

# Halal Tourism Basic Guidelines and Travel Glossary for

# HONG KONG



HONG KONG  
TOURISM BOARD  
香港旅遊發展局



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# 1. Introduction

The "Halal Tourism Basic Guidelines and Travel Glossary for Hong Kong" has been developed through a collaboration between Hong Kong Tourism and Crescentrating to enhance travel stakeholders' understanding of the Muslim travel market in Hong Kong.

As this travel segment grows and Hong Kong aims to capture a larger share of it, there is a critical need to understand the terms related to the services, needs, and practices of Muslim travelers. This document compiles all relevant terms and basic guidelines in one place, helping service providers better navigate this market segment.

The guidelines outline the essential ("Need to Have"), recommended ("Good to Have"), and optional ("Nice to Have") features of key services used by Muslim travelers. The glossary section includes travel-specific terminology related to the Muslim/Halal travel market, offering definitions and explanations of Islamic concepts, core values, and cultural practices pertinent to Muslim travelers.

Faith increasingly influences the purchasing decisions of Muslim consumers, necessitating a thorough understanding of terms such as Halal and wudu to properly serve this segment. By demonstrating awareness of these specific requirements, destinations can assure Muslim tourists of their capability to cater to their needs.

The objective of this document is to offer concise yet insightful overviews of terms related to Muslim travel and tourism, providing valuable context for travel stakeholders in Hong Kong. It addresses various synonymous terms and common spelling variations, indicating plural forms where relevant. Arabic words introduced early in the document are defined later in the glossary, ensuring clarity and understanding throughout.

## 2. Basic Terms

### General Terms

#### Halal

The Arabic term for permissible. In Islamic terms, it means permissible according to the rules of Islam. It is most frequently referred to in regard to food, but it includes any type of action permissible in Islam.

#### Haram/Non-Halal

This refers to anything considered unlawful under Islamic teachings. It is often used in conjunction with Halal, often in regard to food, but can also refer to other unlawful acts in Islam such as stealing, corruption, etc.

#### Tayyib

The literal translation is good/clean/wholesome. It is commonly used by Muslims to refer to food, but often that of a higher quality or purity, such as organic or even simply healthy food. Thus, food can be Halal (made of permissible ingredients) but not Tayyib.

#### Muslim-Friendly

When it comes to Food, they can only be classified as "Halal" or "non-Halal". Food for Muslims cannot be classified as "Halal-Friendly" or "Muslim-Friendly". As such, food in a restaurant can only be either Halal or non-Halal.

The term "Muslim-friendly" can be used for any facility or service which takes into account the needs of Muslims. For example, an Airport that has prayer facilities and Halal food will be a Muslim-friendly Airport. Although the term "Halal-Friendly" is sometimes used in place of "Muslim-Friendly", in most cases, the latter term will be more appropriate.

## Islamic Terms

### Allah

The name in Arabic used to refer to God Almighty. Muslims believe Allah is the One True God, the Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Creator of the Universe, and the Judge of Mankind.

### Islam

A monotheistic religion/faith that is defined primarily by the belief in submission to the One True God alone, and in accepting Muhammad as the final prophet of God.

### Muslim

Individuals who subscribe to the religion of Islam.

### Sharia

The way of life prescribed by Islamic teachings. This includes a wide range of aspects such as financial and economic matters, as well as everyday matters from hygiene and manners to charity and worship.

### Five Pillars of Islam

These are the five primary religious obligations in Islam that are considered the foundations of being a Muslim. These five acts are:

- Shahadah – to declare in one's heart and upon one's tongue that there is nothing worthy of worship except God, and that Muhammad is His Messenger.
- Salah – the five daily obligatory prayers.
- Zakah – to give 2.5% of one's excess wealth to charity every year.
- Saum – to fast during the month of Ramadan.
- Hajj – to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in one's lifetime, if capable.

### Qur'an

A religious scripture, believed by Muslims to be the exact Spoken Word of God and the final revelation and last testament to mankind through the last prophet, Muhammad. Its script is in Arabic and it is meant to serve as a guide to humanity. Its translation is now available in most languages.

### Sunnah

The way of life a Muslim to follow, based on the practices and statements of the Prophet Muhammad.

### Hadith

These are the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad as guided by Allah. After the Qur'an, it is the second most authenticated source establishing all Islamic law and Shariah norms.

## Islamic Terms

### **Zakat/Zakah**

It is an obligatory charity or alms tax taken from those Muslims who have sufficient wealth. It corresponds to 2.5% taken from their excess wealth and is given to the poor and needy once every year in accordance with the instructions of Islamic law.

### **Dua**

The individual act of supplication to God Almighty. It can be done quietly or aloud and is an encouraged act of worship.

### **Adhan/Azan**

The public call to Salah which is delivered from a Mosque. It is recited aloud five times a day to announce the prayer timings of the five obligatory prayers. It praises Allah – God Almighty -and requests Muslims to gather for Salah. In some mosques, especially when they are located in predominantly Muslim communities, the Adhan is transmitted via a public address system.

### **Iqamah**

The second call to Salah given after the Adhan, recited just before the start of the congregational prayer. This is performed in every single Mosque and prayer room all over the world.

### **Khutbah**

The specific sermon delivered by the Imam before the Friday Prayers.

