements are fairly stable. The future will provide new options for meeting protein intake requirements. Consumer preferences will influence how the industry presents these.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Munir Chaudry *president*

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Fermenting Foods for Future Fare

By Deena Anne,
The Deceptive Chef



For centuries, in most cultures throughout the world, fermented foods have held an important place at the table. Without any refrigeration it would be one of the only methods for preserving fresh ingredients. Many of the fermented recipes we see today have stood the test of time. The Romans ate sauerkraut; ancient India civilizations ingested Kefir, a yogurt drink, prior to consuming their dinner; Asian countries created kimchi, and still consume it with most of their meals to this day; Middle Eastern cultures enjoyed cheeses, buttermilk, brined olives, and yogurt; and even the Nordic countries buried fish to ferment it.

Fermentation is a process that basically uses bacteria to break down plant or animal sources and transform it into another edible food, like transforming goat's milk into yogurt or cabbage into kimchi. A prevalent bacteria called lactobacillus, which was first discovered in cheese and yogurt, and subsequently now known to be included in items like sugars, has lead us to the process of lactofermentation.

Lacto, refers to the bacteria within the dairy, not the dairy it was contained within. The same bacteria is also a component in fruits and vegetables allowing a natural fermentation process that doesn't include any dairy. All fermentation that occurs is classified as naturally or commercially derived.

There is, however, a difference between natural fermentation or wild ferment and one that is made with a premade or commercial starter culture such as the case in many cheeses, yogurts, and sourdough breads.

An example of wild ferment is one that occurs in produce as it ripens. This gives you all the microorganisms you need, making a natural fermenting recipe as simple as a salt water brine including just the fresh fruit or vegetables and herbs and spices. This process takes longer but yields some of the best healthy and flavorful results. This simple recipe would also be the best for someone who needs to limit their fermented foods due to yeast or histamine issues.

Fermented foods can benefit the body in two ways. First, fermentation breaks down foods to make them more easily digestible and increases their nutrient absorption, as well as, creating a better taste for otherwise distasteful food. Second, the millions of microorganisms that are used for fermentation can be quite beneficial to the body, most importantly to the intestinal tract.

"Fermented foods are a good carrier and source for symbiotics (pre- and probiotics), considered the healthy microorganisms for good gut flora," according to Saeed

A. Hayek, PhD, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America food scientist.

There are a few different ways fermentation occurs, and each method leaves behind different levels of nutritional value. Pickled vegetables cured in a vinegar, or brine as it is called when all the ingredients are added, can be very healthy but do not contain as many symbiotics as do other products that go through a fermentation which uses bacterial cultures.

The other, very popular method of preservation by fermentation, is using the sugar and yeast to alcohol method. This process is used to create wine, beer, soy sauce, kombucha, and vinegars to name the most common.

This made me wonder, while fermentation is a big part of creating alcohol, is alcohol a byproduct from the fermentation process? If so, how are these foods classified for halal?

According to Hayek, "Most fermentation processes will not produce ethanol to the level that can make it prohibited in Islam or not halal. Examples, yogurt and pickles are fermented foods that contain residues of ethanol which is acceptable for halal. The main haram fermentation are the alcoholic beverages. Most fermented food products will not have high ethanol [content] but fermented drinks or liquids should be watched for ethanol levels even if they are not classified as an alcoholic beverage. Example: soy sauce may contain high ethanol."



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Kefir and yogurts also offer a processing method that is centuries old. This is a process that mostly uses animal intestinal flora as cultures that break down the animal's milk, giving it a thicker texture and a sour taste. Of the two, Kefir is more of a drink because it comes out of the fermentation process thinner, like buttermilk, and yogurt ends up a much thicker texture requiring a spoon to consume.

Hayek clarifies how fermented foods are impacted by the halal certification process. "In general, plant based

products are halal,” Hayek says. “However, the process may change the products from halal to non-halal. Notice that many ingredients currently used by the food industry may be derived from animal sources, which are of concern to halal.”

“Additionally, processing aids such as enzymes and filter aids may also come from animals. For fermentation, most fermented foods have the same concerns of plant based products with the addition of fermentation cultures and ethanol. It is very common in the food industry to use enzymes to accelerate and control the fermentation process. As such, enzymes are not listed in the ingredients since enzymes are considered to be processing aids, not ingredients.”

“Regarding the fermentation cultures, these are the microorganisms that are used in the fermentation process. These cultures need to be activated in a special culture media prior to their use in the fermentation process. This culture media may contain non-halal materials that are derived from animals.”

Certifications like halal help to navigate products on the shelves. As we know, for every rule there are exceptions. The digestive tract carries trillions of live bacteria and they create a culture called a biome. Some of the microbes used in the fermentation process and the foods themselves after having been fermented, may produce histamines levels which could interrupt and upset that biome.

Although histamines should not be problem for most people, some are allergic to them because of genetics or because they suffer with low levels of the enzyme DAO needed to break down the histamines in the intestines.

“Histamines are neurotransmitters that influence your brain’s function and immune health. So, if fermented foods leave you nauseous, inflamed, bloated, or just feeling gross, you may be more sensitive to histamine-producing bacteria or foods,” says Hayek.

Whatever your particular chemical make-up, fermented foods will play a big role, one way or another. Reading labels, and tracking your reactions after you eat, will give you the tools necessary to live a healthy and well-balanced life with or without fermented foods. 🍷

MS. DEENA was coined **The Deceptive Chef** by her clients for making their favorite childhood dishes healthy, decadent and without gluten, dairy, sugar, or soy. She has studied the impact of ingredients in processed foods on health for two decades. She teaches deceptively delicious, healthy recipes because ingredients matter!



Deceptive Chef's Homemade Kimchi

Servings: yields 1 quart

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small head or ½ medium head of napa cabbage
- 1 tablespoon salt (without any anti-caking agents)
- 1 red pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh shallots, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoons dried red chili pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons agave
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¼ cup purple cabbage, thinly sliced
- 1-2 carrots, thinly sliced

Deceptive Chef's 5 Star Dill Pickles

Servings: yields 1 quart

INGREDIENTS

- 1 English or 3 medium pickling cucumbers, cut into rounds with peel on
- 3 tablespoons distilled vinegar (increase with equal amounts of water if necessary to fully cover cucumbers)
- 3 tablespoons water (increase with equal amounts of vinegar if necessary to fully cover cucumbers)
- 1 tablespoon agave
- 4 teaspoons salt (that does not contain an anti-caking agent)
- 1 teaspoon tricolor peppercorns
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dill seeds
- 4 whole and peeled garlic cloves
- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Make sure the mason jar, cutting surfaces, utensils, and your hands are very clean and sterilized.
- 2. Thoroughly wash cucumbers prior to slicing.
- 3. Add all of the ingredients into a medium mason jar and shake well.
- 4. Make sure all the cucumber slices are submerged in the brine while still leaving a ½ inch at the top.
- 5. Store at room temperature for 7 days to allow for fermentation.
- 6. Move to refrigerator once fermented.

