



Challenges Faced by Muslim Travelers and Strategies in Accessing Halal Food in Non-Muslim Countries

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100900178>

Received: 16 September 2026; Accepted: 21 September 2026; Published: 05 October 2026

ABSTRACT

The borderless global economy has made it easier for Muslim travelers to cross borders. Despite this, Muslim tourists, Muslim digital nomads, and Muslim athletes still face significant challenges in obtaining halal food when traveling abroad, particularly in non-Muslim majority countries. This study aims to investigate the factors contributing to these challenges and provide guidance for Muslim travelers in selecting halal food abroad. The research reveals that the lack of a Muslim population, lack of awareness and understanding of halal, and limited access to information about halal food sources are key factors hindering Muslim travelers from accessing halal food. To address these challenges, the study suggests various strategies, including familiarizing oneself with recognized halal certification logos, opting for naturally halal food choices, conducting thorough research on food ingredients, and utilizing social media and online resources for halal restaurant recommendations. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of adhering to Islamic principles in food selection, such as ensuring the food is pure, clean, and free from harm. By adopting these strategies, Muslim travelers can navigate the challenges of finding halal food abroad and maintain their religious obligations while traveling.

Keywords: Tourism, Muslim Travelers, Halal Food, Muslim Athletes, Digital Nomads.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, Muslim consumers have focused on halal food products. Along with the efforts and steps taken, an awareness campaign has been initiated in each country through visits and media coverage, including halal journals and bulletins on television, radio, and the internet. In fact, global initiatives have been implemented, such as promoting halal products abroad through the International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) and Halal Festival (Halfest), giving Malaysia the potential to become the world's halal center (Asiah Shafie, 2019). Halal and haram for a Muslim is a principle that must be upheld, because abstaining from haram is a requirement for all Muslims. Furthermore, halal and haram apply not only to human relationships, but also to connections with Allah SWT. A Muslim is not permitted to ingest a food until he knows for certain that it is halal. Consuming something that is haram or whose halal status is unknown will have negative implications in this life and in the hereafter. Allah SWT commands humans to consume halal food that is excellent (tayyib) for their bodies, as stated in the Al-Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 168. Allah SWT commands Muslims to eat healthy halal food and not follow Satan, who is a true enemy. Two entities that accompany each other are halal and good (tayyib) (Sri Mulyati, 2023).

Knowledge of halal food is necessary for Muslim consumers to make the right and accurate choices. Some of the academics agree that every Muslim must confirm that the food they consume is halal and that the production process adheres to Sharia requirements. Consumers are more diligent in determining the halalness of all types of food products by consulting the list of components used to make the product. The halalness of a food is



determined by its qualities and ingredients, as mentioned clearly in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah SWT explains that what is halal is healthy eating. Islam has outlined several principles that must be followed, including determining how to obtain food, whether it is halal or haram, always ensuring that food is not prohibited by Sharia, emphasizing the method of preparing and processing food, and ensuring that the food or ingredients used do not harm the body or mind. Selecting halal food sources and goods is a top priority for Muslim consumers, to the point where it has been integrated and ingrained in their society. Initially, the halal mark was only intended for Muslims, whether consumers or product manufacturers. However, it has garnered positive feedback from non-Muslim customers and producers, both domestically and globally (Asiah Shafie, 2019).

The halal food industry's present development is driven by human necessities. Halal cuisine is also a guarantee of quality, thus it is not unexpected that it is popular worldwide, among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Global demand for halal cuisine is continuously expanding. With the rise in demand for halal cuisine, a wide range of food products are developing with several varieties to compete in the market and suit the needs of consumers who are practical while still enjoying the delicacy of the food (Sri Mulyati, 2023). Muslims who are concerned about halal food and nourishment are responsible individuals for both their faith and religious. Since it may provide a favorable signal to the body to execute acts of worship and good deeds truly, a sparkling heart is the foundation of greatness. Eating halal food has a profound effect on Muslims and can ensure their conscience's well-being. This statement is in line with Imam al-Ghazali's statement that halal food can strengthen a Muslim's faith, provide answers to prayers, and simplify daily living. Islam's teachings address halal eating because of its obvious and positive effects on people's mental, physical, and spiritual growth. This is equivalent to the fact that eating something that is expressly prohibited in the Quran will undoubtedly negatively impact one's health (Ahmad Syamel Atani, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Halal Food

