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ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

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ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

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More than any other component of culture such as ethnicity, religion, language, clothing, ceremonies and so forth, gastronomic traditions of a nation are the best surviving cultural features of that society. People move, migrate, and experiment and in the meantime, the culinary traditions of societies have always served as one of the most powerful sources of their tranquility.

Culinary traditions and their respective foods and recipes have been passed down from generation to generation and in this course, they have changed and evolved over the time through a natural process of assimilation and acculturation with the prevailing cooking customs, contact with other cultures, and the steady influx of new ideas, techniques, and products.

Among the world’s most vibrant civilizations, ECO Region possesses a diversity of cuisines boasting of breathtaking aromas, bright colours and well-balanced taste. The studies of the foodways in the Region traverse geographical and cultural boundaries, follow the diffusion of foodstuffs, and examine the influences and contributions of not only the nomadic and sedentary civilizations of the Region but also the impact of Chinese, Iranian, Arabic, Indian, Mongol, Ottoman, Russian and other culinary cultures.

Today, culinary tourism is increasingly popular because it not only gives the tourists a taste of the national traditions of the destination countries but also gives them an opportunity to immerse in the local culture, authentic street life and special history of the destination. Moreover, such type of tourism cannot only play an important role in the sustainable tourism experience, but also in developing and sustaining regional identities within the context of rural regeneration, agricultural diversification and the creation of closer relationships between production and consumption in the countryside.

Therefore, it is recommended that the native foods of the regions be identified and revived through adopting sustainable development strategies to improve the well-being of societies, organizing indigenous food festivals and other similar programs to infuse a sense of unity among different regional nations. Undoubtedly, this will greatly contribute to enabling the region to return to its ancient values in the field of traditional and local culinary traditions.

This edition of ‘ECO Heritage’ explores the cuisine and food rituals or the ‘Foodways in ECO Region’ and attempts to make known some of the best dishes of the Region, whose appeal is due to several factors including their diversity, novelty, and the intriguing evidence of cultural exchange over the ages.

Sarvar Bakhti
President of ECO Cultural Institute
Foodways & Tourism

Parisa Firouzkouhi

Food is one of the immediate basic needs of human beings. It is an important cultural element and a common language, employed just like any other language to communicate and share emotions. Eating habits not only affect our physical development and appearance, but also the way we feel and understand our environment, our mood and behavior. The subject of food and culinary culture of any society derives from the historical-geographical environment of that society, and several factors contribute to its formation. Food is not merely a natural product and biochemical compound consumed by humans to survive; it is a cultural element exhibiting the unique features of customs and traditions of any given community, and is profoundly influenced by the diverse climatic conditions as well as flora and fauna of that region. In addition to prompting distinctions in tastes and cultures, the climatic conditions also affect the human temperament and create diversity therein. Moreover, agriculture and food industry play an important role in economic development and job creation. The opportunities, advantages, and plus points of the food industry present a vast potential for expansion. In order to utilize such unique advantages, food and foodstuff might be considered among the most important non-oil export commodities contributing to boosting economic growth.

Impact on Tourism

Food is an important tourist attractor in a variety of forms and is central to the visitor experience. Most visitors wish to experience new and unique culinary tastes and styles of a particular destination and also try to become familiar with the historical and cultural backdrop of that given territory which is reflected in their culinary traditions. Many of these visitors return to previously explored destinations times and again to enjoy tried and tested recipes or travelling further afield in search of new and special cuisine. Therefore, gastronomy has become a central part of the tourism experience. Also known as gastronomic tourism, tasting
According to Izadi (2015), nowadays, food tourism has been recognized as one of the main tools for rural and regional development in many countries. Food tourism plays a prominent part in the economic development strategies of many developing countries. Due to the geographical, climatic and cultural diversity of ECO countries, these countries possess a vast range of potentials for the promotion and development of food tourism which may then contribute to the development of other tourism types - especially rural tourism. With this background, this edition of ECO Heritage is being published as to help promote food tourism in ECO countries and also introduce their rich culinary traditions.

References:
Tajikistan’s Diversity of Living Types
A Key Factor in the Development of Foodways

Dilshod Rahimi,
Director,
Research Institute of Culture & Information
Ministry of Culture, Republic of Tajikistan

The inhabitants of the Republic of Tajikistan are rightfully proud of their national cuisine and are of the opinion that it is one of the most enticing factors to attract tourists. The culinary art of the Tajik people has been shaped during centuries of their rich history and under different influences. Undoubtedly, Tajik national cuisine has many similarities with the traditional food of other Central Asian countries; however, it has its own unique features that are expressed through the methods of preparing the foods, processing of the products and, definitely, taste. Mr. Dilshod Rahimi, Director, Research Institute of Culture and Information of Tajikistan’s Culture Ministry explains more about the rich culinary traditions of Tajikistan to ECO Heritage.
Could you give us a brief history of the traditional cuisine of Tajikistan? What are the popular national dishes and what are the distinctive features of this cuisine?

The culinary system of any nation depends on its environment, nature, and climate. Part of Tajiks live in the cities while another part inhabits the mountains and valleys, and this diversity of living types is one of the key factors in the development of various foodways and culinary traditions.

Tajikistan has lots of foods, breads, sweets, salads and drinks. According to the “Intangible Cultural Heritage List” (last updated in 2018), 147 types of food have been registered in the territory of Tajikistan but still, the Tajik scholars are searching for new entries and studying them.

Most popular dishes in Tajikistan include Oshi Palav, Shurba and its many different varieties (which counts to more than 15 types), Shirberenj, Shakarob, Qorutab, Mantoo, Kashk, Shola, Shirchay, Oshi Borida, Oshi Toppa, all types of kebabs and the like. Among these, palav (pilaf, rice) is considered by the Tajiks as the “king of foods” and it is a favorite food of every family.

Every nation has a set of foods that are indicative of its culture? Which foods are indicative of Tajik culture?

Since ancient times the Tajiks, who were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, have used variety of grains, plants, vegetables, beef and mutton, and partly chicken in cooking. Bread and dough-based products are primary ingredients of Tajik cuisine. In traditional culture of Tajiks, bread is considered a sacred food. Hence, upon the arrival of any guest, a Dastarkhan (large tablecloth) is spread before him/her and the first thing to be served is bread. Special types of breads are baked at weddings and other social events; They grab a piece of bread that has fallen to the ground, kiss it and rub it against their foreheads; They also swear to the bread and so on.

There are so many similarities among the foods of different regional countries specifically Central Asia. A common element in almost all of them is using rice and vegetables in the main course, yet prepared through different methods. How does Tajik’s method of rice and vegetable preparation differ from others?

Tajik Oshi Palav has a lot in common with its Uzbek counterpart. It contains common ingredients such as vegetables (carrots), onions, rice, meat, oil, as well as water and salt. Moreover, as per the taste and desire of the guests/customers, chickpeas, cumin, saffron, garlic, peppermint, black pepper, lemon and other fragrant spices are also added.

The cooking process comprising three parts: roasting the bottom part (zirbak), cooking other ingredients in a pot and finally stewing the rice. That is to say these three steps are important and certain amount of time is required to complete each step.
Food consumption plays a pivotal role in the economy and the health of individuals. Foods and meals, in addition to sustaining life, also have many functions in society, such as promoting peace and mutual respect among communities and individuals. One of the best examples of such function may be found in the history of Tajikistan during the civil war when cuisine played an important part in putting an end to conflicts. Could you elaborate further?

The Tajiks have a traditional cuisine called ‘Oshi Oshti’ (reconciliation meal). From time immemorial, reconciliation ceremonies have been organized on the advent of Nowruz between conflicting individuals. There used to be a person, respected and recognized by everyone, who would bring the conflicting parties to sit at Dastarkhan and all the three would eat Oshi Oshti. During the years of the Civil War in Tajikistan, this tradition was also organized among the parties at war. That Oshi Oshti, which was prepared in 1993 in Khujand, was a firm measure to establish the infrastructure for Tajiks’ peace process.

