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2025-03-21 by Hafiz M. Ahmed*a world where dietary choices are deeply tied to faith, one question often stirs debate among Muslims: Is horse meat halal or haram? While some cultures embrace it as a delicacy, others avoid it entirely. But what does Islam truly say about consuming horse meat? Let's explore the facts, rulings, and cultural perspectives to uncover the answer.*
Food is more than just sustenance—it's a reflection of faith, culture, and tradition. For Muslims, adhering to halal dietary guidelines is a fundamental aspect of life. Yet, certain foods, like horse meat, remain a topic of confusion. Is it permissible under Islamic law, or does it fall into the category of haram? To answer this, we'll examine Islamic teachings, scholarly opinions, and cultural practices. By the end, you'll have a clear understanding of whether horse meat aligns with halal principles.**Related: Is Artificial Meat Halal? What Is Halal and What is Haram?**
Before diving into the specifics of horse meat, it's essential to grasp the basics of halal and haram. In Islam, halal refers to what is permissible, while haram denotes what is forbidden. These guidelines are derived from the Quran, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), and scholarly interpretations. Generally, halal meat comes from animals that are:
Slaughtered in the name of Allah.
Healthy at the time of slaughter.
Free from prohibited substances or practices.
Haram meat, on the other hand, includes pork, carnivorous animals, and those not slaughtered according to Islamic principles. The Debate Around the Permissibility of Horse Meat
Horse meat occupies a unique space in Islamic dietary discussions. Unlike pork, which is explicitly forbidden, or beef and chicken, which are widely accepted, horse meat falls into a gray area. Here's why:
Islamic Texts and Scholarly Opinions
The Quran and Hadith do not explicitly prohibit horse meat. However, there are differing opinions among Islamic scholars. Some argue that since horses are not mentioned as haram, they are permissible to eat. Others point to cultural and practical reasons to avoid it.
For instance, Imam Abu Hanifa, a prominent scholar, considered horse meat makruh (discouraged but not forbidden). In contrast, Imam Malik and Imam Shafi'i viewed it as halal. These differences stem from interpretations of Hadith and the role of horses in Islamic history. Evidence from the Quran:
The Quran does not directly address horse meat, but it provides general principles about permissible and forbidden foods. For example:
"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good..." (Quran 2:168)
"أَلَمْ يَنْزِلْ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءٌ فَسَالَتْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِ نَارٌ... " (Quran 2:244)
This verse emphasizes that all foods are halal unless explicitly prohibited. Since horse meat is not mentioned as haram, some scholars argue it is permissible. Evidence from Hadith:
The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:
"Whoever ate from the animal that Allah has made lawful for you..." (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith 3219)
أَبْلَغُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْبَكْرِ أَلْبَلُغُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْبَكْرِ
This Hadith is often cited by scholars who permit horse meat. However, other Hadiths highlight the Prophet's preference for not consuming horse meat, which has led to differing interpretations. Cultural and Historical Context
Horses have long been valued in Islamic culture for their utility in transportation, warfare, and general historical significance. This has led some scholars to discourage their consumption, as it may seem disrespectful to an animal that has served humanity so well. For example, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, horses were essential for jihad and travel. Some scholars argue that this elevated status makes them unsuitable for consumption. Modern Perspectives
In today's globalized world, cultural attitudes toward horse meat vary widely. In some Muslim-majority countries, it's consumed without issue, while in others, it's avoided entirely. This diversity highlights the importance of understanding local customs and scholarly rulings. Key Factors to Consider
When determining whether horse meat is halal, several factors come into play:
Slaughter Method: Even if horse meat is considered halal, it must be slaughtered according to Islamic guidelines. This includes invoking Allah's name, using a sharp knife, and ensuring the animal's well-being during the process. The Quran states:
"Eat of that over which the name of Allah has been mentioned, if you are believers in His verses..." (Quran 6:118)
Health and Safety: The horse must be healthy and free from diseases at the time of slaughter. Consuming improperly handled animals is not permissible. Cultural Sensitivity: While something may be halal, it doesn't always mean it's appropriate. Respecting cultural norms and personal preferences is an important aspect of Islamic ethics. Practical Advice for Muslims
If you're considering consuming horse meat, here are some steps to ensure it aligns with halal principles:
Consult Local Scholars: Seek guidance from knowledgeable scholars in your community. They can provide context-specific advice based on your region's cultural and religious practices. Verify the Source: Ensure the meat comes from a reputable halal-certified supplier. This guarantees that the animal was slaughtered according to Islamic guidelines. Reflect on Intentions: Ask yourself why you want to consume horse meat. Is it out of necessity, curiosity, or cultural influence? Understanding your intentions can help you make a more informed decision. Common Misconceptions