Halal is a Quranic phrase that meaning permissible, lawful, or legal. Opposite meaning of halal is haram, which means forbidden, unlawful, or criminal. Shari'ah requires that all Halal or Haram concerns, as well as disagreements, be based on the Quran and Sunnah. Halal and Haram are universal concepts that refer to all elements of human existence, including ibadat, muamalat, and mua'sharah. Halal encompasses all behaviors and words that are directed by the Quran and Sunnah. Halal encompasses every aspect, including cosmetics, personal care, food, and services. As a result, the definition of halal encompasses items and services that are labeled as halal or use any other term to indicate that they can be utilized by Muslim customers. In general, halal refers to food that is permissible for Muslims to consume under Islamic dietary requirements as outlined in the Quran, Hadith, and fiqh (jurisprudence) from Islamic legal scholars (Asiah Shafie, 2019).

Meanwhile, halal food is defined as food that is pure in its mode of acquisition, nourishing in quality, and free of any elements that could undermine the concept of halal tayyiba. According to al-Ghazali, halal food can be consumed by non-Muslims as well as prepared for Muslim consumers by adhering to Islamic norms (Asiah Shafie, 2019). Halal food, in the context of Islam, is food that is produced and prepared in accordance with religious laws. Halal food, according to Islamic law, is food that has clean ingredients and is obtained in a pure and harm-free manner. Tayyib implies good, useful, and good. Clearly, tayyib food is safe (not dangerous), nourishing, and accompanied by a genuine sense of thankfulness to Allah (SWT). The concept of halal is built on halal and clean, and it upholds the five axis of maqasid syariah, which are religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Rusli, 2024).

Importance of Halal Food

According to Mohazer, religion is one of the variables that influence public knowledge of halal food consumption. Muslim consumers are more worried about halal food products. As a result, every halal logo in the globe, whether in Arabic or Roman letters, that is put on products and premises attracts Muslim customers. As a result, the key features of the halal food supply chain and halal logistics must be secured, and no mingling of halal and haram until it reaches the consumer (Asiah Shafie, 2019). The Muslim community is obliged to seek and maintain the halalness of food because the source of haram food will damage the personality and morals and



descendants. The quality aspect in Islam is very profound. It turns out that it is healthy, nutritious and nutritious, even fulfilling the concept of halal, pure and providing happiness in this world and the hereafter. Muslims who attach importance to halal food and sustenance are responsible people for religion and themselves, like a heart that always shines. A shining heart is the basis of excellence because it is able to give a positive signal to the body to perform worship and charitable deeds sincerely (Ahmad Syamel Atani, 2024).

Consuming halal food can ensure the well-being of the conscience and have a significant impact on a Muslim. This assertion is consistent with the comments of Imam al-Ghazali (1987), who declared that halal cuisine can strengthen a Muslim's faith, answer prayers, and make daily living easier. Islamic religious teachings are concerned with halal food because of its clear and beneficial effects on human mental, bodily, and spiritual development. This is equivalent to the fact that food that is explicitly forbidden in the holy book of the Quran will undoubtedly have a negative impact on health. According to scientific studies, there are several parasites and bacteria found in pork that can be transmitted to humans and cause disease. These parasites include tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms, *faciolopsis buski*, *paragonimus*, *clonorchis senesis*, and *erysipelothrix rhnsiphathiae*. These bacteria are extremely harmful to humans and can cause organ failure, such as in the lungs, resulting in death in a short period of time (Ahmad Syamel Atani, 2024).

