

# HALALSPHERE

International Islamic University Malaysia - INHART



## The Benefits, Challenges, and Opportunities of *Halal* Gastronomy Tourism – A Review Perspective

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### Abstract

This paper examines the benefits, challenges and opportunities of *Halal* gastronomy tourism in tourist countries. The outcomes are intended to ensure the aspect and effectiveness of promoting *Halal* gastronomy tourism in the destination benefiting the national economy. Secondary approaches such as journals, websites, and books have been used for this research to gather the data. Reviewing and comparing articles on *Halal* gastronomy in a certain country to determine the benefits, challenges and opportunities of gastronomy at the selected destination. The results showed that promoting *Halal* gastronomy tourism can increase the country's income and give a positive impression among travellers, especially among *Muslim* travellers. Moreover, promoting *Halal* gastronomy tourism in a particular destination helps honour the culture and heritage of the designated destination. To explain, a destination's culture can be introduced to other tourists by promoting local food with *Halal* ingredients for *Muslim* travellers.

### Keywords:

*Halal*  
gastronomy  
tourism; Culture;  
Economy; Local  
food; *Halal*  
ingredients;  
*Muslim* travelers

### 1. Introduction

The word gastro is derived from the Greek words "gastros", which means stomach, and "gnomos", which means science or law (Amelda *et al.*, 2022). Gastronomy discusses the relationship between cultures regarding the enjoyment of food and drinks in an area. It studies the various cultural components through the lens of the culinary centre. Gastronomy explains food and beverages in physiological studies. It examines it from a regional culinary perspective as a cultural aspect and an asset for the region in promoting the tourism industry, increasing regional income, and improving people's welfare. In detail, gastronomy focuses more on appetisers and desserts than on these delicacies' history, origin, and raw materials.

Gastronomy is crucial in boosting the area's tourist attraction, increasing the number of tourists, improving the tourist experience, strengthening regional identity, and stimulating the growth of other sectors. Gastronomic tourism can be characterised as follows: gastronomy as an element and indicator of globalisation; tourists play a role in the evolution of gastronomy; tourism is a contributor to developing or

renewing national identity; gastronomic tourism is a means of introducing culinary products as cultural products; the expansion of gastronomic tourism provides a direction for tourism development; gastronomy as a constructive element in the formation of an image in tourist destinations, as a tourist travel destination, as an element of heritage with a tourism dimension (Sufa *et al.*, 2020; Pramezwary *et al.*, 2021).

Tourism has become one of the most significant contributors to a country's gross domestic product in every nation as it continues to expand. Natural traits, such as natural resources, culture and heritage, and landscapes, are the most enticing features of a particular destination. People travel to experience a new environment they cannot find in their usual environment. For example, they may be travelling to a country with four seasons or experiencing a new culture, language, and food of one country. According to research by Mastercard & Crescent Rating (2019), by 2026, more than 230 million *Muslim* tourists will travel domestically and internationally. Moreover, it is anticipated that *Muslim* travellers will inject \$300 billion into the global economy. Worldwide travel is likely to be enjoyable and comfortable for *Muslim* travellers.

*Halal* cuisine has been introduced to the tourism industry to meet the needs of *Muslim* travellers from around the globe. Based on Kivela & Crotts (2015), gastronomy is sometimes referred preparing tasty food. Other research also stated that gastronomy measures the relationship between culture and food. Moreover, the term refers to a person who is profoundly interested in gastronomy and enjoys flavouring, preparing, conducting experiments, exploring, researching, recognising, and publishing food.

The aim of this study is to explore and review the benefits, opportunities, and challenges of *Halal* gastronomy tourism in tourist countries. A few aspects have been highlighted to enhance the view of gastronomy tourism.

## 2. Enhancement of *Halal* gastronomy

Malaysia was the first nation with a *Muslim* majority to introduce the *Halal* sector as a possible driver of economic development in the country's industry and tourism. For example, its local cuisine is vital in promoting tourist destinations, products, and experiences (Som *et al.*, 2020). In his opening remarks at the 2010 World *Halal* Forum, the Malaysian Prime Minister described the *Halal* industry as a growing industry that strives for cultural coherence. It is founded on the universal appeal of Islamic beliefs that promote wellness and incorporates ideals that benefit *Muslims'* health and everyone's. According to Othman & Sangaran (2017), a five-star hotel in Malaysia should introduce a *Halal* premises certificate and guidelines from JAKIM (Jabatan Agama Islam Malaysia). The main reason for this initiative is to encourage more *Muslim* tourists to eat and stay at their accommodations. Regarding cuisine, amenities, and other services, it is more *Muslim*-friendly.

