

Types of Additives and What They Do

It is important to know what you're eating and what exactly is in your food. It is also important to remember that 'Halal' does not just relate to meat and poultry. In the world today there are hundreds of additives added to our food – be it to make them taste better, look better or last longer – and these are not all necessarily halal.

Types of Additives and what they do:

- **Anti-caking agents** – stop ingredients becoming lumpy and thick.
- **Antioxidants** – prevent foods from oxidising, or going rancid.
- **Artificial sweeteners** – increase sweetness.
- **Emulsifiers** – stop fats from clotting together.
- **Food acids** – maintain the right acid level.
- **Colours** – enhance or add colour.
- **Humectants** – keep foods moist.
- **Flavours** – add flavour.
- **Flavour enhancers** – increase the power of a flavour.
- **Foaming agents** – maintain uniform aeration of gases in foods.
- **Mineral salts** – enhance texture and flavour.
- **Preservatives** – stop microbes from multiplying and spoiling food.
- **Thickeners and vegetable gums** – enhance texture and consistency.
- **Stabilisers and firming agents** – maintain shape of food.
- **Flour treatment** – improve baking quality.
- **Glazing agent** – improves appearance and can protect food.
- **Gelling agents** – alter the texture of foods.
- **Propellants** – help propel food from a container.
- **Raising / Bulking agents** – increase the volume / size of food through the use of gases.

When you look at the ingredients at the back of a food product, all of the above will have their own unique 'E-number' and these numbers are recognised all over the world. E-numbers were created by the European Economic Committee so that additives in food could be recognised and regulated easily all over the world.



So many E-numbers... what do they mean?

- **100-199** food colours
- **200-299** preservatives
- **300-399** antioxidants, phosphates, and complex agents
- **400-499** thickeners, gelling agents, phosphates, humectants, emulsifiers
- **500-599** salts and related compounds
- **600-699** flavour enhancers
- **700-899** not used for food additives (used for feed additives)
- **900-999** surface coating agents, gases, sweeteners
- **1000-1399** miscellaneous additive
- **1400-1499** starch derivatives

What is Halal and what isn't?

For additives to be halal they must be from vegetarian, synthetic or microbial sources. Additives that have been sourced from HALAL slaughtered animals are also permitted. If it has not been stated that an additive, let's say gelatine, for example, has come from a halal slaughtered animal, the product should be avoided.