Eating a haram food has a number of negative consequences, including damage to the heart and intellect. Haram food has the potential to harm a person's heart and mind. If a person consumes excellent or halal food, his heart will benefit from the nutrients. Similarly, the opposite is true if a person consumes restricted foods. It will undoubtedly have an impact on the mind's understanding of reward and sin. Not to mention that in everyday life, this might lead to a loss of understanding and empathy when considering the heart. Allah SWT bestows several benefits on humans, the most important being the blessing of reason, which distinguishes and even glorifies humans in comparison to other species. The perfection and strength of reason are essential to the stability of human life, whether as an individual or a member of society. All intoxicating beverages harm the mind, causing humans to lose many of their perks and advantages. As a result, their souls weaken and are dominated by lust, causing enmity and strife among Muslims until fraternal bonds are severed and love is lost. Even worse, drinking alcohol causes people to forget Allah and distances them from His mercy, grace, and kindness (Ahmad Syamel Atani, 2024).

Halal Tourism

Halal tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors within the global travel industry. However, there remains a challenge in clearly defining the concept of halal tourism. The terms "halal tourism" and "Islamic tourism" are often used interchangeably, as they represent the same underlying concept. Halal tourism can be broadly applied to any aspect of the tourism industry that aligns with Islamic principles. Globally, the halal tourism market is projected to grow rapidly, establishing itself as a dynamic and impressively expanding market segment. To tap into the immense potential of halal tourism, many countries including both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority have started offering tourism products, facilities, and infrastructure tailored to the needs of Muslim travelers. Tourism plays a vital role in the economy, contributing significantly to job creation and economic growth. As a result, it is often one of the key sources of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The growing number of Muslim tourists presents both a challenge and an opportunity to further enhance the tourism sector (Widodo, 2022).

Halal tourism aligns closely with Islamic principles, as travel is highly encouraged in Islam. Muslims are encouraged to travel for various purposes, including religious obligations such as Hajj and Umrah. Numerous verses in the Qur'an emphasize the importance of traveling, including Ali-Imran: 137 and Al-An'am: 11. These verses highlight the spiritual, physical, and social benefits of travel, emphasizing that recognizing human limitations and witnessing the greatness of God through exploration strengthens faith. Travel also offers health benefits and reduces stress, allowing individuals to worship more effectively. In Islam, the act of travel fosters hospitality, with Muslims encouraged to provide a warm welcome to guests. Additionally, supplications made during travel (du'a safar) are considered especially likely to be accepted, further underscoring the spiritual significance of traveling in Islam (Widodo, 2022).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Islamic tourism is one of the new tourism products that has existed and been introduced not only in Malaysia but also in most Muslim countries widely. The trend of Islamic tourism is now seen to be growing rapidly where the demand and supply for this tourism increases from time to time. However, there are several challenges faced by various types of Muslim travelers, including leisure-seeking Muslim tourists, remote-working Muslim digital nomads, and competing Muslim athletes, especially when traveling abroad to countries where the majority are non-Muslim. When traveling or on vacation, particularly overseas, each Muslim certainly will pay attention to food, as it is difficult to locate halal food in a foreign country. It is not an impediment to traveling because it allows you to learn about other countries' cultures. It may be a little frustrating because you cannot taste local food, but it does not mean that halal and haram things may be regarded lightly just to meet their needs. (Abangnara, 2017).

In this instance, it is preferable to place more emphasis on this issue. It's not simply that as long as there is no sell pork, then can assume that other items are halal. When traveling here, it is natural to desire to experience life abroad and live like a native. Even in Imam Syafie's poem stated that to invites everyone to get outside of your own comfort zone and explore. However, the topic of halal and haram must be addressed and emphasized, particularly for Muslims. In countries where people are especially not Muslim-majority countries, local Muslims themselves try hard to survive for obtaining the halal food. So as a non-local in that country, as a Muslim itself cannot easily presume to 'rukhsah' by ourself that it is okay to claim something that is not halal (Abangnara, 2017).