Note: Be careful opening after the 7th day as there may be a gas build up and the top might pop. 🚫

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Make sure the mason jar, cutting surfaces, utensils, and your hands are very clean and sterilized.
- 2. Wash and separate the napa cabbage leaves thoroughly, tear into small pieces, and place into a large bowl.
- 3. Sprinkle ½ tablespoon of salt onto the napa cabbage and massage firmly to break down the cabbage, releasing the liquid that will form the brine.
- 4. Set aside and let sit.
- 5. In a food processor combine the ¼ red pepper, garlic, ginger, shallots, red chili pepper flakes, agave, and ½ tablespoon of salt and mix.
- 6. With very clean hands, rub this seasoning paste into the resting cabbage.
- 7. Once all the cabbage leaves are coated with the paste, and you have released a good amount of water, add purple cabbage, carrots, and remaining red pepper, and toss together until well combined.
- 8. Transfer the mixture to a very clean glass container (large bottle, mason jar, etc.) and use a very clean fist or utensil to compress the mixture, ensuring all contents are submerged under brine, to prevent any spoilage. Leave about 2 inches of room at the top of the bottle before capping it tightly with a lid.
- 9. Allow the bottle of kimchi to sit at room temperature for 2-3 days on a shelf to ferment, away from sunlight. (Refrigeration will stall the growth of good bacteria and fermentation.) You may need to “burp” the kimchi every 24 hours to release some of the pressure from fermentation. Note: Be careful when opening the jar to burp it as there is pressure built up and it might pop.
- 10. After 2-3 days, the kimchi is ready to eat.
- 11. Refrigerate remaining kimchi and use as desired. Kimchi will continue to ferment slowly in the refrigerator over time, becoming even more sour and flavorful with each passing day.

Remember! Always use clean utensils when dipping into your kimchi. 🚫





Take Charge of Your Heart Health

By Asma Jarad

Heat disease, also known as cardiovascular disease, describes heart conditions that include diseased vessels, structural problems, and blood clots. The most common types are coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, cardiac arrest, congestive heart failure, peripheral artery disease, stroke, and congenital heart disease. Contrary to the stereotype that heart disease only affects older men, scientists have found that heart disease begins to affect a person's health far earlier in life than previously thought. On a global scale, it has been a leading cause of death for both men and women since the 1950s. It's not all grim news though, because with advances in technology that reveal the depth of heart disease, we also know risk factors to avoid as well as treatment plans.

Risk Factors

When the Framingham Heart Study first began in 1948, heart disease was emerging as an epidemic in the United States, but little was known about the general causes. The study aimed to identify common factors associated with heart disease over a long period of time by recruiting participants who had not yet developed clear symptoms. The research included over 5,000 men and women between the ages of thirty and sixty-two from the town of Framingham, Massachusetts. Through-

out the years, the study has included second and third-generation participants to further analyze the data collected. The Framingham Study identified these major risk factors for heart disease:

- Diabetes
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking

Although the participants of the Framingham Study are primarily Caucasian, other studies have shown that these risk factors universally apply across all racial and ethnic groups. In addition to identifying the risk factors for heart disease, the study also led to the development of effective treatment plans and preventive strategies. Today, diagnostic technologies such as carotid artery ultrasound, echocardiography, magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography (CT) scans of the heart and its vessels, all play an integral role in identifying heart disease. Furthermore, genetic testing for inherited heart disease continues to develop as it identifies gene disorders such as arrhythmias, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathy, and high blood cholesterol.

Amro's Story

At the same time, some cases of heart disease occur suddenly and are relegated as idiopathic—an illness that is not connected to any particular cause. This is the case for my son, Amro. Shortly after his first birthday, he began to develop symptoms of a cold or flu, but over the course of a few days, his symptoms worsened. By the end of the week, our exuberant baby who was always eager to outdo his twin brother, was now lagging behind to the point the he could no longer stand up on his own two feet—literally. That's when we knew something was gravely wrong. Although his pediatrician advised against it, we rushed him over to the emergency room where he was immediately hooked up to monitoring devices. The notion that perhaps this was just a cold abruptly diminished. Amro had heart failure. His heart was double the normal size and was functioning at a critically low level. Within hours, Amro was diagnosed with severe dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM).

Cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle that makes it hard for the heart to pump blood to the rest of the body. Although it is commonly an inherited disease, genetic testing did not find a link. Furthermore, none of the risk factors identified in the Framingham Study applied to Amro. Although it was a difficult time for my family, as Muslims, we believe that everything happens by the divine Will and Decree of God. Sometimes, despite all the measures and precautions we take to circumvent tragedies, it is inevitable for a challenge to pop up in life from time to time. No one is immune. At the same time, whilst we accept God's Will, we are nonetheless responsible for appreciating our health. It is incumbent for us to live as healthy as possible and to be strong Muslims, physically and spiritually.

After two years of ongoing treatments and visits to the hospital, Amro not only survived, but his heart was restored to functioning normally. In fact, his cardiologist calls him her "miracle patient." He continues to take daily medication, but we are nonetheless eternally grateful for this miracle. Today, Amro is an energetic and thriving kindergarten, still competing with his brother on every level.

Prevention is Essential

Health care professionals advise patients to take care of their health now because it is unlikely to last forever. Narrated by Ibn Abbas, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) said, "There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) Health and free time for doing good."—Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 76, Hadith 421. From this tradition, we know it is also obligatory to value our health by refraining from anything that is harmful, and always seek ways for improvement and longevity. We are also reminded never to despair because, "God has sent down both the disease and the cure, and He has appointed

