

Halal Certification for Goods From India, for Buyers and Exporters

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A halal certificate is a private or national body saying a product or a plant meets Islamic dietary rules under a named standard. For meat from India it is now also an export rule. This guide shows importers which issuers their market accepts and how to check one, and walks an Indian exporter through i-CAS Halal and the importing country's own system.

The Short Version

- In Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Malaysia and Indonesia, the question is not "is it halal certified" but "by a body my regulator recognises".
- For meat to 35 countries, India itself requires i-CAS Halal from a NABCB-accredited body, on top of the importer's system.
- Check the certifier's accreditation on the date the certificate was issued. Two of the three NABCB-listed halal bodies had gaps in 2026.
- A halal certificate says nothing about food safety, pesticides or labelling law. It sits beside those checks, never instead of them.
- For spices, rice and ingredients, halal is mostly a customer requirement. Ask for the product certificate, the list of covered products and the expiry date.

Since February 2026, India has told its meat exporters that "halal" on the paperwork means one thing for 35 countries. DGFT Notification 59/2025-26 added twenty countries, from Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to Kenya, Morocco and the Maldives, to the fifteen already on the list (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey and ten more), and for all of them a halal certified meat shipment must come from a plant certified under the India Conformity Assessment Scheme, i-CAS Halal, by a body accredited by NABCB ([DGFT, 9 Feb 2026](#)). Egypt got a longer runway, which was stretched again in August.



That's meat. For everything else, from basmati to guar gum, halal from India is still a private certificate that your customer asks for and your regulator may or may not recognise. This guide covers both. The importer's half comes first, then the Indian exporter's steps. The full list of certificate guides is on [certifications](#).

1. What a Halal Certificate Proves and What It Doesn't

A halal certificate is a body's statement that a product, or a plant making it, meets Islamic dietary rules under a named standard. For meat that means the slaughter method, the slaughterman and the separation of halal and non-halal lines. For processed food and ingredients it is mostly about what goes in - no pork or pork derivatives, no alcohol as an ingredient, animal-derived inputs like gelatin or enzymes from halal sources - and how lines are cleaned.

What it doesn't prove is just as important. It is not a food safety certificate, so it says nothing about pesticides, aflatoxin or Salmonella (that's [food import testing](#)). It is not a government health certificate, which animal products need separately (see [health and veterinary certificates](#)). And it covers only the products and sites named on it, which sounds obvious until you see how often a supplier sends a certificate for a sister unit.

There are two kinds of paper and you'll usually want both. A **site or product certificate** covers the plant and a list of products for a period, often a year. A **consignment certificate** covers one shipment and is common for meat. Ask which one you're looking at.

2. When Your Market Actually Requires One

Halal is a legal entry rule in some markets and a customer rule in the rest.

Market	Legal requirement	Whose certificate counts
Saudi Arabia	Mandatory halal slaughter certificate for meat, poultry and their products	A body recognised by the SFDA Halal Center (SFDA FAQ)
UAE	Halal certificate required for meat and poultry, and for products sold as halal	A body registered by MoIAT, usually accredited by EIAC
Malaysia	Imported goods carrying a halal mark must come from a recognised body	A body on JAKIM's recognised foreign list at halal.gov.my
Indonesia	Halal certification mandatory for many imported product groups	BPJPH certificate, or a foreign certificate from an institution with a BPJPH agreement, registered in Indonesia. BPJPH's site gives 18 October 2026 as the start (BPJPH)
UK, EU, US, Australia, NZ	No legal halal requirement for imports	Whatever your customer, retailer or certifier accepts

For the bottom row, the requirement comes from the retailer or the food service chain. A UK wholesaler selling to halal butchers or an Australian ingredient buyer supplying a halal-certified manufacturer will name the bodies they accept, and those lists are often narrower than the law in Kuala Lumpur or Riyadh. Ask your customer for their list before you ask the supplier for anything.

3. What an Importer Should Check

A real certificate can still be the wrong certificate. Here's the order I'd check it in.

