



Turkey's Culinary Heritage

with Oldways and Ana Sortun of Oleana

Gaziantep and Istanbul, Turkey

March 18–25, 2012



Gaziantep

Gaziantep dates back to Hittite times and it has a Roman citadel to explore. The city is located between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean, at the intersection points of roads connecting the east to the south, north, and west—and it was a key spot on the old Silk Road.

We'd heard that Antep food is a wonderful blend of Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish and Anatolian influences, and we were keen to start exploring the nearby markets. First, though, we had an appointment next door, at Imam Cagdas.

Antep baklava is made almost exclusively from pistachios, yet another thing the city is famous for, and it even lends its name to the nut—*Antep fistigi*. Burhan Cagdas brought over a small wooden bucket of pistachios for us to inspect. They were a vivid emerald green and much larger than any we'd seen before. "These pistachios are of exceptional quality," said Burhan, doling out handfuls of the nuts for us to taste. "With ordinary pistachios, you get maybe 500–600 to a kilogram. The pistachios from Antep, there can be 130–200 to a kilogram."

Greg and Lucy Malouf
Turquoise: A Chef's Travels in Turkey

Turkey's Culinary Heritage

OLDWAYS

HEALTH THROUGH HERITAGE

and

Ana Sortun
of
Oleana

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A Love Affair with Turkey

Oldways' love affair with Turkey and its food began in October 1993, when we brought more than 100 culinary experts from the US, UK, Japan, Australia and Canada to Istanbul for an Oldways Symposium. After Oldways introduced the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid in January 1993, we inaugurated a series of culinary and scientific symposiums for journalists, cookbook authors chefs, and food retailers in Mediterranean countries. Our purpose was to provide a context for the Mediterranean Diet and olive oil—to “put the Mediterranean Diet on the plate” by introducing the foods, wines, preparations, and cultural attractions that are the foundation of the cuisines of the Mediterranean. Turkey was our first stop on the Magical Mystery Tour of the Mediterranean—and it has lured us back, time and time again.

As Dun Gifford, Oldways' founder, wrote in 1993:

“All of the world's nations and cities are of course unique, each from the other. But Turkey can lay a clear claim to a special kind of uniqueness, a kind of ‘terroir d’histoire.’ For all of recorded human history, and for a large part of pre-history, the tides of human history have ebbed and flowed through the vast, mountainous peninsula that is today's Republic of Turkey. There is abundant archaeological evidence throughout Anatolia (as the Asian land mass of Turkey has long been known) of Ice Age hunters and gatherers, of Stone Age agricultural settlers, of Copper Age potters and metal tool makers, and of the original Bronze Age settlements at what—centuries later—became the “topless towers of Ilium” in Homer's Troy.”

“Crusades, hordes, Vandals, legions, and armies have all stormed through Anatolia, since whoever controlled the Anatolian peninsula—aimed like a chunky Asian arrow at the Greek and Italian underbelly of Europe—controlled the Eastern Mediterranean and the riches of the east-west trade routes. How many millions of humans crossed and recrossed through this intersection of the Orient and the Occident in hot pursuit of the riches of empire or religious salvation, or both?”

“Turkey's culinary history is really one of migratory cuisines, because the waves of people who washed over the Anatolian peninsula, rocked in its cradles of civilization, and crossed back and forth through its intersection of Europe and Asia brought with them to Anatolia foods and traditions from the lands they left behind, and took away with them when they moved on the foods and traditions that they found there. Ottoman scholar Tom Brosnahan wrote, ‘It is worth traveling to Turkey just to eat. Turkish cuisine is the very heart of eastern Mediterranean cooking, which demands excellent, fresh ingredients and careful, even laborious preparation. The ingredients are often very simple, but are of the highest quality, and in recipes they are harmonised with great care.’”

It is for all these reasons we are here in Gaziantep and Istanbul. We are here to eat, to learn, and to bring home the pleasures and riches of Turkey and its cuisine that we will experience together. We are grateful to share this time with you, grateful to Ana and Ayfer and our other friends—new and old—for sharing their love and knowledge of the foods of Turkey. We hope you will fall in love, as we have, and continue to spread the word about the glorious treasures of Turkey.

Sara Baer-Sinnott
President, Oldways

A Message from Ana Sortun

In 1997, I was working at Harvard Square's Casablanca restaurant, cooking Mediterranean food mostly inspired by my travels to Italy, Spain and the south of France. While at Casablanca, I was invited by Ayfer Unsal (whom you all will meet and who came to me via Oldways, by the way!) to visit Turkey for the first time and to study the cuisine from her home town, Gaziantep. When I thought about going to Turkey, I imagined genies and flying carpets. I had no idea.

I woke up to my first morning in Gaziantep. It was hot and I was off to the market bright and early with Ayfer. I had put on shorts and a tee shirt and she sent me back to my room to change into long sleeves and long pants. I thought it was interesting that I had to be covered and that women don't usually go to the market. Where was I? I soon got over the mystery (understanding much later) but it's the memory of a potluck she threw for me that is tattooed inside my head forever. It was a turning point and a revelation in my career as a chef.

Her friends graciously threw me a welcome lunch (pot luck) in the park. Everyone prepared a favorite recipe (Ayfer made me make one too!) and there were 30 amazing dishes spread out from one end of the table to the other. I tasted every single one and it was all so unfamiliar yet very rich and complex. I realized that I had tasted 30 dishes, essentially making my way through a 30 course tasting menu and I didn't feel terrible. Even though the flavors were complex, the dishes were light. This idea of food being rich but not heavy was something new for me. I've been hooked since that day and it has changed the way I cook forever. It became a study from there on and I explored ingredients, spices, recipes and techniques, eventually coming up with my own style of Mediterranean cooking that is modern, interpretive but inspired by what I learned and continue to learn from travels to turkey and other parts of the Mediterranean.

Turkey's cuisine is recognized as being one of the most sophisticated in the world and it wasn't well represented in the Boston area at the time I decided to open Oleana (in 2001!!). I am so grateful to have had the eye-opening introduction to Turkish food and I am so excited to share my enthusiasm (and Ayfer) with all of you as we re-trace some of my first experiences in this delicious country!

Thank you to Sara for being such an amazing influence in my life and for organizing and leading this trip to Turkey so that we can taste and learn more.

Ana Sortun
Chef/Owner, Oleana



Culinaria Program

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

Afternoon Check in at Hotels in Gaziantep

We're very fortunate to be staying in Anatolian houses, re-stored as boutique hotels. Our four hotels are Anadolu Evleri, Asude Konak, Tudyali Konak and Zeynep Hanim Konagi. Take time to unpack, rest and/or explore your new Gaziantep neighborhood.

6:30 Welcome with Wine and Cheese

We'll meet in the Courtyard at Anadolu Evleri, one of our four hotels. This will give you time to meet and talk with your fellow travelers, and as the group gathers, we'll enjoy a glass of wine while we have a brief introductory session with Ana Sortun, Sara Baer-Sinnott and Ayfer Unsal.

7:30 Dinner at Imam Cagdas

We'll leave Anadolu Evleri for a short walk to our Welcome Dinner at nearby Imam Cagdas, one of Gaziantep's best kebab restaurants.



MONDAY, MARCH 19

9:30 Introduction to the Foods of Turkey

After breakfast at your hotel, we'll meet again at Anadolu Evleri for an overview of Turkish foods and cuisines with Ana and Ayfer, giving you a good foundation for our week of food exploration and good eating.

10:30 Visit to Gaziantep's Food Bazaar and Copper Market

With a deeper appreciation of Turkish cuisines, we'll venture into Gaziantep's food market, to see the food and ingredients that define this incredible cuisine. We'll also make a stop at Gaziantep's very special Copper Market.

