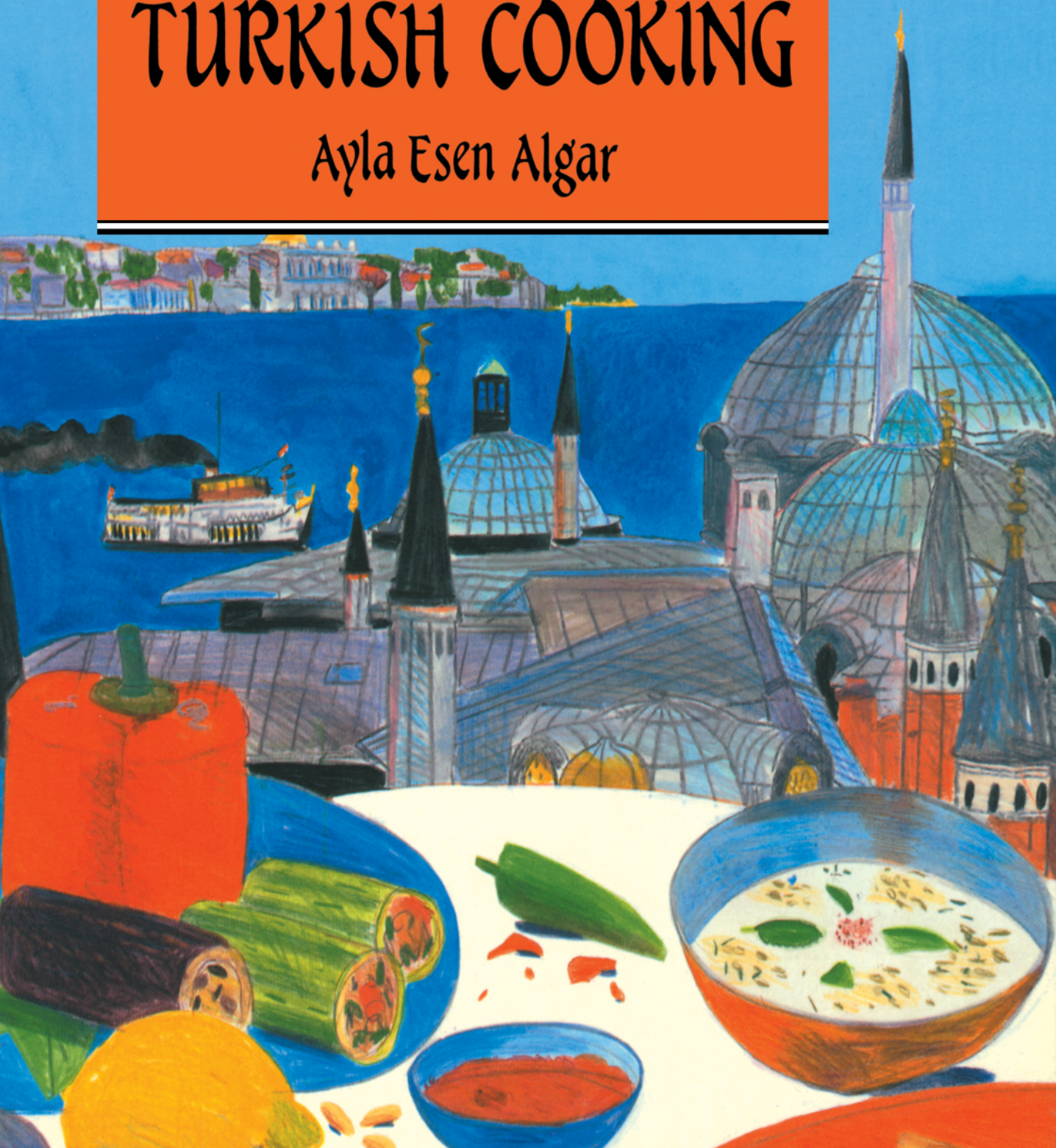


# The Complete Book of TURKISH COOKING

Ayla Esen Algar



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AYLA ESEN ALGAR

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Ayla Esen Algar  
Berkeley, California  
July, 1985



*Anneannemin aziz hatırasına  
ve sevgili anneme*

# Introduction

“Eat of the good things We have  
provided for you as sustenance.”

*Qur'an* 2:58

The main claim to interest of any cuisine is, of course, the stimulation it gives to the appetite and the satisfaction it provides to the palate. But food, properly considered, is not a simple matter of preparation and consumption, which are often complex undertakings in themselves; it also touches upon religious prescriptions and customs, aesthetic tastes, geographic and climatic conditions, social stratification and prosperity. The study of food, then, is a proper although generally neglected concern of the historian, and the cuisine of a people may be regarded, in the words of the hero of a nineteenth-century Turkish novel, as a “complete civilization in itself.”<sup>1</sup>

The integration of food with social, religious, and cultural life was certainly very marked with the Ottoman Turks, and even though the state and civilization they created have crumbled, much of their gastronomical legacy survives in present-day Turkey. To place the delicacies of Turkish cuisine in historical perspective, and to enable the users of this book to supplement the delights of the palate with the pleasures of historical reminiscence, we invite them to peruse this survey of food in Turkish history, or—looked at somewhat differently—Turkish history in food.

Little is known of the culinary habits of the largely nomadic pre-Islamic Turks who inhabited the eastern and northeastern reaches of Central Asia. It is probable that their diet consisted largely of milk products and meat, and that they did not challenge the rule that elaborate cuisine is a by-product of the settled life. One of the earliest Turkish states, that of the Uyghurs who settled in what is now known as Sinkiang in the eighth century of the Christian era, was heavily influenced by the neighboring civilization of China, and this influence may have extended to matters of food. The name of one Turkish dish, *mantı* (a kind of dumpling; see p. 253), is actually derived from Chinese, and the borrowing presumably took place during this period of close contact with China.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the Uyghurs distinguished themselves from the Chinese by eating at low tables, a custom that was later trans-

ported westward in the great waves of Turkish migration and that persists today in Anatolia.<sup>3</sup>

The recorded history of Turkish cuisine begins in about the tenth century, when the Turks came into contact with the Irano-Islamic culture of West Asia and definitively entered the orbit of Islamic religion and civilization. Like other aspects of that civilization, its cuisine was the joint creation of different ethnic elements who borrowed from each other in an uninhibited interchange. Nonetheless, it is possible to assign a definite origin to certain dishes on the basis of etymological or other evidence. *Pilav*, for example, is originally an Iranian dish (the Turkish word being derived from Persian *pulau*), although the Turks came to evolve many distinctive rice dishes not found among the Iranians. Other dishes, by contrast, are originally Turkish, and the words designating them in Persian (and sometimes Arabic) are Turkish. *Bulgur* (cracked wheat; see p. 219), for example, is a Turkish contribution to the culinary stock of the Near Eastern peoples.<sup>4</sup>

Another contribution of the Turks, one much less familiar to us, is *tutmaç*. An early Turkish lexicon described it as "a well-known Turkish dish";<sup>5</sup> now all but forgotten, it appears to have been a thick soup made with noodles, lentils, and sometimes yogurt.<sup>6</sup> It attained such popularity that a thirteenth-century Persian poet, Shams ad-Din Shastkullah, described it as "caliph of the world of appetite" and claimed that "from the limits of Iraq all the way to Khorasan, you can find no one who will deny its deliciousness."<sup>7</sup>