Nowadays, intangible cultural heritage is being well studied and noted and cuisine is an element of intangible heritage of the nations. In this regard, you participated in the 13th session of the intergovernmental committee of UNESCO meeting on intangible cultural heritage held in November-December 2018. Has Tajikistan made any effort to inscribe its national cuisines in UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity?

Yes, in 2016, at the 11th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the entry ‘Oshi Palav and its cultural and social contexts’ was submitted for consideration by the Republic of Tajikistan and in the same session, it was officially included in the respective UNESCO list. In the documents, we deliberated more on the cultural and social aspects of Oshi Palav in Tajikistan. Oshi Palav is a cuisine that brings people together at the table or a round traditional ‘Dastarkhan’ regardless of their age, gender, religious/ethnic affiliation or profession. Oshi Palav is mediator to make friends, for example, in Sughd and Hissor provinces, ‘Gashtak’ and ‘Gapkhuri’ traditional gatherings are common where Oshi Palav is served. There are many customs and traditions in Tajik culture which indicate the popularity of this cuisine.

In a piece you wrote on the intangible heritage of the Tajik people for the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan, you mentioned that in the context of researching Tajikistan’s cultural heritage in the framework of the «Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Tajik People for 2013-2020» a special volume of «Encyclopedia of traditional Tajik cuisine» is being prepared to be published soon. Has the book been released yet?

That is right. So far, four volumes of ‘Encyclopedia of the Culture of Tajik People’ have been published and the fourth volume of the series deals with ‘traditional and modern Tajik cuisines’. The fifth volume on subjects pertaining to cuisines and foodways is expected to be published by the end of 2020.
In recent years, food has gained recognition by governments, business, and academics as an integral part of the tourism product, and as a means of differentiation for destinations. How do you evaluate the potential of your country in the context of international culinary tourism?

It is true. Traditional cuisines and foodways are indeed among influencing factors for tourists and in this respect, Tajikistan and the culture of its people offer many potentialities. This is due to the fact that depending on the climatic and natural conditions of mountains, villages and cities, different types of cuisines are prepared which are pleasing to see and taste for any tourist visiting our country. Another point is that Tajikistan offers ecologically organic raw materials. Organic vegetables and fruits of the sunny Tajikistan are delicious and revitalizing, abound with vitamins and minerals.

As you know, ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) is a specialized agency of Economic Cooperation Organization working towards the promotion of the common cultural heritage of its member states some of which are Central Asian countries. On the other hand, as the name suggests, the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS) in Uzbekistan is mainly focused on conducting research on the arts and culture of the Central Asian countries. As a member of IICAS academic council, how do you see the prospects of cooperation between ECI and IICAS?

The International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS) is more concentrated on the study of the material culture, historical monuments and archeology. While their efforts are necessary and much appreciated, however, it would be great if ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) could pay more attention to the intangible cultural heritage of the Central Asian peoples and seek cooperation in this regard because less attention has been paid to this issue so far.

One of the possible joint measures to be taken by ECI and IICAS might be organizing scientific seminars/conferences and devising joint projects on subjects of common interest because the two organizations share many commonalities in the scope of activities, the geography and area under study as well as research and education areas.
Afghanistan Food and Culture

Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

The culture of Afghanistan has persisted for over five millennia. Afghanistan translates to “Land of the Afghans” or “Place of Afghans”. Afghanistan is mostly a tribal society with different regions of the country having its own subculture. Nearly all Afghans follow Islamic traditions, celebrate the same holidays, dress the same consume and eat the same food, listen to the same music and are multilingual to a certain extent. Afghanistan has a wide varying landscape allowing for many different crops. Afghan food is largely based upon cereals like wheat, maize, barley and rice, which are the nation’s chief crops. Fresh and dried fruits are the most important part of Afghan diet. Afghanistan is well known for its fine fruits, especially pomegranates, grapes, and its extra-sweet jumbo-size melons, (Culture of Afghanistan, July 19, 2019). Food plays a key role in Afghan society and celebration of the holidays with Afghan food is very common. Food establishes kindness, love, communication, collaboration and unity between the Afghan families, relatives and generally between people.
Guests are always welcomed into families at any time with or without a notice in advance. If a guest comes to someone's home without prior notice, the host tries his best to prepare the best food possible without showing any disrespect to the guest. However, if the guest informs the host in advance, the host may prepare different types of Afghanistan traditional foods to please and impress her guest.

In some cultures, unexpected guests might be seen as rude but it’s not in Afghan culture. Guests are always welcomed into families and well served because they believe that the "guest is God’s friend". In Afghanistan, as part of the culture, guests are usually asked to eat several and feel comfortable several times by the host to make sure the guest doesn’t feel shy and doesn’t leave the table hungry. Each part of the country and each ethnic group has its own unique food and cooking style. (Afghan food, Jul 19, 2019).

**Dining Etiquette**

Food and dining etiquette play a vital role in the political, social, cultural and economic interactions in Afghanistan. Therefore, knowing the food etiquette is vital to know them and observe them in different environments. Some of the basic and vital dining etiquettes include:

- Dining in Afghanistan is a different experience (as compared to the western world) and there are many differences in etiquette. That should be observed.
- Always remove your shoes at the door if visiting a home. (It is advisable for both men and women to have one pair of slip-on shoes.)
- When you go to an Afghan home, wait at the gate until you are asked to come in. Do not engage female members of a household in a conversation unless asked.
- If you need to use the restroom, someone will direct you. If you would like to visit other rooms of the house seek permission first.
- Wash your hands before eating.
- If eating at someone’s home, you will be seated on the floor, usually on cushions.
- Food is served on plastic or vinyl tablecloths spread on the floor.
- Wait to be shown where to sit.
- If you can, sit cross-legged. Otherwise sit as comfortably as you can. Do not sit with legs outstretched and your feet facing people.
- Food is generally served communally and everyone will share the same dish.
- Do not eat with the left hand. (If you are not left-handed)
- Always pass and receive things using your right hand.
- Food is eaten with the hands and by watching Afghans you will be able to learn.
- Usually food is scooped up into a ball at the tip of the fingers, and then eaten.
- Leave food on your plate, if you are full, otherwise, it will be filled up again. (Etiquettes of Afghan Culture, Jul 19, 2019)
Role of Food in Culture Building
Afghan food, specially the traditional Afghan food has played an important role in holidays, family get-togethers, and in celebrating and promoting the Afghan culture. Afghans are very hospitable and are known around the world for their hospitality, (Afghan Food Celebrates Culture and Tradition, December 13th, 2017). The tradition of Afghan food is woven into the cultural fabric of Afghanistan. This culture is based on hospitality and generosity. When visitors come to call, Afghan families create a spread of delicious food to honor their guests. When a person or family visit them from another city even, they do not have enough regular food to eat themselves, they would buy groceries on debt from their local food shop in order to make sure their guests were well fed. As a result, it paints the perfect picture about how important of a role food plays in Afghan culture. Therefore, one could say that Afghan food is more than just sustenance or a gesture of kindness and love for family and friends. Afghan food has played a key role in the history and cultural story of Afghanistan. Food is a conversation starter and a curious mind would figure out the history behind the traditions and the types of dishes and their origin in a specific region. In the context of Afghanistan, you can find out that one dish or another is Indian inspired, Greek inspired, Arabic inspired or Western inspired which leads to so many other conversations.