Moreover, this paper focuses on food preparation, such as the methods for preparing ingredients, Islamic animal slaughtering practices, and kitchen cleanliness. As a result of this study, the respondent stated that establishing *Halal* certification is important, particularly in certain situations, such as the Middle East peak tourist season and public sector festivals. In conclusion, the *Halal* sector is a growing sector that needs solemn guidance. Participants in these surveys are expected to have detailed methodological rules based on the *Halal* Foods and Certifications or Handbook. To increase demand for *Halal* gastronomy tourism among *Muslim* tourists, the government should play a crucial role in ensuring all premises obtain a *Halal* certificate and prominently display it so that tourists acknowledge the premises as a *Halal* spot.

Indonesia, one of the most popular tourist destinations, offers a gastronomy tourism spot. Based on the article by Sagala *et al.* (2020), Indonesia has become a popular tourist destination. It must be distinct from the variety of gastronomy offered to domestic and international tourists. Many of its restaurants offer typical characteristics and uniqueness with vibrant and inviting brands for tourists. This situation motivates many visitors to Indonesia to partake in gastronomic tourism. This study focuses on Bandung, Indonesia, sometimes known as Chinatown; it is a destination where visitors may experience a unique Chinese village ambience. The problem with this place is that it contains Chinese concepts. Examining *Halal* culinary components that *Muslim* visitors can accept makes it problematic for tourists to visit Chinatown. This can affect the impression of tourists and the influence of brands on tourists' purchasing decisions at a Chinatown gastronomic destination.

The research has been undertaken in the city of Bandung. Due to Chinatown's application of an interesting concept, the destination's results indicate that it has a unique value as an attraction to attract more tourists. Besides, Chinatown Bandung is home to over 80 renters from Bandung SMEs, whose stalls feature a variety of gastronomic, style, and handcraft products. The PERMABA Foundation also owns a unique "Bandung Chinatown Museum" (Bandung Society Association). The museum features a range of antique Chinese furniture, an infographic, and Chinese history in Bandung. Furthermore, numerous enticing spots for leisure, hanging out, and photography exist. Also, tourists can engage in sightseeing since many colourful buildings with lanterns hanging over the road can serve as photography spots.

## 3. *Halal* gastronomy aspect

The trend has evolved occasionally to cater to the demand of the traveller. *Halal* gastronomy tourism is the latest trend in the tourism business. *Halal* gastronomy tourism is travelling from one destination to another to enjoy the authenticity of the local food prepared with *Halal* ingredients for *Muslim* tourists worldwide (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). Furthermore, *Halal* gastronomy tourism is one of the fastest-growing facets of the global travel industry, as it introduces *Muslim* travellers to local food prepared with *Halal* ingredients. This is the driving factor behind the phenomenal growth in the tourism industry, as *Muslim* travellers seek out vacation experiences worldwide. It has gotten increasingly popular due to social media. People frequently upload photos of delicious food from a particular destination on social media to encourage others to visit and try the food (Oktadiana *et al.*, 2020). One person recommends the most excellent food to another, motivating others to travel to a specific location to sample the local cuisine.

On the other hand, gastronomy tourism increases the economic growth of tourism destinations. To explain, the traveller spends money not only on food but also on accommodation, transportation, and other expenses. Gastronomy tourism has become a trend since the food served is unique to a certain destination and is made by the locals. Those who wish to experience the uniqueness of the cuisine have no choice but to travel to the location. For example, a rapidly developing country such as Japan is starting to adopt the *Halal* gastronomy trend and serve *Halal* food to *Muslim* travellers (Battour *et al.*, 2021; Jia & Chaozhi, 2020). Local foods such as sushi, gyoza, and ramen frequently contain alcohol or pork. However, due to the *Halal* gastronomy trend, numerous shops in Japan sell *Halal* versions of sushi, gyoza, and ramen to *Muslim* travellers. Japan also collaborates with a few *Muslim* countries to provide *Halal* food ingredients. It is very convenient for *Muslim* travellers to eat, and they have tasted the authenticity of the local food (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018).