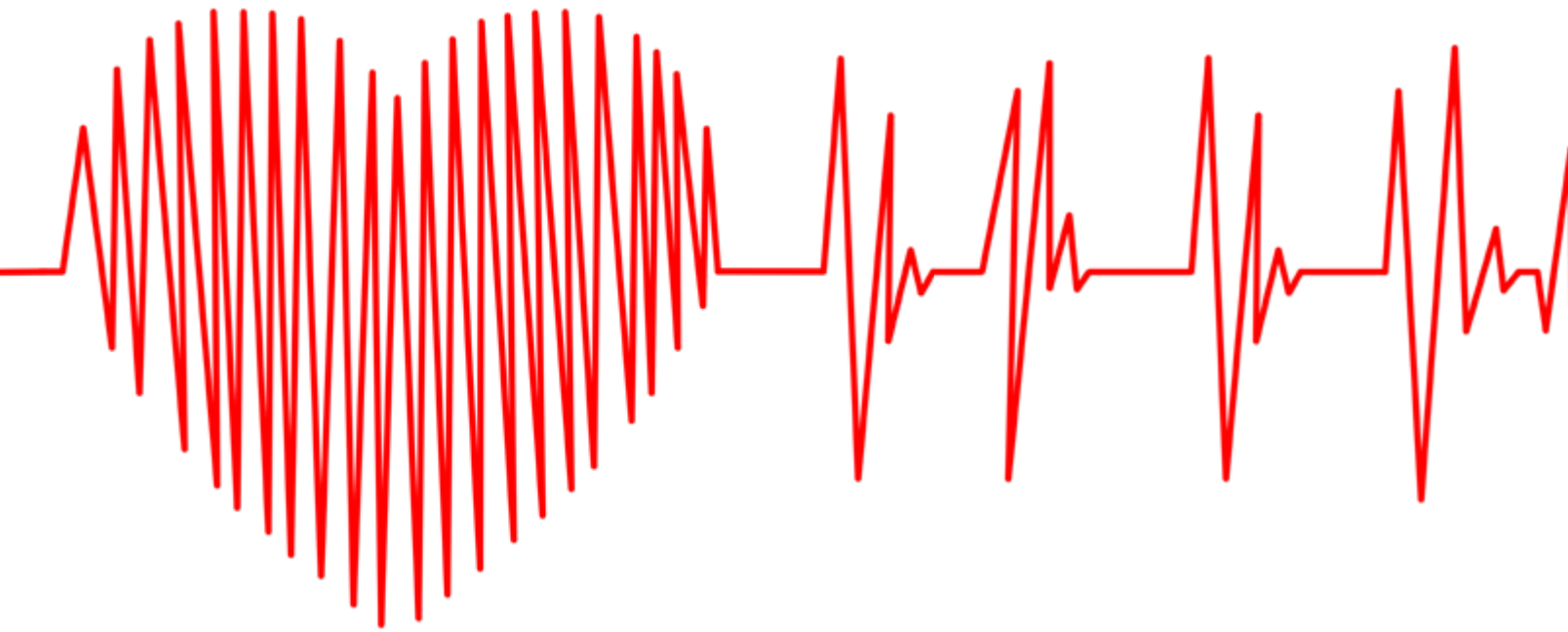


Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) said, "There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) Health and free time for doing good" (Sahih al-Bukhari). From this tradition, we know it is also obligatory to value our health by refraining from anything that is harmful, and always seek ways for improvement and longevity.

a cure for every disease, so treat yourselves medically, but use nothing unlawful."—Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 28, Hadith 3865.

The Mayo Clinic staff suggest seven strategies to help protect your heart.

1. Avoid smoking or using tobacco. There is absolutely no amount of smoking that is safe.
2. Daily exercise for at least thirty minutes helps control our weight which reduces stress on the heart. Activities such as gardening, housekeeping, and taking the stairs all count.
3. Adopt a heart-healthy diet such as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan, or the Mediterranean diet which is rich in vegetables, olive oil, with moderate protein.
4. Maintain a healthy weight. Carrying excess weight, particularly around the abdomen, increases the risk of heart disease.
5. Get enough quality sleep. Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
6. Manage stress.
7. Get regular health screenings, which include checking your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and screening for diabetes.



Treatment Counts

For those who develop heart disease, treatments are available and vary widely. From simple lifestyle changes such as improving diet and including daily exercise, to prescription medications, or even surgery, depending on the severity of the illness. Experts all agree that it is crucial to get treatment for cardiovascular disease, particularly a heart attack, because every minute counts. Thousands of heart cells die every minute blood does not flow to the coronary artery. In the first twenty minutes when an artery is blocked, the cells become ischemic—the plaque builds up in the coronary arteries, which supply the heart muscle. This leads to the risk of permanent damage and a heart attack. If the blood flow can be restarted within the first twenty minutes of a blockage occurring, the cells have a high chance of recovery. Every fifteen minutes a patient waits before they go to the emergency room adds a 1 percent mortality.

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If you take only one thing from this article, let it be not to take heart disease lightly. Heart disease does not discriminate. It can attack anyone at any age. Live a healthy lifestyle and be vigilant about symptoms just as much as you are about avoiding risk factors.
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Both men and women can experience crushing chest pain (angina) during a heart attack, but women also experience different, more subtle symptoms such as shortness

of breath; nausea; extreme fatigue; pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen, or back; numbness; or cold legs or arms. Women must acknowledge that they are also at risk for heart disease. The American College of Cardiology, based in Washington, DC, found that, “Although risk factors for heart attack are similar among men and women, women are more likely to have more serious heart attacks, resulting in death...It is important to call 9-1-1 at the first sign of either typical or atypical heart attack symptoms to seek immediate medical attention.”

If you take only one thing from this article, let it be not to take heart disease lightly. Heart disease does not discriminate. It can attack anyone at any age. Live a healthy lifestyle and be vigilant about symptoms just as much as you are about avoiding risk factors. Don't ignore your instincts. Cardiovascular disease can sometimes be found early with regular evaluations. That is why it is crucial to address symptoms when they appear. Remember Benjamin Franklin's axiom that, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This is true for many aspects of our lives, especially our health. ©

ASMA JARAD is a Chicago-based freelance writer and editor published across multiple forums. In her free time, she promotes literacy for children of all backgrounds through her YouTube channel, Sami & Amro Reading Time.

Garlic

By Asma Jarad



When the children of Israel asked Prophet Moses (Peace be Upon Him [PBUH]) for a variety of food, one of the items they specifically mentioned was garlic. “...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...” (Quran 2:61). Those early ancestors were ungrateful complainers, but nonetheless clever. In addition to adding a unique and powerful flavor to a variety of dishes, garlic also contains distinct health benefits. At the same time that garlic is treasured to many, it can also be out of favor for certain people and places.

History

Garlic is one of the oldest known flavoring plants of many civilizations across the world. Garlic started its journey in central Asia over 5,000 years ago, domesticated during Neolithic times, spread to the Middle East and northern Africa, and eventually to the rest of the world. In ancient times, people used garlic for medical treatments and health maintenance. In the Journal of Nutrition, Richard S. Rivlin, notes the presence of garlic in Egyptian pyramids and ancient Greek temples. He says, “Ancient medical texts from Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, and India each prescribed medical applications for garlic. In many cultures, garlic was administered to provide strength and increase work capacity for laborers. Hippocrates, the revered physician, prescribed garlic for a variety of conditions. Garlic was given to the original Olympic athletes in Greece, as perhaps one of the earliest ‘performance enhancing’ agents.” (The Journal of Nutrition, Volume 131, Issue 3, 1 April 2001).

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...people who regularly consume garlic have a reduced risk of developing certain cancers, such as stomach, esophageal, pancreatic, colon, and breast. This is because diallyl sulfide, a component of garlic, breaks down carcinogens in the body.

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Confirmed Benefits

Modern scientific research confirms these findings as it also recognizes garlic as a vegetable with potential anti-cancer properties. Specifically, people who regularly consume garlic have a reduced risk of developing certain cancers, such as stomach, esophageal, pancreatic, colon, and breast. This is because diallyl sulfide, a component of garlic, breaks down carcinogens in the body. For centuries, civilizations have also recognized that garlic fights

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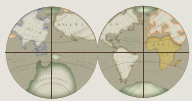
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infections, boosts the immune system, and helps lower blood pressure. In a study on the effectiveness of garlic against bacterial infections, Gowsala P. Sivam found that, “1) raw juice of garlic was found to be effective against many common pathogenic bacteria—intestinal bacteria, which are responsible for diarrhea in humans and animals; 2) garlic is effective even against those strains that have become resistant to antibiotics; 3) the combination of garlic with antibiotics leads to partial or total synergism; 4) complete lack of resistance has been observed repeatedly; 5) even toxin production by microorganisms is prevented by garlic.” (The Journal of Nutrition, Volume 131, Issue 3, 1 March 2001)

Registered dietician, Joe Leech, MS, lists some of the known health benefits of garlic in his article for Healthline Newsletter. In it, he describes how allicin—a pungent oily liquid with antibacterial properties found only in garlic, is formed when garlic is chopped, crushed, or chewed. It enters the body from the digestive tract and travels all over the body where it exerts its potent biological effects. The World Health Organization’s guidelines for general health promotion for adults is a dose of two to five grams of fresh garlic (about one clove) per day. In addition to being highly nutritious, garlic contains only forty-two calories per ounce, 1.8 grams of protein, 9 grams of carbs, 0.6 grams of fiber, as well as:

- Manganese: 23% of the recommended dietary allowance (RDA)
- Vitamin B6: 17% RDA
- Vitamin C: 15% RDA
- Selenium: 6% RDA
- Some amounts of calcium, copper, potassium, phosphorus, iron, and vitamin B1

Natural Gift

By providing unique nutritional and medicinal benefits, garlic is one of the most precious natural gifts. Over the years, the cultivation of garlic has expanded with selective breeding into a wide array available around the world. Garlic comes in different sizes, colors, shapes,

taste, number of cloves per head, pungency, and storability. Most Americans aren’t aware of the different types since we usually see one kind in the market.