### **Imam**

The authoritative person who leads the congregational Salah and teaches the masses their religion.

### **Muezzin**

The person who gives the Adhan for Salah, often in a loud, melodious, and beautiful way.

## Travel Market & Services

### Muslim Traveler

'Travelers who are Muslim' or 'Muslims who travel'.

### Halal-conscious Traveler

Muslim travelers who do not wish to compromise their faith-based needs while traveling. The level of adherence to faith-based needs may vary from one traveler to another. As such, this term refers to Muslim travelers who are looking for at least some form of faith-based need while traveling. The vast majority of Muslims will at the very least look for Halal food while traveling.

### Halal Travel

Halal travel is a subset of Muslim travel. However, since the vast majority of Muslims will at least have some form of a faith-based need while traveling, the majority of Muslim travel will fall into the category of Halal travel.

### Halal Tourism

Halal travel undertaken for tourism. Halal tourism is a subset of Halal travel.

### Islamic Travel

Muslims travel mainly for religious reasons and/or to visit Islamic religious sites. Islamic travel is a subset of Halal travel.

### Hajj & Umrah Travel

Muslims travel to perform Hajj or Umrah. Hajj & Umrah travel is a subset of Islamic travel. It should be noted that Hajj & Umrah travel make up most of Islamic travel.

### Muslim-friendly Destination/Halal-friendly Destination

Destinations that provide services and facilities that cater to at least some of the faith-based needs of Muslim visitors to the destinations.

### MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI)

The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) is an annual report benchmarking destinations in the Muslim travel market. Developed through a collaboration between Mastercard and CrescentRating, it analyzes 140+ destinations worldwide, assessing their readiness to cater to halal and Muslim-friendly travelers.

### Halal Holidays

A leisure trip undertaken by Halal-conscious travelers.



## Travel Market & Services

### **Muslim Packages/Muslim Tour Packages/Muslim-friendly Tour Packages**

#### **Halal Packages/Halal Tour Packages/Halal-friendly Tour Packages**

Terms generally refer to a tour package/itinerary that takes into account the needs of the Halal-conscious traveler. These include services such as providing Halal food, prayer facilities, and accommodation that is better suited for Muslims. Some packages will also include visits to Islamic Heritage sites, Mosques, and Muslim cultural places. The services included may vary from one package to another.

### **Halal Tour Packages**

Tour packages that ensure all aspects of the itinerary and the activities are suitable for Muslims and take into account all the key faith-based needs of Muslim travelers. Refer to the CrescentRating's Tour package rating for more information on how it rates tour packages/itineraries.

### **Islamic Tour Packages**

Tour packages, which include visits to Islamic religious sites or Muslim heritage sites. They may also include a qualified guide or scholar to explain the significance and etiquette required at the destination.

### **Muslim-friendly or Halal-friendly Service/Facility**

Service or the facility has taken into account some faith-based needs of Muslim travelers but not all of their needs. Although a Halal-friendly facility/service may also convey the same meaning, the term Muslim-friendly service/facility is more appropriate.

### **Halal Service/Facility**

A service or a facility that caters to all the key needs of Muslim travelers.

### **Shariah-compliant Service/Facility**

The service or the facility not only caters to all the key needs of Muslim travelers but also strictly adheres to many other Islamic requirements. This includes adhering to company governance and operations, which take into account various Islamic requirements such as halal non-interest-based financing etc. In order to better benchmark the services offered by these entities, CrescentRating has developed a rating system.

See CrescentRating's rating systems to understand how it rates the "Muslim friendliness" of different facilities.

## Travel Market & Services

### **Muslim-friendly or Halal-friendly Hotel**

The Hotel has taken into account some faith-based needs of Muslim travelers but not all their needs. Although "Halal-friendly hotel" may also convey the same meaning, the term "Muslim-friendly hotel" is more appropriate. Some of the main features of these hotels include services such as Halal food, prayer information, and facilities, prayer/qibla directions, the ability to cater during non-standard hours in the month of fasting, water-friendly washrooms, etc.

### **Halal Hotel**

A Hotel that has taken into account all the key needs of Muslim travelers, including having only Halal food & beverages in the Hotel.

### **Shariah-compliant Hotel**

The term Shariah-compliant hotel generally refers to hotels that strictly adhere to many other requirements such as being an alcohol-free premise. They may also adhere to hotel governance and operations, which take into account various Islamic requirements such as halal non-interest-based financing etc.

See CrescentRating's rating systems to understand how it rates hotels based on the different facilities and services they provide.

### **Muslim-friendly Airport**

Airports that cater to some faith-based needs of Muslim travelers, such as having Halal food outlets and prayer spaces

### **Muslim-friendly Cruises/Halal-friendly Cruises**

These terms refer to cruises that provide varying degrees of services and facilities to cater to the needs of Muslim guests. These services range from having Halal food, prayer information, and facilities. Halal cruises may refer to cruises that strictly adhere to many other requirements, such as being an alcohol-free and casino-free environment.

### **Halal Cruise**

A cruise that has taken into account all the key needs of Muslim travelers, including having only halal food & beverages as well as not having casinos on the cruise.

