

Sophia University provides halal lunches after uptick in Muslim exchange students

①To better accommodate the growing number of Muslim exchange students, Sophia University in Tokyo has started selling boxed lunches made with halal food.

②“Until now, I have been buying my lunch at convenience stores and asking my Japanese friends to make sure it doesn’t include pork,” said Panji Purdi, a 21-year-old student from Indonesia. “Halal food is usually rather expensive, but lunches sold here are low-priced and delicious.”

③Sophia’s Yotsuya campus in Chiyoda Ward has been selling about 150 units daily since April 16 for between ¥240 and ¥500. The fare ranges from hamburgers and fried chicken to curry with rice.

④The university, which started a student exchange program with four Southeast Asian countries last year, decided to offer halal lunches after a questionnaire found that many of its roughly 30 Muslim students have a difficult time determining whether the meals they buy include pork, which Muslims abstain from eating, a university spokesman said.



⑤“Since the nationalities of exchange students are becoming more diversified, we want to continue improving the environment for them,” the spokesman said. The lunches are popular among Japanese students and other exchange students as well, according to the university. 【May 1, 2015 / Japan Times】 ←Sophia University is offering halal boxed lunches amid increasing number of Muslim students.

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Halal Meal at University in Japan

It’s not easy to find a halal meal restaurant in Japan as most Japanese people are not familiar with a halal food, however, I know one place I bet you can have a delicious halal meal at an affordable price. That is actually University cafeteria. Nowadays, Muslim exchange students are increasing. Universities are changing according to the circumstance including food service.

Most national universities have a partnership with “National federation of university Co-operative associations” (CO-OP) which tried offering halal meal at university cafeteria. Most organizations are bothered with a strict standard of halal meal and gave up. Nevertheless, CO-OP dealt with the problem, and finally passed inspections and received authorizations from religious organization “Japan Islamic Trust” two decades ago. Thanks to the CO-OP’s effort, Muslim students became able to have a lunch with a friend without caring difference in religion.

In Japan, anybody can enter university campuses freely, therefore, you can use a school cafeteria even if you’re not a university student. All meals are affordable and delicious, so it is worth going to University cafeteria even though the aim is not for halal food.

25 National University cafeterias, including Tokyo University, Kyoto University, offer a halal meal now. If you are curious about cafeteria’s halal meal, by all means, you should visit! 【Nov 13, 2016 / Excerpt from Fan! Japan】

★Ice breaker for active discussion

1. Have you ever tried the Halal food? How was your experience? If not, would you like to try?
2. Please share your memories regarding school cafeterias.
3. What do you think will be the effects of having a Halal section in University cafeterias?
4. What other changes can Universities do to attract more non-Japanese students?
5. Make sentences using the following words: accommodate, questionnaire, abstain, diversified and affordable.