Based on Hazhari Ismail who is one of the tourists abroad expressed his disappointment when he saw two hijab girls who were expected to be from Malaysia enjoying the chicken tempura that was being poked. However, when asked about its halal status, the two girls could only remain silent without saying anything. He stated that it was one example of how Muslims take halal food or drinks very lightly because this hijab girls itself were not sure about the halal status of the chicken tempura (Abangnara, 2017).

For example, in China, the country has the largest population in the world, which is 1.4 billion. The largest concentration of Muslims in China is in Xinjiang. So, one of the reasons there are not many halal restaurants around Beijing is that this capital does not have a large number of Muslims. This shows one of the challenges of getting halal food when traveling abroad. However, in Beijing there is also an area for the Muslim community, namely Niu Jie, where there are many facilities for Muslims, including mosques and food stalls. So there is no need to search because there are many halal food stalls in the rows of shops (Zulkafli, 2022). According to three Indonesian Muslim tourists, they also have difficulty finding halal-certified food in Korea. Although it is easier to find halal food in Seoul, they still have difficulty finding halal food in tourist attractions such as Hongdae. They also found halal-certified food near Yongdusan Park in the Nampodong area, but they were not interested in the food sold there because the halal food sold is Indian food compared to Korean food (M Berita, 2019).

Imam of the South Korea Muslim Federation Abdul Rahman Lee told Mediacorp that although Muslim tourists still have difficulty finding halal food, many changes have been made in the past four years to make Seoul a more Muslim-friendly destination. Mr. Lee also admitted that halal Korean food is very limited. It is less than 10 dishes compared to Indian or Malay food. But according to Mr. Lee, more tourists are learning about Korean ingredients, so they know whether a dish contains only seafood and vegetables. The federation has also started holding seminars on ways to provide Muslim-friendly facilities every two months for the past five years (M Berita, 2019).

Malaysians living or traveling overseas, particularly in Japan, are cautioned to be wary of restaurant operators that serve non-Shariah-compliant cuisine and use forged halal certificates to attract Muslim clients. Datuk Nadzim Johan, Activist Head of the Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association (PPIM), stated that although restaurant operators display halal certificates, Muslims should double-check before eating a meal. He was responding to charges made by a group of former Malaysian chefs who worked at a restaurant in Osaka, Japan, saying that their employer did not have a halal certificate recognized by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM). The four former cooks alleged they were asked to cut beef mixed with pig at a meat processing business before transporting it to the halal premises (Zain, 2018).



He believes JAKIM should intervene in the problem to assist Muslims in finding halal restaurants that are recognized and syariah-compliant. He noticed that, while Malaysians are so familiar with the Jakim halal certificate or logo, there is no guarantee that any restaurant abroad that displays the halal logo is actually syariah-compliant. As Muslims, even if there is a halal certificate but still have doubt on that restaurant, then there is a need to double-check again the restaurant. If there is a customary Quranic verse at any non-Muslim restaurant, as a Muslim, everyone should educate ourselves on how to verify if the restaurants are truly have certificate logo verified by authorities or not (Zain, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative narrative literature review to explore the challenges faced by Muslim travelers in sourcing halal food in non-Muslim countries and the ways in which they may find suitable food when traveling. Relevant literature was identified by searching the academic literature and publicly available authoritative or professional sources using keywords such as “halal food,” “halal food abroad,” “Muslim travelers,” “Muslim tourists,” “halal tourism,” “halal certification,” “halal food challenges” and “halal food strategies.” The review included academic journal articles, books, institutional materials, industry/professional reports and credible online sources that specifically discussed halal food access, halal requirements, certification or Muslim travelers’ experiences.