## The Five Daily Prayers

### Salah/Salat

#### Muslim/Islamic Prayers

Praying five times a day is a key obligatory requirement and is one of the five pillars of Islam. It takes the form of a physical ritual denoting submission to God and includes the recitation of praises of worship, which consist of standing, bowing, and prostrating, all whilst facing the direction of the Qibla.

### Ka'ba

The Mosque built by Prophet Abraham and his son Prophet Ishmael in Makkah (Mecca). It is the cube-shaped building at the center of the Grand Mosque called Al-Masjid al-Haram – a house of God within the larger complex of the Grand Mosque. Muslims all over the world face the actual Ka'ba when they pray.

### Qibla Direction

The direction in which Muslims face when performing their Salah wherever they are in the world. This is the direction leading to the Ka'ba in the Grand Mosque in Makkah in current-day Saudi Arabia. Many hotels are now placing the Qibla direction markings in their hotel rooms. They are generally placed on the ceiling or in the drawers in the room.

### Wudu/Ablution

Ablution or a cleansing ritual to be completed before performing Salah. It includes the washing of the hands, face, forearms, forehead, ears, and feet with water.



## The Five Daily Prayers

### Wudu/Ablution Facilities

A specific area with lower than-normal taps and seats allows ease in the washing of feet, which can otherwise prove difficult in a high-up public wash basin/sink. These are usually found in mosques and tend to accompany prayer rooms wherever they may be.

### Foot Washer

Some washrooms at Airports and other public places provide special low taps to make it easy to wash one's feet. As the socks are removed and the feet become wet, there are often drying options available such as a mat, paper towels, and flannels.

### Prayer Mat

Muslims are able to perform their Salah on any clean part of the ground. However, the preference is to perform it in a quiet place dedicated to prayers. Whether praying in a place allocated for prayers or any other place, most Muslims will spread a "prayer mat" and pray on it, mainly to ensure the cleanliness of the prayer area. This is usually a piece of fabric specially made for Muslim prayers. Some Hotels also provide prayer mats to their guests on request, whilst some provide them in their hotel rooms.

### Muslim Prayer Room

A room designated for Muslims to perform their Salah. Basic features include prayer mats, wudu facilities, and a qibla direction sign. Some may also include separate areas for males and females. Such places are usually found in airports, hotels, shopping malls, etc.

### Multi-faith Prayer Room

Generally found in Airports, hospitals, etc. They are usually either in the transit area or in the public areas of the Airport. Some airports provide such facilities in both public and transit areas. They are intended for use by all faiths to perform prayers, meditation, etc. To cater to Muslim worshippers, these rooms may also contain prayer mats, wudu facilities, prayer timetables, copies of the Qur'an, and a qibla direction sign

### Mosque/Masjid

The sacred Muslim house of worship is dedicated to daily prayers and other religious acts. It differs from a simple prayer room in that an Imam (prayer leader) officially conducts the five daily prayers in the congregation.

## The Five Daily Prayers

### Prayer/Salah Times

The five obligatory daily prayers (Salah) in Islam are called Fajr (dawn), Dhuhr (afternoon), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (sunset), and Isha (late evening), each having specific timings according to the position of the sun throughout the day. As such, the prayer times vary depending on the time of year and location. In any given region, the local Muslim communities usually provide information for specific times. There are also many mobile apps, which provide prayer times for any location.

- **Fajr:** The first of the five obligatory daily prayers. It starts at the crack of dawn and ends at sunrise. It is called the dawn prayer and consists of two units.
- **Dhuhr/Zuhr:** The second of the five obligatory daily prayers. It starts at midday, when the Sun crosses the zenith, and ends a few hours later when the day starts to cool down. Thus it is called the afternoon prayer and consists of four units.
- **Asr:** The third of the five obligatory daily prayers. It starts when Dhuhr ends, and it ends itself when the Sun sets on the horizon. It is thus called the late afternoon prayer and consists of four units.
- **Maghrib:** The fourth of the five obligatory daily prayers. It starts a few minutes after sunset and lasts until evening time i.e. once it has gone dark and the twilight has disappeared. It is known as the sunset or evening prayer and consists of three units.
- **Isha:** The fifth and final obligatory daily prayer. It starts when Maghrib ends, i.e. once the night becomes dark and the twilight has disappeared, and it lasts all night until dawn, although it is preferred to be completed by midnight. It is called the late evening or night prayer and consists of four units.

### Prayer/Salah Time Table

A timetable, which indicates the time of Salah, usually for the upcoming month. Some hotels provide a timetable upon request for hotel guests.

### In-flight Prayer Times

Knowing the prayer times on board a flight is particularly challenging due to the continually changing time zones and position of the Sun. HalalTrip in-flight Prayer Time Calculator, now available on the HalalTrip mobile app, provides prayer times as well as the qibla direction along the flight path for any flight.

### Jummah/Friday Prayer

The congregational prayer is performed in a Mosque every Friday in place of the Dhuhr prayer. This is considered obligatory for all adult Muslim males to participate. Jumu'ah prayers consist of a sermon delivered by the Imam followed by a ritual prayer. The sermon and prayer may last between 30-60 minutes. This prayer is not considered obligatory for travelers.



## The Five Daily Prayers

### Travel Prayer

Some Muslims, while traveling, will avail themselves the permission to shorten or even combine their obligatory prayers for the sake of convenience. During travel, Muslims have options for their prayers: Qasr (shortening) prayer and/or Jama (combining) prayer.

