



Healthy Food in the Quran: A Thematic Analysis of Tafsir al-Munir and Nutritional Science

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Abstract

Food is a fundamental human necessity that plays a crucial role in maintaining health and well-being. The Quran emphasizes not only the principles of *halal* and *tayyib* consumption but also highlights various foods that contribute to human health. This article aims to examine the concept of healthy food in the Quran through Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir* and to explore its relevance to contemporary nutritional science. The study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis. Primary data were drawn from *Tafsir al-Munir*, while secondary data were obtained from scholarly literature on Quranic exegesis and nutrition. Data were collected through documentation and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify and interpret major themes related to healthy food. The findings reveal that the Quran highlights several nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, honey, and milk. According to al-Zuhayli, these foods signify not only lawful consumption but also the preservation of human health and well-being. From a nutritional perspective, these foods provide essential nutrients that support a balanced diet. The study demonstrates the compatibility of Quranic teachings with modern nutritional principles and contributes to strengthening the integration of Quranic studies and health sciences.

INTRODUCTION

Food is a fundamental human necessity that plays an essential role in maintaining health, supporting growth, and sustaining quality of life. In nutritional science, individual health is strongly influenced by the quality and adequacy of nutrients obtained from food consumption. An unbalanced dietary pattern contributes to various health problems, including malnutrition, obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases. From an Islamic perspective, food is not merely a biological necessity but also encompasses ethical, spiritual, and health dimensions that are closely interconnected. Accordingly, the Quran emphasizes the importance of consuming food that is *halal* and *tayyib*, referring to food that is permissible under Islamic law, safe, clean, nutritious, and beneficial to human health (Aziz et al., 2023; Elgharbawy & Azmi, 2022).

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Advances in food science and technology have increased public awareness of the relationship between dietary patterns and health. This issue has become increasingly important amid the rising prevalence of noncommunicable diseases, many of which are associated with unhealthy dietary habits. In this context, the study of healthy food is relevant not only from a health perspective but also as a strategic means of raising public awareness of the importance of consuming high-quality food (Liu et al., 2018). Notably, the principles of consumption that prioritize health, balance, and human well-being have long been embedded in Islamic teachings through the concept of *halalan tayyiban* found in the Quran. Several studies have demonstrated that this concept is closely associated with preventive health principles and balanced nutritional intake as understood in modern nutritional science (Alzeer et al., 2018; Mohideen et al., 2022).

As the primary source of guidance for Muslims, the Quran gives considerable attention to food-related matters. Various types of food intended for human consumption are mentioned in the Quran, including fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, milk, and honey. These references indicate that the Quran addresses not only the legal dimensions of food consumption but also health-related values oriented toward human well-being. Therefore, understanding the Quranic verses concerning food requires a *tafsir* approach capable of elucidating both their textual meanings and their contextual relevance to developments in modern science, particularly nutritional science (Islam et al., 2021; Jahrami et al., 2020; Jameel, 2023).

Furthermore, studying food in the Quran is important because the relevant verses encompass health, dietary ethics, and the preservation of human well-being. Various foods mentioned in the Quran contain nutrients whose benefits are recognized in contemporary nutritional science. Nevertheless, the relationship between interpretations of Quranic verses concerning food and modern nutritional research requires further investigation to develop a comprehensive understanding of the health-related messages conveyed in the Quran. Accordingly, an analysis of Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir* is particularly relevant because this work is known for integrating linguistic, legal, social, and human-welfare considerations in explaining the meanings of Quranic verses (Akhmetova, 2016; Benajiba et al., 2025).

Previous studies have examined the theme of food in the Quran from various perspectives. Rohman (2026) found that food in *Tafsir Al-Azhar* is understood not only as a biological necessity but also as a factor influencing spiritual conditions and human character formation. Yanni (2025) explained that the Quranic concepts of *halal* and *tayyib* are closely associated with physical and spiritual health through a thematic interpretation approach. Islamiyah (2022) demonstrated that the concept of healthy food in *Tafsir Al-Azhar* encompasses nutritional value, moderation in consumption, food safety, and the lawful acquisition of food.