All Meat Is Halal Unless Explicitly Forbidden: While this is generally true, the method of slaughter and the animal's health are equally important. Horse Meat Is Universally Haram: This is not accurate. Many scholars permit it, provided it meets halal requirements. Cultural Practices Overrule Islamic Rulings: While culture plays a role, Islamic teachings should always take precedence in matters of halal and haram. Is horse meat halal or haram? The answer isn't black and white. While Islamic texts do not explicitly forbid it, scholarly opinions and cultural contexts vary. For some, it's a permissible option; for others, it's best avoided. Ultimately, the decision rests on individual beliefs, scholarly guidance, and adherence to halal principles. As Muslims, our dietary choices should reflect our commitment to faith, health, and ethical consumption. Whether you choose to eat horse meat or not, the key is to make informed, thoughtful decisions that align with Islamic values. Reader Interactions
There is an assumption that eating horse meat can increase vitality, vitality, increase stamina, heal aches, and others. So that it is expected to gradually be able to resolve the complaint I made. Horses have long been known to have a large and strong force, can run fast, travel long distances. So it is often used to carry loads or draw carriage. Even in the field of machinery, the strength of a machine is measured by the unit of Horse Power. Indicates its strength can be relied upon. Then the horse meat is considered to be able to give strength to the lives of those who consume it. Basically horse meat is halal. Including the category of Al-Baha'im, or Bahimatul-A'an, group of farm animals. And the meat includes Ma'kulul Lahm. The meat can be eaten. Although in one history mentioned, in the time of the Prophet, never been allowed to eat it, temporarily, is temporary. Because there are conditional needs at the time. That is needed as part of a tool or means of war. The context of the prohibition on eating horse meat at that time was in order to meet the needs of war. In the rules of Usul-Fiqh it says, "Al-Hukmu yaduuru ma'a 'l-ilathi, the form of wa 'adaman". The determination of the law depends on the 'illat. Same with the current conditions, for example, where the government makes a regulation prohibiting the slaughter of productive female cows. Because it will interfere with even hinder the breeding of domestic cattle, which is very necessary to support the needs of the animal protein community. If someone violates it, they can be fined or even sentenced to prison. In Fiqhiyyah language or rules it belongs to the Makruh Tahrim category. The legal provisions in Fiqhiyyah are Makruh, but in practice it is forbidden to do. In the hadith narrated from Jabir bin Abdullah, he said, "In the conquest of Khobar, the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam forbade eating benign donkey meat, and he allowed horse meat." (Narrated by Bukhari 3982 and Muslim 1941). In another hadith narrated from Jabir bin Abdullah, he recounted: "We once enlisted with the Prophet sallallaahu' alaihi wa sallam, and we ate horse meat and drank the milk." (Narrated by Ad-Daruthi, al-Bayhaqi, An-Nawawi said: The Sanad is Sahabeh). However, in the opinion of Abu Hanifah and two of his closest students, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad bin Hasan as-Syabani, horse meat is ruling to eat. Hanafiyah scholars say that eating horse meat is makruh. In the book of al-Mausu'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaitiyah is mentioned as follows: "And halal from animals is eating horses and giraffes. Hanafiyah scholars say, "Eating horses is Makruh Tanzih." (with the category of Makruh) Makruh Tanzih itself is everything that (understood) is forbidden by Syara' but not explicitly. Only understood through the proposition that is still Zhanni. In another explanation, Makruh Tanzih was defined by leaving it better than doing it, even though there was no penalty in doing so. (Al-Mustashfa, 1 / 215-216). The opinion of those who forego eating horse meat, based on the proposition in the An-Nahl verses 5 to 7, Allah mentions about Bahimatul An'an (camels, cows, and goats). God mentioned the benefits humans got with the animal, including the benefits to be eaten. Then in verse 8 God mentions another type of animal: "He created horses, bighals (mules of horses with donkeys), and donkeys, so that you can ride and decorate them. He also created creatures that you don't know about." (Surah An-Nahl: 8). In this 8th verse Allah does not mention their function (the animals) to be eaten. Even though Allah mentioned the benefits of "being eaten" to Bahimatul An'an mentioned in the previous verse. But this argument is refuted. Arguing with this verse to punish the consequences of eating horse meat is to conclude the incorrect proposition. Because the mention of the function of the horse, bighal, and khimar to be ridden and as decoration, does not at all indicate that this animal should not be used for anything else (to be eaten). It is said that the benefits of 'being able to ride and as decoration' are generally the benefits derived from horses. In addition, the halal nature of horse meat is also because there is no argument or text that