

# HALAL DIGEST

NOVEMBER 2000

A Publication of the Islamic Food And Nutrition Council Of America

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## ASSALAAMU ALAIKUM WA RAHMATULLAH

### VANILLA EXTRACT – AN EYE OPENER

Alhamdulillah was-salatu was-salaamu 'ala rasoolillah. All thanks and praise is to ALLAH, Subhanahu wa ta'ala, and we ask that HIS blessings and peace be upon HIS Messenger, Muhammad, salla ALLAHu alaihi wa sallam.

Last month, the Islamic Food And Nutrition Council Of America visited the Muslim community in St. Louis. IFANCA was invited to speak at a session of the adult education committee at the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis. Dr. Muhammad M. Chaudry, President and Roger M. Othman, Regional Director, conducted a Halal food workshop at the center. During the workshop, IFANCA introduced itself to the community, reviewed the advances in food production technology and discussed the current state of food production and food ingredients and conducted a workshop on food ingredients.

The audience was very attentive and very interested. They expressed their appreciation for IFANCA's efforts and asked many questions. Shoppers wanted to know how to get the local supermarkets to carry more Halal certified food products. Others wanted to know the difference in the use of the terms Zabiha and Halal. A question on the minds of many concerned gelatin and the use of gelatin in many products. A number of questions were raised concerning the appropriateness of cheese and whey, the latter being an ingredient in many products. Is vinegar Halal? The shocker came when a young lad asked about vanilla extract. When informed that vanilla extract is required to contain 35% alcohol (beer has 4-6% and wine has 14-20%), the audience was shocked. What an eye opener!

The program concluded with the audience completing a workshop evaluation form and then sampling some Halal certified products, provided courtesy of Fancy Fruit Corporation and Sunrider International.

The conclusion is this was a very useful and well received program and that IFANCA should conduct more of these types of community programs. Muslims are very interested in the quality and appropriateness of foods they eat and want to be well informed at the grocery store. In St. Louis, it was very clear Halal consumers spend extra shopping hours reading labels. Providing more Halal certified products will allow Halal consumers to reduce their shopping time and give them peace of mind. Our thanks to the Muslim community in St. Louis.

Your hospitality and attentiveness is very much appreciated.

If you would like IFANCA to conduct a Halal Food Workshop in your community, please give us a call. We would be happy to visit you. ☞

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ☞ Insha'ALLAH, we will be welcoming the blessed month of Ramadan this month. We ask ALLAH, Subhanahu wa ta'ala, to allow us all to partake of the blessings of this month, to accept our fasting and other deeds and to reward us with forgiveness and Jannah. IFANCA wishes you all Ramadan Mubarak.
- ☞ IFANCA and the Shura Council of Southern California will sponsor **Halal Food 2000** in Buena Park, California during November 12-14. Browse the Web site for more information and a registration form. This promises to be an excellent conference. We look forward to seeing all of you there.
- ☞ IFANCA and Nestle will sponsor Halal Food Conference 2001 in Paris, France during May 17-21, 2001. Look for more details in the weeks ahead. ☞

## FOOD NEWS

- ☞ Senator Richard Durbin-IL has introduced a bill proposing to charge the FDA with regulating genetically engineered foods.
- ☞ Speaking of genetically engineered foods, a scientist at the University of Wisconsin – Madison has discovered a way he believes will prevent cross-fertilization between corn plants. This means you can grow your corn crop and not have to worry about it being altered by other strains of corn. It is especially important because it would prevent genetically altered corn from affecting unaltered corn. What's next? (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonlin.com](http://www.foodingredientsonlin.com))
- ☞ A study by scientists at the University of Bourgogne in France casts doubt about the positive effects of fiber on colon cancer. In light of this and other evidence, the American Cancer Society will revisit its recommendations on fiber and colon cancer. (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonlin.com](http://www.foodingredientsonlin.com))
- ☞ Consumers like products containing dairy ingredients, according to Dairy Management, Inc. Apparently consumers believe that dairy products are good for health. (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonlin.com](http://www.foodingredientsonlin.com))