Another study by Sulfanwandi (2021) examined dietary patterns according to the Quran through a thematic interpretation approach. Their findings indicated that healthy dietary practices are grounded in the principles of balance, adequate nutritional intake, and the consumption of food that is *halal* and *tayyib*. Elgharbawy & Azmi (2022) identified a strong correlation between the concept of *halal* and *tayyib* food and human health. Similarly, Ihsan & Fata (2022) emphasized that the concept of *tayyib* encompasses the healthfulness, safety, cleanliness, and nutritional content of food.

More specifically, Aziz et al. (2023) investigated the effects of prohibited food on health, morality, and religious life based on *Tafsir al-Munir*. Furthermore, research on the concept of diet from a Quranic perspective has indicated that Wahbah al-Zuhayli emphasizes balance, moderation, and the consumption of nutritious food as part of efforts to maintain human health. Zakaria et al (2024) examined the concepts

of halal and healthy food in the Quran and their relevance to health and nutrition in modern society. Mohideen et al (2022) developed the concept of *halalan tayyiban* as a framework for a healthy lifestyle that integrates physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Meanwhile, Anshel & Smith (2014) expanded the study of food in the Quran by examining it through the perspectives of food ethics, social distribution, and food security.

Although previous studies have explored the concepts of *halal* and *tayyib*, dietary patterns, health, and food from a Quranic perspective, most have focused on normative aspects, the legal dimensions of food consumption, or dietary practices in general. Studies that specifically integrate Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir* with modern nutritional science to identify and categorize the different types of healthy food mentioned in the Quran remain relatively limited. Furthermore, previous research has not sufficiently examined the relationship between Quranic food-related themes and the nutritional composition and health benefits of these foods in light of developments in contemporary nutritional science.

To map the research trends related to food in the Quran and its health relevance, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer. The overlay visualization in Figure 1 shows the co-occurrence of keywords, where node size represents keyword frequency, link lines indicate the strength of association between terms, and node color represents the average year of publication (2016–2024). The map shows that *date (fruit)* is the largest and most central node, indicating that dates are the most prominent food object studied and the main bridge between the other topic clusters. The earlier cluster (purple to blue, around 2016–2018) contains keywords such as *honey*, *water*, *zamzam water*, *natural products*, and *cucurbitaceae*, which indicates that early studies focused on foods and beverages explicitly mentioned in the Quran and their natural-product characteristics.

The middle cluster (teal to green, around 2020–2021) is dominated by *fruit ripening*, *date fruit*, and *human health*, showing a shift toward the physiological aspects of the fruit and its health benefits. The most recent cluster (yellow-green to yellow, around 2023–2024) is centered on *food industry*, which suggests that recent research is moving toward the application of these findings in food production and development. This pattern shows that studies of Quranic foods have progressed from identifying the foods, to examining their health benefits, and then to industrial applications. Meanwhile, the limited connection between Quranic exegesis and nutritional composition, particularly through the work of Wahbah al-Zuhayli, confirms the research gap that this article addresses.

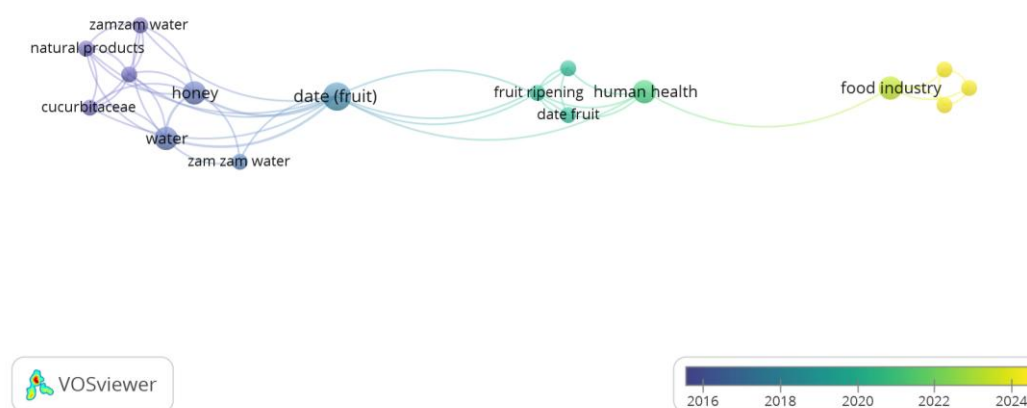


Fig 1. Overlay visualization of keyword co-occurrence on Quranic foods and health

In response to this research gap, this article aims to analyze the varieties of healthy food mentioned in the Quran through Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir* and examine their relevance to modern nutritional science. The analysis seeks to identify the main themes of healthy food in the Quran, explain the

meanings constructed through the exegete's interpretations, and explore their contributions to understanding healthy dietary patterns and human nutritional requirements.