12:30 Pot Luck in Gaziantep (see page 28 for list of dishes & cooks)

This exciting lunch is a recreation of the lunch that made such a difference in Ana's food life—a pot luck lunch Ayfer organized for Ana on her first visit to Turkey. We'll meet in Kavaklik Park in Gaziantep for a once-in-a-lifetime experience—a pot luck lunch with 29 different dishes, plus 7 kinds of sweets, made by home cooks in Gaziantep (Ayfer's friends!).

Afternoon Free time for shopping or resting

Your time is your own after lunch. We'll have a guide or two available for those of you interested in going back to the Food or Copper Market. If a nap is more your calling, we'll be sure to get you back to your hotel for rest and relaxation.

7:30 Dinner at Ishmail

We'll go by bus to Restaurant Ishmail for a light dinner all together.



TUESDAY, MARCH 20

8:30 Mosaics at the Museum

We'll breakfast early in order to get a start on our day. We'll start at the breathtaking Mosaics Museum in Gaziantep.



10:30 Day-long Excursion to Maraş

Known for peppers and dondurma (Turkish ice cream), Maraş or Kahramanmaraş, is a city and province about an hour from Gaziantep. We'll visit the city and market, and learn more about peppers, one of the most essential ingredients in Turkish cooking.

Our lunch today is at a "Floating Restaurant" on a river outside Maraş, where we'll enjoy what Ayfer promises is a wonderful trout dish. After lunch we'll go back into Maraş for dondurma, the famously delicious and elastic Turkish ice cream.

Late Afternoon and Evening

We'll return to Gaziantep after our ice cream treat for you to have free time and enjoy dinner on your own. You'll find suggested restaurants on page 26.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

- 8:30 Visit to a Baklava House**
Once again, you'll want to have breakfast early, so we can leave by 8:30 to experience one of the best Baklava Houses in Gaziantep.
- 10:30 Cooking Demonstration and Lunch (see page 30 for recipes)**
Back in the courtyard of Anadolu Evleri, Ana will demonstrate a number of dishes—her more modern take on traditional dishes. At Ana's special request, Ayfer will also demonstrate sarma, or classic grape leaves. Following the class, we'll be treated to a lunch of the same spectacular dishes.
- 3:00 Visit to Archeological Museum**
Following our lunch and some Turkish Coffee (perhaps you'll learn your fortune!), we'll walk to the world-famous Archaeological Museum for a tour.
- Afternoon Free time**
Enjoy a last walk in Gaziantep and make sure you are packed before we meet for an early dinner.
- 6:30 Dancing and Music with a Light Supper**
We'll be treated to a Sufi Show with a Whirling Dervish Ceremony and music before we leave Gaziantep. The show will be accompanied by a light supper that Ayfer tells us often goes with the show. Our departure on Thursday is in the early hours of the morning, so we'll aim to have you back at your hotel by 8:30 or 9:00 in time to get some sleep and rest.



THURSDAY, MARCH 22

- Morning Istanbul, Kadikoy and Ciya**
Up early, early, early (we'll specify the time the day before) to eat breakfast and take a bus to the airport. Our 7:45 am flight from Gaziantep arrives at 9:20 am at Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen Airport on the Asian side of Istanbul. We'll meet our guide Oguz and go to the market district of Kadikoy, an un-touristy section of Istanbul on the Asian side.
- 12:30 Lunch**
After a market exploration we'll have lunch at Ciya, Ana's favorite restaurant. (See page 12 for information on Ciya and Chef Musa.)
- Afternoon Cruising the Bosphorus**
Kadikoy is also home to the ferries that cross the Bosphorus to the European side of Istanbul. We'll take a cruise and then be picked up by our bus (with our luggage) and check in at the Ottoman Hotel Imperial in Sultanahmet (Old Istanbul or Stamboul). You'll have some free time to unpack and explore before dinner.
- 8:00 Dinner at Nar Gourmet**
We'll meet to walk to dinner at Nar Gourmet, a new restaurant with a modern interpretation of Ottoman cuisine. It's managed by Vedat Basaran, a chef and Ottoman culinary scholar, and an old friend of Oldways' and Ana's.



FRIDAY, MARCH 23

8:30 Spices and Street Food

Following breakfast at our hotel overlooking the old city, we'll leave for Taksim and a street-food-and-spice immersion with Ana and Ayşe Gurdal, the daughter of Istanbul native and Formaggio Kitchen owner, Ihsan Gurdal. Ana and Ayşe will take us in and out of small shops and stores, guiding us with tastings and opportunities to buy Turkish spices. (Not to worry, you can bring dried spices through US customs.)



12:30 Lunch

After the spice and street food tour, we'll stop at Ferda Erdinc's wonderful, low-key vegetarian restaurant, Zencefil (means ginger) for a light lunch. Ferda is a friend of Ana's (who she met through Oldways) and was another special person, instrumental in Ana's Turkish culinary journey.



3:00 Tour of the Hagia Sophia

Our tourguide Oguz will give a guided tour of the Hagia Sophia, just across the street from our hotel. We'll also visit the Blue Mosque, if time and allowance for prayer time permit.

5:30 Turkish Carpets 101 (optional) or Free time for exploring, shopping, resting

Ana has arranged for a special primer on Turkish carpets by her favorite rug merchant in Istanbul. This optional session will be held at his shop, close to the hotel. Or, you may prefer to explore or shop on your own, or take a pre-dinner siesta.

Evening Free evening - Dinner on your own

Please see our suggestions on page 26 for restaurants to enjoy on your own.

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

8:30 Tour of Topkapi

We'll make the short walk to the gates of Topkapi, after a tree-top breakfast at the hotel, for a guided tour of the palace that was the primary residence of Ottoman sultans for many years.



11:00 Ana's Cooking Class and Lunch at Istanbul Culinary (see page 34 for recipes)

We'll arrive at the wonderful Istanbul Culinary Institute, just across the Golden Horn and near the Pera Pelas Hotel, for Ana's special cooking demonstration and lunch. Follow Ana's recipes during the cooking demonstration and then we'll go to a private dining room at the Institute for a lunch of the dishes we watched Ana make.

After Lunch Free time

Stay near Taksim, visit another part of Istanbul, or return with the bus to Sultanahmet for time on your own before we meet for our last evening and a Gala Dinner.

7:00 Gala Dinner

We'll leave the hotel at 7:00 for dinner at Ullus 29, a trendy and stylish restaurant overlooking the Bosphorus and the twinkling lights of Istanbul. We promise—you won't forget the view or the food!

SUNDAY, MARCH 25

Departures or touring on your own.



Ana Sortun



With a degree from La Varenne Ecole de Cuisine in Paris, the Seattle-born Ana Sortun opened Moncef Medeb's Aigo Bistro in Concord, Massachusetts, in the early 1990s. Stints at 8 Holyoke and Casablanca in Harvard Square, Cambridge soon followed.

This was all in the beginning of her career, when Sortun was still cooking what most people think of as typical Mediterranean food from Spain, southern France and Italy. People loved it. While at Casablanca, a friend of the owner invited Sortun to study in Turkey. Not knowing anything about Turkish food or culture but eager to learn, she accepted. ("I imagined flying carpets and genies," she says wryly.) But when she arrived in southeastern Turkey, Sortun's host and her friends presented a potluck of sorts. "I tasted 30 amazing dishes from these women's family repertoires," Sortun remembers. "I was stunned at how rich and interesting yet light everything was."

That trip was when she learned that in the Mediterranean, spice is used to create richness, depth and flavor without heaviness. She also experienced the meze style of eating, which is to have many tastes of mostly vegetable-based dishes before reaching a protein course. "Chefs always focus on flavor and appearance," says Sortun, "but few think about how one feels after eating a long meal."

Upon her return to Boston, she wanted to fuse her newfound love of Eastern Mediterranean spices with her passion for using only the best ingredients. The result of this union was Oleana, which opened in Cambridge in 2001. A mere four years later, Sortun won a coveted and prestigious James Beard Award.

