



MEAT

In this series of **The food we eat or the way we eat**, the third topic is **Meat**.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem, "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." All Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Written by Jouseph Vanderkimpen (Valenciennes, France)

This paper is put together to provide some insights into the issue of food that is good for us as humans and the way we eat it. This is the first article as an introduction. I will write about milk, honey, garlic, onions, pumpkins, cheese, eggs, water, dates, vinegar, olive oil, barley, meat and so more.

As a Muslim, I was always interested in what food is halal [1] and do we have recommendation what and how to eat in the Sunnah [2] of the Prophet Mohammed (صلى الله عليه وسلم) [3]?

I studied the Jewish kashrut laws [4] or dietary laws given to Musa (Moses; عليه السلام) [6] and saw remarkable similitudes. The way we slaughter animals is quite similar. And as the Jews are we are restricted in what kind of animals we may eat, even the list of restricted animals is smaller in Islam.

By doing some research I found out that the Vedic or Ayurvedic (Hindu) diet is also similar to the way Muslims view some foods, although not for the same religious reasons.



Don't forget that your food is medicine. If you take the wrong food you will become sick by it. And Allah knows best.

About eating meat in Islam

Meat is not prohibited in Islam, but rather it is stated that eating a lot of meat is not good. According to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, who argues that historically Muslims ate so little meat they were almost vegetarian. "Meat is not a necessity in sharia [5], and in the old days most Muslims used to eat meat – if they were wealthy, like middle class – once a week on Friday [6]. If they were poor – on the Eids (feasts)."

The prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was not an advocate of daily meat-eating. Instead he warned his followers against constant meat consumption as it could become addictive. It seems that 1,500 years later his concerns are not being heeded.

Early Islamic leaders and scholars repeatedly emphasized that animals were to be treated in a humane manner and be cherished, but many Muslims nowadays view animals as the dominion of people.

"There is not an animal on earth, nor a bird that flies on its wings – but they are communities like you." (Qur'an, 6:38)

Some argue that meat-eating is part of the Islamic tradition and, thus, vegetarianism is a foreign notion for North-Africa and the Middle East. Muslims who eat meat at every iftar (fast-breaking evening meal) the month of Ramadan undoubtedly believe they are doing the right thing. On the other hand, the idea that animals are merely slaves to humans is not only abhorrent to animal-rights advocates, but seems to be at odds with the Prophet's (ﷺ) teaching.

Some would argue that the prayer said before halal slaughtering is part of Islam's humanity when animals are killed for food. This may have been true historically, but in today's "halal" slaughterhouses, a pre-recorded prayer often blares nonstop as the animals are lined up and killed. That is a cop-out from what Islam teaches about "humane" slaughter.



I personally advocate, like the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions, to limit meat consumption to once a week. Humans don't need more than that, and there are plenty of websites explaining meat-replacement foods like lentils, chickpeas, capuchins, kidney beans, kidney beans, soybeans, and white beans.

We can do this out of compassion for the animals, economic reasons, health reasons, weight management, environment of reducing your impact on the planet and so we also follow the example of the Prophet who was a flexitarian [7]. (See also footnote 18)

As said already it is **not forbidden for a Muslim to eat meat**, but there are when we chose to eat meat some rules to follow to obey our Creator.

As it is defined in the Qur'an, believers are welcomed to enjoy all of the blessings of this world [8]. Therefore, about eating meat, Allah does not mention what to eat, but He excludes what is not lawful to eat and may be physically or spiritually harmful to human's body and soul. "You are permitted animals of grazing livestock, except what is [now] announced to you..." (al-Maa'idah 5:1) and what is recited as prohibited is mentioned in the Qur'an: "Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al- Maitah (the dead animals — cattle — beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns — and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal — unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone-altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision; (all) that is Fisqun (disobedience of Allah and sin)" (Qur'an: al-Maa'idah 5:3)

Other than the mentioned meats all other kinds of meat are Halal as described in the Quran: "Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): I find not in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be Maytah (a dead animal) or blood poured forth (by slaughtering or the like), or the flesh of swine (pork); for that surely, is impure or impious (unlawful) meat (of an animal) which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while



slaughtering).

But whosoever is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits; (for him) certainly, your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (6:145).

Note that all kinds of Halal (lawful) meat must be slaughtered according to Islamic rulings: “Do not eat [anything] of that over which Allah’s Name has not been mentioned, and that is indeed transgression...” (6:121).