Table 1 indicates some aspects of gastronomy tourism that travellers typically anticipate. The availability of *Halal* food is not the determining feature in *Muslim* travellers' destination selection. However, *Muslim* travellers tend to stay longer in places that offer many certified *Halal* branches with verified *Halal* status (Jia & Chaozi, 2018). The availability of *Halal* food also influences the type of accommodation tourist chooses. In Malaysia, "fusion cuisine" has been formed influenced by the "multiracial" or "multi-ethnic" characteristics of the ethnic population of Malay, Chinese and Indian (Som *et al.*, 2020).

Table 1: Review of *Halal* gastronomy aspect

Country	<i>Halal</i> Gastronomy Aspect	Statement	Remarks
Indonesia	<i>Halal</i> ethnic food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chinatown serves <i>Halal</i> Chinese and Indonesian food</li> </ul>	Caria & Nuraeni (2019)
	Culinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boost natural resources of ingredients and reveal the Indonesian culture, e.g. Local food, street food etc</li> </ul>	Sukenti (2014)
	Producing innovative products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce new food, environmental, festivals, and handicrafts and cultivate the quality of taste, scent, presentation and service of the food and beverage</li> </ul>	
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with Tourism and Culture and Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)</li> </ul>	
	Standard assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide standard assessment for the employees, the products, and the service quality</li> </ul>	
China, Korea, Thailand	Promoting online advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Such as online transportation and a Bandros (tourist bus) for airport transfer</li> </ul>	
	Tourism marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting <i>Halal</i> cuisine and culinary, <i>Halal</i> food culture, <i>Halal</i> food restaurant, and <i>Halal</i> service via the internet</li> <li>Easy access for <i>Muslim</i> tourists to spot <i>Halal</i> restaurant</li> <li>Guidebook on <i>Halal</i> restaurant destination</li> </ul>	Yousaf & Xiucheng (2018)
Japan, Malaysia	Culture and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main tourist attractions from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore</li> <li>Local food</li> </ul>	Hariani (2017), Som <i>et al.</i> , 2020
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Travel experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Halal</i> food availability</li> <li>Type of accommodation that satisfied <i>Muslims'</i> need</li> </ul>	Mannaa (2019)

Table 2 indicates the most listed heritage food in Malaysia. Many *Muslim* travellers prefer to rent a furnished place with a fully-equipped kitchen, particularly when travelling to non-*Muslim* destinations with children and the elderly. Most *Muslims* who travel ensure that the restaurants they visit are *Halal*. All participants decided based on the Shari'ah principle of consuming *Halal* food. It depends on the individual's level of faith and background knowledge to choose the *Halal* status of the restaurant while travelling. However, some were genuinely cautious and aware of the food's internal and external components (i.e toxic chemicals, biological agents, and microorganisms) (Umarjonovna & Gulomjonovna 2022) before deciding to consume it, such as most Middle East participants who avoided eating meat while travelling.

#### 4. Challenges and opportunities of *Halal* gastronomy

A few challenges and opportunities will be discussed in this paper.

##### 4.1 Challenges: standardisation of *Halal* certificate and *Halal* logo

According to Andrianto (2019), the restaurant business must prioritise the uniformity of the *Halal* certificate. For example,

in Bandung, restaurant managers and *Muslim* travellers who ignore the *Halal* status of their eateries are ignorant. This is due to the importance placed on the quality of ingredients and services supporting *Halalness* hospitality, especially in *Halal* restaurants. In the restaurant industry, perceptions of the *Halalness* of hospitality vary between management and local customers. This action by the restaurant owner may negatively affect the destination's reputation. A negative experience for *Muslim* tourists can lead to negative word-of-mouth and discourage others from visiting the destination or restaurant. This can ultimately harm the restaurant's business and lead to failure.

*Halal* status is crucial to attracting more *Muslim* and non-*Muslim* customers for restaurant operators who have not yet filed for *Halal* certification (Wannasupchue *et al.*, 2019). *Muslim* restaurants are mainly divided into two classifications: certified *Halal* and non-certified *Halal*. Both premises are managed by *Muslim* owners, who prepare and cook food. The difference is that the premise did not apply to the *Halal* certification. It is also known that a *Halal* certificate is important to ensure that *Muslim* tourists will visit and recommend the restaurant without hesitation.