Sortun's commitment to locally grown food took a turn for the personal when a farmer selling spinach turned up at the back door of Oleana one day. "I knew then that I would marry him," Sortun says. Since 2006, Siena Farms has been providing the restaurant with most of its fresh, organic produce. It is owned and farmed by the chef's husband, Chris Kurth, and named after the couple's daughter.

Not content to rest on their laurels, Sortun, business partner Gary Griffin and pastry chef Kilpatrick decided they wanted to launch a more casual venue. Three years of brainstorming later, in August of 2008, Sofra was born in Cambridge, Mass. This Middle Eastern bakery, café and retail shop offers flatbread sandwiches, mezzes, prepared foods and baked goods. It has received both local and national press; *Food & Wine*, *Metropolitan Home* and *Gourmet* have all featured it as a place not to miss.



OLDWAYS

HEALTH THROUGH HERITAGE

"If you've ever wondered how some of the world's healthiest and best-tasting foods seem to wind up in your favorite home recipes and restaurants these days, you'll be glad to know it's not by accident. You have friends in the business."

Cooking Light Magazine, about Oldways

Let the old ways be your guide to good health and well-being.

Oldways is a nonprofit food and nutrition education organization, with a mission to guide people to good health through heritage, using practical and positive programs grounded in science and tradition. Simply, we advocate for the healthful pleasures of real food.

At Oldways, we are more determined than ever to help everyone, everywhere, live longer and healthier lives. We will do this by continuing to encourage people to seek out the joys of good foods and drinks, well prepared and consumed with pleasure, in the company of family and friends. That is the profound and worthy mission that drives us and our partners every day.

Healthy eating and healthy foods have the power to improve the health and well-being of all of us. Science and common sense tell us that good health and good food go hand in hand. The healthy old ways have a special importance and impact because they bring together: (1) good nutrition with delicious foods, (2) culture and heritage, and (3) eating, shopping and cooking. As Michael Pollan wrote in *The New York Times* on Sunday, October 2, 2011, "I have yet to hear of a traditional diet—from any culture, anywhere in the world—that is not substantially healthier than the 'standard American diet.'" The more we honor cultural differences in eating, the healthier we will be."

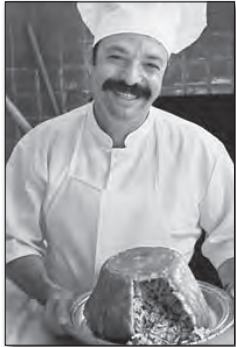
The healthy old ways also have the power to bring people and communities together. As Michelle Obama said about the importance of food, culture and heritage, "Food can be a symbol of cultural identity," it knits families together. What I've come to appreciate is whether you're African-American, Puerto Rican, Dominican or Cuban, food is love."

Oldways was founded in 1990 to address health issues (increasing rates of obesity, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other diseases of excess) and to preserve culinary traditions, helping people make healthy connections to their food (cooking and eating real foods) and their heritage.

We learned early on that change happens by motivating individuals and influencers to move in a common direction. Working throughout the world—from Australia to Brazil and from Italy to the U.S.—Oldways has collaborated with hundreds of international experts including scientists, health care professionals, chefs, historians, food producers and food writers to create "mini-movements" that have inspired millions of people to change the way they eat.

Learn more at www.oldwayspt.org.

Musa Dagdeviren



Musa Dagdeviren is the chef and owner of three restaurants including Ciya, in Istanbul, Turkey. His impact on Turkish cuisine and especially on kebab houses in Istanbul is in large part a tribute to his extensive knowledge of Turkish, Eastern Mediterranean, and Arabic kitchen traditions. Chef Dagdeviren and his restaurants have earned rave reviews including a spot on the 2006 “Saveur 100,” a list of the best and most exciting chefs, restaurants, foods and drinks from around the world.

I LOVE Chef Musa from Ciya

Chef Musa is one of the most exciting chefs I have ever worked with. A trip to Istanbul just for his food I would make! I was introduced to him 15 years ago by my friend Ferda Erdinc who brought me there for lunch one day. I was so excited about what I was seeing and tasting that I couldn't keep my seat. I got up every second to look at what he was doing and ask questions. Musa is a culinary anthropologist. He spends a lot of time researching traditional dishes that are dying and brings them back to life at his restaurants. He seeks out local, wild foods and re-introduces them to people. His food is interesting, rich, soulful and delicious. In the past 10 years, Musa has become recognized all over the world.

Ana Sortun

Introduction to Turkish Cuisine

Great empires have created great cuisines, and the fertile land and the skill of the farmers and fishermen of the Turkish empire have combined with the enthusiasm and abilities of its chefs and home cooks to produce fine, taste dishes that have ensured a place for Turkish food alongside French and Chinese as one of the three foremost examples of the culinary art in the world.

During the course of its evolution from the Turkish tribes of Central Asia to the present day, Turkish cuisine has acquired an individual character which is expressed in the layout of the kitchen, the cooking utensils, the range of dishes and cooking methods, the presentation of food and serving customs. Every branch of the cookery is treated as equally deserving of being rich in variety and succulence.

Nevin Halici
Turkish Cookbook, 1989

Turks cook with feeling, devotion and imagination. Appreciation for good food is an incentive for the cook to prepare even better dishes. Turks mostly conclude a meal by saying “*elinize sağlık*” to whoever cooked the meal. If translated literally it means “may God give health to your hands.” In response to this, the cook says “*afiyet olsun*” meaning bon appétit.

Gülseren Ramazanoglu
Turkish Cooking, 1992

Turkey



Like all major culinary traditions, that of Turkey is marked simultaneously by unity and diversity. The unity derives ultimately from the traditions of the Ottoman palace, which, filtering down to the population at large in modified form, became the foundation for a common national cuisine. This classic cuisine has always been cultivated in its fullest form in Istanbul, and from there conveyed to the provinces through family ties or other linkages with that great metropolis.

The assimilation of the food of Istanbul by the provinces has, however, been subject to significant regional variations. Local tastes, as well as availability of ingredients, have often dictated the use of certain foods in preference to others. Thus the meat dolmas of Gaziantep in southeastern Turkey tend to be spicier than elsewhere because of their heavier use of cumin, peppers, and garlic, while the yogurt soups of eastern Anatolia substitute sweet basil for mint and wheat for rice. In the Aegean area there is a tendency to cook everything in olive oil—even baklava, in violation of the national consensus that it should be cooked in butter. Furthermore, the popularity of certain dishes is uneven throughout the country. Olive oil dishes, for example, are rare in central and eastern Anatolia, areas with a strong preference for meat dishes, and are cooked mostly by those with an Istanbul background. In addition to these regional variations on Istanbul cuisine, fully distinct regional traditions of great richness and antiquity also exist. Collectively, these might be designated as Anatolian cuisine, for they owe nothing to the cuisine of Istanbul, although they are to be found side by side with it. Anatolian cuisine deserves separate and detailed treatment; we will concentrate in this book on the cuisine shared by the whole country, offering only a few glimpses of regional specialties.

Ayla Algar
Classical Turkish Cooking: Traditional Turkish Food for the American Kitchen

A Country of Many Pasts and Peoples

Modern Turkey is surely one of the most intriguingly positioned countries in the world, linking, as it does, the two continents of Europe and Asia. Only around 3 percent of the landmass is in Europe, however—the region of Thrace, which spreads from the northern shores of the Bosphorus Strait up into the southeastern tip of the Balkan Peninsula.

The remaining geographically diverse landmass is in Asian Turkey, also known as Anatolia or, in ancient times, as Asian Minor. A glance at the map shows that Anatolia is a large peninsula, jutting westward out of Asia to nudge up close to European soil at the Gallipoli Peninsula and Istanbul. In fact, Anatolia and Thrace are separated by three bodies of water, the Bosphorus, the inland Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles. At the closest point, in the city of Istanbul, the two continents are a mere half mile apart, and are linked by two long suspension bridges.