Even the above mentioned prohibited meats are lawful (Halal) while you are living in a problematic situation and following the rules of Islam will put you in extreme difficulty. Please note that difficulty does not mean that you do not have ready food at home and therefore you may eat forbidden (Haram) meat. A difficulty, as written in Islamic jurisprudence, is when one’s life is at risk, and there is no other food available but forbidden (Haram) meat.

As we see **some kinds of animals are forbidden to eat and others not.**

Among all domestic land creatures; sheep, cow, horse [10]and camel [16] are Halal, but eating the meat of a donkey is forbidden (Haram). The rest of domestic land creatures such as dogs, cats, etc. are forbidden (Haram).

Deer, cow, zebra, mountain goat and wild donkey are all Halal. [9] However, eating the meat of wild predatory animals that are predatory in essence, have strong and sharp nails, claws and fangs such as, lions, leopards, cheetahs, wolves, or animals with less sharp fangs such as foxes and hyenas are considered Haram.

Also, insects and reptiles, such as snakes, mice, lizards, hedgehogs, fleas, lice, etc., are all Haram.

Birds which have talons with which they catch prey, because of the report narrated by Muslim (1934) from Ibn ‘Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) [11], who said: The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) forbade every wild animal with fangs and every bird with talons.

It says in Zaad al-Mustaqni’: That which has talons with which it catches prey.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (عليه الله رحمة)[13] said: What is meant by talons here is not the thing [spur] that protrudes from the leg of the rooster; that is a talon but it does not catch prey with it. End



quote from al-Sharh al-Mumti' (15/20)

That which eats carrion, such as vultures and speckled crows. It says in al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah (5/135): "The Hanafis, Shaafa'is and Hanbalis are agreed that it is haram to eat large black crows and speckled crows, which are both types that usually eat only carrion, so they are abhorrent to those of a sound nature. This type also include vultures, because they only eat carrion, even though they do not have talons with which they catch prey." End quote.

That which is off-putting, such as bats. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to what constitutes off-putting, which there is no room to discuss here.

Hence all kinds of food from the sea are permissible, whether they are plants or animals, alive or dead. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Lawful to you is (the pursuit of) water-game and its use for food – for the benefit of yourselves and those who travel..." [al-Maa'idah 5:96]. Ibn 'Abbaas said: " Sayduhu (lit. hunting, pursuit) refers to whatever is taken from it alive, and ta'aamuhu (lit. its food) means whatever is taken dead." (Crocodile is haram) [17]

Eating shrimp and crab is permissible and there is no reason not to eat them, because of the general meaning of the evidence which indicates that everything caught from the sea is permissible.

But if it is proven that any of these things are toxic or harmful to the one who eats them, then it is prohibited to eat them, because of the harm that it may cause, not because it is prohibited in and of itself.

That which it is forbidden to kill, such as hoopoes, because of the report narrated by Abu Dawood (5267) and Ibn Majaah (3224) from Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade killing four kinds of animals: ants, bees, hoopoes and sparrow-hawks. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood. In another hadith it is said that it is also forbidden to kill frogs (and logical to eat them). [14]

Some scholars said that it is disliked to **eat raw meat**, but the correct view is that it is permissible, on the basis of the principle that all things are permitted except those which have been expressly forbidden. There is no evidence to suggest that this is forbidden, but it is allowed on the condition that no harm is caused to the person who eats it – in which case it would not be



allowed, because everything that causes harm is haram, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "... and do not throw yourselves into destruction..." [al-Baqarah 2:195]. [15]

Some narrations do seem to indicate that it is **disliked to eat beef** and there are medical harms in doing so. There is a hadith attributed to Rasulullah (ﷺ) regarding the consumption of beef. He is reported to have said, "You should hold fast to the milk of cows and clarified butter of cows, and you should avoid the meat of cows. The milk and clarified butter of cows is a source of medical treatment and a cure, while its meat is a source of sickness." (Mustadrak al-Hākim) [19]

"Moreover, the narration of beef being a source of sickness goes against other authentic narrations, thus bringing its own authenticity into question. Hāfidh Zarkashi writes that there are authentic narrations which establish that Rasulullah (ﷺ) sacrificed a cow for his family, and he would not make a sacrifice of such an animal whose meat is known to cause sickness to others. (Faydh al-Qadīr, vol.4, p.444)

Some scholars of hadith have also provided an alternative interpretation to the narrations which state that beef is a source of sickness. The specialists in Unani (Greek) medicine and Tibb analyze the effects that climate, season, and type of food have on the health of an individual. Many scholars of hadith quote Imām Halimi's interpretation of this narration and agree with his medical analysis from Unani Tibb. Imam Halimi mentions that this narration regarding medical harms of beef cows are particularly serious for the region of the Arabian Peninsula as compared to other regions, and it is as if he has restricted the scope of this hadith to beef in the Arabian Peninsula. The reason is that beef is both dry and cold in terms of Unani Tibb. When this dryness is combined with the arid and dry climate of the Arabian Peninsula, then it will potentially have a severe adverse affect on the person who eats beef. (Faidh al-Qadīr, vol.4, p.444).

