

News • Ramadan

## How Muslim Businesses Observing Ramadan Are Overcoming COVID-19 Setbacks

These Muslim-owned businesses are still operating across the U.S. Here's how you can support them this Ramadan.

By Aliya Karim

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GETTY IMAGES/ASEM ABUSIR CARRIES A FRESHLY BAKED KNAFEH PASTRY TO VISITORS AT HIS CAFE.

As 1.8 billion Muslims around the globe begin fasting for Ramadan, those who are small business owners are continuing to feel the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Farine Baking Company, a Muslim-owned company in Queens, New York, lost approximately 70% of its business and now has only four employees working. Knafeh Cafe in Anaheim, California, which specializes in Mediterranean pastries, lost its catering business, which typically accounts for much of its earned income. And the list goes on and on.

But many of the businesses have continued to make sales by shifting their efforts online.

“People realized that we can deliver knafeh overnight, we can deliver any other type of sweets, and in a couple of days they’ll have it at their doorsteps,” explained Knafeh Cafe owner Asem Abusir, who continues to make his Palestinian family’s dessert specialty, nablusi knafeh. “That

activated our website in a good way.”

Kareem’s Falafel, also in Anaheim, lost 60% of its in-store sales but has nearly doubled its sales to local supermarkets. Customers have also been purchasing its “quarantine falafel” to cook at home.

“This is a new era in business,” said Idris Braithwaite, the owner of Abu’s Bakery in Brooklyn. “You get used to having to improvise in order to find a way to stay alive.”

Braithwaite knows of two people from his local business community who’ve died from COVID-19, and another who is in the hospital fighting for his life. To help slow the spread of the virus, barbershops, nail salons, gyms, and other businesses deemed non-essential have shuttered their windows.

“We can’t take for granted that some of these institutions will be there after this,” he said. “It almost feels like another wave of gentrification.”

In states that are starting to reopen some businesses this week, those in the food industry are nervous about the repercussions.

“In a way, with things being locked down, we felt safer,” explained Riyadh Al-Kasem, who owns Cafe Rakka in Hendersonville, Tennessee. “Now they’re trying to open the state prematurely, [and] some of my employees are feeling extremely in danger.”

Despite the drop in sales and the risks of reopened economies, many are continuing the work of feeding their communities. BigDash is one of more than a dozen Muslim-owned businesses in the Dallas, Texas, area that have teamed up to feed local health care workers.

“We’ve been matching the food with sweet boxes so we can give back and help out the people on the front lines,” BigDash owner Kareem Alrefaai explained. “We’re very optimistic, hoping that when this is all over with, everything goes back to normal. Of course, we have to do our part in order for us to get to the other side.”

“In times like this where people need to be reassured that things will be okay, it serves a purpose of helping people maintain the community, maintain a sense of normality,” Braithwaite said. “[We’re serving] that purpose of what comfort food does.”

It’s nearly impossible to list all the Muslim-owned businesses in the U.S. that are still operating during the COVID-19 pandemic, but here are some worth considering this Ramadan:

## CALIFORNIA

- Cracked & Battered (San Francisco) — takeout (call 415-926-8645)
- De Afghanan Kabob House (San Francisco) — takeout (call 415-929-1124); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats; also delivering meals to health care workers
- Kareem’s Falafel (Anaheim) — delivery through DoorDash and Grubhub; falafel mix free nationwide shipping
- Khan Saab Desi Craft Kitchen (Fullerton) — takeout (call 714-853-1081 for 10% off); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, and Postmates; also distributing free vegan meals and bags of rice and lentils every Friday
- Knafeh Cafe (Anaheim) — takeout and delivery (call 714-442-0044); knafeh and dessert free nationwide shipping; selling qatayef and warbat for Ramadan
- Kroran Uyghur Cuisine (San Diego) — takeout for 15% off (call 858-430-6730); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, Postmates, and Uber Eats
- Pakwan Restaurant (San Francisco) — takeout at all locations; delivery from Tenderloin and Ocean Avenue locations through DoorDash and Uber Eats