As a peninsula, Turkey is surrounded on three sides by water and boasts more than 4,000 miles of thickly forested and spectacularly beautiful coastline. To the north, Turkish fishermen catch turbot, tuna, mackerel and salty anchovies (hamsi) from the free-flowing waters of the Black Sea; to the west, the Aegean Sea is dotted with islands, big and small, while the sunny Mediterranean shores to the south lure thousands of vacationers every year.

As well as being spectacularly beautiful, Turkey has a long and fascinating history. It is a country that has won and lost greatness, where successive empires have trampled each other underfoot in their determination to seize this jewel of the Mediterranean. There can be little doubt that its geographic, straddling seas and continents, goes a long way to explaining Turkey's rich and varied history.



The Anatolian peninsula is crisscrossed by ancient trading routes from East to West, while control of the straights, which divide modern-day Istanbul, allowed successive empires to regulate the movement of ships between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. It is little wonder that wave upon wave of invaders from all directions have washed through the country from the earliest days of civilization.

Greg and Lucy Malouf
Turquoise: A Chef's Travels in Turkey

The Food

We found that there's a definite tendency to divide Turkish food into two camps: Ottoman and Anatolian. In other words, a distinction between the food of the urban rich and the food of the rural poor. The reality, of course, is far more complicated. Turkish cooking today is an interweaving of many different but complimentary strands that together create a gorgeous and vibrant culinary tapestry.



Both rural Anatolian and sophisticated Ottoman cuisines are a legacy of the country's rich and varied history, the complex interchange and cross-fertilization of culinary traditions and influences that have washed through the country down the centuries. Their ingredients and recipes are drawn from such diverse parts of the world as Central and Far East Asia, Persia, Arabia, the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

Growers, sellers and consumers all share a respect for the food they eat. Turks are fussy about the quality of their food and demand that it be the best, the freshest, the most intensely flavored. This means that produce markets are almost always limited to what is seasonally available—you won't find expensive strawberries in Turkish market stalls in the middle of winter.

And when it comes to food preparation, the same respectful approach applies. As one Turkish food writer told us: Turkish food is not about experimentation, it is about technique—about cooking a particular dish in the time-honored way, in the very best way you can.

While Turks may well be determined to preserve and protect their food traditions, it seems that it is not entirely at the expense of innovation. The winds of change do seem to be blowing—or at least wafting gently—through the country's food scene. In recent years, for instance, a small number of passionate chefs have been introducing Istanbul to the pleasures of rural "peasant" food, while still others have taken the first tentative steps toward experimenting with classic dishes and ingredients. There will always be purists who are horrified by this sort of "messaging around" with traditional dishes, of course, but we are all for progress and evolution in the kitchen. And, in the end, perhaps the most important culinary legacy that the Ottomans left to modern-day Turkey is the importance of taking risks and a willingness to experiment. After all, has it not been demonstrated that out of such boldness and creativity, greatness has come?

Greg and Lucy Malouf
Turquoise: A Chef's Travels in Turkey

Mezze

Imagine a table piled high with tempting salads, plump stuffed grape leaves, roasted peppers, dips, kebabs, spicy sausages, spinach pies, and pickled vegetables. Such a spread would be a popular presentation of mezze, Middle Eastern appetizers. I don't think there is an hors d'oeuvres table in the world that can match one with Middle Eastern mezze at their best. For all its honest simplicity, it is extremely elegant food, full of exotic aromas and vibrant colors, fragrant with sweet spices and pungent flavors. Dishes refreshed by yogurt, soothing creamy purees, and the tantalizing smokiness of grilled eggplant provide a variety of tastes and textures that contrast and entwine like the intricate motifs in a Turkish carpet.



Paula Wolfert

*The Cooking of the Eastern Mediterranean:
215 Healthy, Vibrant, and Inspired Recipes*



Mezze are ideally suited to the Western way of life. A small assortment can be served with drinks at parties, and a wider choice provides an exciting buffet dinner. There are many different kinds of mezze, simple and elaborate.

Nuts of all types; salted and soaked chickpeas; olives; cucumbers cut into long thin slices and sprinkled with salt half an hour before serving; quartered tomatoes; pieces of cheese cut into small cubes or long sticks, sometimes grilled or fried—these provide mezze which require little or no work.

Salads are popular as mezze. So is every type of pickle. Sauces or dips made with tahini (sesame paste), chickpeas, and eggplant are greatly favored. They are eaten with little pieces of Arab bread.

Myriads of "miniature foods," sometimes exact but diminished replicas of main dishes of meat, chicken, and fish, can be served. Favorites are grilled or fried chicken livers, fried cubes of lamb's or calf's liver served hot or cold, small minced meat, chicken, or fish balls, and savory little pastries such as borek and pies. Stuffed vine leaves are popular in all their forms.

Claudia Roden

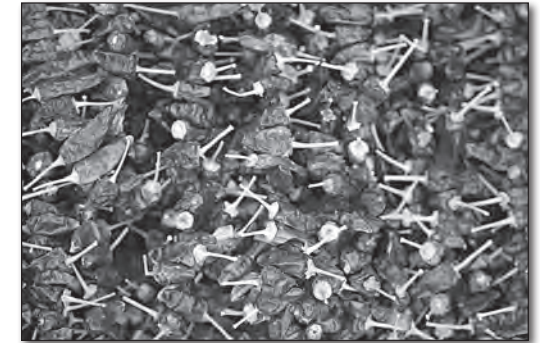
A Book of Middle Eastern Food

Red Pepper Makes the Dish

Pepper first came to Turkey from the Americas, and now red pepper flakes are being exported from Turkey to America.

The production of red pepper flakes is a big industry in Southeastern Turkey. There are four big sites just for producing pepper in Maras. The hot red pepper is grown in the Maras plain, Islahiye plain and some also in the Adiyaman plain. During the months of August and September you will see all the fields returned to red! In Turkish food, pepper is the number one ingredient to be added to dishes. You'll notice in nearly all the restaurants we dine, a special red pepper bowl sits on each table.

There are various ways to produce red pepper flakes, but you will taste two main kinds—red and the other very dark, like purple or black.



The red kind is strictly dried under the sun and then ground. The dark one is smoked, in a way. The peppers are kept in bags under strong sunshine, where they don't get any air. Then the peppers are laid out on the hot surface of house tops in the late evening, which have really absorbed all the heat of the sun during day time. In the morning the peppers are put again in airtight bags and left under the sun. By this way, the bright color of red pepper turns to dark purple and has a smoked taste. After the peppers are completely dried, they are ground. This type of pepper is also good with bulgur dishes, especially with the always-favorite bulgur paddies. There are other methods, too, such as drying them in the oven.

Red pepper paste is made from fresh red pepper which is grown towards end of August and mid September. Fresh red pepper is ground and laid under sun shine to be cooked by the strong heat of the summer sun. The juicy red pepper is stirred while it is under the sun, and after a few days it becomes a thick pepper paste, depending on the depth of the tray used. Only some salt and olive oil are added, and then the red pepper paste is stored in glass jars. The red pepper paste lasts forever, and is used for all kind of meals, especially bulgur dishes. The traditional bulgur salad—kisir—has no taste without red pepper paste!

Ayfer Unsal

*Journalist, Cookbook Author,
Turkish Culinary Expert*

An Essential Turkish Pantry

Mastic: resin from a tree that grows on the island of Chios. It is also a plant resin taken from a Mediterranean shrub.

Sumac: crimson colored berry that is ground. Tart and slightly sour flavor like lemon.

Pomegranate molasses: a thick, tart syrup that is used in salads and cooking made from pomegranate juice. Delicious with lamb stews or any lamb preparation. I recommend bringing some back because the commercial varieties available in the US are not nearly the quality that we will find in the markets in Turkey.