In light of this explanation, the negative health effects of eating beef mentioned in this narration will be restricted to the Arabian Peninsula.

The great Indian scholar of hadith, Allāmah Anwar Shah Kashmīrī رحمه الله, has said with certainty that Rasulullah (ﷺ) did eat beef on numerous occasions. He writes, "The first was the story of Bareerah when charity was given to her. The second was when he sacrificed a cow on behalf of his wives during Hajj. The third is the hadith under discussion [in which Rasulullah (ﷺ) purchased



a cow, commanded for it to be slaughtered, and ate from the meat of the cow] (Sahih al-Bukhari, #3126) Whoever thinks that it is not established that Rasulullah (ﷺ) ate the meat of a cow is indeed unaware of these narrations.” (Faydh al-Bāri, vol.3, p.459)

In summary, we can say in light of the authentic narrations that it is permissible to consume beef and there is no harm in doing so, especially for people living outside of the Arabian Peninsula. There is a good chance that Rasulullah (ﷺ) himself ate beef on multiple occasions, as asserted by Allāmah Anwar Shah Kashmīrī. However, in light of the weak narration emphasizing the adverse health effects of eating beef and the numerous modern-day medical studies highlighting the medical harms of eating beef, **it would be best to eat beef sparingly and in moderation.** A detailed analysis of the hadith narrations quoted in this fatwa is included below in Arabic.” End of quote [20]

What makes meat of permitted animals Halal ?

What makes meat permissible to eat as a Muslim or make it Halal to him is the manner is the way the animal is killed.

“Islam places great emphasis in the way in which an animal’s life ends, which has to be in accordance with Islamic regulations. Life is a sacred blessing of God to creation, animals as well as humans. If the life of an animal has to be ended for human survival, then its life should only be taken in the name of God. Hence, the phrase bismillah (‘in the name of God’) must be uttered just before slaughtering an animal. Muslims cannot consume the meat of animals that are sacrificed in a name other than God. Any animal slaughtered in the name of a person alive or dead, any deity or idol will be considered as haram and therefore it is not permissible for Muslims to consume that meat.

Islamic Slaughter:

Muslims are only allowed to eat meat that has been prepared according to Islamic law. This method is often challenged by animal rights activists as ‘causing unnecessary suffering to the animal’. Muslims disagree and say that Islamic law on killing animals is designed to reduce the



pain and distress that the animal suffers. AFIC has strict rules with regards to Islamic slaughter. These rules state:

1. The slaughterer must be a sane adult Muslim.
2. The slaughterer must say the name of God before making the cut.
3. The name of God is said in order to emphasise the sanctity of life and that the animal is being killed for food with God's consent.
4. The animal must be killed by cutting the throat with one continuous motion of a sharp knife.
5. The cut must sever at least three of the trachea, oesophagus, and the two blood vessels on either side of the throat.
6. The spinal cord must not be cut.
7. Animals must be well treated before being killed.
8. Animals must not see other animals being killed.
9. The knife must not be sharpened in the animal's presence.
10. The knife blade must be free of blemishes that might tear the wound.
11. The animal must not be in an uncomfortable position.
12. The animal must be allowed to bleed out and be completely dead before further processing.

Some experts say that the animal killed in this way does not suffer if the cut is made quickly and cleanly, because it loses consciousness before the brain can perceive any pain: "the Islamic way of slaughtering is the most humane method of slaughter and that captive bolt stunning, practiced in the West, causes 3 severe pain to the animal" Schulze W, Schultze-Petzold H, Hazem AS, Gross R. Experiments for the objectification of pain and consciousness during conventional (captive bolt stunning) and religiously mandated ("ritual cutting") slaughter procedures for sheep and calves. *Deutsche Tierärztliche Wochenschrift* 1978 Feb 5;85(2):62-6. The argument that halal slaughter is inhumane because animals are allowed to bleed to death is scientifically untrue. An animal's throat is cut in one swift motion with a razor sharp knife. Unconsciousness is achieved within seconds and death occurs due to cerebral hypoxia not blood loss." End of the quote [21]

Health benefits of eating less meat

"You may lose weight



A large, five-year study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* in 2013 revealed that people who don't eat meat have a lower average BMI than meat-eaters, and that vegans have a significantly lower obesity rate than omnivores (9.4 percent versus 33.3 percent). Plus, a new study presented at The Obesity Society's 2013 meeting found that overweight/obese people following a vegan or vegetarian diet lost more weight than those who consumed meat—even though both groups took in the same number of calories. Consuming saturated fats—which primarily come from meat and dairy—raises the level of cholesterol in your blood, and high levels of blood cholesterol increase your risk of heart disease. Ditching meat automatically lowers the amount of saturated fat in your diet, in turn reducing your cardiovascular disease risk, Masley said.