## D.C.

- Dolan Uyghur (Cleveland Park) — takeout (call 202-686-3941); also delivering meals to health care workers
- George's (Georgetown) — takeout and delivery through website, use code stayhome2020 for 20% off
- Mama Ayesha's (Woodley Park) — takeout (call 202-232-5431)
- New Dynasty (Dupont Circle) — takeout (call 202-296-6688); delivery through Grubhub and Postmates

## FLORIDA

- Al Basha Grill (Miami) — takeout and delivery (call 786-216-7114)
- Bawarchi Biryani (Brandon) — delivery online or by phone (call 813-324-9314), use code delivery for \$10 off
- Zeko's Grill (Tampa) — takeout and delivery through website

## ILLINOIS

- Chayhana (Chicago) — takeout (call 773-942-7720); delivery through Grubhub
- I Dream Of Falafel (Chicago, Oakbridge Terrace, Vernon Hills) — takeout/curbside pickup and delivery (call 312-559-3333); also delivering meals to health care workers
- Sabri Nihari (Chicago) — takeout (call 773-465-3272); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats; also delivering meals to health care workers

## MARYLAND

- Amina Thai (Rockville) — takeout and delivery (call 301-770-9509)
- Eerkin's Uyghur Cuisine (D.C., Rockville) — takeout at two locations; delivery through Grubhub, Postmates, and Uber Eats, order online for 10% off; also donating meals to health workers

## MASSACHUSETTS

- Darbar (Brighton) — takeout; delivery through DoorDash and Grubhub
- Moroccan Hospitality Restaurant (Somerville) — takeout (call 617-623-0020); delivery through Uber Eats
- Sam's Falafel & Shawarma (Somerville) — order online for free delivery and 20% off
- Silk Road Express (Allston) — takeout (call 617-987-0121); delivery through Chowbus and Grubhub
- Silk Road Uyghur Cuisine (Cambridge) — takeout (call 617-945-1909)
- Tawakal Halal Cafe (Boston) — takeout/curbside pickup (call 617-418-5890); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats

## MICHIGAN

- Bonoful Sweets & Cafe (Hamtramck) — takeout (call 313-368-8800); delivery through DoorDash
- Good Burger (Dearborn, Detroit, Garden City) — takeout/curbside pickup and delivery at all locations
- Hamido (Dearborn) — takeout/curbside pickup (call 313-582-0660); delivery through DoorDash
- Sajouna Cafe & Bakery (Dearborn Heights) — takeout/curbside pickup (call 313-277-8877)
- Shatila (Dearborn) — takeout/curbside pickup (call 313-582-1952); delivery through DoorDash; baklava and dessert nationwide shipping

## MINNESOTA

- Wally's Falafel & Hummus (Minneapolis) — takeout for 10% off (call 612-746-4776); delivery through Bite Squad and DoorDash; also delivering meals to health care and emergency workers
- World Street Kitchen (Minneapolis) — takeout/curbside pickup and free delivery for \$25 and up through website and app

## NEW JERSEY

- Flamez Wood Fired Pizza (Blackwood) — takeout for 5% off; delivery through website for 10% off
- Kabab Paradise (Lake Hiawatha, Randolph, Teaneck) — takeout at all three locations; delivery through website or Uber Eats
- N Thai Palace (East Brunswick, Somerset) — takeout (call 732-257-1172); delivery through DoorDash and Grubhub
- Tribos Peri Peri (Saddle Brook, Jersey City) — takeout and delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats

## NEW YORK

- Abu's Bakery (Brooklyn) — takeout and delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, Postmates, and Uber Eats; also offering iftar meals to the local community on May 12 and 19
- BK JANI (Brooklyn) — takeout (call 347-460-5110); delivery through Grubhub
- David's Brisket House (Brooklyn) — delivery through Caviar, DoorDash, Grubhub, and Seamless
- Halal Hot Fried Chicken (Bronx) — takeout (call 718-829-2834)
- Farine Baking Company (Queens) — takeout and delivery through website and Grubhub; special iftar menu for Ramadan; also delivering weekly meals to health care and rescue workers and handing out free food at the storefront
- Lagman House (Brooklyn) — delivery through DoorDash and Postmates
- Sahadi's (Brooklyn) — in-person shopping at Industry City location; curbside pickup at both locations; delivery through Caviar and Mercato
- Honest Chops Butchery (Manhattan) — delivery through Mercato; limited in-store pickup Wednesday-Sunday (call 212-388-0762)