Table 2: List of popular Malaysia heritage foods (Som *et al.*, 2020)

List of popular Malaysia heritage food	
<b>Rice</b> Nasi ayam Nasi kerabu Nasi lemak Nasi dagang Nasi himpit Nasi ulam Nasi goreng kampung Ketupat Lemang	<b>Side dishes</b> Ayam percik Asam pedas Rendang Gulai tempoyak ikan patin Rendang Kari kepala ikan Serunding Botok-botok ikan Gulai lemak umbut Gulai lemak cili padi Gulai asam rom Kurma daging/ayam Hinava/umai Ayam panggang Daging dendeng Masalodeh Telur pindang
<b>Sauces/Ulam</b> Pekasam Tempoyak Sambal belacan Kerabu mangga muda Cencaluk Sambal gesek ikan bilis Sambal tumis Pajeri Budu Acar Halwa	<b>Noodle</b> Mee goreng mamak Laksa Yee sang Char kuew teow Mee kari
<b>Bread/wheat</b> Roti jala Lempeng Roti canai Putu mayam Tosai	<b>Cracker/snack</b> Otak-otak Sata Yong tau foo Satay Pisang goreng Keropok lekor Ubi kayu
<b>Sweet</b> Bingka ubi Wajik Seri kaya Dodol Lempok durian Laddu Tapai Agar-agar	<b>Local cake</b> Penderam Karipap Kuih lopez Bahulu Ondeh-ondoh Epok-epok Kuih keria Kuihbingka
<b>Porridge</b> Bubur as-sura Bubur kacang hijau Sagu gula Melaka	<b>Drink</b> Teh tarik Cendol Air batu campur (ABC) Air selasih

Sources: Adapted from National Heritage Department 2005



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 1: Among the gastronomy aspects that attract tourist anticipation; are (a) authentication, (b) decoration, and (c) heritage food (Jia & Chaozi, 2020).

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On the other hand, the *Halal* Logo plays an important role in serving the *Halal* market. Haryani *et al.* (2017) and Aliff *et al.* (2015) stated that some business owners showing different types of private *Halal* logos on their premises aim to mislead customers. The absence of enforcement by the government in monitoring *Halal* food certification exacerbates this issue. This implicates consumer confidence and trusts in the *Halal* Logo. The industry has discovered that the logo and status can serve as a marketing instrument for business expansion. The government could capitalise on providing public information and minimise misunderstandings regarding *Halal* market difficulties by forming a consumer interest group like the Malaysian *Muslim* Consumers Association (PPIM). Governments and the public must collaborate to reduce the likelihood of future problems. This is mainly to help Malaysia become recognised as one of the best *Halal* gastronomy destinations worldwide.

#### 4.2 The misconception of *Halal* tourism

Ethiopia's tourism destination has the potential to attract a more significant number of visitors. According to Ahmed & AKBABA (2018), stakeholders and scholars believe *Halal* tourism is only for *Muslims*. The truth is that Non-*Muslim* travellers can also appreciate *Halal* tourism. *Halal* tourism may be characterised as the exclusive domain of *Muslims* and may be targeted by terrorists to promote Islamophobia. However, the main idea is to create a destination that provides travellers with clean and safe cuisine. The definition of *Halal* tourism needs to be more understood by others. Most scholars define *Halal* tourism as Islamic tourism and interchangeably use both terms, which can lead to misunderstanding among non-*Muslim* tourists. The rise of Islamophobia among Christians in Ethiopia is one of the challenges foreseen, as this worldview causes *Muslim* travellers to fear visiting the nation. Ethiopia faces numerous obstacles in the transition to *Halal* tourism, but it presents a significant chance to increase its economy and promote the local culture to foreign tourists.

#### 4.3 The application of *Halal* guidelines

In the research, Dwiwitno (2016) and Aliff *et al.* (2015) described to the audience the basic concept of *Halal* food, namely that all ingredients must be clean to be clean, meat must be slaughtered according to Islamic law, and ingredients containing alcohol or lard must be avoided. The establishment must adhere to a guideline for the preparation of the ingredients. The ingredients must be clean and cannot be made from lard alcohol, as it is the opposite and restricted to be consumed by *Muslims*. Furthermore, introducing *Halal* requirements and healthy living is one of the standards and guidelines. According to Islam, a human cannot drink the blood of an animal for this reason. This is because animal blood contains pathogenic microorganisms and pathogenic worms that can enter the human body, harm the immune system, and

cause illness. In addition, the cross-contamination of *Halal* products with non-*Halal* resource ingredients is strictly prohibited to ensure the cleanliness of *Halal* ingredients. *Halal* food may be consumed without a doubt because of the hygiene of the food.