You may lower your blood pressure

Vegetarians and vegans have less hypertension than meat-eaters, according to findings published in the journal *Public Health Nutrition*. Researchers say it's due to their lower average weight and higher intakes of fruits and vegetables.

You'll reduce your diabetes risk

An American Diabetes Association study found that people following a vegetarian diet had a decreased risk of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of risk factors linked to type 2 diabetes, stroke, and heart disease. Study subjects who avoided meat and poultry products tended to have lower blood pressure, blood sugar, and triglycerides, as well as smaller waists, than those who regularly consumed those foods.

Your cancer risk may drop

In 2002, researchers at Loma Linda University began a 10-year study of nearly 70,000 Seventh Day Adventists, whose religious doctrine advises them against eating meat. Their research found an association between a vegan diet and a decreased risk for all cancer types. Researchers also discovered that vegetarians experienced less gastrointestinal cancer, such as colorectal cancer, and that vegan women experienced fewer female-specific cancers, such as breast cancer.

You'll feel better in tight pants

Eating more veggies and legumes means your fiber intake will go up, and more fiber means less



constipation and improved digestion overall. "I find that many women have purses stocked with digestive aids and over-the-counter products to help them get more bowel regularity, but a vegetarian diet can certainly help with that," said Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, author of *The Flexitarian Diet*. When you have regular digestion and are not bloated, you'll feel thinner, energized, and possibly even sexier, she said.

Your skin will glow

Vegetarianism is one of the best diets for your skin. Eating more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains loads you up with antioxidants, which neutralize the free radicals that can bring on wrinkles, brown spots, and other signs of aging.

You might smell better to your significant other

Following a meatless diet could make you smell more attractive and pleasant to the opposite sex, according to research published in the journal *Chemical Senses*. In the study, men followed "meat" or "meatless" diets for two weeks, and wore pads under their armpits to collect body odor during the final 24 hours of the diet. (We agree—it's gross.) Women assessed the odor samples for pleasantness, attractiveness, masculinity, and intensity. Then the men switched diets and women sampled the scents again. Women judged scents from the meat-free diet as "significantly more attractive, more pleasant, and less intense."

You might be happier

Adding more fruits and veggies to your diet is a natural mood-booster. Economists and public health researchers from the University of Warwick and Dartmouth College studied the eating habits of 80,000 people in Great Britain and found that mental well-being appeared to increase with the number of daily portions of fruit and vegetables, and hit an overall peak at seven servings. The average American gets less than three servings daily.

Your energy levels might increase

Eating more spinach, kale, beans, and other foods high in dietary nitrates may help you feel more energized over time. Research has found that dietary nitrates have vascular benefits, reduce blood pressure, and may even enhance exercise performance in healthy people. "These foods open up blood vessels, allow more oxygen in, and have the ability to energize us in a deep way,"



Blatner said. - End quote [22]

Start form today

You don't have to go cold turkey. Instead, try easing into meatless meals. Consider going meatless step by step as beginning with 2 days a week.

If you don't like the idea of a whole day without meat, start with a couple of meatless dinners each week. Plan meals that feature your favorite entrees that are typically meatless, such as lasagna, soup or pasta salad. Or try substituting the following protein-rich foods for meat in your favorite recipes:

Beans and legumes — great in casseroles and salads

Vegetarian refried beans — a good substitute for meat in burritos and tacos

Tofu — a perfect addition to stir-fry dishes

When your meals include meat, don't overindulge. Choose lean cuts and avoid oversized portions. A serving of protein should be no more than 3 ounces (85 grams) — or about the size of a deck of cards — and should take up no more than one-fourth of your plate. Vegetables and fruits should cover half your plate. Whole grains make up the rest.

The term "flexitarian" as our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), has been coined to describe someone who eats mostly plant-based foods, but occasionally eats meat, poultry and fish. That kind of healthy eating is central to the Mediterranean diet — which limits red meat and emphasizes fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains and healthy fats — and has been shown to reduce your risk of heart disease and other chronic conditions. Why not work on your flexibility and start reaping some healthy benefits?