Garlic comes in different sizes, colors, shapes, taste, number of cloves per head, pungency, and storability.

Other forms of garlic include extract, oil, and powder. Garlic oil or extract can be applied to the skin or nails to treat fungal infections, or to the hair to treat hair loss. Aged garlic powder can also be used on food to add flavor with a reduced odor side-effect. Garlic supplements are available but the process of making them renders them less beneficial than natural garlic.

Despite the many benefits of garlic, there are some drawbacks, most notably the pungent smell it attaches to a person’s breath, especially when eaten raw. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “He who has eaten onion or garlic or leek, should not approach our mosque for the angels are harmed by the same things as the children of Adam.”—Sahih Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 1147. Consideration for not offending others with bodily odors, as well as maintaining personal hygiene is taken seriously in Islam. In addition to causing bad breath, garlic can also produce gas, body odor, and diarrhea. These side effects often occur when consuming raw garlic. Thankfully, most of us have access to countering agents such as toothpaste, mouthwash, breath mints, perfume, etc.

Garlic occasionally causes allergies that can range from mild irritation to migraines or other potentially life-threatening issues, so be sure to consult a health professional if you experience any negative side effects. Ⓜ

ASMA JARAD is a Chicago-based freelance writer and editor published across multiple forums. In her free time, she promotes literacy for children of all backgrounds through her YouTube channel, Sami & Amro Reading Time.





A CLOSER LOOK
AT LABELS

Grass-Fed

By Nadia Malik



Grass-fed meat and dairy are a bit of a misnomer. All cattle eat grass as they grow, but truly grass-finished ones continue eating just forage for their entire lives. The vast majority of cattle are grain-finished, which means they are plumped up in a feedlot on grain for a few months before heading to the slaughterhouse. Grain-finished cattle can be slaughtered faster because the added food fattens them up quicker. The grazers take some more time, up to a year, to gain enough weight.

Although the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the American Grassfed Association provide guidelines and labeling for grass-fed meat, it comes down to the consumer to be knowledgeable about what those labels mean and what they're getting when they seek cattle that has only had grass its entire life. The Association's label means that the animals are fed only grass and forage from weaning to harvest, are raised on pastures and not confined to feedlots, are not treated with antibiotics and hormones, and are local to the United States.

"It's a complex food world out there," explains Heather Darby, professor of agronomy at the University of Vermont. There are continually changing aspects of food that become more important to consumers over time, and keeping up with these trends can become confusing. With grass-fed, she's found that people often start with a belief system that this technique is better for the animal and the environment. They then realize the health benefits associated with it.

For consumers who are intent on humane techniques for raising and slaughtering animals, grass-fed cattle are a tantalizing option. Although not all are out in open pastures, for many it means that they are not confined to feedlots.

Khalid Latif, chaplain at New York University and Imam of the Islamic Center there, sees this as an advantage. He and his co-founders started Honest Chops, a company that comprises of a butchery and hamburger restaurant, to provide a revenue stream for social services. During this quest to open a new business, they conducted their own research of available products.

He and his co-founders decided that if they were going to take on this new project, they wanted to ensure that their meat was organic and fresh. They also sell grass-fed products because they didn't want to contribute to the unhealthy practices they had seen in other locations. For him and Honest Chops, the importance was that the animals were living out their lives as he believes they are meant to: they eat grass, walk around, and are not confined.

"So much of our spirituality is attached to what we consume," he adds. "So from start to finish, we are ensuring those needs are met and that transparency is there."

Islamic scholar Rachid Belbachir clarifies that the concept of grass-fed doesn't fall into the category of allowed or forbidden foods. Because grain is a halal food for Muslims, cattle being fed grain is not a religious issue. He does agree that animals living in an open area before they are slaughtered is preferred. "You don't kill an animal next to another. You feed them and water them. They're not confined like they're in jail," he expands. However, both grain-fed and grass-fed cattle can fit this criteria.

Of course, ethical considerations also come with a price. Mian Riaz, PhD, professor in the food diversity innovation program at Texas A&M University, explains that these grass-fed animals take a longer time to grow bigger on just their natural meals. There's also a cost for more land for grazing, since they aren't confined to a small area. For that reason, "I know definitely the price is two to three times more expensive."

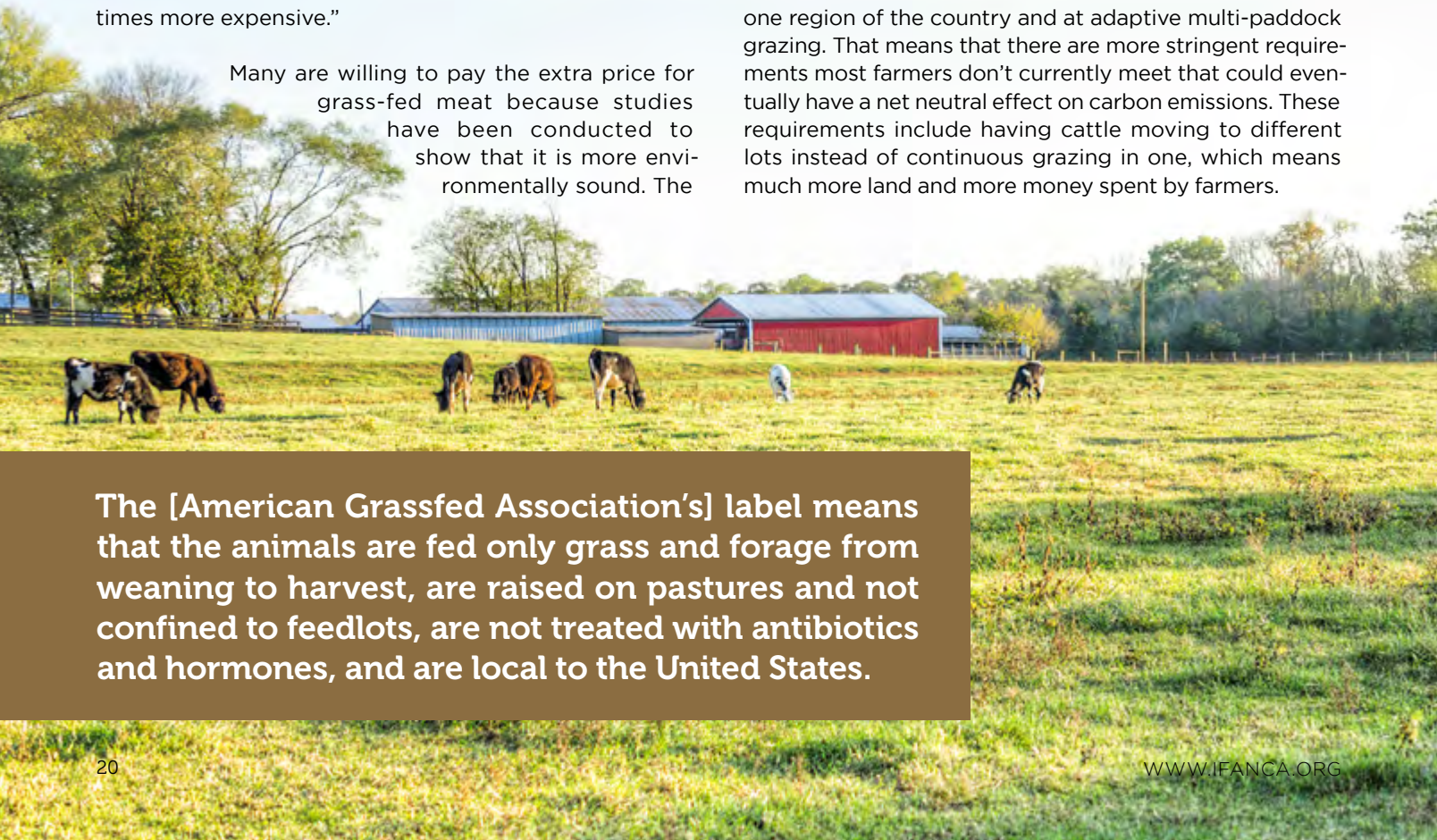
Many are willing to pay the extra price for grass-fed meat because studies have been conducted to show that it is more environmentally sound. The