The name *tutmaç* has virtually disappeared from Turkish cuisine, although dishes similar to it are still prepared.<sup>8</sup> *Börek*, another dish (or, more correctly, a group of dishes) that can be traced to the early centuries of Turkish association with Islam, remains today a mainstay of the Turkish culinary system. The etymology of the word *börek* is uncertain. Although it occurs in Persian as *burak*, the word is clearly of Turkish origin.<sup>9</sup> It may be derived from the root *bur-*, meaning "wrap" or "twist"; this is plausible, since the filling of the *börek* is wrapped or twisted in the dough that encloses it.<sup>10</sup> One account links the invention of *börek* specifically to Bugra Khan (d. 994), a ruler of Eastern Turkistan, from whose realm it gradually spread westward to Khorasan.<sup>11</sup> In any event, the appearance of *börek* is known to antedate the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia. In fact, *börek* came to occupy such a high place in the Turko-Iranian cuisine of Western Asia that it was even considered a rival to *pilav*, the otherwise unchallenged king of the banquet. The rise of *börek* is reflected in a curious poem by the Persian poet Bushaq-i At'ima, describing an imaginary battle between *börek* and *pilav*, which are personified as two rival monarchs.<sup>12</sup>

Another part of the pre-Anatolian legacy of Turkish cuisine is the *güveç*, a kind of vegetable stew cooked in an earthenware pot. The original form of the word appears to be *kömeç* or *gömmec*, meaning "buried"; that is, the pot would be buried in hot ashes to cook its contents, a method still used for baking bread in both Central Asia and Anatolia.<sup>13</sup>

One branch of the Turkish peoples settled in Anatolia from the eleventh century onward, and a new and significant period in Turkish history began. Having emerged from the landlocked confines of Central Asia, the Turks were now in a position to have a decisive effect upon the destinies of the Balkans, the Arab world, and much of the Mediterranean basin. Political prominence went hand-in-hand with cultural splendor, so that the Ottoman centuries came to mark the apogee of Turkish history.

It is not surprising, then, that Turkish cuisine attained new heights of elaboration and complexity in the Ottoman period. It came to overshadow fully the cuisine of Central Asia the Western Turks had left behind, a cuisine that was in any event greatly impoverished by the agricultural decay and economic stagnation that resulted from the ravages of the Mongols and their successors.<sup>14</sup> In Anatolia and the Balkans, the Turks gained access to new types of food: fruits and vegetables generally unavailable in Central Asia, olive oil in abundance, and seafood. The dishes concocted using these were combined with fare of Central Asian origin—*börek*s, *kebabs*, *pilav*s, and so on—to produce one of the most complex, delicate, and elaborate culinary systems in the world.

The chief predecessors of the Ottomans in the Turkicization and Islamicization of Anatolia were the Seljuqs, a dynasty that ruled much of the eastern Islamic world before being reduced to its Anatolian domains. Fragmentary information about food in Seljuq-ruled Anatolia can be derived from a variety of texts. For example, a description of a feast given by the Seljuq Sultan 'Ala ad-Din Kayqubad in 1237 mentions that a variety of kebabs were served (including duck and chicken broiled on spits), together with pepper-seasoned *pilav* and *zerde* (a saffron-flavored rice pudding, eaten cold; see p. 288).<sup>15</sup> In addition, the poetry of the celebrated Sufi and founder of the Mevlevi order, Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi, is, perhaps surprisingly, an important source for the culinary history of the period. Numerous dishes and foodstuffs—wheat soup, *tutmaç*, kebabs, eggplant, spinach, bulgur, pickles, halva, and *kadayıf* (a dessert; see p. 301)—figure in the rich and imaginative imagery one encounters throughout his work.<sup>16</sup> From still other sources, we know that meatless vegetable dishes had already made their appearance in the Seljuq period. For example, dishes known as *kalyeler* and consisting of lightly boiled eggplant or squash covered with melted butter and ground walnuts were much favored. Also in evidence in Seljuq times were leafy vegetables, particularly spinach, served without meat and covered with garlic-yogurt.<sup>17</sup>

It has been suggested that, during this formative period of Turkish-Islamic culture in Anatolia, there were substantial borrowings from the social and material culture of the Greeks residing there, borrowings that were decisive in the area of cuisine. The occurrence in Anatolian Turkish of Greek loanwords relating to food has been cited as evidence.<sup>18</sup> The large number of Greek loanwords in Turkish designating varieties of fish proves incontestably that the Turks learned about seafood from the Greeks. The more general claim, however, that the Turks were the apprentices

of the Greeks in all things culinary is unwarranted. Not only are most of the typical features of Turkish cuisine of pre-Anatolian origin, as we have seen, but the balance of the etymological evidence points to an exactly opposite conclusion: a transmission of culinary influence from Turks to Greeks. For the words of Turkish origin relating to food found in Greek far outnumber such Greek words found in Turkish. Even today, the traveler in Greece who knows Turkish will have little difficulty in making out the menu. So whatever borrowings may have taken place from the Greek milieu, they were limited, and in any event subsumed into a synthesis that was powerfully Turkish and Islamic in nature.

The fullest and most elaborate development of Turkish cuisine in the Ottoman period took place, not surprisingly, in the palaces of the sultans. In fact the progress of the Ottoman dynasty can almost be traced through the growing complexity and opulence of its culinary arrangements. The early sultans ate relatively simply, often in the company of men of religion and ministers of state. After the conquest of Istanbul in 1453—the key event in the transformation of the Ottomans into a world power—it became customary for them to eat in splendid isolation. Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror once stated, “It is not my practice to have anyone eat in the company of my noble person, unless it be one of my family. My revered ancestors used to eat with their ministers, but I have abolished the custom.”<sup>19</sup> When vassal rulers like the Khan of the Crimea were invited to feast with the sultan, physical separation between suzerain and subordinate was always maintained, with the food of the sultan served to him separately on a raised dais.

As the feeding of the sultan took on a ceremonial aspect, symbolic of his lofty power, the staff of the palace kitchen grew both in number and in complexity of organization. At the end of the sixteenth century, there were two hundred servants at most employed in preparing food for the palace; only fifty years later, the palace kitchen staff had swollen to 1,370.<sup>20</sup> In keeping with the genius for administrative hierarchy that pervaded Ottoman state and society, these employees were organized into a pyramid headed by the *matbah emini*, the trustee or supervisor of the royal kitchens. He was responsible for overseeing the entire operation, including the purchase and acquisition of foodstuffs, their preparation, cooking, and serving. His chief assistants were the *matbah kahyası*, who kept a close eye on expenditures and the food entering and leaving the kitchen, and the *kilercibaşı*, whose job it was to see that the palace pantry was adequately stocked at all times and also to preside over the actual business of cooking the food.<sup>21</sup>

Under these three operated a whole series of cooks, who in turn had apprentices and assistants at their command. Their functions were differentiated according to two criteria: the class of consumer for whom their wares were ultimately destined and the particular variety of dish they prepared. The cooks working in the *aşağı matbah* (lower kitchen) prepared food for all the inhabitants of the palace with the exception of the sultan and his immediate family, as well as for any petitioners who might

have business at the palace. The total of those fed from this kitchen each day might reach five or ten thousand, according to different estimates.<sup>22</sup> The food of the sultan himself, together with that of his offspring, wives, and mother, was prepared in a special kitchen, known for some reason as the *kuşhane* (birdhouse). Twelve chief cooks toiled there, in the hope of pleasing the royal palate, under the supervision of a cook known as the *serçini*.<sup>23</sup>

