



## EATING OUT



### The Ultimate List of Restaurants that Carry Creekstone Farms Beef

NOVEMBER 9, 2014 BY SAQIB SHAFI

## Shake Shack Is Not Halal in the US, But Some Day Could It Be?

Shake Shack is one of the most famous burger chains in the world. Started in 2004 as a hot dog stand in New York's Madison Square Park, the chain exploded in popularity and can be considered one of the inspirations for [the "better burger" renaissance for the past fifteen years in America.](#)

But there's something about Shake Shack that has recently come to the attention of many Halal eaters. Shake Shack uses Creekstone Farms beef. The same beef that is [processed as Halal with standards set up by Halal Transactions of Omaha.](#) So, if Shake Shack uses Creekstone,

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### Eating Out? 3 Reasons Why Seeking Beyond Meat Gets You Better Food



### Shake Shack Says They Are

The answer, unfortunately, is no.

While they do use Creekstone beef, Shake Shack also uses other suppliers of beef for the burgers at their restaurants and doesn't offer details on how that works. It's impossible to know which company's beef goes into the burger you order at one of their restaurants. As such, there is no way to guarantee your burger is all Creekstone and thus Halal.

Media Information vs. Corporate Response



[Photo: Jim McIsaac / Getty Images]

I can see where the confusion comes in. There are multiple sources that explicitly state the chain's use of Creekstone Farms beef:

- [New York Times article covering Creekstone Farms, 2010](#)
- [Miami Times article about some Creekstone beef being recalled, 2011](#)
- [Grub Street article covering Shake Shack, 2013](#)
- [Chicago Tribune article covering the opening of the first Shake Shack in Chicago, 2014](#)

Be

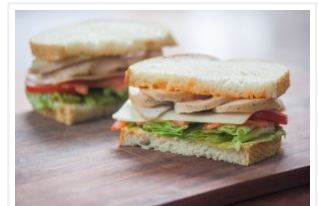
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### How to Make Halal In-N-Out Double Double Animal Style Burgers At Home



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But when reaching out to the company, it seems a different or perhaps *additional* story is told: **Creekstone isn't the only beef supplier the company uses.** That's what happened when a Sameer Sarmast of Sameer's Eats, Amir Sahib of Ibn Percy and HalalTube and a handful of other hopefully Muslim Eaters tried reaching out directly to Shake Shack via Twitter.

*@haroonjuice @patlafrieda @SameersEats*

*Unfortunately, our beef is not halal in the US. We use more than 1 supplier in the US for our beef.*

— *SHAKE SHACK (@shakeshack) October 13, 2013*

Amir posted the result to his blog, Ibn Percy, which interestingly enough mentioned Creekstone before I had published my initial article about its entire line of beef being processed Halal (Note: to the best of my knowledge, Amir's blog post was not published with the understanding that all Creekstone beef was found out to be Halal).

Not one to give up, I tried digging for more information. "Okay, fine, they use multiple suppliers," I said to myself while holding my plush burger toy at night.\* "But what if there are locations that only use Creekstone for their burgers?" A large part of this was driven by the announcement of the launch of Shake Shack in Chicago. The iconic chain was coming to my home town and I really wanted it to be Halal.

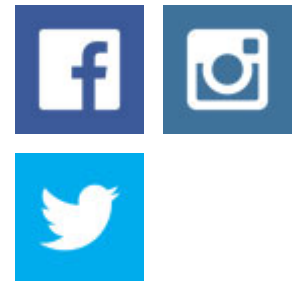
\*I may or may not sleep with a plush burger toy at night.

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found out by directly contacting Shake Shack's corporate office. Hopeful, I decided to give it a try.

My hopes, however, were crushed when I did:

----- *Forwarded message* -----

*Date: Fri, Sep 19, 2014 at 8:12 AM*

*Subject: Re: Creekstone Farms*

*To: Saqib Shafi*

*Creekstone Farm is one of our main beef suppliers, but we work with several suppliers for our all-natural Angus beef. All of the other suppliers meet or exceed the standards that Creekstone sets for humane treatment of animals, etc., so you should feel comfortable eating our burgers and hot dogs. However, we can't guarantee that our meat in the US is halal.*

*SHAKE SHACK*

*24 Union Square East, New York, NY 10003*

Halal? Interesting. I asked nothing about Halal in my Email, but clearly the company has either gotten inquiries about Halal before or understands what Creekstone Farms' beef is all about. When I asked for details of how and when meat from other suppliers is used, the rep I contacted replied again:

*To: Saqib Shafi*

*Thank you for being a Shack Fan! I'm sorry, this is all the information we have to offer at the moment. We cannot guarantee that our meat is halal.*

**SHAKE SHACK**

*24 Union Square East, New York, NY 10003*

Same story as the Twitter response. They use different suppliers, for one. But two, they won't give details on how that all works.

Some of those Muslims who reported getting information about Creekstone only locations suggested calling the main office. They said some people were able to get that request answered when speaking to a person on the phone. But when I called Shake Shack's New York main office, I received the exact same answer as the Email response: they use multiple suppliers, the details of that are proprietary, and they are not Halal.

