

Free essay about food culture in the middle east

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The nations in Middle East include Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Israel. Even though these states have a similar cuisine, each culture is known to have a culture that is distinct and different from the rest. Food preferences and food techniques are also different from one state to the other. Many people from Middle East are known to reside in the United States. The reasons as to why the middle easterners decide to live in America is because of their political reasons need to advance their schooling, as well as the prior emigration of some of the family members. Many students and professionals immigrating to America are known to have their origins in affluent families, and are cosmopolitan in their feeding habits. However, it should be noted that the length of an individual's stay in the United States correlates with the level of Americanization of their diet. Traditional dishes are only prepared in special events. However, the food habits that tend to be common among all the middle easterners include dates, rice, legumes, lamb, wheat and olives. Bread is known to accompany each meal typically. The common foods consumed in the Middle East include Dairy products. Such products may be consumed in their fermented form to include cheese and yoghurt. In puddings and desserts, whole milk is applicable. The Cheese that is commonly consumed by the middle easterners is known as the feta cheese. Besides dairy products, meat is also commonly consumed. In this regard, lamb is the most common type of meat consumed. Christians are the only ones who consume pork. Legumes are also commonly consumed with the inclusion of navy beans, lentils, chickpeas, red beans and black beans. All this types of legumes are accompanied with many dishes.

Breads and cereals are also common in the Middle East. Some given form of rice or wheat serves as accompaniments for each meal. The unleavened bread by the name Matzoh and Pita bread are readily available in the American food market. Filo dough that is used in making baklava is common in many dishes. When it comes to fruits, they tend to be taken as snacks, and at times as desserts. Fresh fruit is the most preferred with lemons being used for flavoring. Apart from fruits, vegetables are also consumed in the Middle East, with eggplant being the one that is commonly consumed. Both fruits and vegetables are preferred to be taken raw or at times mixed in salads. Vegetables are stuffed with either rice or meat. Many dishes are accompanied with either green or black olives. In food preparation, olive oil is the one that is frequently used.

When it comes to eating practices, preferences of food, and the techniques in food preparation, grilling, grinding, stewing, and frying are known to be the most common ways in food preparation. For instance, a festive gathering can majorly have a full leg of roasted lamb. Spices along with seasonings are important in the preparation of the dishes in the Middle East. The most commonly used spices and herbs include dill, mint, cinnamon, garlic, pepper, parsley, and oregano. Even though the Middle Easterners staying in America prefer having an American lunch and breakfast, dinner is usually traditional. In this regard, the recipes found in America have seen some changes with the aim of reducing the preparation time, spices and fats.

Customs and family traditions is also an important element in food culture. In this regard, the Middle Eastern culture revolves around a patriarchal family. This seems to fade off with time since the emigration of families into the

United States, through family ties are still strengthened. In various cultures, food is known to be an important element in any family celebrations, festivals, as well as days of honor. The dietary law relating to the Kosher, on the selection, preparation and consumption of food still has got influence in family lives and the Jewish religion.

The Jewish laws relating to Kashrut, or rather keeping Kosher are capable of identifying the Kosher and the non-Kosher foods. Many ancient rituals and practices that are handed down from one generation to the other are observed. During Ramadan, the Muslims usually fast from sunrise to sunset, and this is expected of them as far as their religious obligation is concerned. Apart from that, body movement is only allowed among people of similar sex. In addition, body language as well as eye contact is still regarded as effective tools in communication.

Cultural diversity is known to be a major issue in terms of eating in America. In order for an individual to gain an understanding of effects or rather the impact of culture in the American nutrition, it is expected that one should gain insights on both culture and food. In the Middle East, etiquette dictates that some regions of the Middle East that is countries at the Persian Gulf, people take food from a communal plate. The plate is usually placed at the center of the table. People usually dine without utensils, and in this case, forks and spoons are never employed in eating. Food is scooped with thumbs while pita bread is picked with two fingers.

People consider the left hand to be unclean, hence cannot be used in eating. Since this is the case, the left-handed persons also consume food using their right hand. The most common exception in eating is that, the left hand can

be used in holding drinking glasses when the right food picks greasy food. Etiquette also claims that, it is in order for one to compliment the host on food and hospitality provided by him or her. Similarly, it is also important to give a try of every plate that is placed on the table. In the case, a guest clears food on his or her plate, and the host fills that plate with food immediately.

In the month of Ramadan, the consumption of food dramatically increases throughout the Muslim communities. During this season, cafes and pastries are usually operated at night, with a carnival atmosphere spreading all over the street. Some Muslims, who are known to follow the example of their prophet, decide to break the process of fasting with dates, and then followed by a different variety of dishes. On the nights of Ramadan, puddings as well as sweet pastries are available everywhere. Marking the end of Ramadan, a feast is prepared with a large variety of pastries and sweets, as far as the Muslim culture is concerned. Muslims also have a feast of sacrifice whereby each household is expected to slaughter a goat though not compulsory, with an obligation of offering food to the poor.