What is truly remarkable about the kitchens of the Ottoman palace is the high degree of specialization that prevailed among the different cooks and their subordinates, a specialization that mirrored the whole complex variety of Turkish cuisine. The preparation of soups, kebabs, *pilavs*, vegetable dishes, fish, different kinds of bread (including the distinctive *fodla*, baked only in the palace), various bakery products, such as *simit* and *kurabiye*, assorted varieties of candy and *helva*, syrup and jam, as well as drinks like *hoşaf* (a kind of fruit punch) and *boza*—each of these was a separate art to be learned while a man served as an apprentice and then cultivated and refined through a lifetime of toil.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, so thoroughgoing was the specialization practiced in the palace kitchens that by the mid-eighteenth century the preparation of each of six varieties of *helva* had been entrusted to a separate master chef, assisted by a hundred apprentices.<sup>25</sup>

The lavish organization and production of the Ottoman palace kitchens were not merely for the sake of conspicuous consumption or the self-aggrandizement of the ruler. For the distribution of food from the royal kitchen was a means of establishing a material and at the same time symbolic link. Food would go to individuals as a mark of honor, either regularly or occasionally, and one day each year, the tenth of Muharram, the dish known as *aşure* (see p.290) would be prepared in the palace kitchens for distribution to all who gathered at the palace gates.<sup>26</sup> Then, too, it was a tradition from the time of Süleyman the Lawgiver onward that, on the fifteenth day of Ramadan, specially cooked trays of *baklava* would be given to the army. The military elite known as the janissaries used to collect their *baklava* from the palace and then take it to their barracks in a riotous parade that occasionally entailed the sacking of the shops they passed.<sup>27</sup>

The place of food in the life of the janissary corps was not restricted to the annual *baklava* allotment. The commander of each of its three divisions was designated *çorbacı* (soupman), and other ranks were known as *aşçıbaşı* (chief cook), *karakullukçu* (scullion), *çörekçi* (baker of round loaves of bread), and *gözlemici* (pancake-maker). In their application to the janissaries, these terms came to lose all connection with the actual preparation of food, although presumably they had once borne their literal meaning. Nonetheless, the focus and most treasured possession of each janissary division remained at all times its *kazgan*, the huge cauldron *pilav* was cooked in; whenever the janissaries decided to revolt—which was often—they would symbolically overturn their *kazgans*.<sup>28</sup>

The elaborate and varied food prepared and consumed in the palace was not the

exclusive preserve of the sultan's family and the rest of the Ottoman elite. Almost every dish and category of food cooked in the palace kitchens was known to the citizenry at large. Of course this does not mean that everyone ate on the same grand scale as the residents of the palace. People in the countryside had a less complex diet, although not necessarily a less nourishing one. In addition, there have always been regional variations in Turkish cuisine, determined in part by the availability or unavailability of certain vegetables, herbs, or spices in a given area. But the inhabitants of most of the great Ottoman cities were generally able to enjoy the full range of Turkish cuisine.

This was particularly true of Istanbul, the Ottoman capital, which acted as an entrepôt where all the varied agricultural produce of the vast Ottoman realm, from Wallachia in the north to the Yemen in the south, was readily available. The preparation and sale of food in the markets of Istanbul were in the hands of a series of guilds (*esnaf*), which were as highly specialized and diversified as the master chefs at the palace. Each guild stood under the spiritual patronage of a prophet or a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, by virtue of some legendary association between the patron and the commodity in which the guild traded. (The patron of the cheesemakers was, for example, the Prophet Abraham, who was believed to have invented cheese). Evliya Çelebi, the celebrated Turkish traveler of the seventeenth century, has left a detailed and vivid account of the food-related guilds of Istanbul. He lists no fewer than forty-three such guilds, including bakers and butchers, cheesemakers and yogurt-merchants, pastry chefs and *börek*-makers, traders in pickles, and sausage-merchants.<sup>29</sup> Together with the other trade guilds, all of these would participate in the great parades that formed such a distinctive feature of Istanbul life; mounted on floats pulled by oxen, they displayed their skills and distributed free samples of their wares among the spectators.<sup>30</sup>

These parades were organized by the state, which also took a close supervisory interest in the functioning of the guilds, especially those dealing in food. Regulations were promulgated with the aim of controlling not only prices but also quality. A set of regulations issued in 1680 by Mehmed IV specified, for example, that *börek*s calling for the use of meat should be filled only with mutton, no other meat, and also that *lokma* (see p. 278) should be made with either rose jam or honey.<sup>31</sup>

Turkish poetry in the Ottoman period is generally characterized by a seriousness of subject and tone; there is no known Turkish counterpart to Bushaq-i At'ima, the Persian, whose entire poetic career was dedicated to the celebration of food. Yet such was the place held by food in the life of the Ottoman Turks that gastronomic themes are occasionally encountered in their poetry. The sixteenth-century poet Revani, who began his career as *matbah emini* to Sultan Selim I, wrote a narrative poem entitled *İşretname* (The Book of Pleasure), devoted primarily to singing the praises of wine, but also including a dish-by-dish description of a banquet that preceded the wine-bibbing.<sup>32</sup> Still more remarkable is the work of Kaygusuz Abdal,

a poet of the fifteenth century who belonged to an antinomian Sufi order, the Bektashis. His poetry contains frequent references to various dishes and even prayers to God for huge quantities of food:

*What this Kaygusuz really needs  
Is a big cauldron of duck pilav,  
Then a hundred and fifty loaves of greasy bread—  
I'd like them soft, if you don't mind!*<sup>33</sup>

By no means did all Bektashis, and still less the members of Sufi orders that observed Islamic law, share the enormous appetites of Kaygusuz Abdal. But the preparation and consumption of food held an important place in the life of Turkish Sufis: these were acts replete with moral and even quasi-ritual significance, a means of both observing and reinforcing spiritual decorum and discipline.

There were also a number of ritual dishes prepared, of which the chief was *aşure*. According to tradition, a number of significant events happened on the tenth day of Muharram: Adam's encounter with Eve, Abraham's deliverance from the fire, Joseph's reunion with Jacob. Of particular relevance, however, was the fact that it was on that day that the waters of the great flood subsided, permitting Noah and his family to leave the ark. Before doing so, they brought together all the foodstuffs remaining on board—chickpeas, beans, wheat, rice, raisins, nuts, dried fruit, and so on—and made them into a kind of sweet soup. In memory of this last meal taken on the ark, a similar mixture has traditionally been cooked in Turkey on the tenth of Muharram and called *aşure*. The overwhelming significance of the day for Muslims, however, is that it witnessed the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet. As a result, the cooking and eating of *aşure* has in effect become a way of commemorating that event, and its legendary association with Noah has been obscured.