Before giving up, I decided to try one last approach: Check with the Chicago location that just opened this week. Maybe a local store would be more open to answering customer inquiries. But when I called management gave me an explanation that was even tighter-lipped than my communications with corporate: stores don't talk about their meat suppliers, the details of that are proprietary, and they are not Halal. Essentially the same exact story.

serve Creekstone, I had no such blessing. Every attempt I made came back saying that the company will not comment on it.

## Frustrations

Admittedly, this predicament disappoints me. I've been following Shake Shack for some time now. Even though I've never actually eaten there, I've actually become a bit of what they call a Shack Fan. The chain is popular and has really affected the way burgers are going in America. As a person generally interested in food, you can't escape the fact that numerous food blogs cover it and TV shows feature it. The sheer [success of the company's story](#) is something that can interest you in eating there.

Post by [Saqib Shafi](#).

Beyond my personal fandom, though, I just wanted my fellow Muslims to be able to enjoy it. Because I technically found a way to enjoy Halal Shake Shacks in the US by way of a recipe called [the Fake Shack burger](#) by J. Kenji Lopez-Alt of Serious Eats. Kenji produced a homemade version of the hyped-up burger. When I first made his recipe a few years ago, I was blown away. It is one of the best and quite possibly my favorite style of burger ever that has taken over the burger making in our household. While I love making my own burgers, I know not everyone has the ability to do so. I wish Muslims in the US could enjoy a Halal Shack Burger simply by going to one of their locations, not cooking it on their own. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem like a possibility.

So, to any Muslim hoping or already ordering thinking as such, I would say to stay away. You simply don't know if the burger you're ordering is made from Creekstone beef or another non-Halal supplier.



'Shroom Burger – crisp-fried Portobello mushroom filled with melted muenster and cheddar, with lettuce, tomato, ShackSauce. [Photo:

[Charlie Hopper/Selling Eating](#)

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Salted Caramel Concrete with vanilla custard, bananas, and salted caramel doughnuts from Glazed & Infused, a Chicago exclusive special.

[Photo:

[Zach Long/Time Out Chicago](#)

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For one, you can still eat at Shake Shack even if you avoid their burger. They offer a vegetarian 'Shroom Burger which is a portobello mushroom that's breaded, stuffed with

Burger with the Chicago-only Salted Caramel Concrete made with vanilla custard, banana, and salted caramel doughnuts from Chicago's own [Glazed & Infused](#).

 Shake Shack Dubai. [Photo: Dubib]

Shake Shack Dubai. [Photo:

[Dubib](#)

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But if it's beef you must have, Shake Shack does have Creekstone only locations. In fact, they are actually labeled as "100% Halal," as in the entire store is Halal from end-to-end and even serve Halal beef bacon. They're just not in the US. These are the Shake Shacks in the Middle East and Turkey. The company is reportedly [opening dozens more across the Gulf and into Saudi Arabia](#). That means you can enjoy Shake Shack without any doubts of meat source by visiting Abu Dhabi, Dubai, or Istanbul. It also means a day will come where Al-Baik isn't the only fast food joint people will line up for while making the sacred journey of Hajj. Shake Shack will probably hit Mecca and Medina, too.

*Dinner: A Fake Shack burger.*

[pic.twitter.com/PW5Rk4JQhk](https://pic.twitter.com/PW5Rk4JQhk)

— *Saqib Shafi (@SaqibSaab) October 10, 2013*

You don't have to book a flight all the way to the Middle East for a Halal Shack Burger, though. Remember [that Fake Shack recipe](#)? You can simply make the burger right at home. Now, I've never had the original myself, but both Kenji and commenters of the recipe say that it tastes exactly like the real deal. But I also served it to a close family friend of ours who was visiting from Abu Dhabi. When she went back home, she tried Shake Shack for the first time. Upon



Lastly, who's to say this is the only way it has to be? Sure Shake Shack's been around for a decade now and has a well established business model. But that doesn't mean it can't change. The company is actually really progressive and open to customer concerns.




Hand-cut Fries, the way fries should be. [Photo:

[Evan Swung/Philly Mag](#)]

An example of this is in their contentious frozen crinkle cut fries. Many customers complained about them as a weak point of the establishment. The company listened and at select locations in New York tested out the gold standard of french fries: hand-cut double fried fries. This required installing new friers and performing extra training on employees. After much praise, Shake Shack announced that the fries were going to replace the frozen crinkle cut kind that have been a staple of Shake Shacks all over the world. Before this took place, the company actually reversed its decision after receiving backlash from loyal customers. Despite being inferior, these loyals didn't want to see the crinkle fries go away (weird, I know). But the whole thing shows their openness in listening to the customer.

then certainly the superior better burger chain of the world can, too (are you reading, dear Shake Shack?). We just have to let them know that's what we want.

So go ahead and hit up your local Shake Shack for a 'Shroom Burger and Concrete. While you're there, though, kindly let management know that you would like for them to offer you an all-Creekstone burger. With enough asking, maybe one day they will.

 [Photo: Ibrahim Salha]

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Ibrahim Salha

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