

Example of research paper on turkish cuisine

[Food & Diet](#), [Cooking](#)



Turkey is a country located in Asia Minor and a small part of Europe. It has borders with such countries as Greece, Iraq, Iran, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Syria, Bulgaria and is washed by the Sea of Marmara, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Naturally the fact that Turkey has quite a big number of neighboring states left its impact on Turkish culture in general and its cuisine in particular. According to the physiographical location there are usually 5 regions marked out on the territory of Turkey: the Black Sea region, the Anatolian plateau region, the Mediterranean coastal region, the Aegean region and the Marmara. Each region had its own influences and thus has acquired different traditions in the lifestyle. This is why Turkish cuisine somewhat varies in different parts of the country.

Generally Turkish cuisine was influenced by Ottoman cuisine which in its turn is often described as a mixture of Balkan, Middle Eastern and Central Asian cuisines. However if we take a look at different regions we can point out that, for example, people who live in the Black Sea region eat more fish particularly the Black Sea anchovy which is explained by the perceptible influence of Slavic and Balkan cuisines. The main local feature of the Aegean region is a significantly lighter usage of spices and the choice of rice over bulgur and they also eat a lot of seafood. The Southeast Turkish cuisine is distinguished by the famous kebabs, mezes and such desserts as kadayif, baklava and künefe. The Anatolian region is famous for its specialties, for example, manti, gözleme or keşkek. In the Mediterranean, Marmara and Aegean regions people use a lot of herbs, vegetables and fish for cooking as these parts of Turkey are very rich in them. The Western regions of Turkey are known for growing olive trees so naturally they mostly use olive oil for

cooking. You can also witness the influence of neighboring states at the Turkish cuisine. For example, the parts of Turkey that are close to Georgia adopted its tradition to eat corn soups and thick corn bread. In the Southeastern provinces which used to be occupied by Armenians people still cook Armenian pizza or, as they call it, Lahmacun.

There also have been some religious influences on Turkish food. The main of them is, of course, the food taboo on pork as it is prohibited to Muslims. The Koran also prohibits drinking alcoholic beverages however many Turkish people do drink wine, beer and liquors. Some representatives of Muslim population also consider other foods to be a taboo even if the Koran does not indicate it directly. For example, people from the Alevi sect of Islam do not eat rabbit, the Turks of Balikesir, a northwestern province, avoid snails and the Yürüks, the Turkish people who used to be nomadic, do not eat any seafood except of fish.

The 90% of the population in Turkey are Muslims and religion plays a great part in their lives. Thus they even have special dishes prepared for religious national holidays. The Muharrem, the first religious holiday of the Islam year, is celebrated on the tenth day of the first lunar month. Aure or Noah's pudding is traditionally prepared on this day. It is a thick and sweet pudding made of grains, fruits and nuts. The most famous religious tradition of Islam is, of course, Ramadan. It is a month-long fast that starts in September. People are prohibited from drinking or eating during the daytime for this period. At the end of each day of that month they eat iftar to break the fasting period. The end of Ramadan is marked by Seker Bayrami known as the Candy Festival. It is a three-day festival during which people prepare

desserts mostly for children who go door-to-door asking for treats. The most popular desserts cooked for this occasion are lokma, a batter that is deeply fried and glazed in syrup, and lokum generally known as Turkish Delight - the most famous Turkish candy.

All these historical factors and traditions find their reflection in the everyday life of a random resident of Turkey. The typical Turkish breakfast will include cheese, tomatoes, eggs, olives, honey, jam, kaymak and bread. Sometimes they also eat soups, meat salami, soujuk (Turkish pepperoni) and yogurt in the morning. Turks consider breakfast to be the main meal as it provides energy for the whole day. A normal lunch of a Turk will usually consist of bulgar (cracked wheat) or rice pilaf dish, meat (mostly lamb or chicken) baked with eggplant and peppers, and grilled fish with lemon. A dinner in Turkey will usually start with a meze (an appetizer). The variety of mezes is really impressive: gozleme, kisir, fried eggplants, lambs' brains with lemon juice, pastirma, fish croquettes, lakerda and much more. The main course during a Turkish dinner usually includes manti (miniature pasta), turnip pickles and peppers, lamb meatballs, different salads, sardines that are rolled in grape leaves and mackerel stuffed with rice or bulgar. Some of the most widespread desserts in Turkish cuisine are melon, dried apricots, fresh fruit, baklava, kadaif, lokum, marzipan, cezerye, macun, sherbet, etc. These are usually served with Turkish coffee or tea and that is also a great attribute of Turkish culture.

Needless to say, some traditional Turkish dishes became known and globally used. For instance, yogurt is a very popular product all over the world nowadays but not everyone knows that it comes from Turkey. Even the word

“yogurt” itself has Turkish origin. Yogurt is a basic element of Turkish cuisine as it can accompany almost any dish from meat and vegetables to bread and rice. Another inalienable part of the culinary culture of Turkey that is renowned all over the world is kebab. It is a traditional Turkish meat-based dish that can be cooked and served in many different ways. Potato kebab, steamed kebab, waterless kebab, bowl kebab, forest kebab – these are just the few examples from an extensive list of kebabs.

We also should mention that in spite of the development of restaurant industry and fast food chains Turkish people still prefer to eat mostly homemade food. They usually pay a lot of attention to the preparation of food, the freshness and quality of ingredients and the compliance with the old traditions and recipes. Some of the key ingredients of the Turkish cuisine are fish, lamb, chicken, eggplants, garlic, onions, beans, tomatoes, green peppers, nuts and various spices and herbs. Using all these fresh products in cooking makes Turkish food nutritive and healthy and the same time. “The Mediterranean diet, which includes Turkey's, is considered a healthy diet to follow.” (Chrones) Most Turkish dishes are hearty and high-calorie; however, they still keep their healthy nutritive qualities because of the right techniques of preparation. Plus the fact that the majority of products used for cooking are grown in Turkey and not imported plays a great role in the overall quality of Turkish food. “Turkey is one of the few countries in the world that has been self sustaining, producing all its own food.” (Chrones) As we can see the modern-day Turkish cuisine was determined by many factors: climate, geophysical location, historical and religious influences and so on. We also can distinguish three main stages in the development of

Turkish cuisine: the Central Asian era, Seljuk and Principalities and the era of Ottoman Empire. Owing to the rich cultural and historical heritage of Turkey and its neighboring countries we can enjoy the outstanding diversity and quality of Turkish food. “ It is said that three major kinds of cuisine exist in the world; Turkish, Chinese, and French. In addition to being the refined product of centuries of experience, Turkish Cuisine has a very pure quality. The variety and simplicity of the recipes and the quality of the ingredients are guarantees of delicious meals.” (Sansal) And this statement is more than truthful. A lot of people who travel to Turkey first of all single out its food. “ The beauty of Turkish cooking is in its affordability, use of fresh ingredients, and ease of basic cooking techniques.” (Chrones) As a conclusion I want to state that we should render homage to Turkish cuisine for not only presenting the outstanding food and traditions in itself but also for making a great contribution to the cuisine of many other countries.

Works Cited

Chrones, Terrie Wright. “ Turkish Food by Terrie Wright Chrones.”

turkishlanguage. co. uk, n. d. Web. 15 Nov. 2011.

Sansal, Burak. “ Turkish Cuisine.” allaboutturkey. com, n. d. Web. 15 Nov. 2011.