The ritual preparation of *aşure* was particularly important among the Bektashis, who included a formal reverence for the Twelve Imams in their syncretic scheme of religious belief. On the evening of the tenth of Muharram, the inhabitants of each Bektashi hospice would gather in the kitchen for the cooking of *aşure* in a great cauldron kept exclusively for that purpose. Everyone took a turn at the sacred task of stirring the mixture, while the *baba* (elder of the hospice) led them in a recitation of poems recounting the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. In the morning, the cauldron was taken down from the fire to the accompaniment of a prayer recited by the *baba*.<sup>34</sup> Similar but less complex ceremonies took place among some Mevlevi who had come under Bektashi influence; the dish they prepared was identical with *aşure*, but their name for it was *aş*.<sup>35</sup>

For both Bektashis and Mevlevi, the kitchen played a central role in the life of the order; it was a place imbued with ritual significance and it served as a place of training and initiation. The hearth where food was cooked (*ocak*) was a sacred place



for the Bektashis, and the dervish supervising the kitchen stood second only to the *baba*.<sup>36</sup>

Among the Mevlevis, a complex hierarchy of kitchen-related ranks existed. After absolving a preliminary retreat of forty days, the initiate would be assigned to the kitchen to serve there for a thousand and one days. He would be trained in any one of fifteen functions by a triumvirate consisting of the *kazancı dede* (cauldron elder), the *aşçı dede* (also known as *ser tabbah*, chief cook), and the *bulaşıkçı dede* (supervisor of dishwashing).<sup>37</sup>

If this hierarchical organization of the Mevlevi kitchen seems reminiscent of the arrangements existing in the palace, let it be pointed out that in the Mevlevi kitchen a symbolic as well as a practical purpose was at work. The cooking of food was seen as analogous to the “cooking,”—i.e., the maturing of man’s soul.<sup>38</sup> Both processes involved the extraction of hidden essences. The outer work, defined by quasi-ritual norms, served as both a reflection of and a support for the inner work.

This exalted view of the kitchen and all that went on there was virtually confined to the Bektashi and Mevlevi orders. But food did have some quasi-ritual significance among other Sufis. A long-standing tradition among almost all Sufi orders was the charitable provision of food (generally soup) to the poor and to wayfarers; this custom was observed with particular tenacity by the İshaki dervishes, who had a chain of hospices extending across Anatolia.<sup>39</sup> Other orders, notably the Naqshbandis, would often eat some kind of candy or *helva* after completing their exercises of *dhikr* (the invocation of the divine name), in order, they said, to complement the inner sweetness of the *dhikr* with the sweetness of the palate.<sup>40</sup>

The religious associations and uses of food were by no means confined to the Sufi orders, widespread though their influence was in Turkish society. A number of occasions in the religious calendar called for special culinary arrangements or the cooking of particular dishes.

Paradoxically, the most important among these was the fasting month of Ramadan, in Turkey as elsewhere the main season for gastronomic ingenuity and indulgence. The approach of Ramadan was heralded by—among other things—stocking the pantries to overflowing with different kinds of jams, syrups, cheeses, pickles, (see p. 202) *sucuk* (see p. 145), *pastırma*, and *güllac*. At sundown, as soon as the time for *iftar* (breaking the fast) was proclaimed—by the firing of a cannon in big cities and the beating of a drum in smaller places—a feast would begin that amply compensated for the rigors of the day’s fast. First came a spread of small dishes filled with such items as dates (preferably brought from Medina), olives, cheese, pickles, and pieces of *sucuk* and *pastırma*. Then came soup—generally rice, noodle, or tripe—as the first course of the meal proper. The meal continued with a meat dish, two varieties of vegetables, *pilav*, *börek*, and—in contrast with the evening meal during the rest of the year—a dessert.<sup>41</sup> Naturally such a full, indeed filling, meal was not within everyone’s means, but most people participated in the gastronomic abundance of

Ramadan nights. It was always possible to visit the houses of the rich, where the doors were flung open to feed all who chanced by. Indeed, for civil servants—always a large class during the Ottoman period—it was considered a duty to call on each of their superiors' homes for *iftar* at least once during Ramadan.<sup>42</sup> Nor did matters end with *iftar* and the evening meal. In Istanbul, after performing *teravih* (the special Ramadan prayers) at the mosque, one would commonly go on a kind of eating expedition to a quarter of the city famous for a particular item: Ayasofya for round loaves of bread, Hocağa for *simit*, Hasanağa for *poğaca* and *pide*, Eyüp for kebabs, Karaköy for *lokma* and *börek*, Beykoz for *paça*, *kaymak*, and yogurt, Yedikule for sheep's heads, and so on.<sup>43</sup>

As for the festival of breaking the fast that brings the month of Ramadan to an end, it has always been popularly known in Turkey as Şeker Bayramı (the Festival of Sweet Things), a name that speaks for itself. In addition to candy and sweet pastries, special varieties of *börek*, *cörek*, and *simit* are prepared for the occasion.<sup>44</sup>

The other great festival in the religious calendar, Kurban Bayramı, involves, of course, the sacrifice of an animal, which has generally been a sheep in Turkey, both for consumption by one's own family, and for distribution among one's neighbors and the needy, but there are no particular dishes or culinary arrangements associated with this festival.

In addition to these two main festivals, Turkish Muslims have always celebrated four nights known as Kandil Geceleri, that is, nights on which the mosques are illuminated. These are the nights of Rabi' al-Awwal 12, the birthday of the Prophet; the first Friday in Rajab, known as Regaib Gecesi (the Night of Wishes); Rajab 27, the night on which the Prophet ascended to the heavens; and Sha'ban 15, Berat Gecesi, the night men's destinies for the following year are determined. These nights are primarily occasions for special prayer and devotion, but their coming used to be marked, and to some degree still is, by the cooking of *lokma* and the baking of a special round loaf.<sup>45</sup>

It goes without saying that feasts have always accompanied happy events like circumcisions and weddings. In general, there has been no fixed menu for these occasions or particular dishes associated with them, but in some places, notably Bursa, it was traditional for such feasts to consist of what were called the four basics (*usul-u erba'a*): soup, a meat dish, some kind of *helva*, and *pilav* or *zerde*.<sup>46</sup>

Another traditional type of meal, now almost completely defunct, was the *helva sohbeti* (the helva gathering) encountered mostly in Istanbul. In order to while away the long winter nights, particularly during the period known as *erba'in* (the forty coldest days of winter, lasting from December 22 to January 30), friends would invite each other to their homes to enjoy not only *helva* but a whole variety of other foods, mostly heavy meat dishes and pastries. Storytellers would also be summoned to amuse the guests. Gatherings like these were not always restricted to the winter. The prosperous inhabitants of a given locality might invite each other in rotation

every Thursday evening, and the main dish for the next week's feast might be chosen by lot.<sup>47</sup>

In countless ways, then, the rich and varied cuisine evolved by the Ottoman Turks was interwoven with their political, religious, social, and cultural life; its elaborateness mirrored the complexity of Ottoman civilization itself.

Almost equally important, from a historical point of view, was the effect that it left on the cuisine of almost all neighboring lands. Wherever the Ottomans went, they bequeathed a legacy of culinary refinement. The cuisine of Syria and, to a lesser extent, Iraq is even now heavily marked by Turkish influence. Throughout the Arab world, it was a mark of distinction, until recent times, to eat Turkish dishes, much as a liking for Persian food had earlier been a sign of refinement and good taste.<sup>48</sup> The culinary vocabularies of all the Balkan languages contain many Turkish loanwords, and the traveler who approaches Turkey overland through Europe realizes by Belgrade at the latest that he has entered the Turkish culinary zone. Turkish cuisine has left its mark as far north as Russia: the Russian word *pirog*, meaning pie (more familiar to the West in the plural of its diminutive form, *pirozhki*) is almost certainly derived from the Turkish *börek*.

