



IHeartHalal

Navy Pier ♥ April 13-15 2018 ♥ ihearthalal.com

For Immediate Release

Photos available upon request

***I HEART HALAL™* ANNOUNCES ROBUST ROSTER OF NATIONAL EXPERTS & ENTERTAINERS FOR FIRST-EVER *HALAL* LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL IN AMERICA, AT CHICAGO'S NAVY PIER, APRIL 13-15**

- First hijabi **Cover Girl™ Ambassador Nura Afia** to lead Beauty Masterclasses
- **TV MasterChef Amanda Saab** and *My Halal Kitchen's Yvonne Maffei* among experts hosting interactive cooking & lifestyle demos all weekend
- Evening programming includes high-end Modest Fashion show Friday, and '*America's Least Wanted*' national comedy showcase headlined by **Mo Amer** Saturday
- Panel discussions range in spirit from '*American Women and Muslim Identity*' & '*Civic Engagement in Modern Day America*' to '*I Don't Wanna Be A Doctor!*'

(March 28, 2018) CHICAGO, IL – *I Heart Halal™*, the first-ever *Halal* lifestyle festival in America, has announced a robust roster of nationally recognized experts and entertainers headlining its jam-packed weekend event at Chicago's landmark Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Avenue, Friday, April 13 - Sunday, April 15, 2018. Among the highlights are certain to be two Beauty Masterclasses led by CoverGirl™ cosmetics' first hijabi Beauty Ambassador **Nura Afia**; two high-end "Proud to be Me" Modest Fashion shows produced by London event guru **Hajira Ahmad**; a comedy showcase starring some of America's top Muslim stand-up comics as seen on *HBO* and *Late Night with Stephen Colbert*, including headliner **Mo Amer**, plus **Ramy Youssef**, **Zainab Johnson**, and **Ahamed Weinberg**, hosted by Chicago native **Azhar Usman**; ongoing interactive cooking & lifestyle demonstrations with top Halal culinary names such as Chef **Demetrios Haralambatos**, **Yvonne Maffei**, **Amanda Saab** and **Sameer Sarmast**, plus a holiday decorating session with **Reem Sayes** and a special men's grooming segment with popular **Nour the Barber**; and a series of thoughtful panel discussions addressing wide ranging topics from Muslim in America to the growing *Halal* economy to experiencing the world through travel with *Halal* hospitality.

Plus, this new high-energy Festival will feature ongoing activity throughout the weekend including a Bazaar of merchants offering fashion, art, travel, and lifestyle products and services that meet the discerning eye of the *Halal* consumer; a *Taste of Halal* food hall featuring some 15 local restaurants; and a festive, family-friendly Kids Zone.

“Our goal for this new festival is to create a space for individuals and families to connect and have fun and experience all the brands creating products and services that meet the needs of anyone looking to live a life that is good and in line with their values, a life that is *Halal*,” said Festival Co-Managing Director **Asma Ahad**. “There is truly something for everyone, age 3 to 93, at *I Heart Halal*. You can laugh and be entertained by nationally recognized Muslim comedians, check out the latest trends in fashion and beauty, discover new travel destinations to explore, learn new ways to invest ethically, find ways to better take care of your body through exercise and nutrition, and socialize and make meaningful connections with a community of people that have like-minded interests and share the same values of living a life that is good,” added Co-Managing Director **Salman Chaudry**.

Among the programming *I Heart Halal* festival-goers can expect to experience:

BEAUTY MASTERCLASSES led by CoverGirl Ambassador Nura Afia (Sat 5:30-7pm, Sun 2:30-4pm)



[Nura Afia](#) is an American Muslim beauty blogger, social influencer, makeup artist and model. She garnered acclaim as one of the pioneers in the makeup genre for Muslim hijabi women on social media and made history as the first hijabi CoverGirl Beauty Ambassador. Afia will share insider tips and tricks as she creates a look and compares drugstore and high end make up products.

Saturday’s demo will focus on creating a natural look while Sunday shows off a ‘Supa Glam’ style! First 100 ticket purchasers for each show receive VIP swag bag courtesy of NYX Cosmetics.