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claim is that well-managed foraging can sequester carbon by absorbing it back into the soil. "If we graze properly, we can actually sequester tons of carbon per acre while producing clean protein," explains Ridge Shinn, founder and CEO of Big Picture Beef. If cattle are allowed to graze for short periods of time in one area and not take out grass by its roots, the plant life will use the carbon left by the animals to regrow instead of allowing it to be released back into the air. This cycle continues as the cattle are moved around to several pastures and then return once there is new grass to eat.

A 2018 study by researchers at Michigan State University supports this idea of grass-fed animals contributing to a better environment. However, this study only looked in one region of the country and at adaptive multi-paddock grazing. That means that there are more stringent requirements most farmers don't currently meet that could eventually have a net neutral effect on carbon emissions. These requirements include having cattle moving to different lots instead of continuous grazing in one, which means much more land and more money spent by farmers.

The [American Grassfed Association's] label means that the animals are fed only grass and forage from weaning to harvest, are raised on pastures and not confined to feedlots, are not treated with antibiotics and hormones, and are local to the United States.



However, Crista Derry, research technician at the Michigan State University Lake City Research Center, contends that if farmers are in areas where that land is already available, it's a good cost-saving method because the only other material needed to grow the grass is natural, such as sunlight and rain.

Shinn has been in the grass-fed arena for twenty years and advocates for it as an advantage both for the beef and farmers because it's a relatively untapped market in the United States.

As an added benefit to the environmental and humane concerns, studies have also shown that grass-finished meat has more of the healthy omega-3 fats than grain-fed meat. According to researchers at Berkeley Wellness, a collaboration with the University of California, Berkeley's school of public health, "The beef produced is leaner than conventional beef, yet its fat tends to have a higher proportion of omega-3 fatty acids. In contrast, when cattle are fed grains at the end of their lives, their omega-3 stores rapidly decline." However, the organization also clarifies that amount is paltry when compared to salmon or other fish, so it's not a cure-all when it comes to trying to eat healthier. For most people, it's an add-on to the environmental and humane concerns.

There can be a learning curve when it comes to taste of grass-fed options, as well. Those used to grain-fed meat may have to adjust palates and ways of cooking because the final product is not as fatty. The taste from grain-finished cuts comes from the marbled fat that the animals put on so quickly. Grass-fed beef can also cook faster and get drier. Shinn spent plenty of time finding the right kind of livestock to ensure that his end-products taste great.


"It's been a steep learning curve, but we've been able to find the cattle that perform on grass and make a tasty, tender piece of meat," he says.

For Derry and Darby, the bottom line for consumers is to try to get as much information as possible on potential meat purchases from a farmer or vendor.

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"I think that if people are concerned about what's going into their meat or how it's raised, going to a farmer's market and finding someone who raises those animals is a really good option," Derry says. This way, consumers can ask direct questions about what the animal has been eating and the grazing practices at the farm to help them make decisions about the qualities most important to them when purchasing meat. 

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. She is currently in a graduate program at the University of Pennsylvania, studying social work and nonprofit leadership.





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Garlic-Based Pepper Soup

By: Maryam Funmilayo

Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups mushroom broth
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 heads/bulbs garlic, minced
- 1 small red onion, minced
- 8 medium-size tomatoes, minced
- 3 medium-size habanero peppers, minced
- 3 medium-size cayenne peppers, minced
- 1 medium-size raw ginger, minced
- 2 tablespoons turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper powder
- 2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 1 teaspoon of Italian seasoning

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, pour the mushroom broth and olive oil and let the mixture boil for 5 minutes.
2. Add in the garlic, onion, tomatoes, peppers, and ginger. Let the mixture boil for another 10 minutes.
3. Add in the salt and all the spices and herbs. Let the mixture boil for another 5 minutes.
4. Serve with baked or cooked potatoes or cooked yam. [®]



Bamia (Okra) Soup


By: Asma Jarad

Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds okra (fresh or frozen)
- 1 head garlic
 - olive oil for frying okra and garlic
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- water, as needed
- salt, pepper, allspice to taste
- 2 cups rice, if desired

DIRECTIONS

1. Slice okra into bite size pieces, discarding the top hat part.
2. Fry the okra in olive oil to get a golden sear, then remove the oil.
3. Add tomato sauce and a blend of salt, pepper, and allspice to taste.
4. Add just enough water to cover the okra comfortably and let simmer.
5. In a clean pan, warm 2 tablespoons of olive oil and fry the garlic until it develops a golden sear.
6. Add the garlic directly to the simmering okra.
7. Let the mixture simmer for another 5 minutes, then enjoy over a bed of rice. 



Heart-Healthy Banana and Guava Smoothie

By: Maryam Funmilayo

Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups homemade yogurt
- 4 medium size ripe bananas, sliced
- 2 small guava, diced
- 1 teaspoon chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon black seeds
- ½ cup lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

1. Pour the yogurt in the blender and add in the bananas, guava, chia seeds, and black seeds.
2. Blend for 1 to 2 minutes until the consistency is fine. Then add in the lemon juice.
3. Blend again for another 1 to 2 minutes.
4. Serve chilled. ©



Protein—More Than Meats (The Eye)

By Naazish YarKhan

When we think of foods that are sources of protein in our diets, non-vegetarians think meat, chicken, and fish. Vegetarians resort to legumes, i.e. lentils (including moong daal, urad daal) and dry beans (including chickpeas [garbanzo], split peas, kidney beans, navy beans, and pinto beans). What both may also add to their diets for protein are eggs, oats, nuts (almonds and peanuts), seeds (like chia seeds and quinoa), soy (tofu, tempeh, or edamame beans), dairy (Greek yogurt), edible seaweed and certain vegetables (like broccoli and spinach). While nascent, insects like crickets are also being served up as protein bars!

Animal Vs Plant Protein—What are Proteins?