As for Western Europe, it is true that Turkish food remained relatively unknown there until quite recently. But to Turkish influence are owed the origins of the major social amenities of modern Europe—coffee drinking and the café. Soon after it entered general use in Turkey, coffee passed along the Mediterranean to Western Europe. In 1644, a merchant by the name of Sieur de la Roque returned to Marseilles after a prolonged residence in the Ottoman lands, where he had acquired the coffee habit. He began serving coffee to his friends, who then popularized it throughout the city. A quarter of a century later, a Turkish envoy, Süleyman Ağa Müteferrika, came to the court of Louis XIV. He served coffee to all who came to visit him, and the drinking of coffee became first a fashion and then a fixture of Parisian society.<sup>49</sup> Long since past are the days of the glory and prosperity of the Ottomans, but fastidious dedication to quality in food still persists and food continues to fulfill a significant social function in Turkey. It still is very much an instrument of human contact and a prime ingredient of that charm, hospitality, and warmth foreign visitors so fondly recall.

Despite all the changes brought about in the Turkish family by the modern age, the family remains a strong unit. Its cohesiveness is regularly expressed at the dinner table, where the most important issues that affect the family are discussed. One simple rule regulating family life is that the members of the family sit down and eat together. In the mornings, they do not simply jump out of bed and grab a bowl of cereal to eat alone while they frantically attend to other kinds of business. Brief though the time spent together may be, everyone sits down to a breakfast prepared by one member of the family and eats together. And in the evening, a mother can almost always count on her children—of whatever age—to be present for the evening meal. The evening meal is an important occasion; it is inexcusable for a teenager to be

elsewhere except for a very good reason. Indeed, people actually look forward to this time of day, not least of all the young. They come to the table with a certain excitement and eagerness to share in a meal that they know has been prepared for them with effort and care, and to discuss with each other the happenings of the day. It is the knowledge that her efforts will be appreciated that makes the mother or grandmother who prepares the meal willing to devote long hours to it.

The evening meal is always consumed in a leisurely fashion, to the accompaniment of conversation. Mothers find out from their children what they have done during the day, and since school is quite demanding and taken seriously, the events of the day are still very much present in the minds of the children and carefully listened to by the parents. In short, the taking of a meal is far more than the consumption of food.

If a close friend happens to drop by during dinner, he will be automatically expected to join the family at the table. Such an unexpected arrival is not considered an imposition; on the contrary, an attitude of "the more, the merrier" prevails in the household. To drop in on a Turkish family is a very special experience; one is immediately enveloped in warm waves of welcome. Everyone turns to the newcomer and listens to his news with genuine interest.

Not only how but where meals are eaten is of significance. No visitor to Istanbul can fail to remember that city's colorful outdoor or seaside cafés or the wide range of restaurants, extending all the way from the humble fish restaurants under the Galata Bridge, at the mouth of the Golden Horn, to the sophisticated establishments that line the shores of the Bosphorus. It may even be claimed that the outdoor café commonly associated with Paris had its origins in Turkey, whence it traveled to France and Vienna in the seventeenth century.

People like to take their meals outdoors, particularly on breezy summer evenings. Even in the shabbiest homes of old Istanbul, families manage to find a worn-out wooden table and set it up on whatever patch of soil they call their backyard. Hanging a naked light bulb from the branches of a wizened fruit tree, they then enjoy their modest meal, followed by many glasses of tea shared with friends, and sit talking softly into the late hours of the night.

Similarly, if one passes through the well-to-do residential sections of Istanbul—or even more, Izmir—one hears the soft murmurs of people conversing and the gentle clinking of silverware and china coming from large balconies overlooking the sea.

No matter whether the neighborhood be poor or prosperous, there is an ever-present and inescapable aroma of food: lamb or fish being grilled, stuffed bell peppers simmering in their juices, the distinctive smell of garlic and yogurt intermingled, eggplant and long green peppers being fried, sweet melons and fresh bread with their inviting aromas—all these distinct and unmistakable smells give a special life to the neighborhood.

But food may be even more than sociability and the shared conviviality of a neighborhood; an offering of food can often be an offering of love. One of my own fondest memories is of my beloved grandmother supplying the right food or drink as a remedy for all sorts of discomfort. A sore throat called for *sahlep*, and a rough cough for freshly brewed camomile tea kept stored in a jar. The lassitude and sleepiness brought on by long hours of study would be swiftly dispelled by a tray full of *börek*s, slices of bread, tea, and homemade jam, which would appear at just the right moment. When I was sick in bed, there would always be some special soup to comfort me, accompanied by softly spoken terms of endearment, the light touch of loving hands patting my hair, and invariably smiling eyes looking into my own . . .

The loving gift of food was by no means restricted to relatives. Anyone coming to the door of the house on a bleak, stormy winter's day, even the postman, would be offered a cup of hot tea to drink before going on his way. Friends who did not mind spending two, three, or even four hours traveling from one end of Istanbul to the other by ferries and buses to visit my grandmother would arrive at her door—sweaty and hot during the summer, cold and shivering during the winter—and immediately be offered what was known as *yorgunluk kahvesi*, coffee to relieve their tiredness. Then in mid-afternoon, the table would be laid for tea. All sorts of nice things would appear: warm *börek*s, slices of good bread, fresh butter, little cakes, different kinds of homemade jam, and freshly brewed tea.

Even without guests, midafternoon tea still has an almost ritual quality in the Turkish home, and for this reason it is unthinkable that it should be taken alone. It generally coincides with the children's coming home from school, and it is one of the many occasions when they interact with their parents and other adults. The children do not simply fill up a tray and withdraw to their rooms, nor do they have to be coerced into sitting with the adults. On the contrary, they are pleased to sit with them for a little while and answer their questions about schoolwork and other concerns. From an early age, the Turkish child is used to seeing many adults, both relatives and friends, visiting the home, so his adult environment does not consist only of his father and mother. One of the beneficial effects of this is that when children reach adolescence, no break of communication occurs between them and adults: adults continue to be as much a part of their life as their peers. It is not at all unusual for the visitor to a Turkish home to be greeted by a teenage son or daughter of the household, who will be only too happy to sit down and engage in conversation. It is also not unusual to see an adult friend of the family sharing his problems with the young people of the house. In short, sharp distinctions between the generations do not exist, and mealtimes are one occasion when this becomes especially apparent.

When I was a little girl, my grandmother's home always had a certain magic about it. During the day, most activity centered around her large kitchen. But once my aunts returned from school, I used to move to the salon where my aunts and

their friends played the piano and listened to French love ballads and Italian operas on the gramophone. (The reader will note that the household, although very traditional in some ways, was less so in other ways!) And then in the evening a whole host of guests would arrive to dine at my grandmother's table.

She had learned to cook at a relatively late age, certainly after she had passed thirty. After the changes wrought by the First World War had compelled my grandparents to leave Damascus and return to Istanbul, she found herself without cooks and servants for the first time. So she began to cook, and what a marvelous cook she became. She persisted in her extravagance, cooking lavishly and always sharing her food with the numerous guests she and my grandfather were accustomed to entertaining. Sometimes one or two destitute friends of an uncle or aunt became semipermanent houseguests and were taken care of in every way for a year or even longer.

In her later years, prosperity and abundance became no more than a memory. She lost her husband at an unexpectedly early age, and this blow was followed by the successive and tragic loss of her two sons. But when I used to visit her, living within her modest means in a tiny flat in Ankara, there were almost always friends gathered around her table. Gone were the grand house, the music, and the extravagance, but the old qualities of generosity and hospitality, the spirit of giving and sharing, the desire for the presence of friends—all these were very much evident. Even when she was in her seventies, I watched her spending hours in the kitchen, and relying on her good health and tremendous energy, she would give her best to the preparing of food. Her efforts were rewarded when her guests would say, "Why is it this dish tastes so different when you make it, Saime Hanım?" She would acknowledge the compliment with a contented smile.