“PROUD TO BE ME” MODEST FASHION SHOWS (Fri 8-9pm and Sat 4-5pm)



Two high end Modest Fashion shows will showcase everyday and unique labels on the runway, including Akira, Artizara, Niswa Fashion, and Islamic Design House, to name a few. Produced by London-based event director [Hajira Ahmed](#), the shows will be emceed by New York-based modest fashion expert and Haute Hijab company founder [Melanie Elturk](#). The programs will feature a special live performance by [Qais Essar](#), Phoenix-based contemporary Afghan composer, instrumentalist and producer who channels his melodic designs through the *rabab*, a 2,500-year-old instrument from Afghanistan. First 100 ticket purchasers for each show receive a VIP swag bag.

“illarious presents: AMERICA’S LEAST WANTED” COMEDY SHOWCASE (Sat 8-10pm)



Starring some of America's top Muslim stand-up comics, “America’s Least Wanted” show employs the power of humor to expose our collective fears and hypocrisies, and to help us laugh at ourselves. The one-night-only performance is headlined by [Mo Amer](#) (CBS’ *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, HBO’s *Crashing*, Comedy Central’s *@midnight*), with supporting acts: [Ramy Youssef](#) (USA’s *Mr. Robot*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, Nick@Nite’s *See Dad Run*), [Zainab Johnson](#) (HBO’s *All Def Comedy*, NBC’s *Last Comic Standing*, BET’s *Comic View*), and [Ahamed Weinberg](#) (NBC’s *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, IFC’s *Comedy Bang Bang*, HBO’s *Insecure*). The show will be hosted by Chicago native, [Azhar](#) Usman (Amazon’s *Patriot*).

CULINARY & LIFESTYLE DEMONSTRATIONS

- *Everyday Recipes* with **Chef Demetrios Haralambatos** of Kontos Foods (Fri 3:30-4:30pm)
- *Cake Decorating* with *Masterchef* contestant and Amanda’s Plate blogger [Amanda Saab](#) (Fri 5:30-6:30pm; Sat 2-3pm)
- *Food, Fitness and Spirituality for Men* with North Shore fitness expert [Khoshal Azami](#) (Sat 1:45-2:45pm)
- *Preparing for Ramadan* using everyday products with Organic Valley and My Halal Kitchen’s [Yvonne Maffei](#) (Sat 3-4pm, Sun 3-4pm)
- *Food, Fitness and Spirituality for Women* with NY trainer [Zainab Ismail](#) (Sat 3:15-4:15pm)
- *Decorating your home for the Holidays* with Days of Eid Founder [Reem Sayes](#) (Sat 4-5pm)

- *Eating, Exercising and Ramadan Gainz* offers expert tips on maintaining a healthy lifestyle with reps from Nutrilite and MIDAN plus **Khoshal Azami** and **Zainab Ismail** (Sat 5:30-6:20pm)
- *Sameer's Eats Presents 'Top Halal Chef'* on site cooking competition with [Sameer Sarmast](#) (Sat 6:30-7:30pm)
- *Sameer's Eats Presents 'Dress to Impress'* best dressed cake competition (Sun noon-1pm)
- *Meet the Influencers* including trailblazers who have successfully launched careers as entrepreneurs and share their stories on social media: [Irene Sarah](#) and Haute Hijab's **Melanie Elturk** (Fri 7-8pm) and **Nura Afia**, **Nour the Barber** and beauty blogger [Elwa Saleh](#) (Sun 1-2pm)
- *Best Barber in the World* Chicago trendsetter [Nour the Barber](#) shares tips and techniques for male grooming (Sun 4-5pm)

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

- *Civic Engagement in Modern Day America* with representatives from the ACLU, Inner City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), and Muslim Caucus of America (Fri 5:30-6:30pm)
- *American Women and Muslim Identity* with Chicago's own [Hoda Katebi](#), Santa Monica-based periodontist [Dr. Sahar Shafi](#) and Detroit artist [Zeinab Saab](#) (Sat 11am-noon)
- *Is Modesty Just Another Fashion Trend?* with [Alaa Elhazezi](#) of Haus of Blush, [Atif Kazmi](#) of Por Homme, [Nadia Azmy](#) of Minaazine, and [Hoda Katebi](#) of JooJoo Azad (Sat noon-1pm)
- *The Halal Economy and the Future of Finance* with Haroon Latif, director strategic insights for industry leader [Dinar Standard](#) (Sat noon-1pm)
- *Navigate and Experience the World with Halal Hospitality* features Huda and Zain of [Muslim Travelers](#) revealing some surprising halal-friendly destinations and travel hacks every *Halal* traveler should know, while travel companies [Serendipity Tailormade](#) and [Holiday Bosnia](#) share inspiring destinations and opportunities to engage with local communities. The seminar will be led by **Reem El Shafaki** of DinarStandard's travel practice (Sat 3-4pm)
- *Muslim in America* with Sadaf Javaid of [illMuslims](#), Himmad Khan of [Haloodie](#), Detroit artist [Marlo Broughton](#), and more (Sun 11a-noon)
- *I Don't Wanna Be A Doctor!* with some who've taken the path less traveled including Por Homme's **Atif Kazmi**, NASA rocket scientist **Humna Khan**, creative director and photographer **Farhat Sikdar**, [illMuslims'](#) **Rummi Khan**, and Brooklyn poet and actor [Mos Gen](#) (Sun noon-1pm)

