

Iran

Response to Information Request Number:	IRN99001.ZLA
Date:	16 November 1998
Subject:	Iran: Availability Of Pork
From:	INS Resource Information Center, Washington, DC
Keywords:	Iran / Islam / Islamic Law / Freedom Of Religion

Query:

What is the availability of pork in Iran?

Can the closing of the only pork factory in Iran be confirmed in print?

Response:

Information on the availability of pork in Iran in print could not be found among the sources currently available to the RIC.

According to a Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs at the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, there could be a quiet black market in pork in Iran. The Specialist stated that although he is not aware of this type of activity in Iran, he compared it to the consumption of alcohol, which is also banned under Islamic law. The Specialist said that security squads often break up parties, mostly involving foreigners, where alcohol was being served, often accepting bribes to look the other way. The Specialist noted that Iran has a porous importation system, that a lot of trade goes unnoticed, and that there are many ways to import pork into the country. The Specialist did not have any information regarding the closing of Iran's only pork factory (5 Nov. 1998).

According to a Professor at George Mason University who specializes in Iran, while pork is forbidden under Islamic law, the policy in Iran is to leave minority religions alone. The professor stated that Armenians living in Iran are allowed to eat pork, and although pork is not publicly available, he believes pork can be purchased "under the table." The professor noted that pork was available before the revolution, mostly in salami and cold cuts, but was banned after the revolution. The professor also did not have any information regarding the closing of Iran's only pork factory (13 Nov. 1998).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

References:

Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. 13 November 1998. Telephone Interview.

Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. 5 November 1998. Telephone Interview.

Last Modified 06/14/2002