Food in Daily Life of Afghans
Everyday food in Afghanistan consists of flatbread cooked on an iron plate in the fire or on the inner wall of a clay oven. Bread often is dipped in a light meat stock. Yogurt and other dairy products (butter, cream, and dried buttermilk) are an important element of the diet, as are onions, peas and beans, dried fruits, and nuts. Rice is eaten in some areas and urban settlements. Scrambled eggs prepared with tomatoes and onions is a common meal. Food is cooked with various types of oils, including the fat of a sheep’s tail. Tea is drunk all day, (Culture of Afghanistan, Jul 19, 19).
Sugar is used in the first cup of the day, and then sweets are eaten and kept in the mouth while sipping tea. Other common beverages are water and buttermilk. Afghans use the right hand to eat from a common bowl on the floor. At home, when there are no guests, men and women share meals. Along the roads and in the bazaars, there are many small restaurants that also function as teahouses and inns.
The common Islamic food prohibitions are respected in Afghanistan. For example, meat is only eaten from animals that are slaughtered according to Islamic law; alcohol, pork, and wild boar are not consumed, although some people secretly make wine for consumption at home.

Afghan Food Customs at Ceremonial Occasions
On special occasions, pilau rice is served with meat, carrots, raisin, pistachios, or peas. The preferred meat is mutton, but chicken, beef, and camel also are consumed. Kebabs, fried crepes filled with leeks, ravioli, and noodle soup also are prepared. Vegetables include spinach, zucchini, turnip, eggplant, peas and beans, cucumber, and tomatoes. Fresh fruits are eaten during the day or as a dessert. In formal gatherings, men and women are separated. Dinners start by drinking tea and nibbling on pistachios or chickpeas; food is served late in the evening on dishes that are placed on a cloth on the floor. Eating abundantly demonstrates one’s enjoyment.
Conclusion

Afghanistan has a long and rich culture. All Afghans, share the same culture though there are some minor differences according to the ethnic and local conditions. The wide varying landscapes enable Afghanistan to have different crops. Food establishes kindness, love, communication and unity between the Afghans. Like any other society, Afghans have specific food etiquette that one shall observe to interact politely in the social and cultural contexts of Afghanistan. Afghans are very generous. They serve their guests in the best way they can, even if the host does not have enough food to feed his family; because they believe guest is God’s friend”.

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Cuisine of the Rep. Azerbaijan
Nutrition for Longevity

Since ancient times, the national cuisine of Azerbaijan has been recognized and won recognition not only in the East, but also in Europe and has been mentioned in ancient sources by famous historians and travelers. Originality, vibrant color, delicate aroma and sophistication of Azerbaijani dishes will be enjoyed by the most sophisticated gourmets.

Azerbaijan’s history of cooking goes back centuries. It is established on the vast scope of experiences of hereditary chefs, some of whom are still alive. No wonder the country is famous as the land of centenarians. Scientists explain this phenomenon due to favorable climate, lifestyle, organic food and the principles of good nutrition.

The cuisine of Azerbaijan is not only dishes and the technology of their preparation, but a part of material culture as well. It is the harmonic unity of culture, history, philosophy, table psychology, traditions, physiology, hygiene, chemistry, equipment, ethics, aesthetics, poetry and poetic aspects of the cuisine, as well as practical habits created by Azerbaijani people in the territories where they lived in harmony with the environment.

The main factor influencing the formation and development of the cuisine is the climate. The territory of Azerbaijan Republic has 8 climatic zones that allows a variety and richness of flora and fauna in the region and form favorable conditions for life and development of all animals and
plants. This is the main factor leading to the development of a rich cuisine. The main components of the cuisine are determined by the country’s natural conditions: the mountain and subtropical climate have caused widespread use of mutton, poultry, river and sea (Caspian) fish, as well as fruits and vegetables in Azerbaijani cuisine. Spices and seasonings, as well as various greens: parsley, watercress, green and black basil, dill, coriander, bitter and sweet pepper, coriander, mint, celery, tarkhun, leek, green onion, etc.

Azerbaijan’s national food is extremely diverse, original and unique, with dozens of different kinds of dishes: dairy, meat, fish, flour and vegetable complemented by soft greens and savory spices. This kitchen is original and has a national character, which manifests itself in the varied yet specific cooking techniques and traditions and consuming methods of the Azerbaijani people.

Azerbaijani cuisine is an intriguing blend of influences from many nations and countries, and yet it has remained distinctive and unique. At the same time many foods that are indigenous to the country can now be seen in the cuisines of other neighboring cultures. Alongside the historical monuments, culture and modern development, the cuisine of Azerbaijan is an equally intriguing discovery for visitors. Some of the popular Azerbaijani dishes are presented here.

**Pilaf**

Rice is a popular dish in many Eastern and Asian countries and every country has its own recipe of delicious pilaf. Each country has its signature dish and every guest of Azerbaijan knows that here, it is a spicy pilaf. Even using relatively simple ingredients like rice, meat, and oil, Azerbaijani pilaf (or plov) is full of flavor and variation. Different regions (and even different chefs) add their own ingredients and use their own techniques for cooking to make signature pilafs, which means that there’s more than enough to explore. Some people count 40 different types of pilaf though there are probably many more.

Rice is usually cooked separately from the rest of the ingredients, and only mixed when served. There is no Azerbaijani holiday, whether it is the celebration of springtime – Novruz Bayram or such special occasion as wedding ceremonies, without pilaf or “Ash”. In Azerbaijan, there are many variants of this beautiful, hearty dish, however, ‘Shah Pilaf’ might be the best.

As the name suggests, Shah Pilaf is the king of pilafs. The most distinctive detail of shah pilaf is the crust, made of light and flaky flatbread that lines the dish where the pilaf is cooked. There are different ways of making Shah Pilaf, but all start with a base of saffron-infused rice. Chicken, meat, rice, raisins, nuts, dried apricots, roasted chestnuts, prunes, and other dried fruits and seasonings are used as toppings and additions on top.
Dolma

In Azerbaijan cuisine, there are more than 20 versions of dolma. The main types of dolma are dumplings stuffed by minced lamb forcemeat, mutton meat, or fish in some regions, mixed with rice and flavored with plentiful of fragrant spices including mint, fennel, and cinnamon which are wrapped in vine leaves (yarpag dolmasi), cabbage leaves (kelem dolmasi), sour sweet cabbage leaves (tursk shiren klm dolmasi), eggplant (Badimjan dolmasi), stuffed lime leaves (Joka dolmasi), tomato (Pomidor dolmasi), bell pepper (Biber dolmasi), quince (Heyva dolmasi), cucumbers (Khiyar dolmasi), vine leaves stuffed with fish (Balig dolmasi), penny cress leaves (Yaragan dolmasi), etc. Dolma is a unique dish with all its types served with sour cream or other sour-milk product and crushed garlic.

Soups

Azerbaijan is a land that appreciates a good soup. There are all sorts of soups available, from meat broth soups to soups made from sour milk and greens. Azerbaijani soups can make a great starter, a light meal during any weather, or a meal on their own. This great variety means that you can spend your whole trip exploring just the soups in Azerbaijani cuisine, without ever getting bored.

Piti is a mutton soup with peas, vegetables, potatoes, tomatoes, cherry, plum, fat and spices. Each serving of piti is cooked in a separate clay dish, called a pitishnitsa. 15 minutes prior to readiness a small cut tail fat is added to the soup. Before being served on a table, piti is filled with spices and saffron infusion and strewed with small pounded dried mint.
Poultry Dishes

There are a lot of wonderful chicken dishes in Azerbaijan, for those looking for something hearty that doesn’t include red meat. Some dishes have many variations, so look for “toyuq”, which means chicken in Azerbaijani. Even very traditional dishes that are most commonly made with red meat, like chigirtma and dolma, can often be found with chicken. These include Chicken qovurma, Chicken chigirtma, Chicken kebab, Tabaka, Chicken Levendi, Musamba, etc.