The sources included in the review were those that focused on halal food, halal consumption, halal certification, halal tourism, Muslim travelers, challenges of obtaining halal food abroad, and practical indicators and strategies for identifying appropriate food. Sources unrelated to halal food or muslim travel, duplicated or non-contributing materials to the objectives of the study were excluded. The selected sources were analyzed through a qualitative thematic analysis in which relevant information was extracted and grouped according to recurring themes. The analysis was based on three main aspects, which are the factors of difficulties of obtaining halal food abroad, the indicators of the halal status of food, and the strategies that the Muslim travelers can apply when it is difficult to find halal food.

This study is a narrative literature review. The aim of the study is to synthesize and interpret the available evidence, not to statistically analyze or collect primary data through surveys or interviews. The selected sources findings were compared and synthesized to identify common themes and relevant examples. Conceptual and Islamic perspectives were supported by academic and authoritative sources, and credible online materials were used to find relevant contextual and experiential information. Therefore, the findings are more of a qualitative synthesis and practical guidance on halal food access among Muslim travelers, rather than systematic or exhaustive coverage of the whole literature on the subject.

RESULTS

A review of the current situation of the challenges faced by Muslim travelers in obtaining halal food can be concluded due to several main factors. Then, basic indicators in the search for halal food abroad are also presented as basic guidelines for Muslims.

Factors That Lead To Challenges For Muslim travelers In Obtaining Halal Food

Due to several factors, Muslim faced a challenge in obtaining halal food in other countries. The first factor is the lack of a Muslim population in some countries. In non-Muslim countries, restaurants or shops offering halal food are often limited to certain areas such as Muslim communities or large cities. In rural or remote areas, halal food may be difficult to find or not available at all. Therefore, Muslim travelers in particular will face difficulties in obtaining halal food, especially in countries where the majority is non-Muslim. In certain cultures, the concept of halal may not be well understood, making explaining Islamic food taboos more challenging. For example, the population in China. According to a tourist who traveled to China, it is possible that halal food is quite difficult to find because Muslims are a minority group in China. This group only represents about 1.5 percent, equivalent to 20 million people of the total population of China. The largest concentration of Muslims in China is in Xinjiang. So, one of the reasons why there are not many halal restaurants around Beijing is that the capital does not have a large number of Muslims. However, in Beijing there is also an area for the Muslim community, namely Niu Jie. There, there are many facilities for Muslims, including mosques and halal food stalls (Zulkafli,



2022).

The second factor is the lack of awareness and understanding of Halal. Most of non-Muslim countries lack understanding of the concept of halal, which includes not only the source of food but also the process of its preparation. This is because, when preparing halal food on the same premises as non-halal food, cross-contamination can occur, such as using the same cooking oil or mixing cooking utensils. Without strict monitoring, food that appears halal may be contaminated with haram substances due to being mixed. For example, if a restaurant serves pork with meat or chicken that has been slaughtered according to Islamic sharia, the meat or chicken will still fall into haram status due to contamination of the pork served with it. Therefore, the lack of awareness among food providers about halal requirements makes it difficult for Muslims to obtain suitable food in foreign countries. This is also the same as roadside stalls that sell without knowing the halal status of the food. There is a statement from one of tourist that also used to travel in foreign countries expressed his disappointment when he saw two hijab girls who were expected to be from Malaysia enjoying the chicken tempura that was being poked. However, when asked about its halal status, the two girls could only remain silent without saying anything. He stated that it was one example of how Muslims take halal food or drinks very lightly because this hijab girls itself were not sure about the halal status of the chicken tempura (Abangnara, 2017). As a Muslim tourist, everyone need to be careful in choosing food purchases that are believed to be more halal, especially when traveling to foreign countries where the majority of the population is non-Muslim.

