



642258 - Is it permissible to eat kangaroos and giraffes?

the question

I saw some video clips of people eating kangaroo meat, and there are some clips of people slaughtering and eating a giraffe.

My question is: what is the ruling on eating kangaroos and giraffes? I hope you can explain that. And what are the scholarly views and opinions that allow that?

Summary of answer

It is permissible to eat kangaroos and giraffes.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

Kangaroos are animals that eat grasses and plants.

In *Mu`jam al-Lughat al-`Arabiyyat al-Mu`asirah* (3/1963), it says:

The kangaroo is a herbivore that feeds on grasses and leaves of trees, and is widespread in the plains of Australia. It moves by hopping, and rests on its two feet. Related species include the ursine tree-kangaroos and wallaby. End quote.

In principle, the ruling on eating animal flesh is that it is permissible so long as there is no religious text to indicate that it is prohibited. As the kangaroo is not a predator and does not attack with fangs – rather it eats plants – there is nothing wrong with eating its flesh.

The kangaroo has no fangs and is not a predator, and there is no Islamic text to suggest that it is



prohibited. Based on that, eating it is permissible. Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Say: I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it is the meat of animals found dead or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine - for indeed, it is impure - or it is [that slaughtered in] disobedience, dedicated to other than Allah} [Al-An`am 6:145].

It says in *Mawsu`at Sina`at al-Halal*, issued by the Ifta' [fatwa-issuing] Department in Kuwait (1/207):

With regard to kangaroo meat, the committee thinks that it is permissible to eat it, because there is no text to indicate that it is prohibited, and because it is a herbivorous animal that has no fangs, and it is not among the animals that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade us to eat in the hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade us to eat any predator that has fangs and any bird that has talons. Narrated by Muslim. And because the basic principle regarding food says that they are permissible, so long as eating them is not proven to be harmful to humans.

II.

The scholars differed with regard to whether it is permissible to eat giraffes, and there are two views:

The first view is that it is permissible. This is the view of the Malikis and Hanbalis, and of some of the Shafa`is.

They said: That is because the basic principle is that things are permissible, and it has no fangs, so the evidence of prohibition is not applicable in this case.

It says in *Hashiyat as-Sawi `ala ash-Sharh as-Saghir* (2/171): It is obligatory, when slaughtering camels and giraffes, to slaughter the animal by stabbing it at the base of the neck. End quote.

In *Muntaha al-Iradat* (5/180) it says:

And other animals besides these are also permissible, such as livestock animals, horses and other



wild animals like giraffes and rabbits. End quote.

The second view is that it is prohibited. This is the view of an-Nawawi among the Shafa`is and of Abul-Khattab among the Hanbalis.

They said: That is because it is a cross between two animals [this was the view held at that time – approx. 6th century AH/12th century CE], one that may be eaten and one that may not be eaten.

In *Al-Majmu` Sharh al-Muadhdhab* (9/27), it says:

It is prohibited to eat giraffes, and there is no difference of scholarly opinion. Some of the scholars regarded them as a cross between an animal that may be eaten and an animal that may not be eaten.

The majority of Shafa`is rejected the view of an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him).

Ar-Ramli the Elder said in his commentary on *Asna al-Matalib* (1/564):

Al-Adhru`i said: What is mentioned in *Al-Muadhdhab* is weird; in fact it [the giraffe] is a cross between two animals that may be eaten, so there is no need for this prohibition. End quote.

It says in *Al-Ghurar al-Bahiyyah* (5/176): Az-Zarkashi said: What is mentioned in *Al-Majmu`* is a mistake; the correct view is the opposite. End quote.

In *Bidayat al-Muhtaj* (1/714) it says:

The prohibition on eating giraffes is mentioned in *Sharh al-Muadhdhab*, but the correct view is that it is permissible to eat them. End quote.

The Shafa`i scholars who stated that it is permissible to eat giraffes include al-Qadi Husayn, as-Subki, Ibn al-Qattan, Ibn Kaj, al-Adhru`i and az-Zarkashi.

See: *Tahrir al-Fatawa* by al-`Iraqi, 3/427; *Al-Ashbah wan-Naza'ir*, p. 60.

It says in *Al-Muharrar fil-Fiqh* by Abul-Barakat ibn Taymiyah (2/189): Abul-Khattab regarded eating



giraffes as prohibited and Ahmad regarded it as permissible.

In *Al-Insaf* (27/219) it says:

Eating giraffes is permissible. This is our view; that was stated by many scholars, and it is the view of the majority of our companions. End quote.

Qadi al-Qudat Taqiy ad-Din as-Subki (may Allah have mercy on him) discussed the view of those who regarded it as prohibited, and went to great lengths in refuting it, then at the end of his discussion he said:

Most of our companions did not discuss this issue at all, and they did not say whether it was permissible or prohibited. I have not seen this view narrated except in the books of these two madhhabs – meaning the Shafa`i and Hanbali madhhabs – even though there are very few who narrated it.

It is no secret that the madhhab of Malik permits it, even though they did not state that or refer to it in their books.

From this we may conclude that the majority of scholars regarded that as permissible, and there is evidence to confirm it, because the giraffe has no fangs, so the evidence of the prohibition does not apply to it, and the basic principle is that things are permissible [unless there is evidence to the contrary]. Moreover, the fact that the giraffe is likened to the camel dictates that it should be permissible, and it is more appropriate that it should be permissible than rabbits, hyenas and lizards, all three of which are proven to be permissible on the basis of the religious texts. Hence we favour the view that it is permissible.

The Hanafis did not mention it, but their guidelines dictate that it must be permissible. And Allah knows best.

End quote from *Qada' al-Arab fi As'alati Halab*, p. 538.

Ibn Nujaym al-Hanafi (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated in *Al-Ashbah wan-Naza'ir* (p. 57)



that as-Subki said: None of the Malikis or Hanafis mentioned it, but their guidelines dictate that it must be permissible. And he made no further comment.

Conclusion:

Eating giraffe meat is permissible, because it has no fangs with which to hunt, and the basic principle is that foods are permissible unless there is evidence to indicate that they are prohibited.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It says in *Ar-Rawd*: ... such as the giraffe, rock hyrax (a small, herbivorous mammal) and jerboa; and also the peacock and parrot. All of these are permissible, based on this guideline.

End quote *from Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 15/33.

Shaykh `Abd al-Muhsin al-`Abbad was asked in *Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud* (463/16):

Is it permissible to eat elephants, giraffes and kangaroos, and what is the guideline on eating animal flesh?

He replied:

It is well known that Islamic teachings gave guidelines on this matter: any bird that has talons and any predator that has fangs is prohibited, as was narrated from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Also prohibited is whatever creatures are regarded as filthy and repulsive.

As for the details having to do with different types of animals, one should refer to the religious texts, but basically things are permissible unless there is evidence to prove that they are prohibited or they come under the general guidelines, such as animals that use fangs to kill, or birds that use talons, or any creatures that are regarded as filthy, and the like.

This ruling is applicable to all animals. End quote.



And Allah knows best.