Fish Dishes

Since Azerbaijan is so close to the Caspian Sea, it makes a lot of sense that there are many fish dishes in Azerbaijani cuisine. Perch, salmon, trout and Caspian kutum are quite common for seafood dishes, but the most prized fish is sturgeon. There are officially 6 species of sturgeon living in the Caspian Sea. Both sturgeon meat and caviar quite expensive, but the exquisite taste makes it a delicacy worth the price. Fish Lavangi comes from the South of Azerbaijan - a picturesque area with beautiful toponyms: Masalli, Lankaran, Astara, Lerik. As the littoral towns of the Caspian Sea, the fish is one of the main ingredients of the local cuisine. The main highlight of this dish is the filling, which is made of walnuts, pomegranate, special sauce, onions, raisins and spices. Other fish dishes include Sazan in Tendyr, Stuffed Fish, Sturgeon Kebab, Fish Cakes, Fish Dolma, Fish Boughlama, etc.

Meat Dishes

Meat dishes are of a great variety. The most favorite meat is lamb. Fresh lamb and beef are cooked with basdirm, which is then made into kebabs. The most common dish is piti and bozbash (thick mutton soups). The most common dish of bird meat is chygartma.

Kufta-bozbash

The kufta is another favorite one made from mutton bones served with chickpeas, potatoes, spices, and large meatballs made from mutton, rice and dried fruit. The spices include pepper, saffron, and salt, and then Kyufta-Bozbash is garnished with fresh coriander (and dried mint in the winter). Other favorite soups include, Dyushbara, Sulu khingal, Dovga, Khamrashi, Umach, etc.

Kufts-Bozbash

The word parcha means “piece” (in this case meaning “pieces of meat”). The dish is made of lamb or beef (Brisket or Shoulder), butter, chestnuts, fresh or dried Quince, chickpeas, potatoes, onions, saffron or turmeric, and served with sprinkled, dried chopped mint. Peeled onions, sumac, fresh vegetables and pickled vegetables are served separately with the dish.
**Bozartma**

The dish is made of lamb or veal (brisket, ribs), butter, onions, herbs (cilantro, dill, mint), lemon, cucumbers, thyme, potatoe, dried cherry-plums or plums, salt and pepper. Bozartma can also be prepared using chicken. In this case, the dish is called chicken bozartma, and in some places, chicken bozbash.

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**Nar Govurma**

It is another version of Govurma made of boneless lamb, melted Butter, onions, pomegranate juice or seeds, coriander, saffron, salt and pepper.
Govurma
Made of lamb or beef (Tenderloin), albuhara (may be replaced with either fresh or dried Cherry-plum), butter, abgora (the juice of unripe grapes), salt and pepper, Govurma is one of the ancient dishes of the Turkic people, the name of which comes from the word “govurmag” (“to fry over high heat”).

Kabab & Shashlik
Azerbaijan has many types of kabab and shashlik. It is made from different kinds of marinated chopped or minced meat, chicken or fish, and vegetables, such as bell pepper, onion, mushroom and tomato. All this is pinned on a skewer and is fried over fire like a barbecue. However, the taste is very different. When it is prepared, kabab is often served with lavas (slim sheets of unleavened bread), union and greens.

Lyula-Kebab
The name of this dish comes from the word lyula, which signifies a barrel or twisted object having a longitudinal hole in the middle. This form of kabab is prepared from forcemeat of mutton filled with spices. Ready Lyula is served with lavash (thin pita bread), churek (bread), fresh herbs and onions. It is also sprinkled with sumac. Lyula kabab can also be made from beef, turkey, and fish (sturgeon family), but sheep’s tail fat must be added to the mixture.

Boughlama
The word boughlama comes from the word “bough” (steam). The dish’s name translates from Turkic languages as “cooked in its own steam.” The dish is made of lamb (hip), small beans, pumpkin, oil, onions, dried cherry-plums, sugar, coriander and dill, cinnamon, salt and pepper.

Arzuman Kyuftasi
The word arzuman is derived from the Turkic word “Azman,” which translates into “huge” or “enormous.” This is fitting as the meatballs are larger than normal and are made to feed the whole family. In addition, this is a celebratory dish. In Azerbaijan, this dish is most common in the Nakhchivan region. This beautiful, unusual, tasty, and filling dish is usually made for a large family or for a festive table and contains boneless chicken, lamb or beef, onions, rice, dried cherry-plums or albuhara, chicken eggs or quail eggs, chickpeas, sumac, dill, salt and pepper.
**Ich Kabab**
The word ich translated from Turkic languages means “insides.” Naturally, this kabab is made from sheep innards (liver, lungs, kidneys, and thoroughly cleaned intestines). After cleaning the innards, cut them into cubes weighing 30-40 g. Add salt and pepper. Next, cut the fat (sheep’s tail fat) into parts weighing roughly 10 g and string them on the skewer between the pieces of chopped liver. Watch out for flaming coals, usually as a result of dripping fat, as the open flame will burn the innards. To prevent this, sprinkle lightly salted water on the coals whenever and wherever you see open flames. When serving, garnish with chopped herbs or parsley and sumac.

**Gabirgha Kebab**
It is one of the oldest dishes of the East. It is considered a traditional dish of eastern and Caucasian cuisine. During frying the meat absorbs the amazing smell of wood, grilled in the smoke, so it gets amazing aroma and taste. Marinated meat cooked on a wood or charcoal, can rightly be called a real barbecue. While serving the dish is decorated with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers and herbs.
the broth starts boiling, the dushbara emerges on the surface – the dinner is ready. Vinegar with garlic is served separately. On top, the dushbara is sprinkled with dried mint or greens, depending on the season.

**Dushbara**

Broth is cooked from sheep bones, and minced meat with onion, salt, pepper and cilantro is made from the flesh of meat. Stiff flour dough is kneaded with water and eggs and rolled out to 1 mm. Then the dough is sliced into equal squares of 2x2 cm. The minced meat is placed in the center of each square and wrapped in a special way. The ready dushbara is shaken on a sieve, freed from excess flour, and cooked in filtered broth. 5-7 minutes after

**Levengi**

The word ‘Levengi’ is associated with stuffing of the belly of a chicken or fish. Tayug Levengi (stuffed chicken) or Balyg Levengi (stuffed fish) are the popular dishes of the national Azerbaijani cuisine. There are several recipes for this filling. Some housewives cook it from fried onions, and others from raw. Next, add walnuts and tursh (eastern seasoning made of cherry plum) or marshmallow fruit candy, called Lavashana. Further, other dried fruits can be added here.
Sweet Dishes

In the culinary arts of Azerbaijan, there are a lot of unique sweet delicacies which are most popular for events and festivals. Many Azerbaijani desserts feature natural ingredients, like honey, nuts, and fresh dough, to make intense flavors without overloading on sweetness. Like many other dishes in Azerbaijani cuisine, desserts can vary from region to region, with some regions specializing in certain desserts. These desserts contain a significant number of additives and spices: poppies, nuts, almonds, sesame, ginger, cardamom, vanillin and others. Typical Azerbaijani desserts are sticky, syrup-saturated pastries such as Pakhlava (perhaps the most famous of the national sweets and a rich dessert made of thin pastry layered with honey and chopped nuts); Shekerbura (a filling of sweet almonds or nuts, mixed with sugar and cardamom and wrapped in dough); Gogal (puff dough with various sweet or salty fillings); Kulcha (sweet, spicy pastry, traditionally baked in a clay oven); Nogul (the most famous traditional Azerbaijani candy); Sheker chorek (a popular Azerbaijani pastry made of steep sweetened dough, kneaded in melted butter and formed in balls).

Drinks

The most famous drinks that you can see in Azerbaijan are dovga and ayran. Dovga is one of the best tastes of Azerbaijani cuisine. It’s a kind of a drink made of yoghurt and a variety of herbs (coriander, dill, and others. Although it is considered as a drink, it should be cooked. Dovga can be served as a cold drink, as well as a soup. Generally, if it’s cooked in summer, it is served as a cold drink, but if it’s winter time, it would be better to have it as a soup.