The third factor is the lack of access or information about halal food found when traveling to foreign countries. This is because not all Muslim travelers know reliable sources of information such as halal applications, halal restaurant directories, or local Muslim communities that can provide guidance in obtaining halal food. Information that is not updated can also make it difficult for travelers to make the right food decisions. Furthermore, not all countries have internationally recognized halal certification bodies. The use of non-standard or dubious halal logos can also cause confusion for Muslim travelers. Some countries also have different food regulations and do not take into account the detailed halal requirements such as requirements in Malaysia. Differences in sects in Islam can also lead to differences in interpretation of what is considered halal or haram in certain countries. For example, differences in the use of ingredients such as gelatin, alcohol in food flavoring, and animal slaughtering techniques can also be a challenge as a Muslim tourist to get halal food for them.

Safe Indicator When Choosing The Halal Food

As a Muslim, choosing halal food is a priority because food will be our flesh and blood. The Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS) shares about halal food indicators when abroad. It is the responsibility of Muslims to ensure that every food and drink they take is from sources that are believed to be halal and toyyib (MAIS, 2019). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"No meat that grows from what Allah (SWT) has angered (haram), and Hell is the most suitable place for it."
(Narrated by Ahmad)

Halal means something that is permitted by Allah SWT, while toyyib means good. Therefore, the combination of halalan and toyyiban in the context of halal food means that the food that is to be eaten is not only halal, but it must be ensured toyyib from all angles, namely preparation, packaging and including its nutritional value (MAIS, 2019). Allah SWT says:

"And Allah has made lawful for them all things that are toyyib, and has forbidden them all things that are bad."
(Surah al-A'raf, verse 157)

Based on this verse, the opposite of toyyib is khabith. Among the characteristics of khabith in food selection are a food or drink that is harmful and also a food or drink that emits a foul odor. These two characteristics are part of the indicators of khabith or food that needs to be avoided when facing difficulties in finding halal food. Therefore, the general consideration for Muslims in finding halal food is to ensure that every food that will be taken is believed in terms of its halality and 'goodness' (MAIS, 2019). With the convenience available today, Muslims can check the halal status of food by browsing the website portal <http://www.halal.gov.my>.

Basically, the original law for food and drink is halal unless there is evidence that states otherwise (Maktabah



Al-Bakri, 2024). This is based on the words of Allah SWT:

It means: "It is He (Allah) who created for you everything that is on the earth." (Surah al-Baqarah: 29)

The above verse includes everything on this earth consisting of animals, plants, clothes and so on. Therefore, it is permissible to eat all foods that are pure and clean, not food that is impure or mutanajjis (affected by impurity), and that does not have any harm in it such as poison and the like. Therefore, including what is permissible to eat is musk because it is pure and not harmful and the like such as grains, fruits and others that consist of pure things (Maktabah Al-Bakri, 2024). Furthermore, this statement is supported by the jurisprudence method agreed upon by scholars:

"The original law for food is halal and the law does not change to haram unless there is a specific argument."

The responsibility to comply with Islamic law on Muslims remains a priority regardless of place and time. The first thing that must be done is to try your best to find halal food with the help of technology such as referring to halal food search applications or with the help of local communities (MAIS, 2019). The words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"Leave what makes you doubtful (and turn) to that which does not make you doubtful." (Narrated by Tirmidhi and Ahmad)

The above hadith is a general method that can be applied to every matter in the life of a Muslim. Staying away from anything that is doubtful will definitely save a Muslim from doing things that are forbidden by Allah swt (MAIS, 2019). It is in accordance with the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as narrated by Nu'man bin Bashir:

"Indeed, halal is clear; haram is also clear; and between the two is doubtful (doubtful) things that are not known to many, so whoever protects himself from doing doubtful (doubtful) things, then his religion and himself are safe, but whoever acts in doubtful (doubtful) things, then he will do forbidden things." (Muslim's narration)

Based on the verse, scholars set the parameters for measuring the level of emergency in three things. First, the emergency faced is really happening, not just a mere assumption such as the risk of loss of life or destruction of property. If it is just an assumption, it must be a strong assumption such as having gone through a process of experience and careful observation. Second, there is no other way permitted by Islamic law to avoid the harm. Third, try not to choose things that blatantly violate the basic principles of Islamic law and Islamic faith such as choosing to drink water that is believed to be alcohol compared to other water that is doubtful. This means that, if in an emergency, a person must choose a lesser harm and not blatantly violate the fundamental matters in Islam. When escaping from an emergency, a person must do so to the extent necessary, not comfortably doing the forbidden thing based on the emergency method measured by its level (MAIS, 2019).

