

## Menu planning for halal meals

Early childhood  
services



The information presented in this resource is intended as a guide only. Cooks preparing food at a long day care centre should speak with a child's parents or carers about specific dietary customs and foods which are permitted and not permitted.

## What is halal?

The halal dietary laws determine which foods are 'lawful' or permitted for Muslims. Foods which are not considered halal are considered haram, or 'not permitted'.



### Examples of some foods not permitted include:

- pork and pork products (ham, bacon, salami, sausages)
- food products that use pork fat (animal fat) such as biscuits, pastries, and cakes
- gelatine, which can be found in lollies, marshmallows, and some yoghurts.
- Lawful (halal) animals and poultry (beef, lamb, chicken, turkey) that have not been slaughtered in accordance with the halal dietary laws

## Halal certification

Some food manufacturing companies will apply for their products to be 'Halal certified'.



### TIP:

Look for a halal certification logo similar to this.



A certified product will be free from any component that is not considered halal. The product must also be processed, manufactured, and/or stored using utensils or equipment that has been cleaned according to Islamic law.

It is important to use halal-certified products, including meat and dairy foods, for children who follow halal dietary laws.



### TIP:

The [Halal Food Directory](#) is useful to find halal certified products.

## Menu planning tips

It is important to understand the considerations when preparing, cooking, and storing halal foods, especially if your centre chooses to use both halal and non-halal meats.

Some centres choose to provide only halal-certified meat products and avoid including any pork or pork products on their menu and other non-halal food items.

Following halal dietary laws will provide children with nutritious food options which meet the Menu planning guidelines for long day care.



### Practical tips for halal menu planning:

- Purchase and use halal certified meats in your recipes.
- If including pork or pork products on your menu, remember to consider and follow food and meal preparation practices. Pork and pork products must not be served to children following halal dietary laws.
- Use halal certified cheeses and yoghurt.
- Use margarine for sandwiches.
- When preparing homemade cakes, biscuits, and other desserts, use only margarine and vegetable oils.
- Check packaged foods do not contain animal fat, gelatine, cochineal colouring (also called carmine, carminic acid, colour 120 or natural red 4) and flavour essence with an alcohol base.

## Recipe modifications

Many recipes used in long day care are appropriate for children following halal dietary laws. The examples on the following page demonstrate how common recipes can be adapted for children requiring halal meals.

You may choose to adopt these swaps only for children who follow halal dietary laws, or you may choose to implement these changes for all children attending the centre.



**Remember to always check for other food allergies, intolerances, and dietary requirements when replacing ingredients.**

Where a separate meal is required, make these meals look and taste like meals served to the rest of the children at the service.

# Example recipe modifications

RECIPE	HALAL MODIFICATION	SUGGESTED RECIPE
Chicken Curry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use halal certified chicken</li> <li>Change up the protein – use fish, tofu, or other meat alternative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Chicken curry</a></li> <li><a href="#">Fish curry</a></li> </ul>
Spaghetti Bolognese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use beef mince only (halal certified) or other meat alternative such as lentils and legumes</li> <li>Use halal certified cheese</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Pasta Bolognese</a></li> <li><a href="#">Vegetarian Bolognese</a></li> </ul>
Pork fried rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use egg or tofu instead of pork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Vegetarian fried rice</a></li> </ul>
Ham and vegetable frittata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace ham with tuna or salmon</li> <li>Use halal certified cheese</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Tuna and broccoli frittata</a></li> </ul>
Ham and egg muffins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace ham with spinach</li> <li>Use halal certified cheese</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Spinach and cheese muffins</a></li> </ul>



## More helpful resources and information

For more information about preparing and serving food for children who require halal meals, see the Healthy Eating Advisory Service course Managing Allergies and other dietary requirements in children's education and care.

You will find a micro-module specific to managing other dietary requirements, including halal dietary requirements, within this course.

### Further information and support

#### Healthy Eating Advisory Service:

- Early childhood services
- Recipes
- Menu planning guidelines for long day care
- Online module: other dietary requirements and preferences



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