Even though dovga belongs to all regions of the country, Ganja city is famous for its special dovga. Ganja people love to add chickpea to dovga, which makes it special.

Another traditional drink that will make your meal tastier is ayran. It is also made of yoghurt. Unlike dovga, ayran is not cooked and have an easy preparation process. The yoghurt is just shaken up and salt is added to it. If you wish, dry mint can be added as well, but it’s optional and not everyone adds it to ayran. Ayran is served as a cold drink.

When you’re sitting down for a filling meal, it’s always good to take some drinks to go along with it. In the winter, tea is most commonly served, while sherbet (comprised of water with sugar, lemon, saffron, mint, basil and fruits and berries) is a refreshing summer drink.
National flour products number more than 30 items, and each region has its own special products. Though maybe not the most popular during the hot summer months, dishes made from dough and flour are common in Azerbaijan. As soups, bread, and main dishes, there are several tasty options in Azerbaijani cuisine. Bread is served with almost any meal. Baked bread in Azerbaijan has been a symbol of abundance and blessing since ancient times.

Different types of bread are baked in Azerbaijan like: flat, rolling, flat bread, lavash, sengek, thick, thin, crepes, cakes, oven bread (tandoor bread). The most traditional Azerbaijani bread is cooked in tandoor ovens. A simple and traditional food, kutabs are a great street snack but can also make for a filling meal. Unleavened dough is rolled thin and made into a full circle, and then half is covered in filling. Fillings may include greens like chives, minced meat, pumpkin or fruits. The dough is folded in half to make a half-circle shape, then fried.

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Iranian Cuisine
A Poetry on the Plate

From the earliest times Iranians have been known for their hospitality, whether that of the tribesman offering rest and refreshment to a weary traveler, or that of the urbane city dweller offering a sumptuous repast to his guests. Tradition requires that guests or visitors be served only the finest food available, and always in the most bountiful manner possible.

Iran’s geography, history and cultural influences have shaped the diversity of ingredients and the methods of cooking in one of the world’s oldest and most sophisticated cultures. Persia – or Iran – has been subjected to repeated invasions, but it has maintained its culture, language and identity throughout the centuries.

The vast size of the country encompasses a wide array of local dialects, lifestyles, regional traditions and customs, not to mention an extraordinary variety of landscapes and climates. All these are reflected in the country’s food.

In the north, around the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, the landscape is lush and green and as a result of plentiful rainfall there is great diversity of fruit, vegetables and herbs.

The northern regional cuisine features simple, fresh notes of taste and aroma, and there is a preference for sweet and sour flavours, as opposed to spicy. Further south, in the provinces near the Persian Gulf, the cuisine is more complex in taste than in the north of the country, with long notes of spices, tamarind and chillies.

Iran offers an extensive list of traditional food, but here, only a few notable and common traditional ones are presented.
Meat Dishes

Koofteh Tabrizi
Koofteh Tabrizi (minced meatball), could be found mainly in northwestern Iran, where the city of Tabriz is the provincial capital. This type of Koofteh is essentially an oversized meatball made from either minced meat and spices or barley and spices (for vegetarians), served with piles of fresh greens and herbs. The food strikes the body as refreshing, particularly when served on flatbread with all those greens. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetuer adi p kiscing elit, sed diam nonummnibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip exea commodo. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendri in vulputate velit esse molestiecique quae, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue.

Kabab
Considered the national Iranian food, Kebab types are very diverse. The most popular one is Kabab Koobideh consisting of ground meat seasoned with minced onion, pepper and salt. Kabab Barg is another type of kabab which is thinly slices of lamb or beef with lemon juice and onion. It is also basted with saffron and butter. Third is Joojeh (chicken) Kabab, or what is called Joojeh in Persian. It is another traditional Persian food made of chicken with its bones, marinated in lemon and onion and again basted with butter and saffron.

Abgoosht
Also called ‘Dizi’, this meat broth dates back to hundreds of years ago. The reason Iranians call this food ‘Dizi’ is that they traditionally cooked and served this food in small stone dishes called ‘Dizi’. The major ingredients of Dizi are meat, beans and chickpeas. However, the recipe is different in some areas and locals add other things to the recipe based on their tastes and interests. For example, in north of Iran, garlic, and in Kerman province, caraway is added for seasoning.
Rice Dishes

Baghali Polo
In Persian cuisine, if rice is prepared with butter and saffron, it is called Chelo. But it can be cooked with other ingredients as well and then it is called Polo. Baghali Polo consists of green dill, vegetables, broad beans and small chunks of lamb meat. It is a popular food particularly in spring when beans and dill are young. The rice is slightly flavored with saffron.

Sabzi Polo
It is a dish of rice and chopped herbs (typically coriander, dill, chives or scallions, fenugreek, and parsley, both fresh and dried) and usually served with fillets of smoked Caspian kutum (white fish). Traditionally it is served on the eve of the Persian New Year (Norouz). In the north of Iran, the fish is marinated in lemon juice and saffron and fried, while in the south the fish is stuffed and baked. This rice goes well with most fish and meat dishes.

Zereshk Polo
This classic Iranian rice dish is studded with red berries, which are first dried and then rehydrated prior to cooking. To prepare this dish, the rice is cooked with butter to soften the intensity of the berries. Zereshk polo is served at weddings and other celebrations because it is impressive and easy to make in large quantities.

Tahchin
It is an Iranian rice cake that includes rice, yogurt, saffron, egg, and chicken fillets. It is also possible to use vegetables, fish, or meat instead of the chicken fillets. Tahchin is composed of two different parts: The thin Tahdig part which includes the chicken fillets, saffron, and other ingredients at the bottom of the cooking pot and the second part which is the white rice. Apart from an amazing taste, it’s a good-looking Iranian food, and that’s why it’s an integral item on the menu of almost every restaurant, or formal ceremony in Iran.
Stews

Khoresht-e Fesenjan

The distinctive flavor of this iconic Khoresht (generic Persian term for stew dishes) combines the nutty taste of ground walnuts with the sweet and sour flavour of pomegranate syrup. It is traditionally made with duck; however, it also works well with chicken or lamb. The stew is relatively easy to make, but it must be left to cook slowly to allow the flavours develop in the sauce and make a thick and creamy consistency with almost a black colour. Sometimes saffron and cinnamon are also added. Some Iranians like to add a bit of sugar to balance the acid.

Khoresht-e Ghormeh Sabzi

Sour and full of herbs, beans and lamb meat, Ghormeh Sabzi is popular all across the country. Recipes from different regions vary slightly. The Azarbaijani version uses black-eyed beans instead of red kidney ones. In the south of the country chilli and garlic are added while in Shiraz, potatoes are sometimes used instead of beans. Dried lime is also used as seasoning which add extra taste of bittersweet and sour. There are other herbs as well, like Parsley, coriander and scallions. All of these together make the unique flavor of Ghormeh Sabzi and that’s why it is so popular.

Khoresht-e Gheimeh

The word Gheymeh, literally refers to small pieces of meat cut into cubes; that is why some people call any stew with cubed meat inside it as Gheimeh. There are various types of this stew in Iran, but this recipe is for the classic Gheimeh, that is meat flavoured with turmeric and other spices and combined with yellow split peas, dried limes, and saffron and garnished with French fries and served with white rice. It is very popular all over Iran and can be cooked all year round; the combination of meat and pulses, served with rice, provides a nutritious meal.
Vegetable Dishes

**Dolmeh Barg-e Mo**

Dolmeh is one of the traditional Iranian foods originally cooked among Azari people in West Azarbaijan. Versions of this have been known in Iran since at least as early as the 17th century. It is actually vine leaves stuffed with a combination of meat and rice, but in fact it can be stuffed by any fruit or vegetable. Popular varieties include stuffed cabbage leaves, spinach, eggplant, tomato, pepper or apple.

