

Dining Differences

Getting together for a pleasant afternoon or evening of dining and conversation is a fine way to get to know the International Fellow, but remember- don't be shocked if you see some table manners or eating habits totally unlike your own. Dining etiquette and eating habits vary greatly by culture and country.

For example, portion sizes in the U.S. are considerably larger than other parts of the world. Also, American deserts are considered to be incredibly sweet across the board. Don't be offended if the IF is surprised by how much/what you are serving.

Additionally, there is varying etiquette revolving around second helpings. In certain countries, if you eat everything on your plate, the host will undoubtedly pile more food on. If you are full, you should leave some food on your plate and drink in your cup. However in other countries, leaving food on the plate may be insulting that the food did not taste good. Also, your guest may want seconds, but feel obligated to refuse your offer the first or second time.



Halal Markets

Arlington Grocery and Halal Store
2524 Columbia Pike
Arlington, VA 22204
(703) 920-5100

Halal Meat Market
1331 Rockville Pike Ste C
Rockville, MD 20852
(301) 424-4444

Khartoum Grocery & Halal Meat
2116 18th St NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 265-7100

***Some Giant and Shoppers locations have a Halal food section

Kosher Markets

Shalom Kosher
1361 Lambertson Dr.
Silver Spring, MD 20902
(301) 946-6500

Brookville Supermarket
3427 Connecticut Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 244-9114

***Many large grocery store chains carry kosher food products.



FOOD AND DRINK

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NDU Sponsorship Program

General Religious Dietary Preferences:

In many cases, the IF may have dietary restrictions stemming either from religious belief or simple allergies. Being conscious of these restrictions will help you make the IF feel more welcome in your home.

The following are general rules concerning dietary restrictions of certain religious groups. It is important, however, to consider the preferences of the individuals being entertained as there are certainly individuals who make exceptions to the rules.



Hinduism

A lactovegetarian diet is followed by many Hindus – no meat, poultry or fish, no eggs, but milk products are allowed and encouraged. Beef is prohibited, as the cow is considered sacred. Brahmins may have restrictions on who prepares their food and how it is stored. There are many fasting days and periods in the calendar, with restrictions such as eating only plant foods.



Buddhism

There are no set prescriptions for food restrictions in Buddhism. Under the concept of ahimsa / doing no harm, a lacto-vegetarian diet is followed by many Buddhists. Buddhist monks have additional restrictions such as fasting and not eating solid foods after noon.



Judaism/Kosher

Meats should be slaughtered under Kosher guidance; pork and shellfish are not allowed. Wine is permitted. Meat and dairy products can not be mixed. Depending on how strictly the IF adheres to Kosher rules, this may mean that they have certain dishware reserved for meat, and a different set for anything with dairy.



Islam/Halal

Meats should be slaughtered under Halal guidance; pork is not allowed. Alcohol is not permitted under these guidelines. There are numerous guidelines for fasting, particularly during Ramadan.

WHAT IS HALAL?

Halal is similar to Kosher only in the sense that it is a set of rules that dictate what and how you can eat certain foods. In Arabic, "halal" means permissible. For halal meat, it is required that an animal's throat be slit swiftly with a sharp blade to ensure as little pain and suffering as possible. While this is being done, the person with the blade says a prayer to Allah and give thanks for the food. It's a very specific method of killing animals for food--one that also involves draining all the blood and ensuring that no live animals sees another animal slaughtered.

Personal Preferences:

The information provided about religious dietary preferences is for your general information. It can not be overstated enough that you should have a conversation with the Fellow you are sponsoring about their dietary preferences.

Assuming that because the Fellow is Jewish they will want to wait hours between eating dairy and meat, or assuming that because the Fellow is Muslim that they will not drink wine, may lead to a situation that is embarrassing for the fellow.

With that being said, you should try to find a balance between being mindful of dietary restrictions, while still cooking what you would consider normal. You should invite the IF to your American kitchen, not create their ethnic kitchen in your home. For example, if the IF is Muslim and keeps Halal, try going to a Halal market for meat– you can still make burgers!