## OHIO

- Istanbul Grill (Avon) — takeout and delivery (call 440-937-0733)
- Lavash Cafe (Columbus) — takeout/curbside pickup through website; delivery through DoorDash and Uber Eats
- MoMo's Kebab (Cleveland) — takeout (call 216-932-3512)
- Pepper's Wings & Fish (Columbus) — in-person orders and takeout (call 614-859-7486); drive-thru

## PENNSYLVANIA

- Al Zaytouna (Philadelphia) — takeout (call 215-574-5040); delivery through website and Caviar
- Joe & Pie Cafe Pizzeria (Coraopolis, Pittsburgh) — delivery through website or by phone at three locations; also delivering pizza to health care workers
- Manakeesh (Philadelphia) — takeout and delivery through website and Caviar
- Saad's Halal Restaurant (Philadelphia) — takeout (call 215-222-7223); delivery through Uber Eats

## TENNESSEE

- Cafe Rakka (Hendersonville) — takeout/curbside pickup and delivery (call 615-824-6264); special combo meals for Ramadan; also delivering meals to health care workers
- Yassin's Falafel House (Knoxville) — takeout/curbside pickup from West Knoxville location (call 865-247-7567); delivery through Bite Squad; also offering free meals to children in need

## TEXAS

- Agha Juice & Cafe (Carrollton, North Houston, Plano, Sugarland) — delivery through DoorDash
- Andalous Mediterranean Grill (Arlington, Irving, Richardson) — takeout and delivery at all locations for \$30 and up within 10 miles

- BigDash (Frisco, Richardson) — takeout/curbside pickup and delivery at both locations; extending hours to midnight for Ramadan; also donating sweets to health care workers
- Loyal Cafe & Creperie (Houston) — takeout for 20% off (call 713-360-7835)
- Lime n Dime (Plano) — takeout/curbside pickup (call 214-501-2183); delivery through Uber Eats
- S&S CheeseSteaks (Arlington) — drive-thru; delivery through DoorDash and Grubhub
- Sukoon Coffee & Ice Cream (Lewisville) — takeout and delivery through DoorDash and Uber Eats
- We're-Dough Bakery (Houston) — takeout/curbside pickup (call 832-582-8877); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, Postmates, and Uber Eats

## **VIRGINIA**

- Burger 7 (Arlington, Alexandria, Dunn Loring, Tyson's Corner) — takeout and delivery at all locations
- East West Grill (Arlington) — takeout and delivery (call 703-312-4888)
- HalalCo (Falls Church) — meat and grocery curbside pickup and delivery (call 703-532-3202); limited customer capacity in-store
- Levant Kitchen (Fairfax) — free delivery within 10 miles (call 571-303-8709)

## **WASHINGTON**

- Almanqal Mediterranean Grill (Seattle) — takeout (call 206-659-4664); delivery through DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats
- Jasmine Kitchen (Kirkland) — takeout (call 425-820-8002); delivery through Grubhub
- Juba Restaurant & Cafe (Seattle) — takeout (call 206-202-2011)

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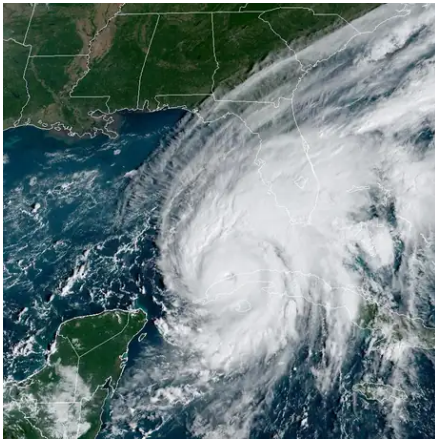
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