ONGOING ATTRACTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND

- A lively Bazaar featuring a broad selection of vendors showcasing the entire *Halal* lifestyle including fashion, art, and travel
- *Taste of Halal* food hall offering myriad options for a complete meal or a snack including such favorite restaurants as Halal Guys, OrganiSoul, Wok N Chop, Karahi Corner, Verzênay pâtisserie.
- Festive family zone providing a safe space for children and families to connect with others while providing their kids robust physical activity with large inflatables, and engaging activities and attractions including character artists and face painters.

ABOUT HALAL & THE INAUGURAL I HEART HALAL FESTIVAL

"*Halal*" means *permissible* according to Islam, but among Muslims today, it means so much more. *Halal* products are those that are good, wholesome, healthy, and nutritious. They may be ethically sourced and produced, cruelty free, vegan, vegetarian, or organic. Beyond *Halal* products are *Halal* actions. To "live *Halal*" instead is to choose a life that is authentic, where one's actions express one's own values in today's world. This new three-day festival will provide a welcoming space for anyone interested in *Halal*

living as embraced by American Muslim consumers and now everyone can experience *Halal* living at this festival.

Expected to be an annual event, the inaugural *I Heart Halal* festival is produced by the Chicago-based not-for-profit **Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA)**® which, for more than 30 years, has been connecting *Halal* consumers in North America and around the world to everything that's good - and to the businesses who make it. IFANCA's clients include corporations such as Coca-Cola, Nestle, Organic Valley, Abbott Nutrition, and Saffron Road.

The inaugural *I Heart Halal* is co-presented by **illMuslims**, an organization focused on cultural programming, community development, and social impact. illMuslims hosts quarterly social experiences across the country in an effort to create a space for folks to connect with peers and develop a sense of community. Its flagship series - 'Be Social' - is a national art social/mixer designed to bring together divergent populations to celebrate creative output, support makers, and network in a lively, interactive space.

The **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois** is a proud partner of the *I Heart Halal* festival. Part of its core beliefs are to promote multiculturalism, build communities, and help ensure that everyone has a chance to be a meaningful part of the American landscape.

HOURS & TICKETING

I Heart Halal will feature three full days of sights, sounds and events appealing to people who want to experience the *Halal* lifestyle, at Navy Pier, Festival Hall A, 600 E. Grand Avenue, Chicago, Friday, April 13 from 11am-10pm; Saturday, April 14, from 10am-10pm; and Sunday, April 15, 10am-6pm.

I Heart Halal kicks off with a ticketed Opening Night Preview, Thursday, April 12, from 8-11pm, hosted by illMuslims and featuring scheduled appearances by Nura Afia, Irene Sarah, and Nour the Barber, with entertainment by DJ Double up, Qais Essar and live art by Marlobro. Plus, Friday, April 13, *I Heart Halal* welcomes students for free, taking advantage of the Chicago Public Schools' School Improvements system-wide day off.

A General Admission ticket (\$5 online, \$10 at the door) allows entrance to *I Heart Halal* throughout the weekend and includes access to most panels and demonstrations; purchases at the Bazaar and a *Taste of Halal* food hall are extra. An additional ticket is required for special programming including the Modest Fashion shows (\$25), "America's Least Wanted" comedy showcase (\$25), and Beauty Masterclasses (\$25). These special tickets include General Admission throughout the weekend. For more information or to purchase tickets in advance, please visit www.IHeartHalal.com

To learn more about the *I Heart Halal* festival, please visit IHeartHalal.com as well as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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