



SEPTEMBER 3, 2014 BY SAQIB SHAFI

How People Reacted to the News that Creekstone is Halal

40,000 views in one day. 85,000 since debut. Over 10,000 shares, likes, and comments combined on Facebook. Restaurant groups changing their business operations. Big name food organizations reaching out for follow-up.

When I published the debut post for Muslim Eater on Creekstone Farms offering Halal meat I knew it would be big. **I didn't know it would be that big.**

The experience, overall, has been quite the ride. It's taught me a lot about the Muslim community and our interest obsession with meat while forcing me to learn more detail about the intricacies of Halal slaughter than I ever knew existed.

EATING OUT



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Allah blessed me with the opportunity to provide that for them.

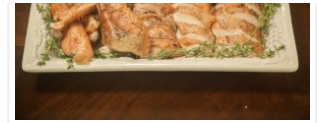
While I was excited to share the news on Creekstone after months of research, it was no match to the reaction of people who the article was written for. People were sharing the article online celebrating as if Paradise was found on Earth. I actually don't eat out that much, but it seems a lot of American Muslims do. Apparently the combination of Creekstone beef being a thing in high-end restaurants and also being Halal was something that affected the dining and social lives for hundreds if not thousands of Muslims.

The article also affected my life in how the Muslim community interacted with me. The day it went live my phone, Email, Twitter, Facebook, and any other form of contact were exploding with messages. Notable Muslim figures and personalities messaged me through the website and social media. When visiting the masjid people shook my hand like I had saved their first child. People introduce me at parties and weddings as "the guy who wrote the Creekstone article."

Funny, because when I first published the article, I had never even eaten Creekstone beef. In fact, I didn't even have it until two months after. People now see me as the champion of Halal beef in America, yet if they knew the real me, they'd know I'm much more excited about baking a loaf of sandwich bread from scratch or cooking up the perfect batch of oatmeal.

Responses from restaurants and food companies

Beyond readers and myself, the article affected a number of restaurants and food groups. Some contacted me to remove their name from the article's list of restaurants that serve Creekstone meat, as they either no longer did or never did in the first place (some purveyors provided me with restaurants which strangely never carried Creekstone). Others asked me to remove their name because they said, "we're not Halal," thinking my article claimed their entire



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But most interesting of all were those who embraced the hype. Some chains actually went out of their way to invite and accommodate Muslim customers by ensuring cross-contamination free cooking. One meat purveyor in another state that distributes Creekstone asked me how they can further reach out to their local Muslim community and make them aware of the Creekstone options in their area.

All in all, the reaction to the news exceeding any expectations I had. Thanks to all the readers who made it happen. In the aftermath, I'm thinking about the future. I'm looking forward to see how the advent of Creekstone will affect the Muslim food scene in the next few years.

Why I thought Muslims may not react so positively



Lockwood Restaurant in the Palmer House Hotel, Chicago [Photograph:

Haute Living

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When the news hit, many Muslims responded with the same reaction:

“OH MY GOD. THIS HAS CHANGED MY LIFE.”



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1. It's expensive. A lot of the restaurants listed are pretty upscale establishments. So, firstly, the price point for many of the dishes are a lot more than what Muslims are used to paying at the average Halal restaurant. Just for example, a steak dinner at Lockwood Restaurant in the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago costs at least \$50. That's without drinks, tip, and parking downtown. A lot more than that \$5 parahta roll many are used to.



Dry Aged Creekstone Côte de Boeuf with Roasted Bone Marrow, top menu item at Minetta Tavern in New York, \$145 [Photograph:

[Argus Guide](#)

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2. How the beef is cooked and prepared. With most ethnic Muslim cooking, cheap cuts of stew meat are used which is cooked low and slow for hours or quickly in a pressure cooker until the connective tissue in the meat converts into gelatin, giving the meat a different type of moisture even when cooked beyond medium rare. The type of steaks served at this restaurants aren't like that. They have optimal juiciness when cooked to medium rare. Go beyond even medium, and the meat dries out.

When I asked some people who claimed this news changed their lives if they eat meat, they responded, "no way, I can't eat anything remotely pink, medium well, at least." I'm not sure if I'd describe the

time to allow the juices to absorb back into the meat and the steaks usually seasoned only with salt in a lesser amount than super seasoned ethnic meat, you have beef that is way different than what many Muslims are used to; pink, lukewarm, and lightly seasoned. I remember once telling someone the reason only salt is used to season meat is to taste the actual flavor of beef. Their reaction? “Ick!”

3. The whole anti-red meat movement in the Muslim community which I’ve heard about in the past few years. Most Muslims I know are big time red meat eaters, especially men and especially lamb. But there are people who aren’t so into it, especially beef. The weird part is, those same people were blown-away excited at this news, calling it life changing, yet also told me, “I actually don’t really like red meat.”

All these issues put together in light of the types of reactions I received taught me one thing. We’re more excited by the idea of something being Halal than actually eating the Halal meat itself. I’m not sure why that is, but it could be because Halal eaters have been deprived of options for so long that’s causing them to act this way.

Either way, there *are* many Muslims that do eat their beef this way when cooking at home and already visit these types of establishments to eat seafood and vegetarian meals that will be excited to hear this news. I’m happy to be able to share it with them.

IN HALAL

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