prohibits it with Sharih (all that is bad and firm). The scholars explain, horses are not included in the category of illegitimate animals, forbidden for consumption. Like savage, Khaabits (disgusting), Jallalah (eating unclean), fanged animals with fangs that prey and attack enemies / prey. It is emphasized in the verse of the Qur'an which means: "And justifies for them Abh-Thoyyibaat (all that is good) and forbids them Al-Khoba'ith (all that is bad, disgusting)." (Qur'an, 7: 157). It is mentioned in the hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar, "The Prophet of Allah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam forbade from consuming street animals and milk produced from him." (Narrated by Abu Dawud No. 3785 and At-Tirmidzi No. 1824) In another hadith, which is narrated from Abu Hurairah, the Messenger of Allah said, "All animals that are fanged, eat it is haram." (Narrated by Muslim). Also narrated by Idris al-Khatalani, he heard Abu Thalhah al-Ansari say, "The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam forbade eating any fanged beasts." (Narrated by Bukhari no. 5538 and Muslim no. 1932) Furthermore, from Ibn 'Abbas, he said, "The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam forbade eating any fanged beasts that were fanged, and every type of bird that had nails to grip." (Narrated by Muslim no. 1934). Even so, the halal meat according to the scholars who justify it, must still be based on the requirements Mu'tabar such as must be slaughtered sharply, and other provisions set by the Fatwa Commission of Indonesia Council of Ulama (MUI) in terms of slaughtering animals in accordance with Sharia principles. Wallahu alam. (USM) Are you confused about whether horse meat is halal or not? The topic of consuming horse meat has sparked debate and controversy among Muslims for many years. Even in Turkey, a country with a significant Muslim population, horse meat is served in some restaurants and markets, leading to questions about its halal status. In this blog post, we will answer for horse meat halal or haram in Islam and explore the various arguments surrounding this issue. We'll end up with a better understanding of the topic, and you can make an informed decision with proof from the teachings of Islam. Yes, horse meat is halal in Islam. According to hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) allowed the consumption of horse meat in Ghazwa E Khaibar and declared donkey meat to be haram instead. (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3982; Muslim, 1941.) Furthermore, many scholars have agreed upon the permissibility of consuming horse meat. However, many scholars consider horse meat as Makruh (disliked but not forbidden) due to the lack of clarity in the hadith. Also, in the Quran, Allah says, "And (He has created) horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and use for show; and He has created other things besides what you do not know." (Surah An-Nahl 16:8) This verse shows that Allah has created horses for us to use, which can also be interpreted as a sign of their halal status. However, some scholars argue that this verse only refers to using horses for transportation, not consumption. So here we have different opinions and interpretations regarding the halal status of horse meat in Islam. The majority view is that it is halal, while some consider it Makruh. So, if you ask our recommendation, we suggest you avoid horse meat and opt for other halal alternatives to stay safe, especially when there is no necessity. You might also like knowing is deer meat halal. The debate surrounding horse meat is not new; it dates back to the early days of Islam. The primary reason for this controversy is the lack of clear guidance from the Quran and hadith. Another reason is cultural beliefs and practices. In some cultures, consuming horse meat is considered a noble or heroic act. Therefore, consuming their meat is looked down upon. Similarly, even in Islam, some people view horses as sacred animals and argue that eating their meat diminishes their status. Moreover, the way horses are slaughtered can also be a point of contention. In Islam, the animal must be slaughtered in a specific manner to make its meat halal for consumption. If this procedure is not followed, the meat becomes haram. Some argue that slaughtering a horse in this manner is not possible, making its meat automatically haram. Also see is turkey meat halal. The argument that horse meat is haram in Islam mainly stems from the Quran verse where Allah says, "And (He created) the horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment. And He creates that which you do not know." (Surah An-Nahl 16:8) This verse is commonly interpreted as Allah stating that horses have been created for the purpose of transportation and as a display of beauty. Some scholars interpret this as a clear indication that horses were not meant for consumption and, hence, consider horse meat as haram. They argue that if Allah intended for horses to be eaten, it would have been clearly stated in the Quran. However, this interpretation is not universally accepted, leading to different opinions on whether consuming horse meat is halal or haram in Islam. The majority view among scholars and Muslims is that horse meat is halal. This is because they say the Prophet Muhammad allowed horse meat consumption. Also, the verse from the Quran mentioned earlier can be interpreted in a different way. Some argue that the verse does not specifically mention that horses cannot be eaten, but