**Mirza Ghasemi**

Mirza Ghasemi is a tasty vegetarian appetizer which hails from the Northern Iranian Caspian region. It’s made with roasted skewered eggplant which is seasoned with garlic, tomato, turmeric, oil or butter, and salt. The seasoned eggplant is then turned with eggs. The whole thing is then mixed and served with bread or rice.

**Kuku**

Kuku is a type of dish usually made of vegetables and eggs. It is a very popular dish with most Iranian families and housewives. It can be served cold as well as warm, and also it can be prepared in advance of the mealtime. Since Kuku tastes excellent cold, it is very often used as a picnic (mostly on Fridays) and travel food.
Traditional Soups

**Aash**
Aash is a traditional thick Iranian soup served hot. There are different kinds of Aashes in Iran, such as Ash-e Reshte, Ash-e Dough, Ash-e Sabzi, Ash-e Kashk, etc. but the most common one is Ash-e Reshte. It is a textured soup full of noodles, beans and leafy greens such as beet leaves and spinach. At the top of the dish, you can see a layer of mint oil, crunchy fried onions and also sour Kashk. Kashk is a dairy product which tastes like sour heavy yogurt. Traditionally, when someone decides to go on a travel, Iranians cook Ash-e Reshte in their goodbye ceremony. Ash-e Reshte is also part of Iranian menu for Nowruz, the Persian New Year.

**Breads**
Called ‘nan’, the Iranian breads are a staple of the Iranian table and culinary experience. ‘Lavash’ is the thin, flaky, sometimes almost paper-thick bread. ‘Sangak’ is a stretchy elliptical bread usually baked on a bed of small stones or pebbles. Sangak is among the most common type of bread you’ll find served across Iran, and comes plain or in varieties topped with sesame or other seeds. ‘Barbari’ is another common type of bread which is a thick oval-shaped one.
**Desserts & Sweets**

Zoolbia and bamiyeh, which is particularly popular during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, and Ranginak (a date dessert) are among the 10 best desserts you must eat when you visit Iran. Three main ingredients to be found in any combination in these desserts are saffron, rosewater, and cardamom. The tea-loving culture does have a sweet tooth, breaking out the treats for any occasion and specially to enjoy with tea. Traditional Iranian ice cream, which is made of saffron vanilla ice cream with rosewater and pistachios, and faloodeh (vermicelli noodles) are also yummy desserts that are able to cool you down in hot summer days. Sholezard (rice pudding) and Gaz (Persian nougat with pistachios) are also in this tasty list. Shirini Yazdi is the sweet souvenir of Yazd city. The well-known desserts of Yazd include Iranian baghlava pastries, qhottab (donut hole-shaped cookies), Loze Nargil (coconut sweets), and Pashmak (cotton candy). Koloocheh (Persian cookies), halva and Sohan are also among the most popular Iranian sweets.

**References:**
Kazakh National Cuisine
Flavors of the Steppe

Just like a mirror, any national cuisine reflects the soul of the people, its bright history, original traditions and customs, and many of its characteristic features are due to the lifestyle that has been formed over the centuries.

In Kazakh cuisine, preference has always been given to cooking; therefore, Kazakh cooking has enjoyed a peculiar technology and the distinctiveness of their lifestyle, has left an imprint on these methods of cooking.

For centuries, Kazakhs were herders that lived in challenging climate conditions. This way of life required a lot energy, which determined the nature of Kazakh food that is very high in protein and calories.

Due to the easy storage conditions of animal products including meat and milk, these have long made up the basis of Kazakh cooking as the main components of the diet of nomads. Meat has been the basis of most dishes and Kazakh-style meat and its products adorn any dastarkhan (a low table), and it is by the abundance of meat dishes that they judge the richness and diversity of the festive table. Among meat products, preference is given to mutton, beloved throughout Central Asia. However, other types of meat are also consumed: beef, horse meat, goat meat, poultry, etc. Besides meat, pastries and flour products are another important component of the Kazakh national dishes.
Kazy

Kazy is a horse sausage traditionally made with meat and fat taken from the ribs. It is usually seasoned with garlic, pepper, and salt before it is stuffed into natural casings. Kazy is boiled, smoked, dried. This is an indispensable dish at Kazakh holidays and weddings. The sausage can be sold raw or lightly smoked, and before it is consumed, it is usually boiled and served sliced. Although it is mostly enjoyed as an appetizer, kazy can also be incorporated into various dishes.

Beshbarmak

The most popular dish has always been the national meat dish, ‘beshbarmak’ (meaning ‘five fingers’ because of the manner in which it is eaten with hands). This is a very ancient dish, consisting of cooked horse, mutton, beef, or a combination of those three types of meat served along traditionally prepared thin pasta squares. The dish is then combined with a flavorful sauce made with meat broth, onions, salt, and pepper, and the finished meal is typically paired with a bowl of meat broth on the side. Nowadays, there are numerous versions of beshbarmak, and the event of consuming the dish is often ritualized. The meat is eaten with a boiled pasta sheet and a meat broth called shorpa, usually served in traditional Kazakh bowls called “pialas”. At the end of the meal kumys is served, then tea.

Noodles

Each kitchen has its own dishes from boiled dough, pasta and dumplings. The Kazakhs have lagman (homemade noodles, served as a main course with a large piece of meat and vegetables, and as a side dish, without meat), kespe, and Naryn (noodles made from very thin dough with meat).
**Kuyrdak**
A traditional meat dish, Kuyrdak is roast meat – beef or any other kind of meat except pork – cooked with a large amount of onions and vegetables (traditional potatoes, carrots, onions, pumpkins). The name of the dish comes from “kuyru” (fry). In Kazakh cuisine, kuurdak is made from sheep’s liver, kidney, heart and lungs.

**Manti**
Manti is a dish of finely chopped meat and finely rolled dough, which is steamed. In translation, “manti” means “stuffed head”. There are several recipes for Mantis. In Kazakh cuisine, the manti filling is normally ground lamb (sometimes beef or horse meat), spiced with black pepper, sometimes with the addition of chopped pumpkin or squash. Mantis are cooked in a multi-level steamer and served topped with butter, sour cream, onion sauce or garlic sauce.

**Pelmeni**
Pelmeni are dumplings consisting of a filling wrapped in thin, unleavened dough. The dough is made from flour and water, sometimes adding a small portion of eggs. The filling can be minced meat (pork, lamb, beef, or any other kind of meat), or fish. The mixing together of different kinds of meat is also popular. Various spices, such as black pepper and diced onions as well as garlic, are mixed into the filling.

**Chak-chak**
Chak-chak is a dish of dough with honey, raisins and nuts (poppy seeds). It has the form of a noodle made in the form of a small square.
Bursak
Baursak is a unique fried bread with a puffy appearance consisting of flour, milk, salt, sugar, eggs, butter, and yeast. Made in spherical or triangular shapes, the bread is fried only for special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, or memorials. The bread is commonly consumed on its own or as a dessert accompanied with sugar, butter, jam, or honey, while some people like to dip it in tea.

Pilaf
The main dish, which Kazakhs eat on weekdays and on major holidays, is pilaf. Cooking recipes are a large number. Every region, every village and even a street presents its own version of pilaf. However, the main ingredients remain unchanged: rice and meat. Cooked onion, other vegetables, as well as a mix of spices, may be added. Depending on the local cuisine, it may also contain, fish, pasta, and dried fruit.

Kurt
This is a type of dried, salty cheese made from dehydrated sour cream by forming small balls and letting it dry. Traditionally, kurt was useful on long treks on horseback across the steppe, especially when herding sheep across the steppe. It is a rich in protein dairy product that Kazakh shepherds used to eat a lot in the winter when there was no milk. Today, people in Kazakhstan eat it as a salty snack.