### Qasr Prayer

Qasr refers to the practice of shortening obligatory prayers when traveling over long distances, making it easier for someone to negotiate the difficulties of travel. It involves reducing the number of units of prayer for Dhuhr, Asr, and Isha prayers from the usual four units to two units. Note that Maghrib (three units) and Subuh (two units) prayers are not shortened.

### Jama' Prayer

Jama refers to combining two prayers during specific circumstances. While traveling, it is allowed to combine Zuhr and Asr prayers, as well as Maghrib and Isha prayers, which means that they will pray only three times that day.

### Jama' Qasr

Jama' can be combined with Qasr. It means that while combining the prayers, Muslim travelers could also shorten the units of prayers.

## Halal Food

### Halal Food

Food that is permissible to eat according to the teachings of Islam. This is essentially any food that does not fall into the category of Haram (or forbidden). Although some specific teachings vary, the consensus is that food/drinks must be free of pork, alcohol/intoxicants, poisons, harmful ingredients, or unhygienic elements. Any meat must be slaughtered in accordance with the methods prescribed under Islamic law, known as Zabihah.

### Zabihah

The Islamic method of slaughtering an animal. Muslims consider this to be the most humane and purest way to slaughter an animal for consumption.

### Halal Meat

There are minor differences on which animals are considered Halal, but the general consensus is that all seafood is Halal and that herbivorous land animals are Halal, provided they have been slaughtered according to Islamic rulings.

### Halal Assured

This is when the owners/managers of an establishment assure the customers on their own authority that the food they serve is Halal.

### Halal Certification Bodies

These are authorized institutions that perform the task of systematically verifying that products or establishments (restaurants) are in accordance with Halal requirements. Halal certification bodies are generally local bodies performing certifications within a local region/country and are sometimes regulated by government authorities. Many businesses around the world have seen the rising demand from Muslims for independent verification of Halal assurance of their products.

### Halal-certified

The products or establishments that have been checked by a recognized official Halal certification body and then had a certificate issued confirming their Halal status. This term can be incorporated into:

#### **Halal-certified Restaurants**

Restaurants that are issued certificates by a Halal certification body that confirms their food as being Halal.

#### **Halal-certified Snacks/Packaged Food**

Food whose ingredients and process are halal-certified and ensure that the overall certification process is implemented correctly

## Halal Food

### Halal Kitchen

A kitchen that is exclusively used for cooking Halal foods. It maintains complete separation of Halal and Haram foods, ensuring no cross-contamination. Some Halal certification bodies will certify a kitchen within a restaurant independent from the overall restaurant.

### Halal Logo

A logo that is labeled on Halal-certified products by certification authorities to confirm that a product is prepared according to Islamic standards. Each certification body has its own logo.



### Muslim Food/Muslim-friendly Food/"No Pork No Lard"

These terms are used in some cases by restaurants to indicate that the food is suitable for Muslims to consume without being officially certified by external bodies.

## Washroom/Toilet Facilities

### Hand Shower

A plumbing fixture that is a small handheld shower for cleansing oneself after toilet use, usually placed in a holder against a wall near and within reach of the toilet. It is Muslim etiquette to use water to clean one's private parts after using the toilet. There are a number of fittings used in toilets to cater to that need.



### Lota

A jug or bottle that is found by the toilet and is used to pour water and clean oneself after using the toilet. Muslims are encouraged to sit down when urinating so as to keep their clothing clean, which is vital for maintaining purity as one prepares for prayer afterward.

### Bidet

A low sink or plumbing fixture used for washing oneself after using the toilet. The type of bidet that resembles a small bathtub is found mainly in southern Europe.



### Washlet

In Japan, most toilets include an inbuilt bidet (commonly called a washlet) that sprays water for cleansing. These are also used in other countries such as Taiwan and Korea.

## Fasting/Ramadan

### Ramadan/Ramadhan

Ramadan is the month of fasting for Muslims. It is the 9th month of the Islamic Calendar. The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar system, thus it has a 12-month cycle, revolving around 355 days. As this is 10 days less than the Gregorian calendar, the Islamic months, including the month of Ramadan, vary each year in comparison. Yearly, the month of Ramadan advances by 10 days compared to the Gregorian calendar.

### Fasting/Saum

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a compulsory form of worship for all Muslim adults although there are exemptions for the ill and weak. Muslims do not have to fast while traveling, although most Muslim travelers nowadays opt to fast anyway due to the comfortable facilities available while traveling.

Fasting, in the Islamic sense, requires one to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and intimacy from dawn to dusk. While fasting, Muslims will continue with their normal day-to-day activities; however, they will also allocate additional time and effort towards other religious activities such as reciting the Qur'an, frequenting the Mosque for extra prayers, increasing their charitable work, etc.

The fasting period begins at dawn and ends promptly at dusk - it is calculated very precisely based on the time of sunrise and sunset if physical observation is not possible. These times vary, depending mainly on the geographical location and the day of the year (lunar year). The time to commence fasting coincides with the time of the first of the five daily prayers a Muslim has to perform, referred to as the Fajr prayer. The conclusion of the fasting period of that day corresponds with the 4th of the five daily prayers, called Maghrib.

