



**Febe Armanios, Boğaç A. Ergene.** *Halal Food: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 400 pp. \$29.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-026905-0.

**Reviewed by** Laura Kitchings (Boston University-Metropolitan College)

**Published on** H-Environment (May, 2020)

**Commissioned by** Daniella McCahey (University of Idaho)

*Halal Food: A History* by Febe Armanios and Boğaç Ergene is a succinct introduction to the definitions of *halal* and *haram* foods and the evolution of these definitions. The book's glossary defines *halal* as "legally permissible" and "lawful" and uses the terms "forbidden," "illegitimate," and "sinful," to explain *haram*. The book is aimed at a mainstream, non-Muslim Western audience who may have heard these terms but not considered how these binary food categories developed among Muslims over the centuries. While many mainstream Americans likely only seen the word *halal* on meat labels, the book dispels the myth that Islamic dietary laws only apply to meat consumption (p. 38).

Each thematic chapter of the book presents an additional challenge that Islamic food rules need to navigate and adds to the complexity of strictly defined food rules. The book begins with an overview of the historic justifications of the food rules and how they initially evolved in the environment of the Arabian Peninsula. The first chapter also stresses the similarities of the food descriptions in the Quran and Christian and Jewish food rules. The authors also provide an appendix comparing Kosher, Christian, and Islamic dietary regulations that demonstrates that underlying similarities of food rules among the three religious groups.

The early chapters on meat and slaughter focus on how various schools of Islamic thought began classifying various foods following the Quran. The authors provide charts to explore the differences between these schools of thought, for example showing how the various schools classify disputed land and aquatic animals. These chapters also stress that Islamic food rules apply at every stage of the meat supply chain, from the animal's capture through processing and production. This theme of how Islamic food rules apply to every stage of the food supply system is reiterated throughout the book and demonstrates how complicated strict food rules have become in the modern food system. The chapter on slaughter also introduces how Islamic food rules need to navigate governmental regulations regarding meat production. The authors guide the reader through the various discussions around pre-slaughter stunning required by many governments and how these discussions relate to earlier decisions about meat slaughter made by other religions. The author's discussion of stunning demonstrates the global nature of the current meat industry and reiterates one of the book's themes, that the global nature of the current food system complicates Islamic food rules.

The authors use their chapter on intoxicants to explore how the rulings around intoxicating

substances demonstrate changing Muslim attitudes toward these substances over time. As is done throughout the book, the authors use artwork of the period to demonstrate the various interpretations of Islamic food rules.

The second part of the book moves away from introducing the various discussions around Islamic food rules and examines the global economics and standards around the halal food industry. This section focuses on the growing market and the need for understandable global standards for halal certification. This section shows how the various debates around food classification play out in a global food economy and explores the financial competition for the growing halal food market. These chapters explore how the various codified Islamic food rules interact with the growing packaged-food market and the desire of some Muslims to eat foods that are produced in environmentally sustainable ways.

This section also considers the daily realities of living according to strict Muslim dietary rules in Western society. The authors introduce the readers to a variety of halal restaurant guide smartphone applications and food blogs that assist users in making daily food decisions. While many readers may be familiar with halal street food carts, the authors briefly explore the upscale halal food scene and tourism market. Throughout the section, the authors explore how religious values function in the global capitalist economy. This allows the reader to consider how capitalism strives to turn religious values into purchasable products and how some current debates around Islamic food rules reflect capitalistic goals.

As with most books considered to be food studies, the authors used scholarly sources from a variety of disciplines, ranging from anthropology to microbiology and biotechnology. This book also serves as a primer for future works looking to incorporate less-traditional sources. The book successfully uses artwork, recipes, and details from food packaging to illustrate various points. For ex-

ample, images of Turkish tiles displaying wine cups and a lithograph that includes a representation of a hookah are used in the chapter on intoxicants to explore changing Islamic attitudes toward intoxicants. The use of recipes throughout the book allows the authors to underscore the diversity of Islamic cuisines and the challenges faced when adapting Western recipes. Given the enormous scope of this compact work, the use of images and recipes reinforces the various themes of the text, reducing repetitiveness.

This book succeeds in explaining the complications that arise when strictly placing foods in carefully defined food binaries, without overwhelming the reader. The thematic arrangement of chapters allows the reader to fully consider the theme of each chapter while still examining the larger themes of the book. For example, the chapter on eating outside of the home includes a section on the challenges of obtaining halal food in public schools and the political debates concerning religious food rules that require accommodation by politicized school food movements. This chapter also explores the growing halal packaged-food market and the labeling used to court this market. This chapter also continues the discussion of the growing halal “foodie” market introduced in an earlier chapter focused on the halal food business.

The book successfully challenges the reader to consider not only a variety of Islamic food debates but how religious values are treated as a marketing tool in a capitalist global marketplace. This work will hopefully be continued in further studies reflecting a variety of voices from those following religious food rules.

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**Citation:** Laura Kitchings. Review of Armanios, Febe; Ergene, Boğaç A. *Halal Food: A History*. H-Environment, H-Net Reviews. May, 2020.

**URL:** <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=54707>



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