Tahini: sesame paste made from sesame seeds. In Turkey, they like to double roast the sesame seeds.

Sahleb: orchid root from wild orchids with sweet flavor. Used to flavor ice cream and to thicken a warm milk drink.

Dried Spearmint: sweet, warm flavor. Try using spearmint in place of oregano in your favorite tomato sauce

Maraş pepper: rich, oily, sweet, caramelized flavor with mild heat from Maraş.

Red pepper paste: artisinally, this is made like tomato paste where sweet and hot peppers are dried in the sun to concentrate the flavors into a paste. Use in place of tomato paste in vegetable or meat preparations.



Baharat: this literally means spice. A loose word for spice blend. Baharat's can vary by the region, recipe, person, etc. A cook mixes a baharat as they are cooking. For instance, if it's a hot day and they are making grilled lamb the baharat would be blended one way. If it was a cold day and they were braising lamb the baharat would be made another. The range can be from 7 to 15 different spices.

Nigella seeds: have a slightly bitter taste like celery seed. You see these seeds all over the breads, crackers and in string cheese. They are not the same as black sesame seeds which they often get confused for.

Ana Sortun

Traditional Turkish Dishes

Biber dolması: stuffed pepper

Börek: pastry that is filled with cheese and vegetables or meat

Dolma: vegetables stuffed with rice or spiced meat and then cooked in olive oil

Dondurma: Turkish ice cream, but with a much thicker, stickier texture than the Western variety. Distinctive, and definitely worth trying!

Gözleme: flat bread that is stuffed with spinach, feta, or meat.

Kebab: (or kebab) simply means “roasted,” and usually refers to lamb roasted in some form, but may refer to chicken—or even (roasted) chestnuts—as well. The most familiar Turkish kebab is shish kebab: chunks of lamb roasted on a skewer.

Köfte: a bulgur-based pate or dough. It is used to make small, round meatballs—often lamb or mutton—mixed with onions, spices, and crumbled bread.

Künefe: a dessert made with shredded phyllo dough (called kadafi). The dough is filled with sweet cheese, baked, and then soaked in a sweet syrup.

Manti: tiny, meat-filled pasta often topped with garlic yogurt and a spicy tomato sauce.

Pilaf: Generally made of rice, but also of bulgur and sehriye (vermicelli). A staple of the Turkish table, pilaf may include eggplant, chick peas, beans, or peas.

Simit: ring-shaped snack bread that is often covered with sesame seeds.

Yaprak sarma: Vine leaves stuffed with rice, herbs, and pine nuts.



Raki



Raki is a clear brandy flavored with pungent anise. Most is quite potent (80 to 90 proof/40% to 45% alcohol) and thus diluted with water and sipped. It is similar to Green ouzo and French pastis. When mixed with ice and/or water for drinking, it turns milky white. Because of its color and hefty alcoholic punch, Turks call it lion's milk (*aslan sütü*).

How to drink raki:

Fill a clear, straight, narrow glass 1/3 or 1/2 full with raki, then dilute with water and/or ice to taste.

Coffee

Coffee plays a special role in both the culture and cuisine of Turkey. Beans are ground to an ultrafine texture, and the coffee itself can be served with very little—or very much—sugar. Usually served after meals, Turkish coffee is meant to be enjoyed with others, and the reading of fortunes in the grounds is one important part of the social ritual.

Turkish Coffee

For this classic drink, you will need a medium-size Turkish coffee pot (available at www.kalustyans.com) and 4 demitasse cups.

Makes 4 Coffees

4 tablespoons finely ground espresso, as fine as powdered sugar
4 teaspoons sugar
4 demitasse cups full of cold water (about 1/3 cup)

Place coffee, sugar, and water in the coffee pot, and do not stir. Cook over high heat until the sugar starts to melt and the coffee looks shiny, about 3 minutes. The coffee will get hot and the mixture will start to collapse. At this point, remove from the burner and stir the coffee with a spoon. Place the mixture back on the heat. Holding the pot, watch and wait until the coffee is not quite reading to boil, but begins to rise to the top of the pot.

Remove from the heat and let it sit for 1 minute, then turn the heat on high and wait for the coffee to rise to the top of the pot again. This should take only 10 to 15 seconds, so make sure to watch the pot carefully. Repeat the process once more, for a third rising.

After the third rising, carefully skim a little bit of the foam—or crema—from the top and divide it equally into 4 demitasse cups.

Slowly pour the coffee into each cup, equally dividing the coffee. There should be a little crema on the top of each coffee.

Sip the coffee to the grounds, turn the cup over onto the saucer, and let the grounds settle. Refer to Ayfer Unsal's *Guide to Reading Fortunes in Your Coffee Grounds* for interpretation.



Ana Sortun

Spice, Flavors of the Eastern Mediterranean

Reading Fortunes in Your Coffee Grounds

Rectangle: You will receive some goods.

Triangle: You will receive either a present or money.

Circle: You will have good fortune. You could get married or receive a job promotion.

Cube: You will have a happy family.

Bow: Some happy event is very near.

Star: You will take a short trip or you will make a good investment.

Rising Sun: Your dreams will come true.

American Football: You must sacrifice to win somebody's heart.

Woman's purse: You will receive money in the near future. Be frugal.

Palm Tree: You will have a fantastic holiday and meet new people.

Key: You will move into a new home. You will win somebody's heart.

Leaf: You will hear from an old friend or make a new one.

Eye: Somebody is jealous of you.

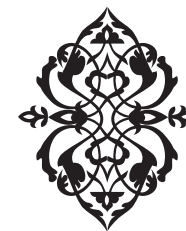
Butterfly: Be careful of a new friend.

Ear: Don't believe everybody. Be careful!

A bunch of little dots: You are spending too much money. Please be careful.



Ayfer Unsal



Yogurt

Turkey is a nation of yogurt lovers. Most of the countries milk production goes towards making yogurt.

Made from cow, goat, sheep and water buffalo milk, yogurt devotees will know that the higher fat content of the latter three animals makes even more delectably creamy yogurt. Yogurt appears on the table at every mealtime and is served with just about anything, including soups, stews, kebabs, pilavs, stuffed vegetables and salads.

Yogurt is one of the most ancient foods known to man. Evidence exists of fermented milk products being produced almost 4500 years ago, and the Turks are just one of many peoples who like to claim responsibility for its creation.

In Turkish markets and dairy shops, you'll generally find two kinds of yogurt; *sivi tas* and *suzme*. *Sivi tas* is the standard yogurt and can vary in consistency from fairly runny to thick and creamy. It's used to make most yogurt-based sauces and is diluted with iced water to make *ayran*. *Suzme* is very firm strained yogurt that's made by hanging *sivi tas* in a muslin bag overnight to drain away the whey. This is also called *labne* in Arabic.



Greg and Lucy Malouf
Turquoise: A Chef's Travels in Turkey

Ayran

In Turkey and the Middle East, the yogurt drink *ayran* is popular with meat kabobs but I like it best served chilled for breakfast at the start of a hot day.



For 1 long, tall glass:
thick, plain strained yogurt,
iced water, ice cubes, salt, and dried mint

Half fill the glass with thick yogurt and top up to two-thirds full with iced water. Stir well—it should have the consistency of thick cream. Add a couple of ice cubes, stir in a little salt, to taste, and a touch of dried mint. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then drink.

Sarah Woodward
The Ottoman Kitchen: Modern Recipes from Turkey, Greece, the Balkans, Lebanon, Syria, and Beyond

Dondurma



The famous Turkish “stretch” ice cream. Dondurma is a pounded ice cream and that unique stretchiness comes from mastic (plant resin) and sahlep (an extract of orchid root).