### Suhoor

The morning meal taken before the beginning of the fasting period is called Suhoor. This is a very important meal for Muslims. It is best to take Suhoor as close as possible to the start of the fasting period.

### Iftar

The name given to the meal by which Muslims break their fast, at the Maghrib prayer time. At the time of Iftar, dates and water are generally consumed to break the fast.



## Fasting/Ramadan

### Taraweeh

During the month of Ramadan, most Muslims will also pray an additional congregational prayer called the Taraweeh prayer. The timing of the Taraweeh prayer is after the last of the five prayers of the day, known as the Isha prayer.

### Dates

The fruit of the date palm tree that is very commonly grown in the Middle East. It can be eaten fresh or dried and is commonly sold dried as it has a better shelf life. Dates are a significant part of Islamic tradition and are usually used to break the fast during the month of Ramadan.

## Hajj and Umrah

### Hajj

A religious ritual pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca, Saudi Arabia) is to be performed at a specific time of the year (on the 8th to the 12th of the month of Dhul-Hijjah in the Islamic calendar). As one of the five pillars of Islam, it is considered obligatory for every Muslim who is physically and financially capable to perform it at least once in their lifetime.

### Umrah

A smaller religious ritual pilgrimage to Makkah similar to Hajj, however, it is optional and can be performed at any time during the year except during the Hajj days. It should be noted that Umrah trips make up the largest percentage of the Islamic Travel Industry and that Hajj requires specific visas issued by the Saudi Arabian government.

## Islamic Calendar and Festivals

### Islamic/Hijri Calendar (AH)

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar that is based on cycles of the lunar (moon) phases. The calendar starts with the date Prophet Muhammad emigrated from Makkah to Madinah, an event known as the Hijrah in the year 622 CE. This calendar is sometimes referred to as the Muslim calendar, Arabian calendar, Qamari calendar or most commonly, the Hijri calendar; denoted by the AH sign, similar to how the Common Era is denoted by CE.

## Islamic Calendar and Festivals

### Eid al-Fitr

One of the two main religious festivals in Islam. It is a moment of great joy and celebration. The day starts with a special prayer and sermon conducted in the Mosque. It is called the Festival of Fitr which means to break one's fast - Muslims are not allowed to fast on this day because it marks and celebrates the end of Ramadan.

### Eid al-Adha

One of the two main religious festivals in Islam. This day honors the Prophet Abraham's devotion to God in the story of the sacrifice involving his son Ishmael. There is a special prayer and sermon conducted in the Mosque. This festival lasts for four joyous days of great feasting and charity, starting on the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah (the 12th month of the Islamic calendar).

## Clothing

### Awrah

The parts of the body which need to be covered. Islam provides guidelines for Muslim males and females regarding modesty in dress. They differ for males and females, depending on their age, and depending on whom they are in the company.

### Hijab

An additional cloth worn by some Muslim females to cover the head and some parts of the face.

### Niqab

An additional cloth worn by some Muslim females to cover the head and some parts of the face.

### Abaya

A loose over-dress that extends to the feet.

### Thawb

A long robe worn by Muslim men, specifically in Arab countries. The top is usually tailored like a shirt, but it is ankle-length and loose.



## Greetings

### **Assalamu Alaikum**

“Peace be upon you!” said when a person greets another.

### **Wa Alaikum Assalam**

“Peace be upon you too!” said when a person responds to the greeting of “Assalamu alaikum”.

### **Jazakallahu Khairan**

“May God reward you with good!” said to thank someone in return when a person has done some good for you.

### **In-sha Allah**

“God Willing” is said when a person intends to do something.

### **Ma-sha Allah**

“It is as God Wills!” said when appreciating something.

### **Alhamdulillah**

“All praise and thanks are due to God” said when one hears good news or is feeling grateful.

### **Eid Mubarak**

“A Blessed Eid to you!” a greeting offered to one another during the two Eid festivals.

### 3. Faith-Based Needs of Muslim Travelers

Muslim travelers have several faith-based needs which vary in their level of importance. The CrescentRating Faith-Based Service Needs helps service providers understand which service experiences matter most to Muslims. Developed in 2009 and updated in 2019, it is a framework that encapsulates the key needs of any Muslim traveler categorically. The different categories help travel service providers prioritize implementation.

#### Need to Have Services

##### Halal Food Services

Halal food is by far the most important service that a Muslim traveler is looking for when traveling. Therefore, offering Halal food is key to attracting all Muslim travelers. Acceptability of the different levels of Halal food assurance varies among Muslims. The following table illustrates the main types of “Halal” assurance provided by food outlets and their acceptability by most Muslims.

Halal Assurance	Remarks	Acceptability
<b>Halal certified restaurants</b>	Restaurants certified Halal by a Halal Certification Body (HCB). Most HCBs do not certify restaurants that serve alcohol, but some do.	Acceptable for all
<b>Restaurants served by only a Halal-certified kitchen</b>	Restaurants served from a kitchen certified Halal by a HCB.	Acceptable for many
<b>Self-assurance – claims to serve only Halal food:</b> <b>A. Muslim-owned or managed</b> <b>B. Muslim managed</b>	The restaurant management/ staff claim all food served in the restaurant is Halal	A. Acceptable for many B. Not acceptable for many
<b>Self-assurance – claims to serve Halal food and non-Halal food</b>	The restaurant management/ staff claim that some food served in the restaurant is Halal	Not acceptable for many
<b>Self-assurance – claims to serve only vegetarian or seafood</b>	The restaurant management/ staff claim that all food served is vegetarian or seafood	Acceptable for many



## Need to Have Services

The acceptability also varies depending on the region the Muslim travelers are coming from. Having food outlets with proper Halal assurance identifiable by the visitors is the best option sought by Muslim visitors from Southeast Asia and Western Europe.