When I went back to Istanbul at a troubled time in my life with three little boys of my own, she insisted on coming to take care of us, although she was now in her eighties. I agreed, and although there were others to help, she took on all of the cooking without ever complaining or showing a trace of tiredness. All she would say, once in a while, was, "Dear Ayla, please tell the greengrocer to be more careful in selecting the vegetables he sends us. The last batch of eggplants were not all they should have been," or, "You should order the butter from someone else; the last butter we got could have been fresher."

It will be apparent by now that it was from this grand lady that I gained my inspiration to cook. Like her, my serious interest in cooking began relatively late, when I was in my early thirties, and as I look back, it seems to me now that part of my devotion to cooking has sprung from the desire to create an unseen bond between us. What is certain is that I owe to her not only my sense of taste and whatever mastery of technique I may possess but, more importantly, an appreciative desire for company and the ability to express that desire with offerings of food. So in many ways, both hidden and apparent, this book is my tribute to her memory.

## Notes to the Introduction

1 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Çamlıcadaki Eniştemiz* (Istanbul, 1967), p. 85.

2 Gerhard Doerfer, *Die mongolischen und türkischen Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1965), IV:1, p. 23. From Turkish, the word *mantı* also passed into Persian (see Muhammad Mu'in, *Farhang-i Farsi* [Tehran, 134 Sh./1961], IV, p. 4381) and Tajiki (see M. V. Rahimi and L. V. Uspenskaya, *Tadzhiksko-Russkii Slovar'* [Moscow, 1954], p. 215).

3 Annemarie von Gabain, *Das Leben im uigurischen Königreich* (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 91, 94.

4 Maxime Rodinson, "Recherches sur les documents arabes relatifs à la cuisine," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1949, p. 151.

5 Mahmud Kasghari, *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*, Istanbul, 1335/1915, I, p. 452.

6 See commentary by R.A. Nicholson on the *Mathnawi of Jalal ad-Din Rumi*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1937), IV: 7, p. 249.

7 Quoted in Zabihullah Safa, *Tarikh-i Adabiyat dar Iran* (Tehran, 1339 Sh./1961), II, pp. 852–856.

8 See H. Z. Koşay and A. Ülkücan, *Anadolu Yemekleri ve Türk Mutfağı* (Ankara, 1961), p. 116.

9 See Doerfer, *Die mongolischen und türkischen Elemente*, IV:2, p. 331, and 'Ali Akbar Dikhuda, *Lughatnama*, art. *burak*.

10 W. Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialecte* (St. Petersburg, 1911), IV, p. 1698.

11 See Abdulghani Mirzoev, *Abu lshaq va Fa'aliyat-i Adabi-yi U* (Dushanbe, 1971), pp. 131–132.

12 Ibid., pp. 31, 118–121.

13 Radloff, *Versuch*, II, p. 1651; Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, *Büyük Türk Lügati* (Istanbul, 1943), IV, p. 190; Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 722.

14 From the nineteenth century onward, the cuisine of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia was further modified by growing Russian influence. See K. Makhmudov, *Uzbekskie Blyuda* (Tashkent, 1963), pp. 5–6.

15 See Zeki Oral, "Selçuk Devri Yemekleri ve Ekmekleri: ii," *Türk Etnografya Dergisi*, I:2 (1956), p. 73.

16 See Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi* (London and the Hague, 1978), pp. 138–148.

17 Zeki Oral, "Selçuk Devri Yemekleri ve Ekmekleri: ii," *Türk Etnografya Dergisi*, 1:3 (1957), p. 30.

18 Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Mediaeval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, 1971), pp. 482–483. Vryonis' attribution of a Greek etymology to the Turkish word *pastırma* (cured pressed meat) is unwarranted; the word is derived, in slightly adapted form, from the verb *bastırmak*, "to press."

19 Ali Seydi Bey, *Teşrifat ve Teşkilatımız* (Istanbul, n.d.), p. 92.

20 İsmail Hakki Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı* (Ankara, 1945), pp. 380, 382.

21 Ibid., p. 379; H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (London, 1950), I:1, pp. 357–358.

22 The former figure is taken from Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilatı*, p. 379; the latter from Reşad Ekrem Koçu, *Topkapı Sarayı* (Istanbul, n.d.), p. 52.

23 Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilatı*, p. 381; Koçu, *Topkapı Sarayı*, p. 52.

24 Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilatı*, pp. 381, 458; Emin Cenkman, *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Kiyafetleri* (Istanbul, 1948), pp. 145–155.

25 Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilatı*, p. 460.

26 Koçu, *Topkapı Sarayı*, p. 52.

27 Ibid., p. 50.

28 Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, I:1, pp. 319–321.

29 Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, ed. Zuhuri Dânişman, (Istanbul, 1969), II, pp. 231–258. Part of the relevant section has been translated by Bernard Lewis in his *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman, 1963), pp. 120–121.

30 Turkish miniature painters created pictorial records of some of these parades. See Richard Ettinghausen, *Turkish Miniatures* (New York, 1965), plates 18–28.

31 See Roger Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié de la xviie siècle* (Paris, 1962), pp. 331–335.

32 See E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (London, 1902), II, pp. 319, 334–335.

33 Kaygusuz Abdal, *Hatayi, Kul Himmet* (Türk Klasikleri:20), ed. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Istanbul,

1953), p. 48. For German translations of some of his verse, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Aus dem goldenen Becher* (Istanbul, 1975), pp. 60–61.

34 E. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London, 1937), pp. 169–170.

35 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlanadan sonra Mevlevilik* (Istanbul, 1953), pp. 417–419.

36 Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, p. 254.

37 Hamit Zübeyr, “Mevlevilikte Mutfak Terbiyesi, *Türk Yurdu*, V:28 (March 1927), pp. 280–286; Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevi Adab ve Erkani*, (Istanbul, 1963), pp. 27, 41.

38 See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 144.

39 Mehmed Şemseddin, *Yadigar-i Şemsi* (Bursa, 1332/1914), p. 220.

40 İsmet Efendi, *Risale-i Kudsiyye* (Istanbul, n.d.), p. 41.

41 For full information on the food consumed during Ramadan, particularly in Istanbul, see Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı* (Istanbul, 1940), pp. 93, 125–127; Ali Rıza Bey, *Bir zamanlar İstanbul* (Istanbul, n.d.), p. 168; Halit Fahri Ozansoy, *Eski İstanbul Ramazanları* (Istanbul, 1968), pp. 6, 17–18; and Samiha Ayverdi, *İbrahim Efendi Konağı* (Istanbul, 1973), pp. 87–88.

42. Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, p. 125; Ali Rıza Bey, *Bir zamanlar İstanbul*, p. 166.

43 For these and other details, see a mid-eighteenth-century book of verse, the *Ramazan-name* of Emir Mustafa (ed. Amil Çelebioğlu [Istanbul, n.d.]), which is predominantly concerned with food. With minor variations, a similar itinerary could profitably be undertaken in Istanbul today.

44 Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, p. 130.

45 Ibid., pp. 123–124.

46 Fazıl Yenisey, *Bursa Folkloru* (Bursa, 1955), p. 88.

47 Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, pp. 90–91, 99–100.