- 🔗 Pass the paprika. Americans, especially baby boomers, are demanding spicier foods. They are also enjoying more ethnic foods. Of course, Muslims know that Halal foods offer a diverse flavor, as Islam is the choice of people of all ethnic backgrounds. (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonline.com](http://www.foodingredientsonline.com))
- 🔗 A group of foreign vitamin companies will pay \$335 million in fines to settle price fixing suits, which inflated the price of vitamins used in common nutritional supplements. (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonline.com](http://www.foodingredientsonline.com))
- 🔗 In October, sucralose became available for consumer use. Sucralose is a new non-caloric sweetener, or sugar substitute. This gives users of non-caloric sweeteners another choice. Sucralose is available in the market under the brand name Splenda. IFANCA has certified Splenda. (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonline.com](http://www.foodingredientsonline.com))
- 🔗 America is getting fatter. The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) reports that obesity in the U.S. has increased 6% from 1998 to 1999. The increase spans all age groups, both sexes, all regions, and all income and educational levels. (Reported in Food Ingredients Online: [www.foodingredientsonline.com](http://www.foodingredientsonline.com)) ☞

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## CAFFEINE

How many of us like to wake up to the smell and taste of coffee? Or are we the type that prefers tea? Maybe we enjoy a nice cold soft drink on a hot day. It is likely that each of these contains caffeine. Is that a problem?

It is claimed tea was discovered in China in 2737 BC, when some tea leaves fell into a pot of boiling water and the smell was enticing. Coffee traces its origin to Africa in the year 575. And caffeinated soft drinks originated around 1880.

There have been many studies concerning caffeine. In 1958, the US FDA classified caffeine as Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS). The American Medical Association (AMA) holds a similar view, with the qualification that consumption of caffeinated beverages be moderate and other lifestyle habits be moderate or appropriate. Of course, moderation is a somewhat personal issue, since people react differently to the effects of caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant and may increase alertness. It is not uncommon for students pulling an “all nighter” or people working late to indulge in a few caffeinated beverages.

To date, studies have not shown caffeine consumption to have any adverse on conception or pregnant women. Nor have studies shown any connection to cancer. Of course, moderation is always advised.

While abruptly reducing the intake of caffeine may cause headaches and restlessness, there is no evidence that caffeine is addicting. And contrary to what we see in the movies, caffeine will not help someone who is drunk to “sober up”. Of course, moderation is always advised.

Adults consume an average of 200 mg. of caffeine per day while children consume approximately 38 mg. Per day. Sensitivity to caffeine is an individual thing and those who feel they are sensitive should avoid or limit their caffeine consumption. Caffeine is not retained in the body and the normal cycle is about 4 hours. Tolerance to caffeine is increased with regular consumption, so you may find people consuming more than the average amount with little or no effects. Of course, if caffeine affects your sleep, you should avoid any consumption within 4 hours of bedtime. The typical caffeine content of common beverages is:

Beverage	Caffeine content, mg
Coffee, brewed, 8 oz.	85
Coffee, Instant, 8 oz.	75
Coffee, Espresso (1 oz.)	40
Coffee, decaffeinated, 8 oz.	3
Tea, brewed, imported, 8 oz.	60
Tea, instant, 8 oz.	28
Tea, iced, 8 oz.	25
Average Soft drinks, 8 oz.	24
Chocolate milk, 8 oz.	5
Baker’s chocolate, 1 oz.	26

In summary, the popularity of caffeinated beverages has led to many studies about the effects of caffeine on the body. This includes studies related to pregnancy, miscarriages, osteoporosis, cancer, breast disease, fertility, blood pressure, heart disease and addiction. None of the studies show any significant adverse effects of caffeine consumption in moderation. Alhamdulillah for Islam, which teaches moderation in food and drink and enjoins what is pure and wholesome and prohibits what is harmful. ☞

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IFANCA WISHES ALL OF YOU

**RAMADAN**

**MUBARAK**

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Insha’ALLAH, the recipes will return next month. ☞