Shelpek
Shelpek is a traditional Kazakh flatbread commonly consumed all over the region. The main ingredients of shelpek are flour, milk, sugar, butter, sour cream such as Kaymak, baking soda, salt and vegetable oil. It is made in the same way as Baursaks.

Shurpa
Usually found at home after a special meal, Shurpa is a traditional hot broth usually drunk after a satisfying meal eating beshbarmak. It is warm, oily, meat-flavored,
Drinks

The traditional drinks are fermented mare’s milk (kumys), camel’s milk (shubat), cow’s milk (airan), as well as sheep milk and its products—kaymak (sour cream), katyk or ayran (buttermilk). These drinks were traditionally consumed with the main course. However, meals often end with Kumys as well and then tea. Black tea is traditionally consumed with sweets after the main course. Nowadays tea (with milk) has virtually replaced other traditional drinks.

**Conclusion**
The cuisine of Kazakhstan is beautiful both in the sound of the names, in the content of the dishes, and in the serving. The Kazakh meal is something different from the old one but still it is imbued with ancient laws of hospitality. In Almaty, Astana, there are many restaurants of national, high Kazakh cuisine, which every tourist seeks to visit.

**References:**
The Kyrgyz Feast
The Vibrant Food Culture of the Republic

Any ethnic group has its own unique cuisine. It is not by chance that experienced ethnographers and scientists recommend starting any study of unfamiliar life with typical every day and festive meals. And tastes, as is known, are formed historically, largely under the influence of the natural environment and life. It was in the food that the ancient traditions of the people were the most stable. The assortment of dishes that has been developed and worked out over the centuries and the methods of their preparation are deeply original, and for those who try these dishes, traveling around Kyrgyzstan will acquire a special flavor and appeal. Kyrgyzstan is a country where at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, traditional nomadic and sedentary culture have united. Thanks to the multinational population of the country and the natural conditions, the cuisine of Kyrgyzstan is very rich and diverse. One of the peculiarities of Kyrgyz cuisine is that products mostly retain their natural look and taste. The local food mainly contains meat and dough in various combinations. Most of these dishes are made with little or no spice, and instead they use high-quality dough and meat. In addition, as part of the nomadic cuisine, dairy products are very popular. Eating bread and drinking tea and often jam from all types of fruit is common everywhere, with almost every dish. A distinctive feature of Kyrgyz dishes is that all of them are prepared solely from fresh products and are rarely reserved for future use, and the recipes for their preparation, although they seem to be quite simple, but in practice contain a lot of subtleties that are rather difficult to master.
Meat Dishes

In Kyrgyz cuisine there are at least 20 meat dishes. These recipes have been handed down from generation to generation. All these dishes are made from sheep, cow and horse meat.

**Beshbarmak**

Beshbarmak is one of the most beloved and traditional Kyrgyz dishes with Turkic roots. Beshbarmak is chopped meat, which is served with noodles, onions and strong meat broth. It is noteworthy that traditionally, beshbarmak is eaten by hand and specifically with “five fingers”, thus the name of the dish. Beshbarmak is mainly distributed in the north of Kyrgyzstan, in the Chui, Talas and Naryn regions. It is noteworthy that beshbarmak without noodles is called “naryn”.

**Chuchuk**

Chuchuk (or kazy in Kazakh) is a sausage made from horse fat and horse meat. The dish has been considered among the Kyrgyz as the most delicious treat since ancient times. In some regions of the country, Chuchuk (or kazy) is just served for the guest of honor as a sign of respect. Chuchuk can be served cold, as a snack, or hot, as an additive to the main dish. For example, to beshbarmak.

**Shorpo**

Shorpo is a strong and fatty meat broth that can contain carrots, potatoes, noodles and greens. Shorpo is ubiquitous throughout Kyrgyzstan, but the recipe for its preparation can vary greatly depending on the place. For example, in the northern regions of Kyrgyzstan, almost no seasonings are added to shorpo and the entire emphasis is on long-term cooking of meat broth. On the contrary, in the southern part of the country, a large number of aromatic spices and ingredients are added to shorpo.
Lagman
Lagman is a boiled noodle seasoned with roasted and then stewed vegetables and meat. Laghman has Dungan roots and since ancient times is one of the favorite dishes of national cuisine. Like pilaf, lagman has many varieties: fried boso-lagman, served separately by Guryu-lagman, etc. The ingredients can also differ quite strongly, depending on the season or place of preparation. Notable for Lagman noodles, which is stretched by hand. In Kyrgyzstan, lagman is widespread.

Kerchoo
It is lamb meat cooked over a coal fire, like a barbecue. First the meat is scorched then cuts are made on the meat, salted and grilled.

Kuurdak
Kuurdak is roasted meat with potatoes, onions and lots of spices. It is found almost everywhere.
Dymdama
In fact, dimdama is stewed vegetables in a cauldron with added meat. The vegetables used include cabbage, potatoes, carrots, eggplant, peppers, onions, celery, and many others.

Ashlyan fu
Ashlyan Fu is a cold soup made from sour-hot vegetable broth, lag noodles and starch. The dish is common in the Chui and Issyk-Kul regions of the country, but the most delicious is the type of dish cooked in Karakol, where Ashlyan Fu served with a small fried pie with potatoes.

Korut
It is a fermented milk product, in the form of small dried balls. The history of korut goes deep into the nomadic antiquity of the Turkic peoples. Making koruts was one of the few ways to stock up on provisions for the long term. Koruts are remarkable precisely because they can be stored for literally years. It tastes salty and sour and is widely distributed throughout Kyrgyzstan.
**Breads**

*Flapjacks*

Flapjacks are national Kyrgyz bread baked in flat and rounded shape in tandyr. This type of bread has many varieties and those with various additives carry their own names: patyr-nan, tochoch, may-tochoch, etc. Flapjacks are baked with onions, poppy seeds, sesame, etc.

*Boorsoki*

Boorsoki is the most favorite kind of bread for the holidays. It is made of small pieces of yeast dough fried in oil. Favorite boorsoki are popular for their taste (they can be both salty and sweet), as well as for the fact that they may not spoil for a very long time.

*Kattama*

This is a yeast dough baked in a pan with a large amount of butter or kaymak - fat sour cream and often found with onion filling.
Drinks

**Maksym**
Maksym is a Kyrgyz national drink made from cereals: barley, millet, wheat and corn. It has a sour taste. The main properties of the drink are not only a peculiar, unique sour-salty taste with a pleasant smell of roasted grain, but also the most important, incomparable and unparalleled in the world of drinks, the ability to instantly and permanently quench thirst.

**Airan**
Fermented milk airan, an analogue of kefir, is considered to be a very famous drink, but without any admixtures and prepared according to special recipes of former nomadic peoples. This drink has a uniform texture and sour taste, it is very nutritious and good for health. By filtering the airan, a slurry mass is obtained from suzme, from which other products are prepared, such as solid kurut and tonic drink chalap.

**Chalap**
Chalap, made from suzme with the addition of pure mountain or spring water, which is abundant in Kyrgyzstan, has a delicate fermented milk slightly salty, refreshing taste and a uniform consistency. This drink has a high biological value due to the high content of amino acids, essential for the body.

**Kumis**
Kumis is a traditional Kyrgyz drink produced by thorough beating of mare’s milk. koumiss is prepared only from May to September, when mares feed their offspring and can be milked. Koumiss has a tonic effect and at the same time is slightly alcoholic. Based on the healing properties of koumiss, a whole system of healing was developed - koumiss treatment. It is used in the treatment of tuberculosis, scurvy, gastritis, diseases of the pancreas, anemia, neurasthenia, cardiovascular diseases and typhoid fever.