According to Ezzat Ezzudin who also has an education in the field of pure shariah, explains what is meant by halal so that it can be understood by the confused public. He stated that the real meaning of halal is that all food or product preparation processes are guided by syara'ah, including the materials used must be clean and pure. Halal does not mean that a food or product must have the halal logo of JAKIM and similar bodies. The halal logo that is often seen is a method or evidence from the authority to verify that the product complies with halal guidelines, in addition to helping increase our confidence in using the product in question. If a product does not have a halal sign, it does not mean that it is haram and cannot be used at all (Syahirah, 2022).

In fact, in the method of halal and haram fiqh which involves any product, whether food, beverage, beauty and others, the original principle of the law for something is that it is permissible as long as it is not proven to be haram. Therefore, if a person is confident in the product and process for a product, then the law must and can be used and it is not a problem. However, the principle of halal and haram also emphasizes that any doubt or suspicion that arises in oneself regarding the status of the product to the point of causing discomfort should be avoided immediately. A good understanding of this matter is very important for all Muslim individuals, especially when traveling to non-Muslim majority countries (Syahirah, 2022).

Therefore, it can be concluded that it is obligatory on every Muslim to choose and find halal and clean food,



especially when abroad in a Muslim minority country. So, when a halal shop or food has been found, then the responsibility as a Muslim to find halal food has been completed. Therefore, when it is clear that there is a halal logo or it can be confirmed that the food content is made from halal ingredients, then be confident and trust in Allah SWT. Never open the door to feel suspicious because it is a game of the devil and will complicate a human's life. With this latest internet access, there are too many ways to ensure that the food you buy is halal. The same goes for using grab food or food panda to buy halal food. This certainly makes it easier to find halal food even in non-Muslim countries (Maktabah Al-Bakri, 2024).

DISCUSSIONS

There are few tips and strategies that can be refer as a guidance for every Muslim in selecting halal food abroad when travelling in foreign countries.

Learn About The Malaysia Halal Logo And The FHCB That Have Been Recognized

The simplest way to obtain halal food is to look for products with halal branding on the market. As a Muslim, identify the well-known halal mark, particularly JAKIM in Malaysia. This is because Malaysia is frequently recognized as a leader in Halal certification due to its strong and comprehensive halal certification standards and procedures, including the Malaysian Halal Management System (MHMS), which has been used to cover all aspects of the Halal supply chain, including sourcing, processing, storage, transport, and distribution. Malaysia has also become the first country in the world to issue comprehensive halal standards and extend the halal concept to several other schemes such as pharmaceuticals, logistics, medical devices and cosmetics (Serunai, 2024), which shows progress and thoroughness in placing a certification that something is halal is reliable according to Islamic-sourced standards. If the JAKIM halal logo is not found, Muslim travelers can also see the list of names of Foreign Halal Certification Bodies (FHCB) recognized by JAKIM. These are Certification Bodies abroad that JAKIM itself has authorized that the body can be trusted in its halal certification process. The list can be viewed on the JAKIM website.

Choose The Food That Are Originally Halal And Safe

There are various halal food options that Muslim travelers can choose from abroad. Among them are foods such as vegetarian or vegan. It is one of the safer options to consume if halal food is difficult to find in a foreign country. In addition, Seafood such as fish, squid, shrimp and clams can also be one of the halal food options for Muslim travelers. Most seafood is considered halal in Islam, but make sure it is not prepared with haram ingredients such as alcohol, not intoxicating and not harmful to anyone who consumes it. Furthermore, foods such as tofu and tempeh can also be one of the initiatives for Muslim travelers to consume it because it is a natural product.