Maraş is the true home of ice cream. The goats, sheep and cows that graze in the nearby mountains produce the country's sweetest milk, and the wild orchids that contain sahlep also grow in the mountain pastures. In fact, maraş dondurma is more than just stretchy. The ice cream is firm enough to be eaten with a knife and fork and is almost hard and chewy but still melts in your mouth.

Turkish Tea



Turkish tea is traditionally served in small, tulip-shaped glasses with a rounded bowl at the bottom. The glass is placed on a saucer (often decorate with lurid flower patterns), together with two or three sugar lumps for you to add to taste. If your taste is Turkish, then the sweeter the better. The tea is always served without milk and strong and although the first glass may be at breakfast time, it is served throughout the day and late into the night. In the bazaars the tea-carriers are a familiar sight, swinging metal trays loaded with glasses at a seemingly impossible angle.

For the industrial quantities consumed at the bazaars, the tea is usually made in a samovar. To make it at home, warm a small teapot (preferably metal), add 3 teaspoons strong, black tea, top up with boiling water and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Pour from a height into small glasses (a few tea leaves don't matter), add sugar and drink as soon as you can bear to pick up the glass.

Sarah Woodward
The Ottoman Kitchen: Modern Recipes from Turkey, Greece, the Balkans, Lebanon, Syria, and Beyond

Rice: An Essential Ingredient of Turkish Cuisine

Sara and Dun met Engin Akin in Istanbul when they were organizing the Oldways 1993 International Symposium on Turkish Foods and Wines. Since then, she has become a newspaper columnist, radioshow host, cookbook author, cooking school teacher, and a much-in-demand speaker on Turkish food.



Turkish cuisine is a friendly cuisine with its ingredients common to most people and other cuisines. Dishes made with tomatoes, olive oil, butter, pepper, garlic, vegetables like eggplant, legumes, and grains used throughout the Mediterranean basin appear on everyday tables all around Turkey. These ingredients are either cooked with meat or made into soups; almost all vegetables may be simmered in olive oil. Always using fresh and seasonal ingredients, Turkish cuisine is probably one of the healthiest.

Yogurt, another symbolic health food, is one of the oldest ingredients of our cuisine. It can be made into a drink or a sauce, or served as an accompaniment, but surely it is a favorite since childhood.

Turkish cuisine has long been a fusion cuisine in the sense that many ingredients from all over the world have been integrated into our gastronomy long before fusion became known to the world. Rice is one ingredient that has been carried to Anatolia all the way from our first homeland. Rice appears snugly in dolma or within the warmth of a chicken soup, or as an incredibly tasty duet with sugar and spices, such as saffron and mastic in numerous desserts. Our love of rice is, however, crowned by the flaky rice pilav that appears nearly every day on family tables and always on festive tables.

As rice comes in many disguises, so does the unleavened bread of the nomadic Turkish tribes. Countless pastries, savory and sweet, including böreks, the flaky baklava, and others with more erotic names—like woman's navel or lip of the beloved—are all made from yufka, the see-through muslin-thin sheet of pastry made with a rolling pin. The wonderfully aromatic butter the pastries are dressed with only makes sure that they will be an everlasting taste memory.

Engin Akin,
The Oldways Table, 2006



Snacking on Street Food

Gozleme (right): yuftka dough (flour, water and oil based like a tortilla) is folded around a filling and crisped on a saj (domed griddle). We will see cheese or spinach and cheese fillings. It's a sort of stuffed turkish pancake, similar to a quesadilla.

Fried mussels: shucked battered then fried in olive oil. Served on a skewer with an almond and garlic sauce called tarator.

Kumpir: are baked potatoes that are split in half. The insides are scooped out and mixed with yogurt and put back into the potato. There is a bar of toppings to choose from after that.

Profiteroles: they serve these filled with pastry cream and piled on top of each other to form a lumpy cake that is scooped out by weight and served with chocolate sauce.

Su borek: a pie made from a fresh cheese, eggs, butter and yuftka pastry. The pastry becomes noodle-like and this rich snack is cut up into little pieces so that you can eat it on the street.

Kokorec: lamb intestines skewered and roasted with oregano and chiles. Served as a sandwich.

Fish sandwich: A simple fried or grilled fish sandwich made with bonito—the most common fish of the Bosphorus—with onions, tomatoes and fresh baguette. Balik-ekmek is mostly sold in old fashioned fishing boats along the Bosphorus.



Ana Sortun

The Evil Eye



The Nazar Boncuk charm (or Evil Eye Bead) is an “eye,” often set on a blue background. It stares back at the world to ward off the evil spirits and keep you safe from harm.

Since then the people have been attaching this evil eye bead to everything they wished to protect from the evil eyes. From the new-born babies to their horses or even to the doors of their homes.

This tradition still lives in Turkey. The glimmering evil eye beads that are hand made with ancient methods by very few glass masters, are distributed from Anatolia to the whole world.

Restaurant List for Gaziantep

Bayazhan

It has a bar and a restaurant in a nice atmosphere. Kebab local food. Historical building. Ataturk Bulvarı No119/1 Sahlınbey, Gaziantep 27010, Turkey.

Cavus

One of the oldest kebab house of Gaziantep, down town.

Culcuoglu

Kebab restaurant with a very good reputation.

Hotel Anatolia

4-5 star hotel. The young chef is a student of Ayfer's. He loves to present different good food.

Sahan

In the old part of the city in a historical building. Kebab and local food, quite expensive.

Sahree

In Kavaklık district. A very good fish restaurant! It is not a big restaurant but very nice, highly recommended. They bring the fish directly from the Mediterranean.

Sirvan

Kebab house. Sirvan used to be sous chef of Imam Cagdas. Not a lot different than Cagdas, where we are going.

Yorem

Simple local restaurant.



Gaziantep Castle

Restaurant List for Istanbul

360

Ana recommends this restaurant for cocktails and the view. It is in the Beyoglu district.

Istiklal Caddesi Mısır Apt. No:163 K:8, 34437 Taksim/Istanbul 0212 251 1042

Asitane

Classic Turkish

Kariye Mh. Kariye Cami Sokak 6, Istanbul Province/Istanbul 0212 534 8414

Boncuk

This restaurant is in the flower passage in Taksim and it is perfect for mezze and lunch. Great experience.

Hüseyinağa Mh. Nevizade Sk 19, Istanbul, 0212 243 1219

Borsa

Classical Turkish restaurant

Istiklal Cad. 14 Istanbul 0212 292 4071

Changa

Very hip and happening scene in Taxim. Delicious, innovative Turkish fusion food.

Cihangir Mh. Sıraselviler Caddesi 47, 34433 Istanbul 0212 251 7064

Haci Abdullah

Ottoman in Taksim. This is a favorite of the locals. Like a brasserie.

Hüseyinağa Mh. Atif Yılmaz Cd 9, Istanbul, 0212 293 8561

Hünkar

Specializes in typical traditional Ottoman-Turkish cuisine, named on list of world top 100 restaurants by British magazine *Restaurant*

21 Mim Kemal Öke Sokak, Istanbul 34360 0212 4662 / 0212 225 4665

Mikla

Finish chef gives Turkish dishes a Scandinavian twist. Spectacular view of the Bosphorus.

Marmara Pera - Asmalı Mescit Mh. Mesrutiyet Caddesi 95, Istanbul, 0212 293 5656

Tugra

This restaurant in the Çırağan Palace on the Bosphorus is very fancy. This palace is stunning and expensive. Great place to have a drink if you don't want the formal dining experience.

