

## Cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs

Many religious and cultural groups have special food needs.

- Seventh Day Adventists and Buddhists are vegetarian.
- Hindus do not kill any animal for food, although they do eat meat from animals that have been killed by non-Hindus.
- The Jewish religion has many strict laws associated with the foods eaten and the way in which it is obtained and prepared; for example, meat from the pig (pork, ham or bacon) is not allowed to be consumed. The meats that are permitted can only come from an animal that chews its cud and has divided hooves, for example cows, sheep, ox or goats. In very strict Jewish homes, meat and dairy products are not served at the same meal. They have to be prepared and served on separate plates using different utensils. The dishes must be cleaned in separate sinks.
- Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol, and follow very strict guidelines when it comes to selecting foods to include in their diet. Animals must be slaughtered by Islamic law. The word 'haram' means unlawful and the word 'halal' means lawful. Pig meat, blood, carnivorous animals and alcohol are 'haram'. Milk, honey, fish, legumes, grains, fruits and vegetables are halal. Animals such as cows, sheep, goats, deer, moose, chickens, ducks and game birds are also halal, but they must be slaughtered according to Islamic rites in order to be suitable for consumption—this is known as 'zabihah'.
- Fasting is required by some religions during particular times, for example during Ramadan among Muslims. The sick, as well as children and pregnant women, are usually excused from fasting.

### 8.4.5 Food preferences of major cultural and religious groups

Food	Hindus/Buddhists	Muslims	Jews
Eggs	Some*	Yes	Yes
Milk and yoghurt	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cottage/curd cheese	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chicken	Some*	Halal#	Kosher+
Mutton	Some*	Halal#	Kosher+
Beef	Hindus no, Buddhists some	Halal#	Kosher+
Pork	Some*	No	No
Fish	Some*	Yes	Yes
Butter/ghee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Margarine/vegetable oils	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* Very strict followers avoid this.

# Halal meat must be killed, dedicated and prepared in a special way.

+ Kosher meat for Jews requires special rituals and butchering procedures in preparation.