



Introduction to Halal: Basic Concepts & Requirements

Module 1

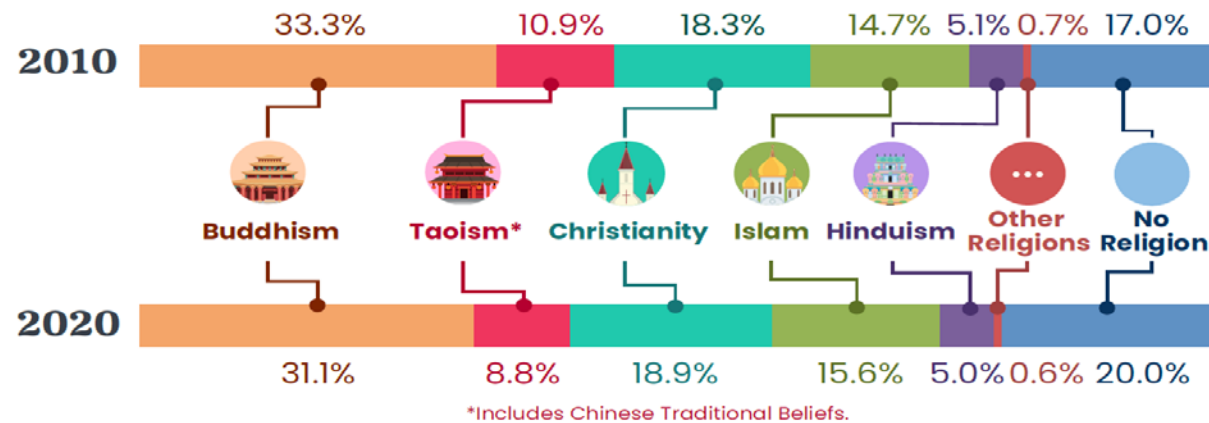
Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- ✓ Understand and apply the fundamental concept and requirements of Halal
- ✓ Recognise the Halal related terminologies and its definitions

Introduction to Halal

According to the Census of Population 2020 on religion by the Department of Statistics, Singapore is a multi-religious country of which Islam makes up the top 3 largest religion. Being a multi-religious country, it is imperative that each one of us has the duty and responsibility to understand the religious needs and requirements of every religion in ensuring a harmonious living.



Source: SingStat Website - Religion - Visualising Data

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

The Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura or Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (“Muis”), statutory board of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (“MCCY”) established in 1968 under Administration of Muslim Law Act (“AMLA”), advise the President of Singapore on Islamic matters and serve the religious interest of the Singapore Muslim Community.

Muis interprets the Qur’an and Hadith including engaging stakeholders for feedbacks and consultations with intensive scrutiny and review to produce the Singapore Muis Halal Standard (“SMHS”) and Halal Certification and Endorsement Conditions (“HCC”).



Introduction to Halal

Just like other religions, Islam has its own sets of religious requirements that Muslims, the followers of Islam, adheres to. Muslims live their lives based on two main sources of guidance:

- ✓ **Qur'an, holy religious text in Islam**
- ✓ **Hadith, the sayings or traditions by the Prophet Muhammad**

Muslims believe in striving to abide by its principles and guidance in every aspect of their lives including the consumption of food and drinks in which Muslims are obligated to consume food and drinks that are wholesome and Halal.



What is 'Halal'?

Muslims are required to consume food and drinks that are wholesome and *Halal*. Wholesome food provides nourishment that promotes the health and well being of the individual's body and mind.

Generally, most food and drinks are Halal or *حلال* in Arabic which means permissible or allowable unless they are considered Haram in Arabic which means forbidden or prohibited.

For food and drinks to be considered as Halal, we need to consider two factors:

1. Source of ingredient and/or derivatives
2. Environment to prepare, process and manufacture

Food for thought

Have you encountered *حلال* sign or logo on any product label or food establishment?

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Source of Ingredients and/or Derivatives

The source of all ingredients and/or derivatives must originate from Halal sources.

Items deemed as **Haram (non-Halal)** sources are simplified as follows:

Amphibians

Blood and Birds of prey with sharp claws

Carnivores, omnivores and Carrion-eaters

Dead meat or carrion

Intoxicants & Food **i**mmolated unto idols

Swine



2

Environment to Prepare, Process and Manufacture

The environment to prepare, process and manufacture must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ Equipment and facilities used to prepare, process and manufacture must meet with health and safety standards
- ✓ No addition and cross mixing of non-Halal additives, processing aids and/or other non-Halal ingredients and/or derivatives to prepare, process and manufacture
- ✓ Animals slaughtered are in accordance to the Singapore Muis Halal Standard. Four criteria has to be fulfilled in slaughtering which are:
 - i. Perform by Muslim slaughterer
 - ii. Use of sharp blade
 - iii. Animal alive and healthy for consumption before slaughter
 - iv. Complete severe of animal trachea, esophagus, carotid artery and jugular vein

Ritual Cleansing

Purity is essential in Islam as Muslims should only consume food and drinks that are free from any cross mixing of impurities. One of the most common impurities that Muslims believe is pork and its derivative. Hence, ritual cleansing by using processed earth water is necessary when any paraphernalia such as equipment to process or utensils to serve food and drinks come into contact with pork and its derivative.

For certain situations, ritual cleansing is required before certification process can proceed such as a food establishment which previously serve pork-related dishes decide to serve only Halal dishes to cater to the wider Muslim community. Non-certification purpose may also require ritual cleansing such as upcoming event serve Halal dishes in which the event organiser previously serve pork-related dishes.



Regardless for certification or otherwise, Muis provide such ritual cleansing service.

Ascertaining Halal Status

Ordinarily, the Halal status may not be easily determined due to lack of information on the food and drink such as the source of ingredients and/or derivatives used and the environment of preparing, processing and manufacturing to produce the food and drink. This will result in the status to be termed as *Syubhah* in Arabic which means doubtful or uncertain.

The general public especially the Muslims are encouraged to do the following when in doubt:

Check the product labels or menu for ingredients used

Ask the manufacturer or the food establishment on the ingredient used and environment of preparing, processing and manufacturing

Decide based on the information available on the Halal status

#CheckAskDecide



Halal Certification

Ascertaining the Halal status of the product or food establishment may not be convenient and straightforward. To ease the process of determining the Halal status of a given product or food establishment, Muis provides certification and endorsement of product and/or food establishment to assure the general public on the Halal status.

Applicants and Halal certificate holders undergo audit checks and periodic inspections to certify that the product or food establishment does not undermine the Halal status. In the next chapter, we shall look into the certification and endorsement process.



Practice Time!

Categorise the following items based on their Halal status (i.e. Halal, Haram or Syubhah):



Fresh seafood



Gelatine



Flavouring



Pork



Frogs



Fresh Milk



Fruits



Crocodile



Vegetables

Answer:
HALAL – Fresh seafood, Fruits, Vegetable (do not undergo any form of processing), Fresh Milk (minimal processing)
SYUBHAH – Gelatine, Flavouring. (considered as doubtful since the source of ingredients and the environment to prepare, process and manufacture are not clearly known.)
HARAM – Pork, Frog, Crocodile. (swine, amphibians and carnivores are considered as Haram.)

Conclusion

Consuming Halal food and drinks is essential for the Muslims to uphold with their religious requirements. Muis helps to provide assurance to the Muslim community on the Halal status of the product and food establishment.

In the next module, we shall look into the certification and endorsement process.

Food for thought

Do you think Muslims can patronise food establishment claiming to be “No pork no lard”, “Muslim friendly”, “Muslim owned”?