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, “Protein is found throughout the body—in muscle, bone, skin, hair, and virtually every other body part or tissue.” There are “at least 10,000 different proteins” and proteins comprise amino acids, twelve of which are made by the human body. Another nine, the essential amino acids, can’t be made by the body and are derived from food. A complete protein is a food that contains “all twenty-plus types of amino acids needed to make new protein in the body.”

There are animal and plant based protein sources. The main advantage of animal proteins versus plant proteins



is that animal sources such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and dairy are “complete sources”, providing all the essential amino acids. Some plant based complete sources of protein include soy, buckwheat (for example, soba noodles), and quinoa.

Protein deficiencies are typically found in populations with food insecurity. “In this country, there isn’t much protein deficiency unless you are a strict vegan. Insufficient protein is related to hair loss, brittle nails, anemia, fatigue, loss of muscle mass, and weakened immune systems,” says nutritionist Shahana Khan, of Naperville, Illinois. “You also need it to heal and maintain skin elasticity. Anorexia, too, can put you at risk of protein deficiency.” Consuming a meal or snack containing protein is recommended within an hour of a workout to repair any muscle tears and replenish the body’s glycogen reserves. If you suspect you may have protein deficiencies, a blood test for it can determine any problems.

Beans and Lentils

“How much protein we need depends on age, weight, and health. The Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI) for protein is 0.6-0.8g/

Item	Serving	Protein Content (grams)
Peanuts	1/2 cup, shelled	19
Lentils	1 cup, cooked	18
Greek yogurt	6 ounces	18
Pumpkin seeds	1/2 cup, hulled	17
Quinoa	1/2 cup, uncooked	14

source: shape.com

kg of body weight. Fifty grams of protein suffices for a 140-pound person. This amount is a per day recommendation. It is entirely possible to meet the requirements of protein from alternative sources such as tofu, tempeh, beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds,” says Dr Jyothsna Rama Rao, a nutritionist with a practice in Melbourne, Australia. Her areas of expertise include over-nutrition and its effect on cellular function.

Foods like whole grains, nuts, seeds, peas, corn, beans, and lentils are known as incomplete proteins. A combination of incomplete proteins, whether in one or more meals, will also provide your recommended dietary intake. Reducing animal proteins is good choice, says Shahana Khan.

Consumed in many parts of the world, lentils are a gluten-free, low-fat, protein-rich alternative to meat and fish, and comprise as much as 25 percent protein. A staple in South Asian diets, they are the go-to protein for Shazia Siddiqui, a Naperville, Illinois, resident. Even better, unlike meat, lentils have no cholesterol.

“I find that proteins, combined with fats or fiber, fills you up. I

feel satiated through the day and can fall asleep at night without having cravings,” says Siddiqui, who follows Pick up Limes and nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar on YouTube for nutrition advice. “I am a yogurt fanatic. Labneh is also very high in protein and my kids use it in sandwiches. Ghee has lots of protein. I make Boca patties with kidney beans, adding veggies to make them high fiber. The best thing we can do for our family is make things from scratch.”

.....
There is no one best animal protein source nor one best plant protein source. “Combine a variety of foods so you aren’t missing out.”

“My favorite way to eat lentils is Sicilian style, as made by my grandmother in a soup dish called ‘lenticchie’: brown lentils with ditalini noodles and some sort of leafy green like spinach or Swiss chard, with freshly grated Parmesan cheese on top. Delicious with fresh Italian bread to scoop it up,” says Yvonne Maffei, Founder, My Halal Kitchen.

protein. Eating them in moderation, or in lieu of another food, is key given that “half a cup of nuts contains about 400 calories.”

Nadia Khan, of Oakbrook, Illinois chooses “Moong dal” which has the highest protein among all lentils. Besides cooking them according to traditional South Asian recipes which she finds are both easy and quick, she serves her family sprouted lentils, adding them to salads and sandwiches. She also has two or three eggs a day.

Nut butters, almond milk, and cashew milk often find their way into Siddiqui’s diet as sources of protein. Nadia Khan is a chia-seed buff. She loves making chia-seed puddings—a refrigerated combination of chia seeds soaked in almond or coconut milk with a splash of vanilla. Two tablespoons of chia-seeds provide four grams of protein.

Eggs-From Villain to Super Hero

From being bad for your cholesterol, eggs have rebounded to being considered one of the most complete foods. “I usually have a very big breakfast and I want it to be big on proteins as it’s better for my energy,” says Nadia Khan. “I have two or three eggs and turkey sausage. I have meat once a day. Lots of sources of protein are also sources of iron.” She recommends the documentary ‘The Magic Pill’ as an informative source on protein.

Quinoa, a seed and complete protein, provides all nine amino acids. Half a cup of uncooked quinoa provides fourteen grams of protein.




Nuts and Seeds

Nuts are another great source of protein. Half a cup of peanuts, for instance, provides nineteen grams of

Dairy and Soy

Plain Greek yogurt beats yogurt. Six to seven ounces of fat-free Greek yogurt delivers seventeen to twenty grams of protein. “A cup mixed with chia seeds keeps my energy levels up. I was surprised,” says Nadia Khan.

She also snacks on edamame beans (boiled soybeans) which have the highest amount of protein among beans. On a 2,000 calorie diet, half a cup of edamame beans provides 32 percent of the daily value (DV). While half a cup of firm tofu provides 44 percent of the DV, it isn’t a food she relishes.

Item	4 oz. broiled sirloin steak	4 oz. grilled sockeye salmon	1 cup cooked lentils
			
Protein (grams)	33	30	18
Fat (grams)	5	1	0
Fiber (grams)	0	0	15
Notes	Great source of protein, but fatty	Naturally low in sodium; Salmon and other fatty fish are also excellent sources of omega-3 fats, a type of fat that’s especially good for the heart.	Virtually no saturated fat or sodium

Source: Harvard School of Public Health

Halal Consumer

Processed Foods and Protein

Protein additives have long been added as an ingredient in our foods, according to processedfoods.com. They are, “valued by food formulators for properties such as their ability to gel, foam, emulsify, and form films and dough structure. Protein ingredients range from gelatin to plant-derived proteins—such as from wheat, soy, rice, and pea—and even more recently to protein from cultivated algae. Whey protein concentrates and isolates, for example, are added to foods and beverages for both nutritional and functional purposes.” Reading labels to ensure halal certification symbols is part and parcel of the halal consumer’s grocery shopping experience in the West.

On the shelf, whey protein is often consumed for weight management, by athletes, lactating moms, and those healing from surgeries. Its biological value of proteins is 104, higher than eggs (100), soy protein (74), and beef (80). Whey protein isolate ranks highest for being easily digested and retained by the body. The more there is of an ingredient, the closer it is to being listed at the beginning of the nutrition label. For whey protein beverages, either whey protein isolate or whey protein concentrate should appear first on the labels.

Protein helps to stabilize blood glucose levels by slowing the absorption of glucose into the bloodstream. This in turn reduces hunger by lowering insulin levels and making it easier for the body to burn fat, according to the Whey Protein Institute.

Is it Enough?

There is no one best animal protein source nor one best plant protein source. “Combine a variety of foods so you aren’t missing out,” says Shahana Khan.