Moreover, by implementing *Halal* requirements, it is possible to make items of a higher quality compared to those that adhere to the conventional standard. To explain, by adhering to *Halal* requirements, all the ingredients and actions would be monitored, and any illegal action would be a penalty. As a result, the tourists do not need to worry about the *Halal* status, as all preparation before making the food will be observed and free of local ingredients. Other than that, the importance of implementing *Halal* requirements is to ensure that *Muslim* travellers can enjoy their vacations without doubting the *Halal* status of the food they consume. The authors emphasise that the basic reasons for banning some substances are their uncleanliness and toxicity to our bodies due to their unclean components and toxic constituents.

Aliff *et al.* (2015) also added that genetically modified (GM) is added to processed food are dangerous as it has been altered. In this modernisation area, the *Halal* concept cannot be limited solely to "pork-free" meals. Ingredients that are *Halal* and not dangerous to be consumed by the human, such as gelatin, enzymes, lecithin, and glycerin, as well as additives such as stabilisers, flavourings, colourings, and others, are considered *Halal* ingredients. The authors urge that Jabatan Agama Islam (JAKIM) improve present *Halal* processes in the food industry to guarantee that the standard and guidelines are straightforward. The authors mentioned ensuring that the JAKIM enforces the *Halal* law on the premises that take advantage of their *Halal* status.

#### 4.4 The awareness of local heritage food

Ghazali (2020) mentioned the significant factor of Malaysia's gastronomy tourism. The level of awareness of local heritage food among food industry players is important for identifying the promotion efforts made by food industry players in the marketing of local heritage foods and exploring the perceptions of food industry players about the potential, importance, and opportunities of local heritage foods as a factor in Malaysian gastronomy tourism. Due to a lack of cooks and visitor understanding of this type of cuisine, it is conceivable that the national heritage food will be forgotten. If the native food is lost, Malaysia will lose its. Furthermore, promoting Malay food in a large hotel with many visitors is suggested. Other than that, the government and authorities should continue to organise larger-scale events and festivals that may be used to introduce Malaysia as a paradise for food lovers to both local and international tourists.

#### 4.5 The opportunities for *Halal* tourism

Kivela & Crotts (2015) mentioned several opportunities for Tourism and Gastronomy. In Hong Kong, gastronomy reinforces the concept that Hong Kong is the leading gastronomic destination. It also aims to improve the performance of business products and services and create new business opportunities. Moreover, providing experiences and motivating individual tourists can ensure that gastronomy tourism becomes even more popular in the future due to the authenticity of the food provided. The results also revealed that gastronomy is increasingly crucial in how tourists choose a

destination. Overall, having a major attraction in one destination will build a potential business and improve the country's economy.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, *Halal* gastronomy tourism can be seen as a new attraction that can encourage more tourists to visit one destination. When a country promotes *Halal* culinary tourism at their places, there are numerous benefits. The first advantage is that the destination can primarily promote its culture and heritage through local food. Usually, local food is related to the culture of the place. For example, tourists can be introduced to foods served to the monarch and queen of the country or consumed during unique festivals. Besides, *Halal* gastronomy tourism can promote the authenticity of the local food at a particular destination. It has been proved that local food can be the main attraction of one destination, hence attracting more *Muslim* travellers. Other than that, promoting *Halal* gastronomy tourism can increase the country's economy. When tourists visit a destination, they spend money on lodging, transportation, and other services, which positively impacts the local and national economies. To explain, a visitor who visits a destination for its cuisine or gastronomy may also appreciate other attractions, such as the area's natural resources or the country's culture and history. Tourists who spend money on accommodations, transportation, and other services contribute to the local and national economies. The destination's original culture and heritage significantly ensure its success as a tourist attraction. However, many alternative techniques are available for promoting the country, such as food festivals or cultural events. By doing so, the country could become well-known, and tourists could spread the good word about the country, thus attracting more tourists to the destination and boosting the economy.

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