The novelty of this article lies in its application of thematic analysis to Quranic verses concerning food, drawing on Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir* and integrating it with the perspective of nutritional science. The article not only identifies the types of healthy food mentioned in the Quran but also classifies these foods into thematic categories and analyzes their nutritional composition and health benefits in light of modern nutritional research. Thus, the article offers an interdisciplinary approach that brings Quranic exegesis into systematic dialogue with health and nutritional science.

The implications of this article encompass both theoretical and practical dimensions. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of an integrative approach to Quranic studies, thematic exegesis, and nutritional science by demonstrating the relevance of Quranic concepts of food to the principles of modern nutrition. Practically, its findings may serve as a reference for academics, health practitioners, educators, and Muslim communities in promoting healthy and balanced dietary practices consistent with Quranic values. In addition, the findings may support the development of religion-based health literacy and strengthen health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at improving public health.

METHODS

This article was developed through several stages, including problem identification, data collection, data organization, thematic analysis of Quranic verses concerning food, interpretation of Wahbah al-Zuhayli's exegesis in *Tafsir al-Munir*, and examination of its relevance to modern nutritional science. All stages were conducted systematically to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the concept of healthy food in the Quran and its contribution to the development of health studies grounded in Islamic values. This approach facilitates the integration of Quranic exegesis and nutritional science in explaining the meanings, functions, and benefits of foods mentioned in the Quran (Engkizar et al., 2025; Forbes, 2022; Takona, 2024).

Method and Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using content analysis. This approach was selected because the study focuses on examining the meanings, themes, and messages contained in the Quranic text and the interpretations of verses concerning food in *Tafsir al-Munir*. Content analysis enables an in-depth exploration of textual data to uncover the underlying structures of meaning within primary sources. In addition to describing the concept of healthy food in the Quran, this approach facilitates a broader interpretation of its relevance to developments in contemporary nutritional science (Taufiq, 2022).

Data Sources

The data consisted of primary and secondary sources. The primary data were drawn from *Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa al-Shari'ah wa al-Manhaj* by Wahbah al-Zuhayli, which served as the principal reference for understanding Quranic verses related to healthy food. The secondary data were obtained from scholarly journal articles, books on Quranic exegesis, nutritional science literature, and other relevant academic publications addressing food, health, and nutrition from an Islamic perspective. The use of both types of sources was intended to enrich the analysis and strengthen the academic arguments developed in this article (Amrin & Amirullah, 2022; Peterson, 2019).

Instruments

The primary research instrument was the *human instrument*, namely the researcher, who was responsible for collecting, selecting, classifying, interpreting, and

deriving meaning from the data. To support this process, a documentation sheet and a data categorization matrix were used to record relevant Quranic verses concerning food, their interpretations, and related findings from nutritional science. These instruments facilitated the systematic organization of the data, making it easier to identify themes and relationships among categories emerging throughout the analytical process (Adi et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Tools

The analysis employed a thematic categorization matrix and a thematic analysis framework. These tools were used to map the various types of food mentioned in the Quran, group the data according to related themes, and examine the relationship between Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretations and modern nutritional concepts. The thematic matrix helped maintain data traceability, ensuring that each finding could be traced back to its source and interpretive context (Ebrahimi & Yusoff, 2017; Engkizar et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which focuses on identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning within the data. The process began with repeated reading and in-depth familiarization with the data, followed by the identification of Quranic verses related to healthy food. The next stage involved coding the data to identify emerging categories of meaning. These codes were subsequently grouped into major themes representing the different types of healthy food mentioned in the Quran. The resulting themes were then interpreted in light of *Tafsir al-Munir* and examined in relation to modern nutritional science. Through this process, the study sought to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Quranic messages and contemporary nutritional principles (Adi et al., 2025; Nabel, 2021; Syafril et al., 2021).

Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation and persistent observation. Source triangulation involved comparing information from *Tafsir al-Munir* with other works of Quranic exegesis, scholarly articles, and relevant nutritional science literature. In addition, the data were reviewed and examined repeatedly to ensure the consistency of interpretations and the alignment of findings with the sources consulted. These procedures were intended to enhance the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and validity of the findings, thereby ensuring that the analysis could withstand academic scrutiny (Denny & Weckesser, 2022; Kocaman, 2024).

Through this methodological design, the article seeks to provide a systematic and in-depth analysis of the different types of healthy food mentioned in the Quran based on Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir*. It also examines their relevance to developments in modern nutritional science, thereby strengthening interdisciplinary inquiry at the intersection of Quranic studies and health sciences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Varieties of Healthy Food in the Quran from the Perspective of *Tafsir al-Munir*

Fruits

The Quran mentions various types of fruit, including dates, grapes, olives, and pomegranates. These fruits are presented not only as blessings from Allah but also as foods that provide benefits for human life. In this study, fruits constitute one of the main categories of healthy food examined through Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation and their nutritional properties. Al-Zuhayli's interpretation indicates that references to food in the Quran extend beyond the mere identification of particular food items. Food is presented as one of Allah's blessings that humans can

enjoy and benefit from. From a nutritional perspective, fruits provide various nutrients required by the body, making them relevant to the principles of dietary diversity and adequate nutrient intake.

Meat and Fish

Meat is one of the food sources mentioned in the Quran. In Wahbah al-Zuhayli's interpretation, discussions of meat are closely associated with the requirements of halal consumption and the manner in which food is obtained and consumed. Thus, from an Islamic perspective, the goodness of food is determined not solely by its nutritional composition but also by its permissibility under Islamic law. Fish is another food category examined in this study. In addition to being permissible for consumption under Islamic law, fish provides nutrients that contribute to the body's nutritional requirements. This demonstrates the potential for an integrated examination of food in the Quran that considers both religious principles and health-related dimensions. Accordingly, the findings identify meat and fish as components of the range of foods that provide nutritional benefits to humans.

Vegetables

The Quran mentions several plant foods, including cucumbers, garlic, onions, and pumpkins. Surah al-Baqarah (2:61) refers to cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions, while Surah al-Saffat (37:146) mentions a gourd plant.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:61)

وَقَتَّائِهَا وَفُومَهَا وَعَدْسَهَا وَبَصَلِهَا

Meaning: *Its cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions.*

Surah al-Saffat (37:146)

وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّفْطِينٍ

Meaning: *And We caused a gourd plant to grow over him.*

In *Tafsir al-Munir*, Wahbah al-Zuhayli explains the gourd plant in the story of Prophet Yunus as part of Allah's blessings following the prophet's period of physical weakness. The plant is described as beneficial because it provides food and nourishment. From a nutritional perspective, pumpkins contain water, dietary fiber, carbohydrates, and various vitamins and minerals. Their precise nutritional composition varies according to the species and variety. These properties indicate that pumpkins can contribute to a nutritious diet and support human health.

Honey

Honey is explicitly mentioned in Surah al-Nahl (16:69). Wahbah al-Zuhayli explains honey as a substance with various benefits that may be used for medicinal purposes. His discussion of honey in *Tafsir al-Munir* also refers to its composition, including glucose, fructose, and water.

Surah al-Nahl (16:69)

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ

Meaning: *From their bellies comes a drink of varying colours, in which there is healing for people.*

Within the scope of this study, honey illustrates a connection between Quranic interpretation and knowledge concerning health. It is presented not merely as a food or drink but also as a substance associated with benefits for humans. Nevertheless, its potential benefits should be considered in relation to appropriate consumption and individual nutritional needs. Since honey contains substantial amounts of sugar, its consumption should be moderated as part of a balanced diet.

