

Food and Family

Synopsis:

Food and family are two important elements in the lives of religious people. For many religious traditions, families are the foundation of faith life and many religious groups understand themselves as extensions of the family unit. Families are sacred spaces and the roles of mother and father within families carry religious responsibilities. The preparation and sharing of food can strengthen family relationships and are also a means of recreating ethno-religious identities. Many people practice dietary restrictions on the basis of religious beliefs such as fasting or abstaining from certain types of food and drink. Religious dietary restrictions can help heighten spiritual awareness, increase sensitivity to those who live with hunger, or promote self-discipline.

As Canada becomes increasingly diverse, so too do the food choices at our grocery stores and the culinary range offered by restaurants. This is in part due to the demands of religious consumers as well as religious proprietors. For example, as the Canadian Muslim population grows so too does the demand for halal meat as well as for restaurants that enable their patrons to easily observe Islamic dietary restrictions. Naz Ali is the chef at Caribbean Flavas, a “casual fine dining restaurant” in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Naz and his sisters Aziza & Azana came up with the restaurant concept during their studies at university. The restaurant décor and cuisine reflects the family’s Caribbean roots as well as their Muslim heritage. Naz’s parents are highly involved in the daily operations with mum working in the kitchen and dad greeting and serving patrons.