The body. Is it recognised by your regulator (SFDA, MoIAT, JAKIM, BPJPH) for this product group? Each publishes a list. Look it up yourself and don't rely on a logo in the supplier's catalogue.

The accreditation date. For meat from India, the certifier also needs NABCB accreditation for i-CAS Halal. NABCB's product certification list showed three halal bodies when I read it on 17 October 2026, and two of them carried a note that their accreditation was not valid for part of 2026, one from 9 March to 9 July and one from 9 April to 30 July ([NABCB](#)). A certificate issued inside one of those windows is a problem even if the body is fine today. So check the issue date against the body's record, not just today's status.

The scope. Read the product list on the certificate. Does it name your product, your brand and the plant address that appears on the invoice? Merchant exporters often hold certificates in their own name for goods made elsewhere. That isn't wrong by itself, but you want to see which plant was audited.

The dates. Issue date, expiry date, and for consignment certificates the shipment details (container, lot, weight) matching the commercial invoice.

The register. Many bodies publish a certificate search or put a QR code on the certificate that opens their own register. Indonesia lets you search registered foreign halal certificates on the BPJPH site. If the QR code opens a PDF hosted on the supplier's own website, that proves nothing.

Red flags I'd stop on - a certificate with no expiry date, a body name that is one word different from a recognised body, product lists that say "all products", and a supplier who sends a new certificate every time you question the old one.

4. What to Ask the Supplier For and When

- **At RFQ:** which body certifies them, for which products and sites, and the current certificate. This is when you find out whether their body is on your market's list. Switching bodies takes months, so it's a sourcing decision, not a shipping detail.
- **At PO:** write the body, the standard and the consignment certificate (for meat) into the contract, and say the certificate must cover the plant named on the invoice.
- **Before packing:** confirm the certificate is still valid on the production date and the shipping date.
- **Before sailing:** a draft of the consignment certificate and the health certificate, so the numbers match the invoice and packing list.

If you're buying meat or meat products for a Gulf, Malaysian or Indonesian customer and the supplier can't name both their i-CAS body and their recognised body for your market, move on. Plenty of Indian plants hold both.

5. Who Issues Halal Certificates in India

There is no single government halal certifier in India. Certificates come from private bodies, some religious trusts and some companies. Two things changed in 2023 and 2024 for meat.

First, the Quality Council of India set up i-CAS Halal, and DGFT made it the export rule. Notification 03/2023 said meat may be exported "as Halal certified" only from a facility certified under i-CAS Halal by a NABCB-accredited body, gave existing bodies six months to get accredited, and asked all meat export units to register on APEDA's meat export portal ([DGFT 03/2023](#)). APEDA is the monitoring agency.

Second, Notification 34/2024-25 turned that into policy conditions from 16 October 2024 for named HS lines (bovine boneless meat 0201 30 00 and 0202 30 00, sheep and goat meat under 0204, edible offal under 0206, and prepared meat under 1602) and fifteen countries. After shipment, the exporter must give the buyer a valid i-CAS halal certificate, and where the importing country has its own halal rules, also a certificate from a body approved under that country's system ([DGFT 34/2024-25](#)). Non-halal meat exports kept their old procedure.

Then came the twenty extra countries in February 2026, with two weeks to comply and six months for Egypt, which Notification 28/2026-27 extended to nine months from 9 February 2026 ([DGFT 28/2026-27](#)). That puts Egypt at about 9 November 2026.

For anything that isn't meat, India has no export halal rule. The certificate your buyer wants is the one their market or their customer recognises.

6. How an Indian Exporter Gets One

The steps below are for a meat plant, which has the most to do. A spice or ingredient maker skips the i-CAS parts and goes straight to the body the buyer's market recognises.

Step 1 – Pin down the market list. Write down every destination you sell to, and for each one the bodies its regulator recognises (SFDA, MoIAT, JAKIM, BPJPH) and the bodies your big customers accept. Pick a certifier that covers as many as possible. This takes a week of reading, and it decides everything after it.

Step 2 – Register where you must. Meat units register on APEDA's meat export portal and need the usual export registrations (see [IEC, RCMC and export registrations](#)). Meat plants also need their APEDA plant registration and the health certification route that applies to the product.