rather, it highlights their purpose as transportation and adornment. Furthermore, they point out that if horses were meant to be haram for consumption, donkeys would have been included in the list of animals created for a specific purpose, as mentioned in the same verse. Also, they say, according to hadith narrated by al-Bukhari, 5191; Muslim, 1942. At the time of the Prophet (PBUH), we slaughtered a horse and ate it. So, based on these arguments, it can be concluded that horse meat is halal in Islam. Lastly, we would say, it is better to avoid horse meat to be on the safe side and out of respect for the differing opinions on this matter among scholars. However, if there is no other option and it is necessary for survival, then consuming horse meat would be permissible according to Islam. In the end, it is up to an individual's personal convictions and interpretations. You can also learn is it haram to eat raw meat. A. Yes, it is halal to eat horse meat, according to the majority of scholars and hadith. But due to a lack of clear guidance, some consider it Makruh (disliked but not forbidden). A. No, donkey meat is not halal in Islam, as declared by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3982; Muslim, 1941. In Turkey, horse meat is considered halal and commonly consumed as a form of protein in their cuisine. However, it is always best to confirm with the local Islamic authorities for reassurance. A. Yes, horse milk is halal and can be consumed according to Islamic dietary laws. In conclusion, the halal status of horse meat in Islam is a topic that has been debated for centuries. While some consider it as Makruh or disliked, the majority view is that it is halal. The lack of clear guidance from the Quran and hadith has led to different interpretations and opinions on this matter. Ultimately, it comes down to personal beliefs and convictions. So, we hope this blog post has answered is horse meat halal and provided some insight into the controversy surrounding horse meat in Islam. JazakAllah Khairan for reading! According to Islamic scholars, there is a difference of opinion among the major schools of thought regarding the permissibility of consuming horse meat. Specifically, within the Hanafi school of thought, there is a varying perspective on this matter. However, it is generally regarded as Makruh (disliked) according to the Hanafi school of thought. Evidence from the Quran and Hadith
Khalid bin Walid (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prohibited the consumption of horse meat, mule meat, and donkey meat. [Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith: 3198]
Salih bin Yahya bin al-Miqdam narrated from his grandfather al-Miqdam bin Ma'di Karb that they participated in a battle alongside Khalid bin Walid. Our companions were cooking meat, and they tied it (to the meat) and said, "Wait until Khalid comes, and I will ask him, and he said, "We went on an expedition with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to the Battle of Khaybar. The people hastened to the fortress of the Jews, so he commanded me to announce: 'Assemble for the prayer, and none except a Muslim should enter Paradise.' Then he said, 'O people, you have hastened in the fortresses of the Jews. Shouldn't you make sure you do not consume the property of the covenant except with its right?' Haram for you is the meat of domesticated donkeys, horses, and mules, and any carnivorous animal with fangs, and any bird with talons.'" [Musnad Ahmad]
The above narrations clearly indicate that the consumption of horse meat has been chosen among the Haram (forbidden) meats by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is further supported by the following verse of the Quran: "And (He created) the horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment. And He creates that which you do not know." [Surah An-Nahl, 16:8]
Logical Analysis
Eating horse meat is prohibited because it is abundance, and the purpose of using horses as a means of transport and in jihad would be diminished. Therefore, eating horse meat is prohibited to preserve the purpose and sanctity of horses as an instrument of jihad. Opinions of Other Scholars
Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilly states: "According to the scholars, it is Halal, but according to Imam Malik, it is Makruh. The fatwa (legal opinion) was given based on the view that it is Makruh (disliked), not Haram. According to the famous scholars, the preference is given to the prohibition, and the textual evidence supports that. However, what is mentioned in Kitabat al-Bayhaqi contradicts it, contrary to the explicit narrations and the fatwa of the majority of scholars." [Fatawa Razawiyyah, Vol. 20, p. 314]
Mufi Anjad Ali Azmi, referring to Al-Mukhtasar, states: "Eating domestic donkeys and mules is Haram, while eating wild donkeys called 'gurkurh' is Halal. As for horses, there are different narrations, and it is disliked according to Imam Nahl. The meat of horses is an instrument of jihad, and eating it diminishes the spirit of jihad. Therefore, it should not be consumed." [Bahar-e-Shariat, Part 15, p. 326]
Opinions of other prominent scholars, such as Imam Malik, Imam Awzai, and Imam Mujahid, also hold that eating horse meat is Makruh (disliked). End Notes