### Prayer Facilities

Prayer is among the central pillars of Islam. Wherever they are, most Muslims strive to perform prayers at their prescribed times. In order to cater to this need, the services and facilities that are frequented by Muslim travelers need to be equipped with prayer rooms, ideally with separate spaces for both males and females. Another important consideration is the cleansing ritual referred to as Wudu. It is performed before a Muslim performs their prayers. This requires that the prayer rooms be provided with “foot washing” facilities. While this place arrangement to pray is the most preferred place of worship, any designated private space will suffice.

### Water-friendly Washroom

For Muslims, water is essential for performing the ablution (ritual cleaning called wudu) to perform their daily acts of worship. The availability of innovative products such as travel bidets, some even collapsible, have made life easier for this generation that is always on the go.

### No Islamophobia

Destinations perceived to exhibit Islamophobic sentiments and behavior have a negative impact on Muslims. Safety and security are the top priorities that any traveler keeps in consideration, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or ethnic composition. Given the hate crimes reported in some regions, the majority of Muslims would rather avoid destinations perceived to be unwelcoming.





## Good to Have Services

### Local Muslim Experiences

Many Muslim travelers seek destinations where they can connect with their faith and heritage. Experiencing local Muslim culture, traditions, and customs is a significant draw. Activity options where they could explore historic mosques, participate in community events, or engage in activities that facilitate interaction with local Muslim communities will significantly enhance the travel journey for Muslim travelers.

### Ramadan (Fasting) Services & Facilities

During Ramadan, Muslim travelers need suhoor and iftar meals with halal options, extended dining hours, and access to clean prayer spaces for daily and Taraweeh prayers. Travel packages can include mosque visits and community iftars. Activities should be fasting-friendly, allowing travelers to enjoy their trip without compromising their religious obligations.

### Social Impact Activities

Islam is a religion that significantly encourages mindfulness and empathy towards ourselves, others, and the environment, which pushes Muslims to be interested in contributing towards a greater social cause. In tandem with their sense of community, Muslims are open and eager to participate in sustainability for a better earth.

## Nice to Have Services

### No Non-Halal Activities

Muslim travelers prefer environments that avoid non-halal activities. This includes alcohol-free zones, no gambling facilities, and modest entertainment options. Clear halal certification, transparent information, and alternative leisure activities like nature excursions and cultural tours are essential to respect their faith and lifestyle.

### Recreational Spaces with Privacy

Muslims value facilities with privacy, which are important to uphold their faith. Although most can adapt to their situation and environment, facilities such as common swimming pools, gyms, beaches, spas, and beauty salons can be discomforting for Muslim female travelers who wish to use said facilities.

## 4. CrescentRating Terminology

### About CrescentRating

Founded in 2008, CrescentRating's vision is a world where Muslims can explore the world around them with ease while building bridges with all communities.

The company uses insight, industry intelligence, lifestyle, behavior, and research on the needs of the Muslim traveler, to deliver authoritative guidance on all aspects of Muslim-friendly travel to organizations across the globe. CrescentRating is committed to being a Credible, Knowledgeable, and Globally Trusted partner for travel stakeholders.

CrescentRating services are now used by every tier of the tourism industry globally, from government bodies and tourism agencies to hospitality service providers, to meet and serve the needs of the Muslim traveler. CrescentRating is now considered the world's leading authority on Halal tourism. Its services now include Rating & Accreditation, Research & Reports, Education & Training, Ranking & Indices, and providing Data & Insights.

### Rating & Accreditation System

Crescent Rating is a globally recognized comprehensive, and independent rating and accreditation service for Muslim-friendly travel services. Establishments that are Crescent Rated offer an indication of the level of facilities they offer to Muslims.

### Crescent Rated Hotel

CrescentRating has developed a rating system to validate and rate the overall level of halal-friendliness in hotels. Hotels are rated on a scale of one to seven, based on the level of facilities and services they provide, with one being the lowest and seven being the highest rating.

### Crescent Rated Shopping Mall

CrescentRating has developed a rating system to accredit the overall level of Halal-friendliness of shopping malls. An 'Accredited Shopping Mall' rating awarded by CrescentRating indicates that the attraction provides the minimum requirements to meet the faith-based needs of a Muslim traveler. Shopping malls are classified into Bronze, Silver, or Gold categories, reflecting the range and quality of Muslim-friendly amenities they offer.