Çırağan Palace Kempinski Yıldız Mh., Çırağan Caddesi 32, 34349 Istanbul Province/Istanbul 0212 326 4646



Potluck Dishes in Gaziantep

March 19, 2012

1. **Oz Corbasi:** Wheat berries with yogurt and maras pepper (Emel Sayin)
2. **Dovmeli Alaca Corba:** Lentils and chick peas with wheat berries and tarragon (Selma Ozkara)
3. **Dovmeli Paca:** Wheat berries with garlic, sweet and hot peppers (Nilgun Ozdover)
4. **Cagla Asi:** Green almonds cooked with chick peas, yogurt and lamb (Muruvet Sozmen)
5. **Izmir Kofte:** Izmir-style meatballs with yogurt and chiles (Murad Ucaner)
6. **Mas Piyazi:** Mung beans with walnuts and parsley (Ozden Tasar)
7. **Yuvarlama:** Teeny-tiny meatballs with chick peas, dried mint and yogurt (Selma Goktekin)
8. **Eksili Ufak Kofte:** Lamb kofte and chick peas with chiles and dried mint (Serpil Nakipoglu)
9. **Siveydiz:** Green onion and Garlic broth with chick peas and yogurt (Leyla Ozkiyikci)
10. **Eksili taraklik tavasi:** Lamb chops with quince and pomegranate sauce (Kaleli Hotel)
11. **Alinazik:** Smokey eggplant with lamb and tomato (Necile Ozkarsli)
12. **Kabaklama:** Native winter squash with lamb and chick peas (Atiye Dai)
13. **Dolma made with winter dried vegetables:** Sun-dried eggplant dolma slowly cooked with rice and lamb (Selma Yesilova)
14. **Kabak Oturtma:** Fried zucchini with lamb and parsley (Selma Kanalici)
15. **Borani:** Swiss chard and black eyed peas (Selma Ozkara)
16. **Pirpirim Asi:** Stewed black eyed peas, chick peas and lentils with wild purslane, tomato and garlic (Nurten Ozkececi)
17. **Kuru Bamya:** Okra with lemon and lamb (Hulya Haksal)
18. **Ciger Kavurma:** Lamb liver with onion and parsley (Sinan Karabagli/Otel Kaleli)
19. **Truffles from region:** Wild truffles if we are lucky (Gullu Koc)

20. **Firik pilav:** Smoked green wheat with lamb (Emel Sayin)
21. **Bulgurlu pancar sarmasi:** Swiss chard dolma with bulgur wheat and lamb (Zerrin Ogucu)
22. **Arap Koftesi:** Lamb kofte with yogurt (Gullu Koc)
23. **Mercimekli kofte:** Red lentil kofte (Sabiha Yapici)
24. **Zeytin boregi:** Green olive and walnut pie with pomegranate molasses (Nilufer Berk)
25. **Hatce mincik:** Tomato and pepper salad with pomegranate molasses (Nurten Ozkececi)
26. **Arpa sehriyeli tavuklu pilav:** Rice with dried eggplant and red pepper (Sahine Sun)
27. **Micirik asi:** Grilled lamb and eggplant kebob with pomegranate molasses (Gullu Koc.)
28. **Kilis Kebabi:** Eggplant and meat balls are grilled then cooked with onion, pomegranate sauce (Sinan Karabagli/Otel Kaleli)
29. **Eksili Taraklik Tavasi:** Lamb chops cooked with quince and onion (Sercan Saglik, Executive Chef)



Sweets

- Peynirli Irmik Helvasi:** Semolina pudding with pistachio (Nuriye Horozoglu)
- Bastik:** Grape fruit leather
- Tahin Helvasi:** Halva
- Kurabiye:** Semolina cookies with pistachio
- Sucuk, Muska:** Walnuts wrapped in grape fruit leather
- Cevizli Helva:** Walnut halva
- Nise Helvasi:** Cream of wheat with grape molasses

Recipes for Gaziantep Cooking Demonstration

COOKING CLASS: Gaziantep, Wednesday March 21

- *Ayfer's Kisir*
- *Tomato, Walnut and Pomegranate Salad*
- *Spinach Lamejun*
- *Gaziantep Chicken*
- *Watermelon, Berry, and Halva Salad*

AYFER'S KISIR

Ayfer's recipe that she gave Ana in 1996.

2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons pepper paste
2 cups of fine bulgur
1 onion, finely chopped
1 head of lettuce, washed and finely chopped
1 cup chopped parsley
6 scallions or green onion
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon maras pepper
½ teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon dried mint
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses
Salt to taste

Bring 2 cups of water to a boil and add tomato paste and red pepper paste. Simmer for 3 minutes.

Place bulgur in a large mixing bowl and pour the hot water over it. Stir to combine and let sit until it's completely cooled.

Stir in finely chopped onion, parsley, lettuce, green onion, cumin, chiles, black pepper, dried spearmint, olive oil, and pomegranate molasses. Season with salt to taste.

Serve room temperature or cold.

TOMATO, WALNUT and POMEGRANATE SALAD

Serves 4

3 cups of ripe cherry tomatoes, washed and split in half
1 cup of walnuts, blanched and soaked in ice water
4 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
4 tablespoons olive oil
Pinch of cinnamon

Lightly salt the tomatoes and let them sit in a colander for 10 minutes to drain off any juice (catch the juice in a large mixing bowl and reserve). Finely chop the walnuts.

Use the reserved tomato juice and whisk together with olive oil, cinnamon, and pomegranate molasses. Combine the cut tomatoes, walnuts, parsley, and mint.

SPINACH LAMEJUN

Makes 4-6 lamejun

1 ½ pounds spinach, washed
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon dried mint
½ pound haloumi, finely grated
½ cup crème fraiche or labne
Salt and white pepper to taste

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add a 1 teaspoon of salt to it.

Drop spinach in the boiling water for 30 seconds or until it is completely wilted. Drain immediately and run a little cold water over it to cool it down.

Squeeze as much liquid from spinach as possible, by squeezing small amounts at a time between your palms.

Place spinach on large chopping board with garlic, lemon zest, and mint. Use a large knife to mix everything together and chop as fine as possible. Place chopped spinach in large bowl, stir in crème fraiche and haloumi. Season with salt and pepper

Use pizza dough and roll out a 6-inch round as thin as you can. Par-cook them in a cast iron pan or use store bought pita or Iggys pre-cooked pizza shell. Spread the mixture as thin as you can so the whole pie is covered but with a very thin layer. Bake at 350 degrees until the top is a little bubbly but the lamejun is still soft and not crispy.

GAZIANTEP CHICKEN

Ana's re-interpreted recipe from her notes from when she first visited Ayfer in 1997.

Serves 4

4 chicken breast halves
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Grated onion (half a white onion)
2 ½ teaspoons Baharat spice mix (see recipe below)
1 teaspoon of tomato paste
1 teaspoon water
2 tablespoons of pistachios
2 tablespoons of pine nuts
4 tablespoons dried currants or sour cherries
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
2 tablespoons yogurt
2 tablespoons tahini

Mix onion with 1 tablespoon olive oil, 2 teaspoons Baharat, tomato paste and water. Pour over chicken breasts and stir to coat. Let stand for 20 minutes.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Bake chicken on a baking sheet for 8-12 minutes depending on the size of the chicken.

Meanwhile, finely chop the pistachio and pine nuts. Fry them gently in 1 tablespoon of olive oil until light brown and just barely toasted (about 4 minutes). Stir in garlic and continue to cook for another minute. Remove from the heat and stir in currants or cherries.

Blend yogurt, tahini and remaining tablespoon of olive oil to form a smooth tahini sauce. Season with salt to taste.

Slice chicken and top with the nut mixture and tahini sauce.

BAHARAT SPICE MIXTURE

Yield 1 cup

3 tablespoons dried oregano
2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons ground nutmeg
2 tablespoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons ground coriander
4 tablespoons dried mint, crushed through a sieve
4 tablespoons ground black pepper

WATERMELON, BERRY, AND HALVA SALAD

(Or Seasonal Fruit)

Serves 4

¼ cup of sugar
¼ cup of water
Zest of 1 lemon
1 vanilla bean, split
2 cups of watermelon balls (or citrus wheels)
2 cups of strawberries or a mixed berries
¼ cup finely shredded mint leaves
¼ cup of crumbled pistachio halves

Put the sugar, water, vanilla bean and lemon zest in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil then simmer gently for about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. When cool, remove the vanilla bean. Chill the syrup.