Read The Ingredients Carefully And Analyze Them Properly

When a Muslim travels to a foreign country where it is difficult to get halal food, they should do research on the destination they want to go to first. This includes the availability of halal restaurants and halal food in local supermarkets around the destination they want to go to. If the destination is an area with a Muslim community that can provide guidance and support, there is no problem for them to get halal food there. Every tourist should also be careful about the food regulations and culture of the country they are visiting so that nothing undesirable happens. Understand important terms in the local language such as "Halal," "No Pork," "Vegetarian," or "Kosher" which are sometimes suitable for Muslims to consume. Be sure to check the ingredient list on food packages to avoid non-halal ingredients such as gelatin, alcohol, or animal enzymes. Muslim travelers should also make good use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to find reviews and recommendations of halal places to eat by other Muslim travelers. It is also recommended to join Muslim travel communities or groups to exchange experiences and travel tips.

Buy Ingredients And Cook At Home

Most Muslim travelers can also choose to cook at home. They only need to go to the market to buy the ingredients needed for their home cooking. Usually, restaurants that claim to be halal do not fully understand the concept of



halal. They may even claim their chicken or meat is halal, but the preparation process has been mixed with haram ingredients such as pork and alcohol. This can cause doubts for Muslim travelers, especially when they want to eat at the restaurant. If there is doubt about the halal status of a food, avoid eating it and look for other alternatives. As a Muslim, it is highly demanded to practice the principle of "if in doubt, leave it out". However, if Muslim travelers decide to buy their own cooking ingredients, they can know and choose the selected cooking ingredients by themselves. Therefore, they themselves are also confident in the preparation method and the dishes that they will serve at home later.

Bring Food from Your Own Country

Apart from the above initiatives, Muslim travelers can also choose to bring their own food from their country before they travel to a foreign country. They can bring halal snacks to a foreign country because products in their own country are easier to find and trusted by themselves. Among the foods that can be brought are halal fast food such as halal instant noodles and canned sardines. They can also bring snacks such as bread, halal biscuits, and dried fruit. Halal protein products could be one of the initiatives to bring such as canned meat or protein bars to diversify their food to survive in other countries. Furthermore, the world is now increasingly innovative and developing according to the convenience of users. Various halal foods have been innovated according to the suitability of travelers who used to travel and likely bring their own food in foreign countries. For example, ready to eat food, dendeng nyet that is sealed so that it does not go stale quickly, self-heating instant food and many more that are suitable for Muslim travelers who like to travel to other countries.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Muslim travelers in obtaining halal food abroad highlight the need for greater awareness, education, and accessibility. Factors such as the lack of a Muslim population, limited understanding of halal requirements, and insufficient access to verified halal food sources pose significant obstacles for travelers. Despite these challenges, efforts have been made to address the issue, such as the establishment of Muslim-friendly zones in major cities, the introduction of halal certification standards, and the availability of online resources and applications that guide Muslim travelers in their search for halal food. These developments underscore the importance of ongoing collaboration between halal certification bodies, governments, and the hospitality industry to ensure that Muslim travelers have access to halal food options without compromising their religious beliefs.

To navigate these challenges, Muslim travelers are encouraged to adopt various strategies, including familiarizing themselves with recognized halal certification logos, opting for naturally halal food choices, conducting thorough research on food ingredients, and utilizing social media and online resources for halal restaurant recommendations. Additionally, the practice of home-cooking using locally sourced halal ingredients can serve as a reliable alternative when dining out poses uncertainties. Ultimately, by staying informed and vigilant, Muslim travelers can ensure their dietary needs are met while experiencing the cultural richness of their travel destinations without compromising their religious values.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Authors acknowledge the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) for funding under the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) FRGS/1/2023/SSI13/UITM/03/1

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