

Discover how Muslim Civilisation Influenced Today's Homes



Coffee



The story goes that, more than 1200 years ago in Ethiopia, a goatherd noticed his animals became livelier after eating coffee berries. By boiling the berries, people created al-qahwa, which they drank to help them concentrate during late-night prayers. Coffee found its way to Europe through Arabia and Turkey then reached England in 1650, thanks to a Turkish merchant.

Cappuccino was inspired by Capuchin priests using coffee left behind by the Turkish army after the siege of Vienna in 1683. It appears that the Viennese mixed Turkish coffee with cream and honey to create cappuccino.



"It was in the 12th and 13th centuries, when 'the luxury of the Orient' in military skills, manner of dress, and home interior, were transferred to the West".

Late 19th century French scholar, G. Le Bon

From the late 7th century onwards, people of many faiths in Muslim civilisation, developed ideas and customs that improved life and continue to affect the way we live now.

Did you know?

10th-century philosopher and music theorist Al-Farabi developed the *rababah*, an ancestor of the violin family, and *qanun*, a table zither.

Music



In the ninth century, mathematician and astronomer Al-Kindi was one of the first people to write on the therapeutic value of music. He also used musical notation and added a fifth string to the oud, an instrument like the lute.

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The military band and instruments like the guitar (*qithara* in Arabic), and the naker (from *naqqara*), a goatskin-covered wooden drum, all have roots in Muslim civilisation.

The notes of the musical scale, with their names *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti*, bear a striking phonetic similarity to letters in the Arabic alphabet *dal, ra, mim, fa, sad, lam, sin*.



Clocks



The Famous Clocks

Sophisticated time-telling devices were unknown in 8th century Europe. The arrival of a water powered clock gifted by Caliph Harun al-Rashid of Baghdad to Emperor Charlemagne of Aachen had fascinated those who saw the device. Such clocks were spread across the Muslim world. Famous amongst them are those made by Ibn al-Haytham, Basra; Al-Muradi, Al-Andalus; Ridwan al-Saati, Damascus; Jazari, South-East Turkey; Taqi al-Din, Istanbul; Bou-Inan, Fez.

The Elephant Clock

The 13th-century inventor Al-Jazari from Diyarbakir in south-east Turkey made numerous water clocks. His Elephant Clock, an elaborate timepiece, celebrated the diversity of humanity. Al-Jazari used Greek Archimedeian water-floating technology, an Indian elephant, an Egyptian phoenix, mechanical human figurines in Arabian dress, a Persian carpet and Chinese dragons.



Ibn al-Haytham



Eleventh-century scholar Al-Hasan Ibn al-Haytham was a pioneering scientific thinker who, inspired by observing light entering a dark room, developed experiments which led him to make major breakthroughs in understanding light and vision.

He laid out new ideas about light, colour and vision in his Book of Optics, probably completed around 1027 while he was in Egypt. Later, European scholars drew on the book's Latin translation.

Born in Basra around the year 965, Ibn al-Haytham not only changed people's understanding of how we see, but he laid the foundation for experimental science. He died in Cairo in around 1040.

Camera Obscura



By experimenting in a dark room that he called *Al-Bayt al-Muzlim* (camera obscura in Latin), Ibn al-Haytham proved that we see objects lit by the Sun because its light reflects off the objects, then enters our eyes.



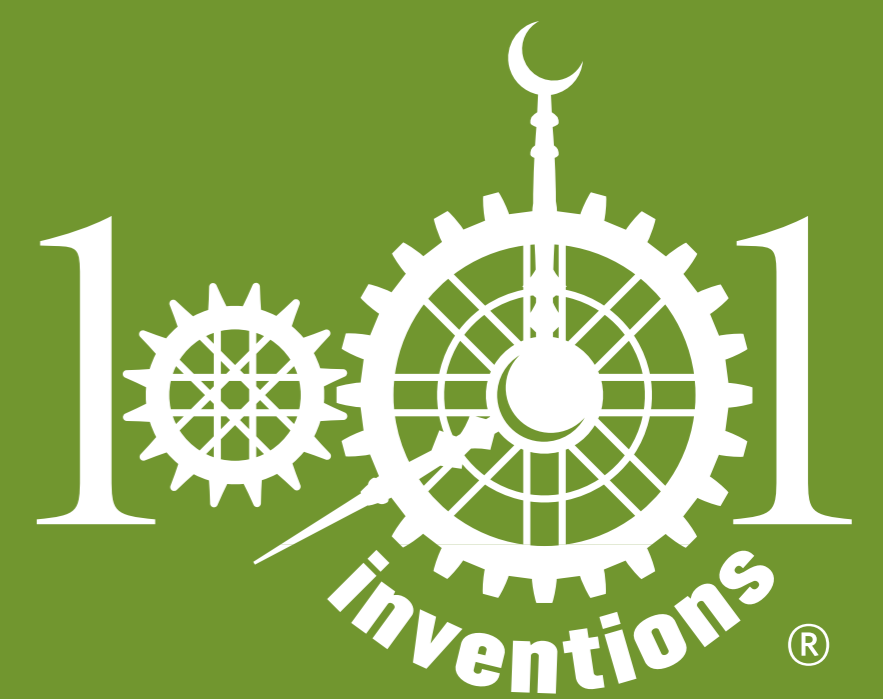
Food and Diet



The development of agricultural techniques in Muslim civilisation enabled the provision of a wider variety of foodstuff, and people tended to eat according to seasonal influences.

A great deal of influence on food consumption and preparation arrived in Europe from the Muslim world. A considerable number of ordinary delights have Eastern origins. Yoghurt, for instance, has Turkish origin. Ice cream was diffused to the rest of the world from Sicily, and is yet another Islamic legacy, whose early production used to take place in cool caves on the island.

Books on food and diet also spread. 9th-century scholar Al-Kindi was the author of a work on cookery, which gave a menu for each day of the year; and at the end of the 12th century poet and historian Ibn Al-'Addeem wrote an encyclopaedia on food, diet and perfumes.



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