Step 3 – Choose an i-CAS Halal body. Pick one on NABCB's list with "Halal" in its accreditation and read its validity dates and any non-validity notes on [NABCB](#). If the same body is also recognised by your importing countries, you get one audit for both. If it isn't, plan for two certifiers.

Step 4 – Apply with the documents. Expect to send the company and plant details, the product list, a process flow, raw material list with suppliers and their halal status, cleaning and segregation procedures, your food safety certificates, and for slaughter plants, the slaughter procedure and the names of the Muslim slaughtermen. Check the current fee on the certifier's own schedule.

Step 5 – Close the gaps on paper. The certifier reviews the documents and comes back with gaps. The usual ones are inputs without halal certificates (flavours, emulsifiers, enzymes, casings, processing aids), shared lines without a validated cleaning procedure, and no written traceability from raw

material to finished lot. Budget two to six weeks here, depending on how many inputs need supplier certificates.

Step 6 – The site audit. The body's auditor, usually with a Shariah or religious affairs expert, audits the plant. For slaughter that means watching the process. Non-conformities get a deadline to close, typically a few weeks.

Step 7 – Certificate issued. You get a site or product certificate with a list of products and an expiry date, usually a year, with surveillance visits during that time. Check how long your body gives itself to issue after closing non-conformities, because buyers will ask.

Step 8 – Consignment certificates per shipment. For meat, each shipment gets its own certificate from the body, matched to the health certificate, invoice and packing list.

Step 9 – Renew before expiry. Start the renewal two months out. A gap between certificates is the most common reason a container sits at a Gulf port while paper catches up.

Common rejection reasons at the body stage are unsupported raw materials, alcohol-based flavour carriers, and lines shared with non-halal product without a cleaning record. At the importing border, it's a certificate from a body the regulator doesn't recognise, or a certificate that doesn't match the shipment.



What to send the buyer – the current certificate, the product annex that lists their product, the body's accreditation or recognition reference for their market, and for meat, the i-CAS certificate and the consignment certificate after each shipment as the 2024 notification requires.

If you'd rather someone else chased the certifier, the input suppliers and the audit dates, [SourcingSync](#) runs that kind of work for buyers and their Indian suppliers.

7. A Worked Example With Frozen Buffalo Meat for a Malaysian Importer

This example is an illustration built from the rules above, not a real firm.

Say you're importing frozen boneless buffalo meat (HS 0202 30 00) into Malaysia from a plant near Aligarh. Three things must line up.

India's rule applies, because Malaysia is on the 2024 list and the HS line is named, so the plant needs i-CAS Halal from a NABCB-accredited body and you receive that certificate after shipment. Malaysia's rule applies, because the meat is sold as halal, so the plant also needs a certificate from a body on JAKIM's recognised list. And Malaysia's veterinary import rules apply on top, which a halal certificate never replaces. Ask your Malaysian importer to confirm the plant is approved for Malaysia and which health certificate they need.

Before signing, you check the plant's i-CAS body on NABCB, including any 2026 non-validity window, and its Malaysian-recognised body on halal.gov.my. You put both into the contract. At shipment you check the consignment halal certificate against the health certificate and invoice line by line. That's an afternoon's work against a container held in Port Klang.

FAQ

Is halal certification mandatory for all food exports from India? 

No. India's export rule covers specified meat and meat products to the 35 listed countries. For other goods it depends on the importing country and your customer.

Can one certificate cover several countries? 

Does halal certification cover cosmetics or pharmaceuticals? 

How do I know a halal body is accredited in India? 

Is a halal certificate the same as a health certificate? 

8. Next Steps

- For the government certificate that travels with meat, dairy and seafood, read [health and veterinary certificates](#).
- For embassy stamps some Gulf buyers ask for, see [document legalisation and attestation](#).
- For Saudi product conformity outside food, see [Saudi SABER and SASO](#).
- For lab tests on the same lot, read [food import testing](#).
- For the UAE and Malaysia market pages, see [UAE](#) and [Malaysia](#).
- For every certificate guide, go to [certifications](#).