Milk

Milk is another food mentioned in the Quran. Wahbah al-Zuhayli interprets references to milk in relation to milk derived from livestock as well as milk described in accounts of Paradise. In this study, goat's milk is used as an example for examining

the nutritional composition and potential benefits of milk. Goat's milk contains water, energy, protein, fat, carbohydrates, calcium, phosphorus, iron, sodium, and potassium. These components indicate that milk can provide several nutrients required by the body. The findings also suggest a relationship between al-Zuhayli's interpretation of milk as a beneficial drink and its nutritional composition as described in modern nutritional science. However, the specific nutritional values depend on the milk's composition, processing, and serving size.

The Relevance of Wahbah al-Zuhayli's Interpretation to Nutritional Science

The findings indicate that the foods mentioned in the Quran represent diverse sources of nutrients. Fruits and vegetables contribute vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, and water, while meat and fish provide protein and various other nutrients. Honey and milk, meanwhile, have distinct nutritional compositions. Accordingly, the range of foods discussed in the Quran can be examined not only from a religious perspective but also in relation to human health and nutrition (Robiansyah et al., 2022).

This relevance does not imply that every reference to food in the Quran constitutes a technical explanation of nutritional science. The Quran primarily serves as a guide for human life, whereas nutritional science explains dietary requirements and the composition of foods (Safei & Taqwa, 2026; Salim & Rusmana, 2022). The relationship between these fields becomes apparent when the values identified through Quranic interpretation are examined alongside contemporary principles concerning nutritious and beneficial food.

Beyond nutritional composition, the concept of food examined in this study is also associated with the principles of *halal* and *tayyib*. In other words, healthy food from an Islamic perspective is not defined solely by its nutritional content. Its permissibility under Islamic law, quality, safety, and appropriate consumption also require consideration. This integrated perspective connects religious principles with contemporary understandings of food quality and dietary well-being (Benajiba et al., 2025; Nahar & Hidayatulloh, 2021).

The characteristics of *Tafsir al-Munir* further support this discussion. Wahbah al-Zuhayli combines transmitted reports with rational analysis and relates Quranic interpretation to issues arising in human life. In some discussions, his arguments also incorporate medical considerations. Consequently, *Tafsir al-Munir* provides a basis for examining Quranic verses concerning food in ways that are relevant to human well-being, while maintaining a distinction between the exegetical meanings of the verses and the empirical findings of modern nutritional science (Mausufi et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

The thematic analysis of Quranic verses on food, as interpreted by al-Zuhayli in *Tafsir al-Munir*, reveals that the Quran presents a comprehensive framework of healthy nutrition through the inclusion of fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, honey, and milk. These food categories are portrayed not merely as lawful provisions for human consumption but as components of a broader system aimed at preserving health, well-being, and the sustainability of human life. From the perspective of nutritional science, these foods contain essential nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, proteins, healthy fats, and bioactive compounds that contribute to physiological functions and overall health. The findings indicate a significant correspondence between Quranic guidance and contemporary nutritional principles, particularly regarding dietary quality, nutritional adequacy, balanced consumption, and health promotion. Furthermore, the concept of healthy food in the Quran is inseparable from the principles of *halal*, *tayyib*, and moderation, which collectively establish a holistic foundation for physical, ethical, and spiritual well-being.

The principal contribution of this study lies in the integration of thematic

Quranic exegesis and nutritional science to examine healthy food within the framework of *Tafsir al-Munir*. This interdisciplinary approach demonstrates that Quranic food-related verses encompass not only religious and ethical dimensions but also scientifically relevant insights concerning nutrition and health. The findings enrich the growing body of scholarship on the intersection of Quranic studies, health sciences, and nutrition by providing a systematic understanding of food as both a spiritual and physiological necessity. Practically, the study offers a conceptual foundation for promoting healthy dietary behaviors grounded in Islamic values and may serve as a reference for educators, health practitioners, researchers, and policymakers seeking to develop faith-based health literacy initiatives. Future studies may extend this discussion through comparative analyses of other exegetical works, maqasid al-shari'ah-based approaches to food ethics, or the incorporation of emerging evidence from nutritional and public health research to further advance the integration of Islamic scholarship and contemporary science.

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Author contribution

Arum: writing-original draft preparation and visualization, data curation, **Hana Natasya:** analysis, editing, conceptualization, **Islahuddin:** methodology.

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The data and the grammatical structure in this article have been validated and verified by English language experts and no AI-generated sentences are included in this article.

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Ethical clearance

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