### Crescent Rated Attraction

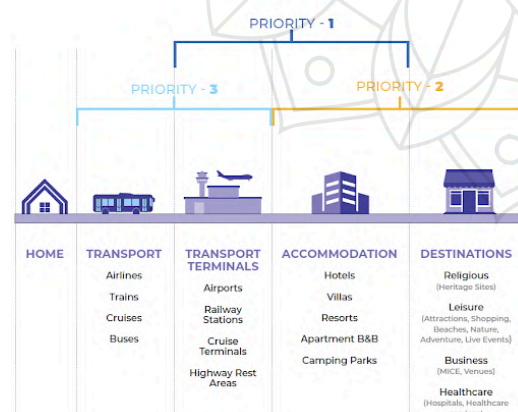
CrescentRating has developed a rating system to accredit the overall level of Halal-friendliness of attractions. An 'Accredited Attraction' rating awarded by CrescentRating indicates that the attraction provides the minimum requirements to meet the faith-based needs of a Muslim traveler. Attractions are classified into Bronze, Silver, or Gold categories, reflecting the range and quality of Muslim-friendly amenities they offer.

## Crescent Rated MICE Venue

CrescentRating has developed a rating system to accredit the overall level of Halal-friendliness of MICE venues. An 'Accredited MICE Venue' rating awarded by CrescentRating indicates that the MICE venue provides the minimum requirements to meet the faith-based needs of a Muslim traveler. MICE Venues are classified into Bronze, Silver, or Gold categories, reflecting the range and quality of Muslim-friendly amenities they offer.

## CRAHFT Reference Model

CrescentRating's proprietary reference model is used to identify individual segments in the travel services value chain. The model allows a destination to identify the gaps, thus being a precursor to strategy development. CRAHFT model can be applied to any type of tourism. (Leisure, Business, Healthcare & Education, MICE, and live events). CRAHFT model analyses the services offered from the time a traveler leaves his home, to airports, food & beverages, transportation, hotels & hospitality, shopping, and tourist attractions.



## CrescentRating Customer Experience Map for Hotel Touchpoints

Muslims interact with service providers through various touchpoints. The CrescentRating Customer Experience Map helps managers deliver desirable service by addressing the faith-based needs of Muslim travelers across all touchpoints. Initial efforts should focus on core faith-based needs during pre-trip and main-trip touchpoints. As capabilities mature, organizations can differentiate by offering unique experiences and managing post-trip touchpoints to enhance customer loyalty.

## CrescentRating Customer Experience Map for Hotel Touchpoints

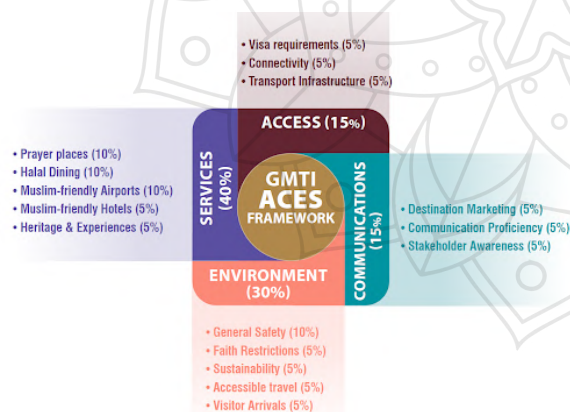
	Discovery & Booking	Stay	Post-Stay	
Nice to Have	●	●	●	RSP
	●	●	●	NNH
	●	●	●	SC
Good to Have	●	●	●	RS
	●	●	●	LME
	●	●	●	HF
Need to Have	●	●	●	PF
	●	●	●	WFW
	●	●	●	

## Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI)

The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) is an annual report benchmarking destinations in the Muslim travel market. Developed through a collaboration between Mastercard and CrescentRating, it analyzes 145 destinations worldwide, assessing their readiness to cater to halal and Muslim-friendly travelers.

### ACES Model

The CrescentRating ACES model, established in 2017, evaluates destinations' Muslim friendliness in four areas. Access, Ease of access to the destination. Communication, Internal and external communication by the destination. Environment, The overall environment and setting of the destination. Services, The range of services provided by the destination to cater to the needs of Muslim travelers.



### RIDA Framework

RIDA—standing for Responsible, Immersive, Digital, and Assured—offers a model designed to enhance the travel experience for Muslim tourists while adhering to their faith-based needs. This framework not only caters to the requirements of Halal compliance and cultural sensitivity but also aligns with broader industry trends toward digitalization and personalized services. It serves as a blueprint for destinations and service providers aiming to optimize their offerings and effectively engage with the Muslim travel market.



## 5. Guidelines for Muslim-friendly Establishments

The following section summarizes the key guidelines for Hong Kong Travel establishments to be able to cater to the Muslim travel market.

### Airport

#### Halal Food:

- Encourage convenient store(s) to have a ready-to-eat Halal food shelf with clear signage
- Halal food outlets are clearly identified in both public and transit areas.
- Encourage Restaurants to get Halal certified by BOT.

#### Prayer Rooms:

- Establish Prayer rooms in public areas with ablution facilities.
- Have separate male and female spaces with ablution facilities.
- Toilets with bidets or hand showers.
- Place prayer mats in the prayer room.
- Have a clear SOP for the prayer room management.
- Staff at the airport information counters are trained on the Muslim traveler's needs and are able to answer their information requests.

### Accommodation Services (Hotels, Resorts, etc.)

#### Halal Food:

- Clearly mark food at the buffet.
- Create a curated list of nearby Halal restaurants, including delivery options.
- Introduce a selection of pre-packaged Halal snacks/beverages or partner with a nearby Halal restaurant for room service.
- Introduce a Halal breakfast corner.
- Set up a dedicated Halal-certified kitchen with a wider range of options.
- Ability to cater during the month of fasting (Ramadhan).