Excess protein consumed is excreted. When you consume any food you have to look at it as a combination of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates—a package deal. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, “a 4-ounce broiled sirloin steak is a great source of protein—about thirty-three grams worth. But it also delivers about five grams of saturated fat.” Animal fat impacts cholesterol. A cup of cooked lentils provides eighteen grams of protein but it also has 230 calories. Balance your intake so you are cognizant of the daily values that are recommended in different categories whether sugar, fat, carbs, or protein—all of which are found in a single food, similar to cooked brown rice. As in Islam, so too with food: taking the middle path is key. ©

NAAZISH YARKHAN is a college essay and writing consultant (www.writersstudio.us) and contributor to over 50 media outlets including Chicago Tribune, NPR, PRI and more. Her writing has been translated into French, Hebrew, Arabic, Urdu, Bahasa, and Tagalog.



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Let's Get Hard Core

By Ali Othman, CPT



For years now, fitness professionals have impressed upon us the importance of core training. We've been told that a strong core will enhance our ability to perform our activities of daily life, reduce the occurrence of lower back pain, improve our reaction time to external stimuli, and even make it easier to load and empty the dishwasher. It would seem that this magical muscle group deserves all the attention it receives; but in order to achieve optimal performance from our core we must first understand its form and function.

The American Council on Exercise defines the core as, "The major muscles that move, support, and stabilize your spine" (Acefitness.org). The core muscles house and protect our spinal cord, the information superhighway stretching between the brain and the rest of the body. They surround and support our vital internal organs, and they cross over the hip joint and give us the ability to flex, extend, and rotate our torso and legs. Take for example the movements involved in reaching down to pick up a pencil, returning to the upright position, then reaching up and twisting your body to put the pencil onto a shelf. This simple action requires the activation of most of the muscles which make up our core. While this activation is largely involuntary, deliberate training of these muscles will allow us to more easily twist, turn, and hold our bodies upright.

For optimal results you can personalize your core training to provide you with benefits specific to your needs.

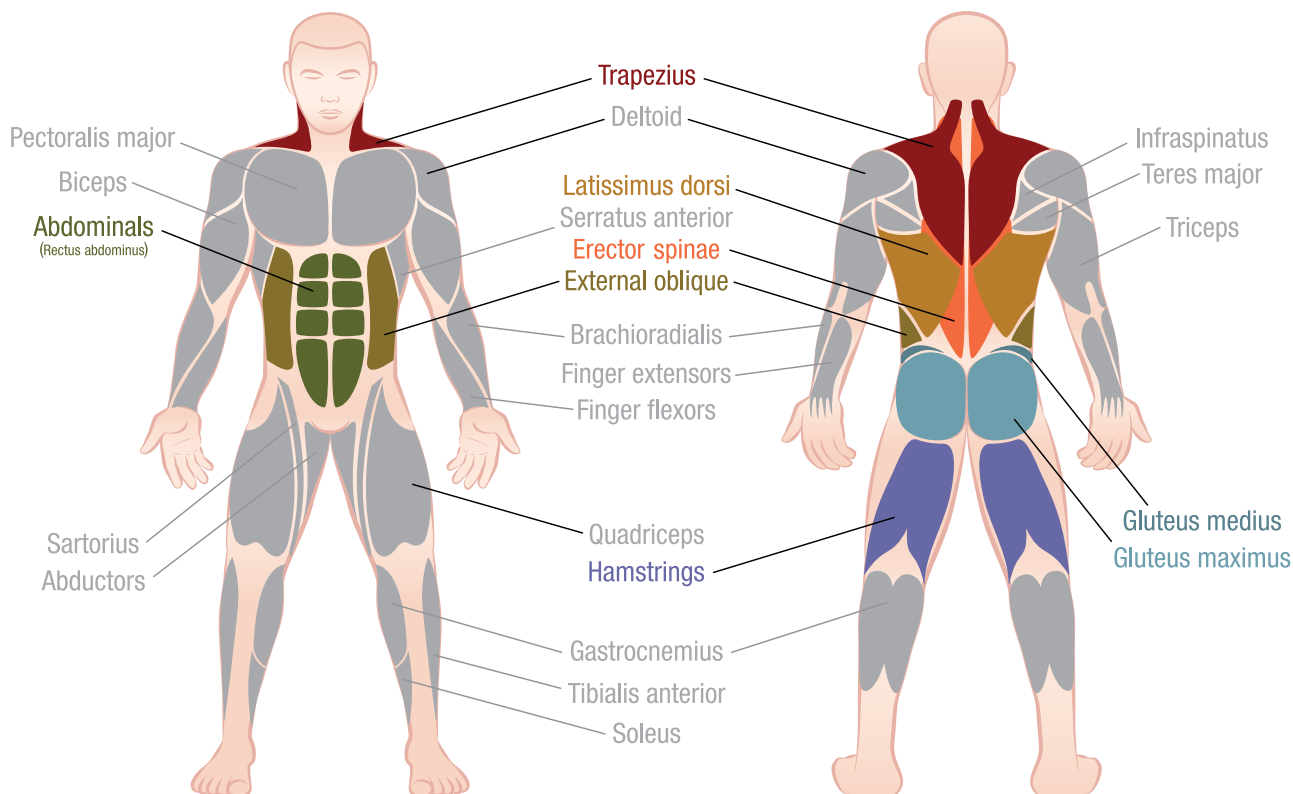
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There is a reason for all of us to take an interest in strengthening our core, but how and where do we start?

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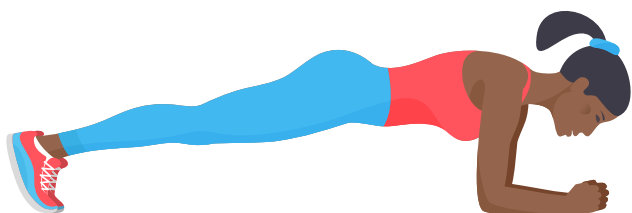
Boxers need to be nimble enough to dodge punches and dynamic enough to return them in the blink of an eye. Golfers need to be able to twist and rotate while remaining accurate enough to strike the ball. Office workers sit at their desks all day, hunched over a keyboard. Extended periods of improper posture in this position can result in debilitating back pain. New parents and expecting mothers carry their children in positions which add stress to the lumbar region and can result in long-term soreness and discomfort. There is a reason for all of us to take an interest in strengthening our core, but how and where do we start?

A light anatomy lesson can lead us in the direction of working smarter instead of harder. Our upper bodies are quite heavy, and the spine is the structural support that allows us to stand and walk on two feet instead of all-fours like the overwhelming majority of other living beings. Since our torso doesn't contain much bone, we rely on our core muscles to wrap around our ribs, spine, and pelvis to keep our spine from compressing and our upper bodies from hunching and falling over. The erector



spinae runs parallel along the length of each side of the spine. It straightens our back and helps with side-to-side rotation. The rectus abdominus is a muscle that extends vertically on the front of the body from the pubic bone to the sternum. Many of us know this muscle well, and refer to it as the “6 pack.” When flexed, this muscle allows us to bend forward, the action we see during a sit-up or a crunch. The erector spinae works as its antagonist muscle to slow and stop the forward bend, and when flexed it brings us back to the upright position. The internal and external oblique muscles run diagonally up and down both sides of the torso and help to flex and rotate the trunk. Also included in the core are the latissimus dorsi and the trapezius muscles, which make up a massive portion of the outer muscles of the back. These muscles control a huge number of functions in the neck, arms, and shoulders. Below the waist we have the glutes and hamstrings. The glutes are regarded as the strongest muscle in the body, facilitate movement in our hips and legs, and keep your pants from falling to the ground. A well-rounded core training routine should include movements which address each group of core muscles allowing the entire unit to strengthen equally.