In conclusion, there is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the permissibility of consuming horse meat in Islam. While some scholars consider it Halal (permissible), the majority view in the Hanafi school of thought is that eating horse meat is Makruh (disliked). It is advised to avoid consuming horse meat to uphold the sanctity and purpose of horses in Islamic teachings. Question: Assalamuallaikum w.b.t. I have a question. I live overseas and recently I am gifted by a friend with horse meat. My question is, is it permissible for us to eat horse meat? Hope for an explanation pertaining to this matter. Answer: Waalaimussalam w.b.t, Alhamdulillah, praise and thanks to Allah for the countless blessings He has blessed us all with. Blessings and salutations to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, his wives, his family, companions and all those that follow his teachings to the day of judgement. We start with the saying of Allah SWT:
كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا مَطْهُورًا
[O mankind], eat [that is] lawful and good
Surah al-Baqarah (168)
Sheikh al-Sa'di already commented on this verse by saying that it is meant for all mankind whether they are among the believers or disbelievers to eat from whatever is on earth among the grains, fruits and animals which are permissible for them to take (to eat and take benefits from it), not through seizing, stealing, through prohibited dealings (selling and buying) or any prohibited actions. While toyyiban means not from bad things (dirty and filthy) like corpse, blood, pork and others. This verse is a dalil that the original rule for something (to eat and benefit from it) is permissible. (See Tafsiir al-Sa'di, 1/80)
The ruling of eating horse meat
Pertaining to this matter, Imam al-Nawawi stated that eating it is halal and not makruh. (See al-Majmu' Syarh al-Mubazzab, 9/5 and Taudhih al-Ahkam, Dar Ibn Hazm, 3/497)
It is enough with the hadith from Asma' bint Abu Bakr to refute the claim by those who said that horse meat is haram to be eaten (or makruh) because the family of Abu Bakr RA will never do anything unless they know of its permissibility (to do so) because they are always with the Prophet PBUH. (See Minhaj al-'Allam li Syarh Bulugh al-Marram, 9/206)
May Allah SWT give us all clear understanding in religion. Ameen. Answered by: Moulana Muhammad Imad Ali
Question: Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Is Horse meat allowed in Islam? Answer: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
Imam Abu Hanifah (RA) is of the opinion that consuming horse meat is Makruh Tanzih due to its honour and due to the fact that a horse is needed in wars and battles. Imam Abu Yusuf (RA) and Imam Muhammad (RA) consider it to be halal and it is said that Imam Abu Hanifah (RA) retreated to this opinion. Therefore, it will be permissible to consume, although best to avoid. (Hidayat p.441 v.4)
Only Allah knows best. Written by Moulana Muhammad Imad Ali
Checked and approved by Mufti Mohammed Toos Miah Darul Ifta Birmingham
The majority of scholars are of the view that it is permissible to eat horses, because of the sound ahadith that have been narrated concerning that. Jabir bin 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: On the day of Khaybar, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade eating the flesh of domestic asses, but permitted horse flesh. There were other numerous authentic Hadiths pointing to the fact that companions were eating horse meat. Among them was the Hadith narrated by Asma' bint Abuhakr, may Allah be pleased with them, from the authentic Hadith of Bukhari and Muslim, she said: We slaughtered a horse in the era of prophet of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and we ate it. In another narration: "And we were in Madinah". Among those who make resolution on the eating of horse meat see Shuraah Al-Qadi, Hassan Al Basri, 'Ataa', Sa'eed bn Jubayr, Layth bn Sa' d, Sufyaan Al-Thaory, Abu Yusuf, Muhamamad bn Hassan, Abu Thaor and others. Abu Hanifah, Al-Awza'i and Malik held the opinion that it is detestable. But the detestation in Malik's view falls under makrooh tanzih (which is not firmly detested). Also, they deduced from Sunan Abi Dawud, An-Nasaa'i and Ibn Majah that the prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, forbids eating of horse meat, mule, and donkeys, for Allah's, word: And (He created) the horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment. And He creates that which you do not know.[Quran 16 : 8]
However, Shaif' and those who agree with him said that the intent of that verse is not about legalisation or prohibition rather the point is Allah's definition of his grace for his servants and awakening them on the perfection of His power and wisdom. Concerning the Hadith in which Abu Hanifah, Malik and those who agreed with them, referred to, Imam Ahmad: it doesn't have good reference and there are two men that are not known. Thus, we cannot leave the authentic narration for a weak one. For that reason, eating of horse meat is lawful according to the strongest opinion. Question Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds; and may His blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his Family and Companions. Eating the meat of all kinds of horses is permissible as recorded by the majority of Muslim scholars. The evidence is the Hadith reported from Jabir Bin Abdullah that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) On the day of Khaibar, Allah's Apostle forbade the eating of donkey meat and allowed the eating of horse meat. There is another Hadith reported from Asma Bint Abu Bakr who said: We slaughtered a mare in the period of the Prophet (Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) and we ate it while we were in Madina . Allah knows best.