

Meet Smart: Spice Up Your Meetings With flavours from around the world

Windsor-Essex County is a diverse community with 102 different cultures identified¹. The individuals at your organization likely come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. However, meeting fare typically consists of the same types of foods, with little cultural variation. This tool can be used to increase the cultural foods offered in your workplace.

Why celebrate culture with food?

- To improve your health.
- People tend to eat the same foods with little to no variation day to day, or week to week. This limits the variety of nutrients you feed your body. Diversify your plate by eating foods from different cultures. Bringing more variety to your plate will not only boost your health, but excite your palate too.
- To learn more about your colleagues and their cultural backgrounds.
- To improve your understanding of the cultures that exist within WEC.

Did You Know?

- There are over 160 different self-identified ethnic groups in WEC, with 83 non-official languages spoken at home¹.
- The most common native countries that WEC residents immigrated from are the United States, Italy, United Kingdom, Lebanon, Mexico, Iraq, India and China.
- 21.43% of WEC residents are foreign born, with 14.77% being recent immigrants (within the last 5 years).
- There are over **160** different self-identified ethnic groups in WEC

Food Restrictions

Halal Foods

- The Islamic religion, practiced by Muslims around the world, includes observing Islamic dietary laws (Zabihah), which define foods that are Halal, meaning *permitted*. In contrast, Muslims avoid foods that are Haram, as this means *not permitted*.
- Some food and ingredients may not be clearly Haram. These items are labelled Mashbooh, meaning doubtful.
- Use the following chart to identify common Haram and Mashbooh foods and ingredients:
- **Note: this is not a complete list of all Haram and Mashbooh foods and ingredients.**

¹ Statistics Canada. 2013. Windsor, CMA, Ontario (Code 559) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013.

| Haram Food & ingredients | |
|--|--|
| Food & Ingredients | May be found in: |
| Alcohol | Alcoholic drinks ,desserts, candies, combination foods |
| Pepsin | Cheese, yogurt |
| Lard | Baked goods, desserts, bread, crackers |
| L-Cysteine (if from human hair) | Dough, flour |
| Meat and meat by-products from non-Zabihah sources | Meat dishes, mixed dishes, soups, sauces, prepared foods |
| Pork and pork products (e.g., bacon, ham) | Soups, sauces, combination foods |
| Vanilla extract | Baked products, desserts, candies |

| Mashbooh Food & ingredients | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Food & Ingredients | May be found in: |
| Animal Shortening, animal fat | Baked goods, desserts, bread, crackers |
| Broth/Stock | Mixed dishes, soups, sauces |
| Enzymes | Cheese, bagels, |
| Gelatin | Desserts, candy, baked goods, ice cream, puddings, yogurt |
| Lipase | Cheese, yogurt |
| Mono- and di-glycerides | Bread, baked foods, processed foods, animal shortening, some margarines |
| Rennet | Cheese, yogurt |
| Whey | Milk, cheese, crackers, combination foods |

- Some foods are labelled as Halal. If no label exists, check food label's ingredient list carefully, and regularly. When in doubt, call the food company to identify the source of the ingredient.
- Look for the Halal certification symbol on food labels
- The Islamic religion includes various fasting periods. One example includes the month of Ramadan, where fasting is required from dawn until dusk. To accommodate those observing Ramadan, consider asking when the best time to hold a meeting is, and whether food is really necessary.

Kosher Foods

- The Jewish religion includes the laws of Kashrut, a comprehensive legislation which identifies permitted and forbidden foods, and various other dietary rules. The term Kosher identifies a food that is *permitted* or *acceptable*.
- Kashrut dietary rules are extensive and comprehensive. Here are some of the basic guidelines to remember:
 - Pork and shellfish are strictly prohibited.
 - Meat must be Kosher, as Kosher animals are killed according to Jewish Law. Look for a Kosher symbol to identify Kosher meat.

- Meat cannot be eaten with dairy.
- Utensils used for meat must be kept separate from utensils used for dairy.
- Utensils used for Kosher foods cannot come into contact with non-Kosher foods.
- Look for a Kosher symbol on foods labels. Not all Kosher foods will be labeled with the symbol, so read the ingredient list to look for non-Kosher ingredients.
- Judaism can be Liberal or Orthodox, depending on how strictly one adheres to the laws. It's ok to ask questions to ensure the meal meets everyone's needs.

Understanding Vegetarianism

What is vegetarianism?

Vegetarianism is the practice of not consuming animal products.

Are there different types of vegetarianism?

There are many forms of vegetarianism, although most forms avoid red meat, white meat, poultry, fish or seafood.

Lacto-ovo eats meat and dairy products

Lacto eats dairy products

Ovo eats eggs

Pesco eats seafood, eggs and dairy products

Semi eats poultry, seafood, eggs, and dairy

Vegan does not eat meat, poultry, seafood, eggs or dairy products

In addition to avoiding meat, some vegetarians also avoid products that may use animal ingredients not listed on their labels or used in the product manufacturing. For example, sugars that are whitened with bone char, cheeses that use animal rennet, and products containing gelatin derived from the collagen inside animals' skin, bones and connective tissue.

Why do people choose vegetarianism?

Individuals who practice Hinduism do not eat meat from animals that have been involved in the taking of a life. They believe that they can accumulate the animals' karma if they consume the flesh.

It's important to remember that the reason for choosing a vegetarian diet is personal. Don't assume that someone is a vegetarian based on their culture or religion. Also, don't assume what form of vegetarianism they practice. The best thing to do is ask.

Culture-inspired Meeting Tips

- Don't assume! Ask your staff and colleagues if they have any special dietary needs.

- Not everyone within one culture eats the same or follows the same dietary laws/restrictions. It is important to ask your staff what dietary needs are specific to them.
- Host a potluck, and ask staff to bring in one dish that represents their culture.
- Ask that each dish be labelled with its ingredients to make it easier for those with allergies or food restrictions to identify foods they can eat.
- Rotate themes for meeting menus based on different cultures.
- [Click here to visit Windsor Eats' website](#) to find an extensive list of local restaurants and caterers, which are conveniently categorized by culture.
- Ask your cafeteria manager to feature a different cuisine one day each week or each month.
- Have a recipe exchange.
- Ask individuals to bring in family recipes to share with the group. Each participant will go home with at least one recipe to try themselves.
- Display food certification symbols (e.g., Halal or Kosher), or food ingredient labels on foods when hosting meetings.
- Remember to refer to the Meet Smart booklet to ensure healthier options are served at meetings.
- For a detailed list of healthier choices for multicultural cuisines, click here to [visit the Eat Right Ontario website](#)