48 Rodinson, “Recherches,” p. 105.

49 V.S. Leclant, “Le café et les cafés à Paris, 1644–1693,” *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, VI:1 (January–March 1951), pp. 2–4.



# AMERICAN NAMES FOR SOME INGREDIENTS AND THEIR BRITISH EQUIVALENTS

active-dry yeast: dry yeast

all-purpose flour: use plain white flour unless strong plain flour (or strong white flour) is specifically recommended. For the recipes in the section on böreks, strong plain flour is preferable. (See note on flour on page 232). There are a few other recipes where use of strong flour has been indicated. Otherwise, all references to all-purpose flour apply to British plain white flour.

almond meal: unblanched ground almonds

beet: beetroot

bell peppers: sweet peppers

bulgur: cracked wheat or burghul

Chinese parsley: fresh coriander

cornstarch: cornflour

eggplant: aubergine

fava beans: broad beans

grape leaves: vine leaves

great northern beans: dried haricot beans

ground beef: minced beef

ground lamb: minced lamb

half-and-half: single cream

Japanese eggplant: small, slender aubergine  
(Dutch aubergine)

kasseri cheese: aged Greek, Turkish or Bulgarian  
cheese

mastic: gum arabic

phyllo pastry: fila or strudel pastry

powdered sugar: icing sugar

\*US cups and spoons are standard measuring  
utensils; all measurements made with them are  
level, not heaped.

## SELECTED DRY MEASURES:

USA	UK
Butter:	
1 tablespoon	1/2 oz
1/2 cup ( 1 stick)	4 oz
1 cup ( 2 stick)	8 oz
Dried beans:	
1 cup	6 1/2 oz
Flour	
1 teaspoon	1/8 oz
1 tablespoon	1/3 oz
1 cup	5 oz
Lentils:	
1 cup	7 oz
Nuts:	
1 cup	5 1/2 oz
Rice:	
1 cup	7 oz
Sugar (castor):	
1 cup	7 1/4 oz
Sugar (icing):	
1 cup	4 1/2 oz

Temperatures are all degrees F.

## AMERICAN AND BRITISH MEASURES (All conversions are approximate)

### FLUID MEASURES:

USA	UK
1 US quart (4 cups)	32 fluid oz
1 US pint (2 cups)	16 fluid oz
1 US cup (16 tablespoons)	8 fluid oz
1 US tablespoon (3 teaspoons)	1/2 fluid oz

# Soups

Soups have a well-established place in Turkish cuisine. Especially during the cold months of winter, a pot of soup can be found simmering in almost every Turkish home. Throughout the year, soups are generally served as the first course of a meal. This holds true even of formal dinners. Soups not only are inherently enjoyable but are also believed to help digestion, particularly if the soup is a light one. A good soup served at the beginning of a meal can also make up for the scantiness of the main dish in poorer households.

There are two fundamental types of soup: a light soup, generally served as a first course, and a substantial soup, made with grains, legumes, and vegetables. The latter variety makes a small meal in itself and will often be served as a lunch or light supper, to be eaten with an abundance of good fresh bread.

Yogurt and mint soup is a guaranteed favorite with everyone. In eastern Turkey, especially Erzurum, hulled wheat is commonly substituted for the rice generally used in this soup, and *reyhan* (Chinese parsley) for mint leaves. Red lentil soup is a surprise for most people in the West, since they are not familiar with red lentils. The lentils are actually reddish orange in color, and when cooked they turn to a beautiful shade of yellow, creating a very wholesome and tasty soup. Fish soups, vegetable soups, especially the spinach soup and carrot soup have also been very popular with my guests. Finally, do not overlook the finishing sauce made with egg yolk and lemon juice prescribed for certain soups; it enriches the texture and flavor.

## Yogurt Soup with Mint

*Naneli Yoğurt Çorbası*

Everyone's favorite.

1. Put the meat stock and rice in a pan, cover and simmer until the rice is soft, about 30 minutes.

2. In a mixing bowl, beat the egg yolks with the yogurt and flour. Add the water and blend to the consistency of a thin batter. Gradually add this to the soup through a sieve, stirring constantly. Cover and simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat.

3. Melt 4 tablespoons butter in a saucepan, stir in the mint leaves and cayenne or paprika, and cook until bubbly. Gently stir this mixture into the hot soup. Serve immediately.

*8 Servings*

**2 quarts beef or chicken stock**  
**1/2 cup rice**  
**4 egg yolks**  
**3 cups yogurt**  
**6 tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**1 1/2 cups water**  
**4 tablespoons butter**  
**3-4 tablespoons dried mint**  
**leaves, crushed**  
**1/2 teaspoon or more cayenne**  
**or paprika**

## Red Lentil Soup

*Kırmızı Mercimek Çorbası*

Red lentils are sold in bulk in stores that stock a variety of grains. They are actually reddish orange in color and turn beautifully yellow when cooked. It is important to know that most lentils contain some small, hard particles almost like pebbles that must be carefully removed by spreading the lentils on a tray before washing. Red lentils are nourishing and create a wholesome, tasty soup.

1. Cook the lentils and rice together in the

stock or water until soft, about 45 minutes. Press through a sieve and set aside. Discard the residue remaining in the sieve.

2. Sauté the onions in 4 tablespoons butter in a large saucepan until golden brown. Blend in the flour and stir 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat. Slowly pour the hot lentil-rice mixture into the onions and flour, stirring briskly with a wire whisk to blend until thick and smooth. Cover and simmer gently 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3. Beat the egg yolks with the milk and stir into the soup. Bring just to a boil. Remove from heat. The consistency should be that of a cream soup. Hot water may be added if necessary to thin. Sprinkle croutons over individual bowls of hot soup.

**CROUTONS:**

Remove the crusts from the French bread. Cut into 1/4-inch cubes. Sauté in butter until golden brown.

*8 Servings*

**1 cup red lentils, picked over  
and washed several times  
2 tablespoons uncooked  
short-grain rice  
2 quarts meat stock or water  
1-2 finely minced onions  
4 tablespoons butter  
6 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
3 egg yolks  
1 cup milk**

**CROUTONS:**

**2 slices French bread  
Butter**

## Red Lentil Soup with Mint

*Ezo Gelin Çorbası*

This is a delicious variation of the previous recipe, made by omitting the croutons and stirring mint-seasoned butter into the soup just before serving.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a small pan. Add the mint leaves; stir a few seconds. Add the pepper and cook a few seconds until bubbly. Stir this mixture into the hot Red Lentil Soup, mixing well to blend. Serve immediately.

*8 Servings*

**Red Lentil Soup, p. 18**

**3 tablespoons butter**

**1/4 cup dried mint leaves,  
crushed**

**1 teaspoon cayenne or red  
pepper flakes (or more)  
to taste**

## Peasant Soup with Wheat and Yogurt

*Yayla Çorbası*

A healthy and delicious soup from eastern Turkey.

1. Soak the grain in hot water for 1 hour. Drain and set aside.

2. In a kettle or large saucepan, sauté the onion in butter until golden brown. Stir in the broth and wheat or barley; simmer until the grain is tender but not mushy, about 30 to 40 minutes.

3. In a mixing bowl, beat together the yogurt, flour, egg yolks, and 1 1/2 cups water until smooth.

Gradually add to the soup through a sieve, stirring constantly. Cover and simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Add the Chinese parsley; simmer 1 or 2 minutes longer. The consistency should be that of a cream soup. Let the soup stand 15 minutes. Just before serving, heat the soup and pour into individual bowls. Spoon some of the seasoned butter on top.