Since the core is a group of muscles designed to work together harmoniously, training these muscles most efficiently is best done using a combination of exercises employing two techniques. First, through movements which encourage a synergistic action of motion, or antagonist muscles pulling with equal force in opposite directions causing fluid motion at a joint. Movements like these ensure that the muscles around a joint are equally stressed and do not cause misalignment (*Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*, 2010 Volume: 40, Issue: 2, Pages: 82-94). The second technique uses isometric exercises which require several of your core muscles to contract simultaneously and remain contracted for an extended period. Dr. Edward Laskowski defines isometric exercises as, “Contraction of a particular muscle or group of muscles. The muscle doesn’t noticeably change length and the affected joint doesn’t move” (mayoclinic.org). Squeeze the desired muscles to bring your body into position, and force the muscles to remain contracted to keep your body from moving. The **forearm plank** and any of its variations are great examples of this type of exercise, and are a great starting point for beginners at the onset of a core training program.



Done with proper form, the **forearm plank** strengthens the muscles of your deep inner core. The multifidus, transverse abdominus, diaphragm, and the pelvic floor function together as one entity and make up the deep inner core (*The Effects of Deep Abdominal Muscle Strengthening Exercises on Respiratory Function and Lumbar Stability*; Kim, Eunyoung PhD and Lee, Hanyong PhD). These are muscles you don’t see when looking in the mirror, but strengthening this group of core musculature provides us with better posture, increased capacity to intake oxygen, prevents degeneration of the spinal column by holding the vertebrae in place, and even helps to prevent the onset of age-related urinary incontinence.

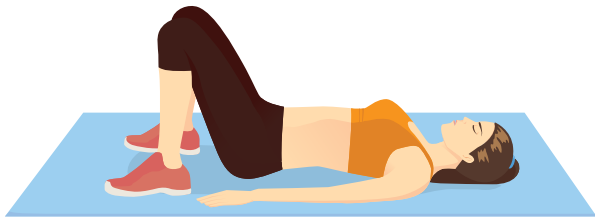
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The forearm plank and any of its variations are great examples of this type of exercise, and are a great starting point for beginners at the onset of a core training program.

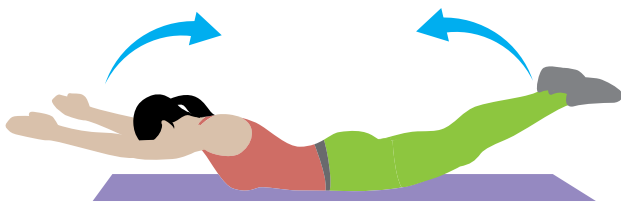
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To perform the **forearm plank**, start on all fours on the ground with your hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Step one foot back at a time until you are in a high plank on your hands and toes with your feet together. Squeeze your glutes and abdominals and lower your arms one at a time until you are resting on your forearms with your elbows directly beneath your shoulders and your palms flat on the ground. Hold in this position for about twenty seconds, rest for another thirty seconds, and repeat for three to four sets. Similar to all exercises, strive for quality rather than quantity. As this becomes easier you can increase your plank time and decrease your rest periods. In order to keep your spine in a neutral position, focus your eyes on the ground in front of your palms. Your goal is to keep your body as straight as possible. If you feel your back starting to dip, squeeze your glutes, retighten your abdominals, and of course remember to breathe (Shape.com).

A great exercise to work your lower core and improve both power and posture is **the bridge**. This exercise works the hamstrings, glutes, and muscles of the lower back; and just like the plank it can be done anywhere without any equipment. Atrophy in these muscles is a common culprit of hip and lower back pain. To perform **the bridge** lie on your back, knees bent, feet and palms flat on the ground, and arms stretched down your sides. Tighten your glutes and abdominals and lift your hips off the ground creating a straight line, or a bridge between your knees and your shoulders. Try holding this position for thirty seconds per set, performing three to four sets (Verwellfit.com).



The erector spinae is a muscle that commonly degenerates due to age and inactivity. Its primary function is extension of the back, which causes the chest to push forward and out, putting us in an upright postural position. Well-trained, these muscles can aid in achieving proper spinal alignment. For those of us who spend a major part of the day at a desk, the opposite may be true. There is a simple exercise that can be done anytime, anywhere with a clean floor. To perform **the superman**, lie face down with your legs straight, and arms stretched forward. Squeeze the muscles of the back and glutes, and raise your torso and legs off the ground. Done correctly, only the hips and the lower stomach will be touching the floor (Livestrong.com). Focus on slowly controlling the movement rather than jerking up and down. Hold at the top of the exercise for a second or two, and then come down slowly keeping your arms and lower legs off the floor throughout the exercise. Do this exercise three to four days a week going for four sets of ten repetitions.



Many exercises can be done at home without any equipment, but if you want to take it to the next level, the cable machine at your local gym is a great place to get a well-rounded core strengthening session. Cable machines

allow you to perform a variety of exercises in an almost unlimited number of positions. They also allow for multiple joint movements such as flexion at the shoulders and hips. To perform the **cable double-crunch**, place the pulley at the lowest setting and lie flat on your back with your head about two feet in front of the machine. Reach behind your head, grab the handle, and lift your feet slightly off the ground; this is your starting position. As you pull the cable down the midline of your body, lift your legs and concentrate on the contraction of your rectus abdominus. Focus on using your core to bring your arms down over your body instead of letting your shoulders do the work.



There is no across-the-board formula for how often you should be working the core muscles. Ideally you should strive for at least three days per week, however each of us is built differently and the intensity of our workouts will differ based on many factors. One person may require more time to recover than another, and one workout might call for more recuperation time than the next. Self-assessment is a key tool in your belt; and as you pay attention to your body's response to exercise you will gather information about the capacity of your muscles and their necessary recovery time. Design your core exercise program with your own personal goals in mind; change your routine before allowing it to get stale, and before you know it you will be basking in your glorious results.

The information in this article is meant to educate and help you make informed decisions about your fitness health; it is not a substitute for advice from your healthcare professional. Always consult your physician before the onset of any exercise program or change in your diet. ©

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Kontos	Bakery Items, Bread	Kontos Foods, Inc.	Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and fruit & vegetable markets throughout the United States
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Melaleuca	Personal Care Products Nutritional Supplements	Melaleuca, Inc.	Visit their website for distributors: www.melaleuca.com
My Own Meals	Food Products	My Own Meals	Visit their website: www.myownmeals.com
National	Food Products Sauces & Dressings, Condiments Dessert Mixes Spices & Seasonings	National Foods Limited	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States and Canada
Nestle	Food Products Beverages / Beverage Concentrates Dairy Products Drink Mixes, Dessert Mixes	Nestle Pakistan Ltd.	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States
Nutriline	Nutritional Supplements	Access Business Group, LLC	Visit their website for distributors: www.nutriline.com
Olympia	Gyros, Flat Bread	Olympia Food Industries, Inc.	Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and restaurants throughout the United States and Canada
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Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
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Sunrider	Personal Care Products Cosmetics Food Products Nutritional Supplements	Sunrider International	Visit their website for distributors: www.sunrider.com
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