#### Prayer Room and Amenities:

- At least rooms in one floor of the hotel are marked with the Qibla direction.
- Ability to provide temporary prayer rooms for meetings and events held at the hotel. Toilets with lota (water jug or bottle).
- Toilets with bidets or hand showers.
- Prayer mats available on request.





## Attractions/Shopping Malls and MICE Venues

### Halal Food:

- Encourage convenient store(s) to have a ready-to-eat Halal food shelf with clear signage
- On board a fast food chain already Halal-certified
- Prioritize selecting Halal caterers for events or the ability to accommodate Halal dietary restrictions
- Clear signage to locate Halal food and prayer rooms.

### Prayer Rooms and Amenities

- A prayer room with ablution facilities.
- A prayer room with separate male and female spaces with ablution facilities.
- Staff at the information counters are trained on the Muslim traveler's needs and able to answer their information requests.
- Toilets with bidets, hand showers or lota (water jug or bottle).

## 6. CrescentRating Overview and Process

There are 9 steps for an establishment to acquire Crescent Rated which will typically take 3-6 weeks to complete and initiated through the website [www.crescentrating.com](http://www.crescentrating.com). Obtaining a Crescent Rating assures the Muslim community and increases visibility and online traffic for the Crescent Rated establishment.

1. **Sign up:** Begin the process by signing up on the CrescentRating platform and providing the necessary information about your establishment to create an account.
2. **Apply:** Once signed up, proceed to fill out the application form in which you are required to provide detailed information about your establishment, focusing on how it caters to Muslim-friendly services and amenities.
3. **Review:** After submitting the application, CrescentRating will review the provided details. This step involves assessing your establishment's compliance with CrescentRating's standards.
4. **Audit:** CrescentRating conducts an audit of your establishment, involving site visits or virtual inspections to assure and verify the information submitted in your application.
5. **Pay:** Following the audit, you will be required to make the necessary payment for CrescentRating's annual rating service.
6. **Confirm:** Once the payment is processed, CrescentRating will confirm by reviewing the audit report & awarding the final rating to the establishment.
7. **Display:** Your establishment will be provided with CrescentRating rating collaterals that can be downloaded to display them in your marketing channels. This showcases your commitment to being a Muslim-friendly establishment to potential patrons.
8. **Publish:** CrescentRating will proceed with publishing the rating for your establishment on its platform. This includes listing your establishment on CrescentRating's Member Directory Listing and HalalTrip's Member Directory Listing.
9. **Promote:** CrescentRating will begin the promotion campaign on your establishment through HalalTrip. You can freely promote your CrescentRating certification.

Below are the ratings for Crescent Rated Hotels, Shopping Malls, Attractions, and MICE Venue.

1. Crescent Rated Hotel, rates the overall Halal-friendliness of hotels on a scale of one to seven – with one being the lowest rating and seven being the highest.



In rating hotels, CrescentRating has a minimum requirement of level 3. The criteria of Hotel Rating are as follows.

<div>  <div>THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITY ON HALAL TRAVEL</div> </div>			
Criteria	5 crescent rating	4 crescent rating	3 crescent rating
 Muslim-friendly concierge support	✓	✓	✓
 Qibla Direction in Guest Rooms **	✓	✓	✓
 Hotel serves Halal food	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>
 Water-friendly toilets (e.g., bidet) **	✓	✓	

*\*Including iftar and sahoor during Ramadan*  
*\*\*Available on at least one floor of rooms*

<sup>1</sup> Halal breakfast corner (only uncooked meals)  
<sup>2</sup> BOT<sup>^</sup> Certified Halal-friendly Restaurant  
<sup>3</sup> BOT<sup>^</sup> Certified Halal Kitchen  
<sup>^</sup> The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong

2. Crescent Rated Shopping Mall, rates the overall Halal-friendliness of Shopping Malls. Bronze being the lowest and Gold being the highest.



3. Crescent Rated Attraction, rates the overall Halal-friendliness of Attractions. Bronze being the lowest and Gold being the highest.



4. Crescent Rated MICE Venue, rates the overall Halal-friendliness of MICE Venues. Bronze being the lowest and Gold being the highest.



In rating Shopping Malls, Attractions, and MICE Venues, CrescentRating has three different classifications. The classifications are as follows.

<div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div>crescent</div><div>rating</div></div><div>THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITY ON HALAL TRAVEL</div></div></div><div>Attraction/Shopping Mall/ MICE Venue Rating</div></div></div>			
Criteria	gold cr	silver cr	bronze cr
 Prayer Room	✓	✓	✓
 Halal Food	✓	✓	
 Ablution Facility	✓		
 Water-friendly toilet (e.g., bidet)	✓		

## 7. Additional Resources

- Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index Reports
- Other Mastercard-CrescentRating reports
- Crescentrating Playbook
- Crescentrating Blog section
- Halal In Travel Global Summit speeches and panel discussions: Crescentrating YouTube Channel



**Download the Reports here**



# Halal Tourism Basic Guidelines and Travel Glossary for **HONG KONG**



HONG KONG  
TOURISM BOARD  
香港旅遊發展局

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