**SEASONED BUTTER:**

Melt the butter in a small pan. Stir in the paprika or cayenne and cook until bubbly without browning. Remove from heat.

*8–10 Servings*

**2 quarts chicken or beef broth**  
**10 tablespoons hulled wheat**  
**or barley**  
**Hot water**  
**1 large onion, minced**  
**3–4 tablespoons butter**  
**3 1/2 cups yogurt**  
**6 tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**4 egg yolks**  
**1 1/2 cups water**  
**1 bunch Chinese parsley**  
**(coriander or cilantro),**  
**chopped**

**SEASONED BUTTER:**

**3–4 tablespoons butter**  
**1 teaspoon paprika or cayenne**  
**(or more to taste)**

## **Lentil Soup with Mint**

*Siyah Mercimek Çorbası*

1. Sauté the celery and 1 chopped onion in 2

tablespoons butter in a large saucepan until golden brown. Add the tomato and sauté 2 or 3 minutes longer.

2. Stir in the stock and the lentils; cover and cook until the lentils are soft, about 40 minutes. Stir in the fettucine or Chinese noodles and continue to cook 5 to 20 minutes, until the pasta is done.

3. In a small pan, sauté 1 chopped onion in 3 tablespoons butter until golden brown. Add the mint leaves and cook a few seconds longer. Stir into the hot soup. Serve immediately.

*8 Servings*

**2 quarts meat stock**  
**1 cup chopped celery with**  
**leaves**  
**2 large onions, chopped**  
**5-6 tablespoons butter**  
**1 medium tomato, chopped**  
**1 1/2 cups lentils, soaked**  
**in water overnight**  
**3/4 cup fresh or packaged**  
**fettucine or fresh Chinese**  
**noodles**  
**1/3 cup dried mint leaves,**  
**crushed**

## Tomato and Rice Soup

*Domatesli Pirinç Çorbası*

Cook the tomatoes in a large saucepan until they reach the consistency of a sauce. Add the rice and the stock and cook, covered, for 20 to 30 minutes or until the rice is soft. Stir in the parsley; continue to cook 1 or 2 minutes longer. Serve.

*6 Servings*

**6-7 cups of beef or  
chicken stock**  
**2 minced tomatoes**  
**1/2 cup uncooked short  
grain rice**  
**1/2 cup chopped parsley**

## Coil Capellini and Lemon Soup

*Terbiyeli Şehriye Çorbası*

**1.** Melt the butter in a pan; add the tomatoes and cook until soft. Stir in the chicken stock.

**2.** Bring the mixture to a boil. Add the capellini, stir to separate the strands, and cook about 5 minutes, until it is soft. Stir in the parsley.

**3.** Beat the egg yolks with the lemon juice; mix in a little of the liquid from the soup. Gradually add this mixture to the soup, stirring constantly. Bring just to the boiling point. Remove from heat.

*4-6 Servings*

**2 tablespoons butter**  
**1 large tomato, diced**  
**4 cups chicken stock**  
**3/4 cup slightly crushed coil  
capellini**  
**1/2 cup parsley, finely chopped**  
**2 egg yolks**  
**Juice of 1/2 lemon**

## Wedding Soup

*Düğün Çorbası*

**1.** Place the lamb in a large kettle or stockpot

*Soups*



with the carrot, onion, salt, peppercorns, and water. Bring to a boil. Remove the froth that forms on the surface. Cover and simmer until the meat is tender, 1 hour or longer.

2. Remove the bones and discard. Cut the meat into small bite-sized pieces and reserve. Strain the stock, measure out 2 quarts and keep it at a gentle simmer over low heat.

3. Melt 6 tablespoons butter in a large pot. Blend in the flour and stir 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat. Gradually pour in the hot stock, stirring briskly with a wire whisk to blend until thick and smooth. Add the meat pieces to the soup, cover and simmer gently 10 minutes.

4. Beat the egg yolks together with the lemon juice. Stir in 2 cups of the hot soup, then return all to the pan. Bring just to the boiling point; remove from heat. The consistency should be that of a cream soup. If necessary, add a little hot water to thin.

5. Melt 2 tablespoons butter and stir in the paprika. Cook until bubbly without browning. Pour the soup into individual bowls and spoon the seasoned butter on top.

*8-10 Servings*

**2 lbs. lamb shoulder or neck**  
**slices, with bones**  
**1 chopped carrot**  
**1 chopped onion**  
**Salt**  
**10 peppercorns**  
**2 1/2 quarts water**  
**8 tablespoons butter**  
**1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons**  
**all-purpose flour**  
**3 egg yolks**  
**Juice of 1 lemon**  
**1 teaspoon paprika**



1. *Clockwise:* Red Lentil Soup (with croutons); Fish Soup with Vegetables; Yogurt Soup with Mint





2. Circassian Chicken

# Tripe Soup

## *İşkembe Çorbası*

A celebrated, traditional soup. In Istanbul there are small restaurants that serve nothing but this. They are frequented all night into the early hours of the morning by men, for tripe soup is reputed to be a good cure for a hangover.

1. Wash the tripe thoroughly. Place in a large pan with 2 1/2 quarts water and some salt. Bring to a boil. Remove the foam that forms on the surface. Cover and cook until the tripe is soft, 2 hours or longer. Remove the tripe from the pan. Allow the tripe and the cooking liquid to cool.

2. Remove all fat from the tripe and the liquid. Measure out 2 quarts of the liquid; discard the rest of it. Cut the tripe into very small pieces and return to the liquid. Simmer.

3. Blend the flour into 4 tablespoons melted butter and stir 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat. Gradually pour in 2 cups hot liquid from the tripe, stirring briskly with a wire whisk until smooth and bubbling. Return the thickened liquid to the soup, blend well. Cover and simmer 15 minutes.

4. In a mixing bowl, beat the egg yolks with the lemon juice and gradually stir into the soup. Cook just to the boiling point. The consistency should be that of a cream soup. If necessary, a little hot water may be added to thin.

5. Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a small pan. Stir in the cayenne or paprika; cook until bubbly. Remove from heat.

6. Combine the vinegar and the garlic in a small serving dish. Pour the soup into individual bowls. Top with a spoonful of the seasoned butter and serve with the vinegar-garlic sauce, to be added to individual taste.

*8 Servings*

**3-4 lbs. honeycomb tripe, cut  
into large pieces**  
**2 1/2 quarts water**  
**Salt**  
**1/2 cup all-purpose flour**  
**6 tablespoons butter**  
**3 egg yolks**  
**Juice of 1 lemon**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons cayenne  
or paprika**  
**1 cup vinegar**  
**5 cloves garlic, mashed**

## Chicken Soup

*Tavuk Çorbası*

1. Blend the flour into the melted butter in a large pan and stir 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat. Gradually add the chicken stock, stirring briskly with a wire whisk to blend until smooth. Blend in the chicken, cover and simmer 15 minutes over low heat.

2. Beat the egg yolks with the cream or milk and a little liquid from the soup. Slowly add this mixture to the soup, stirring constantly. Bring just to a boil. The consistency should be that of a cream soup. If necessary, a little hot liquid may be added to thin. Serve the soup with croutons if you wish. For croutons see page 19.

*6-8 Servings*

**2 quarts chicken stock**  
**1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-  
purpose flour**  
**6 tablespoons melted butter**  
**2 cups cooked chicken meat, cut  
into bite-sized pieces**