

Islam

Islam distinguishes between food that is lawful (Halal) and unlawful (Haram). All this is described in the holy book of Islam – Qur'an.

Muslims are not allowed to eat the meat of swine and animals dedicated to other than Allah. Animals that die of themselves are also forbidden to eat therefore, all animals must be slaughtered under strict rules.

Muslims are also not allowed to drink ethanol or wine. However, it is not a sin to consume any of the forbidden foods if there is a necessity. E.g. If one is starving or dying of thirst.

Judaism

- Jewish dietary laws – Kashrut
- everything must be Kosher

Jewish rules are extremely complex including restrictions on how meat is slaughtered, which animals may be eaten (most famously pork and shellfish are not allowed), the part of the animal that can be eaten, who makes certain foods, combinations of foods (meat and milk), avoiding contamination(utensils), what can be eaten on holidays, and more. Many non-Jewish people prefer foods labelled kosher because they believe them to be cleaner or more strictly prepared.

Forbidden kinds of animals:

- mammals – carnivores, animals that lack cloven hooves (camel, hare, horses)
- birds – scavengers, birds of prey
- all reptiles and amphibians
- water animals – those that do not have both fins and scales

Hinduism

Hinduism is the third most popular world religion and as the other religions, Hinduism has its own eating rules as well. The food is considered a gift from God, therefore it should be treated respectfully. It is a part of God or Brahman, and it nourishes the entire physical, mental, and emotional aspects of a human being.

There are strict rules that must be obeyed:

- beef is strictly forbidden, because cow is sacred and considered Mother in Hinduism
- pork is a strictly forbidden food too
- the Hindu religion believe that violence or pain inflicted on another living thing rebounds on you = karma
- to avoid causing pain to another living thing, vegetarianism is an option, but not compulsory
- alcohol, onions, garlic, and red-coloured foods such as red lentils and tomatoes are also prohibited
- in the Laws of Manu¹ meat is not always forbidden
- fasting in Hinduism depends on a person's caste or the occasion, e.g. serving food to the poor or a beggar is good karma

Food rituals:

- cleaning the place where the food will be eaten
- sprinkling of water around the food, accompanied by some mantras or prayers
- making an offering of the food, then offering five vital breaths (pranas) – prana, apana, vyuana, udana, and samanaya and then to Brahman seated in the heart

¹ the most important work of the textual tradition of Hinduism

Vegetarianism in Hinduism

Vegetarian diet excludes the meat of animals, but does permit eggs. Vegetarian foods include grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and dairy products.

Some people associate vegetarianism with Mohandas K. Gandhi. He was a vegetarian by a conscious ethical choice, because he believed that one should refrain from being harmful to any person or any living thing, even to animals. He was a strong adherent of this belief.

The practice of a vegetarian diet for Hindus is based on the following reasons:

- **Medical grounds** – vegetarian diet is easier to digest, provides a wider range of nutrients, and introduces fewer burdens and impurities into the body
- **Ecological grounds** – Earth is not suffering = no escalating loss of species, no destruction of rain forest to create lands for livestock, no air and water pollution in order to produce meat in the human diet
- **Ethical grounds** – mentioned above, related to not harming any living thing
- **Religious grounds** – the principle of nonviolence, the intention to offer only “pure” vegetarian food to a deity, and nonvegetarian food is detrimental to the mind and spiritual development
- **Economical grounds** – practices vegetarianism from the philosophical viewpoint, concerning issues such as public health and curbing world starvation
- **Cultural grounds** – in some castes meat is allowed (excluding beef), e.g. lower-caste people will eat meat, but Brahmins² are mostly vegetarians

² mainly priests and teachers who attain the highest spiritual knowledge

Mormons

Religious and cult group with centre in Utah, the principal branch of the Latter Day Saint movement of Restorationist Christianity, the Mormons have also strict rules related to food. They are very committed to have good health.

It is prohibited to consume:

- alcohol, including wine and beer
- black tea, green tea, and other caffeinated teas
- iced coffee and iced caffeinated tea
- illegal drugs
- tobacco

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints explain their eating commitment to the cult:



Bekah answered...

This is a question that people ask us as missionaries quite a bit. A lot of people are looking for a specific answer such as "because they contain caffeine" or "because they are addictive", but the real answer is, we do not drink coffee, tea, or alcohol, because our Heavenly Father has commanded it. We have been given our bodies as a gift from God, and while we control them, we are his children. He wants us to stay as healthy and happy as we can and gives us these commandments so that we can do just that. Sometimes we do not understand the commandments of God, but we must follow them, so that one day, we can be worthy to return to live with him and have eternal happiness for forever.

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Molly answered...

God gave us the ability to choose. There are substances in coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco and other harmful drugs that limit our ability to choose. The intent of the law of health we follow is to preserve our ability to make good choices. This law of health is called the "Word of Wisdom". It not only guides us regarding the substances to avoid, but also those to include in our diet. We are told to eat fruits and vegetables in their season, include grains, and eat meat sparingly. We are promised that if we follow these guidelines we will be healthy, able to learn and accomplish all that is required of us by our various roles in life. I am grateful for the blessings I receive from following the Word of Wisdom.

As a Dietitian I especially love this law of health because as I've seen the US guidelines for nutrition develop they are now aligning with what the Lord told us many years before. I believe that the guidelines set forth in our law of health are the minimum requirements for good health. It may be necessary for some people to avoid certain foods or eat a lower fat diet, or avoid caffeine entirely, but these specifics are not mentioned in the law of health and are to be determined by each individual.

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Spencer answered...

For me, the law of health, usually called the Word of Wisdom, is important for two reasons. First, our bodies are gifts. When you look at how complex and how interactive the cells in our bodies really are, you kind of gain a new appreciation for how fragile they are, too. So why would anybody put anything into your body that is so harmful to it? Secondly, tobacco, alcohol, coffee, tea, and illegal substances, are all psychoactive drugs, whichever way you cut it. They all alter your consciousness to some degree, which makes it understandably difficult to listen to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost isn't very good at shouting.

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Andrew answered...

It's cool to see the difference between the Lord's wisdom and our wisdom. Sometimes they match and sometimes they clash. I can imagine that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with two stone tablets and proclaimed they came from God, there was probably lots of speculation whether it really was or not. Bottom line is, God keeps giving us commandments and to keep our bodies healthy by telling us to avoid tobacco, alcohol, coffee, tea and any other harmful substance.

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Megan answered...

I choose not to drink or partake of things that can harm my body because 1) I respect my body. I want to have complete control of myself and my actions and 2) I don't use tobacco, alcohol, coffee, tea or illegal drugs because I believe that it brings unhappiness. Drinking and drugs causes so many problems in families and marriages. I don't want any of those problems and heartbreak that comes with that.