

The **MUSLIM** Market

The Islamic or Muslim market is one of the most important markets for goats and especially sheep. There are between 5 and 8 million Muslims in the US, most concentrated in urban areas. The population is growing fast, both from immigration and through conversions. Muslims should not be stereotyped. The population is diverse, and it represents many different races, nationalities, and cultures.



Eid Al Adha

The major holiday in which Muslims consume sheep and goats is the Festival of the Sacrifice (Eid al Adha), a multi-day festival (Eid) which commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son (Ismail) to God. The festival coincides with Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Some Muslims prefer to do their own slaughter. Full carcasses are usually preferred, as the meat is divided into thirds for distribution, with one third being given to the poor.

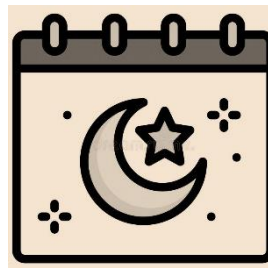


Other holidays

Other holidays in which Muslims may consume sheep or goat include the Islamic New Year (Muharram), the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (Mawlid al Nabi), Ramadan (month of fasting), and the "Festival of Fast-Breaking" (Eid al Fitr).

Moon not the sun

Muslim holidays move forward 11 days each year. This is because Islam follows a lunar calendar, which is dictated by the moon not the sun.



What is HALAL?

The word Halal means permissible. For an animal to be considered Halal by the Muslim population, it has to be killed by a Muslim, in God's name, with the animal facing towards Mecca. Slaughter is considered "ritual," since the animal is not stunned before it is killed. This is similar to Kosher.

An "unblemished" ram is usually preferred for the Festival of the Sacrifice. Besides being intact, the sheep should not have had its tail docked or horns broken or removed. The animal should be over 60 lbs. and over 6 months of age; thus, yearlings or older animals may be preferred.

While Muslims will consume sheep and goats of various sizes and conditions, they generally prefer the lighter, leaner (less finished) animals in the marketplace.

It's a boy!

It's also common for Muslims to sacrifice sheep (or goats) on the occasion of a child's birth (Aqiqah): two for a boy and one for a girl.



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