Islam is not only a religion it is a **way of life** with protocols, rules and manners governing every facet of life. Since food is an important part of daily life, food laws carry a special significance. Muslims are expected to eat for survival, to maintain good health and not to live for eating. In Islam, eating is considered to be a matter of worship of God like prayer, fasting, alms-giving and other religious activities.

And Allah knows best.



Disclaimer of Medical Advice:

See Introduction: <https://yvanderkimpen.com/2020/04/04/the-food-we-eat/>

Footnotes:

1. **Halal:** (/hə'la:l/; Arabic: حلال ḥalāl), also spelled halaal is an Arabic word that translates to "permissible or lawful" into English. The term halal is particularly associated with Islamic dietary laws, and especially meat processed and prepared in accordance with those requirements.
2. **Sunnah:** (Arabic: سُنَّةٌ , sunnah, plural Arabic: سُنَنٌ sunan [sunan]), also sunna or sunnat, is the body of literature which discusses and prescribes the traditional customs and practices of the Islamic community, both social and legal,[1] often but not necessarily based on the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals) of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, as well as various reports about Muhammad's companions.
3. **صلى الله عليه وسلم** = Peace be upon him. It is a custom for Muslims to give honorific blessings each time they say or hear the name of the Prophet Muhammad to send blessing and peace upon him. ('Alayhiṣ-Ṣalātu was-Salām)
4. **Kashrut:** Kashrut (also kashruth or kashrus, כַּשְׁרוּת) is a set of dietary laws dealing with the foods that Jews are permitted to eat and how those foods must be prepared according to Jewish law. Food that may be consumed is deemed kosher (/ˈkɒʃər/ in English, Yiddish: כּוֹשֶׁר), from the Ashkenazi pronunciation of the Hebrew term kashér (כָּשֵׁר), meaning "fit" (in this context: "fit for consumption").
5. **Sharia law** (in Arabic: الشَّرِيعَة / ja'ri:ʕa /) represents in Islam various doctrinal, social, cultural and relational norms and rules decreed by revelation.
6. **Friday** is the holy day for the Muslims as is the Saturday (shabat) for the Jews and Sunday for the Christians.
7. A semi-vegetarian diet (SVD), also called a flexitarian diet, is one that is centered around plant foods and with the occasional inclusion of meat.
8. "Say, who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which he has produced for his servants and the good (lawful) things of provision?" (Qur'an 7:32)
9. Quote from Ibn al-Qayyim (رضي الله عنه) has summed up for us the teaching of the Prophet (ﷺ) with regard to food and drink, which he derived from the saheeh ahaadeeth. He says in Zaad al-Ma'aad (1/147): :Similarly the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) was not to reject what was available, and not to go out of his way to seek that which was not available. No good food was brought to him but he ate it, unless he had no appetite for it, in which case he left it but did not forbid it. He



never criticized any food. If he wanted it he ate it, otherwise he would leave it, as he refrained from eating lizard meat because he was not used to it, but he did not forbid it to the ummah. He ate sweets and honey, which he liked. He ate camel meat, mutton, chicken, bustard, onager, rabbit and seafood. He ate grilled meat and both fresh and dry dates. ... He did not refuse good food, and he did not go out of his way to seek it, rather he would eat what was available, but if it was not available he would be patient, and he would tie a stone to his stomach because of hunger. Three new moons in a row would be sighted, and no cooking fire would be lit in his house.” End quote.

10. See fatwa [70320](#)

11. رضي الله عنه = May Allah be pleased with him, honorific blessing for the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. (Radeyallāhu ‘Anhu)

12. عليه السلام = Peace be upon him, honorific blessing for the monotheistic prophets. (Alayhi Salam)

13. عليه الله رحمة = May Allah’s mercy/blessing be upon him (Rahimullah Alaih)

14. Hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah From: Sunan Ibn Majah. Chapter 31, The Chapters on Hunting, N° 3223

15. See fatwa [1924](#)

16. See fatwa [7103](#)

17. See fatwa [1919](#)

18. See fatwa about vegetarianism [2521](#)

19. Most scholars of hadith have declared this narration to be weak including Hāfidh al-Sakhāwi, Hāfidh Ibn Hajar, Hāfidh Zarkashi, Imām Dhahabi, and others. Hāfidh al-Sakhāwi has mentioned all the different chain of narrators for this statement and has described in detail the weakness of each chain. Imām Hākim had authenticated this narration, but the majority of the scholars of hadith differed with him in this regard and declared this narration to be weak.

20. [Link to article](#)

21. [Link to article](#)

22. [Link to article](#)