Mix the berries, mint and half of the sugar syrup. Toss and serve sprinkled with halva.



Recipes for Istanbul Cooking Demonstration

COOKING CLASS: Istanbul, Saturday March 24

- Red Lentil Kofte
- Cacik
- Topik
- Iskender Kebob
- Muhallabia

RED LENTIL KOFTE

Makes 16 Kofte

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium white onion, minced (or leeks)
1 small carrot, peeled and finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoons red pepper paste
1 cup red lentils, picked over and rinsed
3 cups water
3/4—1 cup fine ground bulgur
Salt and Aleppo pepper to taste
2 cucumbers (Lebanese or Turkish variety)
1 cup of pomegranate seeds
2 teaspoons of pomegranate molasses
1/2 cup of chopped fresh mint or parsley
16 pieces of romaine lettuce or other head lettuce

In a medium saucepan, sauté the onion, bell pepper and carrot in olive oil and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste, cumin and pepper paste, then add the lentils and water and bring to a boil.

Simmer over moderate heat until the lentils are tender and have absorbed about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the liquid (about 8 minutes). This should look like a thick lentil soup. Stir in the bulgur and remove from the heat. Let stand until the liquid is absorbed and the bulgur is softened, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and Aleppo.

Transfer the lentil mixture to a rimmed baking sheet and spread in an even layer to cool.

continued

Cut the cucumber into a fine dice, stir in pomegranate seeds, pomegranate molasses and season with salt and red pepper. Fold in mint just before serving.

Form the lentil kofte into little patties. Serve with lettuce and spoon salad.

You can substitute cabbage, apples, leeks or other vegetables in this recipe depending on the season.

CACIK

Cacik translates to anything or everything green with thick garlicky yogurt.

Makes 4 cups to serve 6

1 bulb fennel, outer leaves removed, cored and finely chopped
1 cup of finely chopped cucumber
1 cup of steamed spinach, squeezed very dry and roughly chopped
2 tablespoons of chopped fresh dill
½ cup roughly chopped parsley
2 tablespoons of finely chopped mint
2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
3 cups thick Greek-style yogurt
2 cloves finely chopped garlic
Juice of half a lemon
1 teaspoon dried mint
Aleppo chiles for garnish
Serve with lamb dumplings

In a small mixing bowl stir the garlic and the lemon juice until combined. Let stand for 10 minutes.

Stir in the yogurt, 1 tablespoon olive oil, dried mint and season well with salt and pepper to taste.

In a separate mixing bowl, combine the fennel, cucumber, spinach, herbs and season with salt to taste. Toss with 1 tablespoon of olive oil.

To assemble the dish, spoon a generous spoonful of vegetables on the bottom of a shallow bowl. Top with a heaping spoon of yogurt and three dumplings. Sprinkle with Aleppo chiles.



Fennel

TOPIK

Chickpea and Potato Terrine Stuffed with Greens and served with Tahini Sauce

1 cup of chickpeas soaked overnight
3 each baking potatoes, peeled, cut in small pieces, boiled and riced (about 2 cups of riced)
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon ground allspice (optional)
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 bay leaf
Pinch of baking soda

Cook chickpeas with a bay leaf and the pinch of baking soda until tender. About 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaf, drain and puree with 4 tablespoons of olive oil and spices until smooth and creamy. Slowly incorporate the potato to the mixture - being careful not to overwork. Set aside to cool.

For the Filling:

1 onion, finely minced
2 teaspoons chopped garlic
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons pistachio, lightly toasted
4 tablespoons, finely chopped dried apricots
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 ½ teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon ground allspice
1 ½ teaspoons ground cumin
1 ½ teaspoons Aleppo chiles
Salt to taste

Cook the onion in the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium high heat until onions soften, about 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining ingredients and set aside.

To Complete the Filling:

½ cup of scallion (green onion), roughly cut
4 cups or more of spinach leaves, cleaned and stemmed
4 cups of roughly cut chard leaves, stems removed
1 tablespoon olive oil

Heat a large sauté pan with olive oil and cook the spinach, scallion and chard until everything is tender, about 4 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside to cool. Remove the liquid from the cooked greens by squeezing them between your hands. Chop finely. Stir in the onion mixture and season with salt to taste.

For the Tahini Sauce:

4 tablespoons tahini
1 heaping tablespoon grape must
1 tablespoon of olive oil
Salt to taste

Whisk the above together in a small mixing bowl.

To Assemble the Terrine:

Line a small loaf pan or medium cazuela with saran wrap. Fill with chickpea and potato mixture and use your hands to evenly distribute it so that the mold is lined like a pie shell is with pastry for a pie. Place the filling in the center and cover with more chickpea potato mixture. Fold over the saran wrap and lightly press it. Refrigerate for one hour.

Open the saran wrap and turn the terrine out onto a plate. Frost with tahini sauce and serve like a torte or pie.

ISKENDER KEBOB

Beef with Tomato and Caramelized Butter

Serves 4

1 pound of beef sirloin, cut into 2 large pieces
1 teaspoon dried spearmint
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon cumin
1 tablespoon olive oil for sautéing
1 onion, finely chopped
4 cups of canned or fresh grated tomato
2 cloves garlic
1 teaspoon of dried spearmint
4 tablespoons of brown butter (plus a little more for drizzling at the end)
4 small pitas
½ cup of Greek yogurt

In a small saucepan, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil until soft or translucent. Stir in tomato and simmer for 20 minutes on medium-low heat. Allow to cool and puree the sauce in the blender adding the brown butter. Cut the pita bread in one-inch squares and lightly coat with olive oil. Toast very lightly until one side gets a little toasted but the bread is still soft and not crisp all the way through.

Combine the spices and dried herbs. Grill or sear the beef on both sides. Remove from heat and sprinkle generously with the cumin and herbs and allow the meat to rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing.

Spread some yogurt on the bottom of a dinner plate and top with some pita squares. Spoon tomato sauce over the pita squares and arrange slices of beef on top. Drizzle with any brown butter that is left.

MUHALLABIA

Milk Pudding

Serves 8

4 cups milk
½ cup sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch
¼ teaspoon ground mastic
1 cup Labne or Greek yogurt



Grind mastic grains with a very small amount of sugar with a mortar and pestle until it is a fine powder.

Set a medium bowl in an ice bath for cooked pudding. Set aside.

Combine mastic, cornstarch and ½ cup of milk, whisk until smooth. Put remaining 3½ cups milk and sugar in saucepan. Bring milk to rolling boil, immediately pour in milk and mastic mixture, whisking constantly. Continue to whisk over medium heat until milk thickens. Pour into bowl over ice bath; whisk until mixture cools. Whisk in labne (this can be done by hand or with a hand blender). Pour into serving glasses to set. Cover each and refrigerate.

To serve:

Spoon fruit preserves, sauce or curd in thin layer on top. Pull a small ball of Turkish candy floss on top of fruit.



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Sara Baer-Sinnott
President, Oldways
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CREDITS: As a nonprofit educational organization, Oldways expresses sincere appreciation to the sources of selections that appear in this Program Book. These works make valuable contributions to this educational program, and to our understanding of Istanbul and Gaziantep, and the foods and wines that make it so special.



Istanbul

Istanbul is as polite and friendly as a country village, as noisy and clotted with people as any city in the world, old and sleepy, and busy. I felt, not welcomed, but taken for granted there. They are used to so many strangers. For more than fifteen hundred years of empire, Istanbul has welcomed an international horde from whatever the known world was and is.

Mary Lee Settle
Turkish Reflections

The Ideal of a single civilization, implicit in the cult of progress and technique, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life.

Octavio Paz





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