**Kurma-tea**
On the basis of black tea in some families prepare a special drink called “Kurma-tea”, which is also very useful and nutritious. Ingredients of this tea: flour, fat tail, brewed black tea, salt and sugar to taste. Kyrgyz people are proud of their hospitality and will never leave a guest hungry. And it does not matter, in the capital or in remote towns, the cuisine of Kyrgyzstan will always impress with its rich aroma and unique taste!

**References:**
Pakistan is a religious country. The influence of Islam has also affected the national cuisine. The spreading of the Islam religion, starting in the A.D. 700s, forms the basis of Pakistani cuisine. Because Muslims are forbidden to eat pork or consume alcohol, they concentrated on other areas of food such as beef, chicken, fish, and vegetables. The Moghul Empire (from India) began its ruling in present-day Pakistan around 1526. Its style of cooking, called Mughal, typically includes such ingredients as herbs and spices, almonds, and raisins. Mughal cooking remains an important part of Pakistani cuisine. Foods such as shahi tukra, a dessert made with sliced bread, milk, cream, sugar, and saffron (a type of spice), and chicken tandoori are still enjoyed in the twenty-first century. Chicken tandoori is chicken that is cooked at a low temperature in special large clay ovens called tandoors. Pakistan was part of India until 1947. Although Pakistani cuisine has obvious Indian roots (found in its heavy use of spices, for example), its foods reflect Iranian, Afghan, and Western influences to give it its own distinct character. These cultures brought different uses of herbs, flavorings, and sauces to Pakistan, transferring ordinary staple foods into unique dishes.
Traditional Pakistani Dishes

**Paratha**
While Halwa Poori is a special and beloved breakfast food in Pakistan, paratha is the most common everyday breakfast. In its simplest and most common form, it’s a ball of dough which is rolled into a circle with flaky layers, and shallow fried over a hot plate in a generous amount of oil or ghee. You’ll find other versions, like for instance an Aloo paratha, stuffed in the center with potatoes, onions, and masala seasonings. One of the greatest things about eating a paratha is the flaky layers of dough, both gooey and crispy all at the same time.

**Halwa Poori**
Halwa poori is a traditional breakfast that features semolina pudding or halwa and a soft fried dough called poori. Halwa is typically made with a mixture of fried semolina and sugar syrup, which is then combined with nuts such as pistachios and almonds. Poori is a soft and fluffy fried bread consisting of a dough made with flour, water, salt, and oil. It is shaped into a thin, flat disk, and then usually deep-fried until it puffs up. Fresh and hot poori is traditionally accompanied by sweet semolina halwa or sooji halwa.
**Seekh Kebab**
Seekh Kebabs are among the many other kebabs that are widely loved in Pakistan. They are made either of chicken, lamb or beef and are molded along the skewers before being barbequed over fire. The meat is minced and mixed with different spices and herbs before cooking and is served with naan (bread) or rice, raita (yogurt dip) and simple salad.

**Paya**
This is a dish known for its sticky consistency coming from the trotters or the hoof of the animal that is used to make the stew. Beef, goat, buffalo or sheep trotters are mostly used to cook Paya along with various spices. The dish was traditionally slow cooked over night to make the bone and meat juice seep into the soup whereas now it still takes a couple of hours with the use of pressure cookers. Chickpeas are also added into the stew sometimes.

**Nihari**
Nihari begins as a heap of dry spices frying in vegetable oil and animal fat. The meat ingredients follow (most commonly beef shank), and a very healthy portion of Desi Ghee (home-made local clarified butter). The slow-cooking stew is then stirred altogether in a glorious cauldron of a pot. It has a deep red color from the spice and infused ghee.

**Biryani**
It is a mixed rice dish made with spices, rice, meat or chicken and vegetables. Also, sometimes people add pieces of potato in it to make it even more delicious. It is served at almost all weddings and other functions, and is a staple meal throughout Pakistan.

**Keema**
This dish is served in almost every household in Pakistan because it is an excellent blend of potatoes and minced mutton or chicken curry. It’s simple but delicious.
**Karahi**

Karahi is one of the best of all Pakistani food, and is dear to the hearts of all Pakistanis. You can find Karahis cooking in the smallest roadside shop, or in the Palatial kitchen of a local Rajah. The dish takes its name from the black, iron, scoop-shape pan. Usually a karahi curry is made with goat, but also commonly with chicken or even shrimp. The metal dish can then be its own serving bowl, sizzling hot coming straight to the center of your table.

**Haleem**

Haleem is an incredibly hearty dish made with a combination of barley, local wheat varieties, and chana (chickpeas). This is a great food to have in the morning, or for an early lunch. It's very rich, full of calories to keep one's energy up throughout the day. The flavor in a good bowl of haleem can be so rich that simply eating it with roti, and then sipping on a few cups of milk or green tea, can leave you perfect and content.
Chicken Dishes

**Sajji**
Sajji can include many types of meat, but usually it’s made with chicken. Very little seasoning is used as it’s all about two things – the charcoal heat, and quality of the meat. As with most Pakistani food restaurants, sajji is served with a stack of piping hot roti bread, straight from the tandoor oven.

**Chicken Malai Boti**
Chicken Malai Boti gets its name from Malai or fresh cream that is used to marinate the meat along with spices before it is barbecued. This gives the meat a unique smooth, soft flavorful bite. It’s one of the most popular dishes in Karachi because of the winning combination of spiciness and the creamy base which makes the chicken meat almost melt upon eating.

**Chaat**
The idea of a chaat is a delicious but filling snack, cost-efficient and quick, eaten standing or on the go – often a popular Pakistani street food. Some chaat begin with a bed of chick peas, which get a covering of sour, spicy, or cooling sauces on top. Very few foods are dearer to Pakistan than a simple plate of chaat. You’re likely to find this dish ahead of long lines of people daily on pretty much every main road in the country.

**Chicken Tikka**
Chicken Tikka is popular in Pakistan. The dish is prepared by marinating chicken meat, with spices and yogurt and then cooking it over fire using skewers. It’s the same as Tandoori Chicken and is referred to as chicken tikka whether the meat is boneless or not. It’s a dry dish so it’s often served with cut limes, yogurt or green chilli and mint dips and is eaten with roti or naan (bread).
Chicken Channa Handi,

Photo by Sohail Asim, Food Photographer in Karachi
Desserts

Zarda

The bright yellow zarda is a sweet and fragrant Pakistani rice dish which consists of basmati rice cooked with milk and sugar. The rice is cooked alongside natural food colorings, which give the dish its yellow color, and a blend of traditional spices, most commonly cardamom, cinnamon, and saffron.

Often, it also includes raisins and chopped roasted nuts such as pistachios, almonds, or walnuts. Zarda is considered a rich and festive dish, usually served on special occasions, but it also makes a perfect everyday dessert, enjoyed warm, over a cup of refreshing tea. A similar dessert is also found in the Punjabi region, where it is often referred to as meethe chawal.

Also known as gajar ka halwa, this dish is made using a combination of grated carrots, nuts, milk, sugar and clarified butter. Best served with a scoop of ice cream on the side, this flavorful but light dessert often makes an appearance at weddings and parties.

Kheer

Kheer is another dessert eaten at weddings or on celebratory occasions such as Eid al Fitr, the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. This is a thick and creamy rice pudding-type dish is slow-cooked using milk, rice, sugar and infused with cardamom. It’s topped with crushed pistachios and tastes equally delicious whether eaten hot or cold.

Falooda

In the intense heat of summer, this refreshing dessert is a popular choice. A concoction made with an array of ingredients including milk, rose syrup, ice-cream and jelly, it also contains vermicelli and basil seeds. It is thought the basil seeds have a cooling effect on the body.

Gajrela
Gulabi chai
Pink tea, also known as Kashmiri tea, is a traditional beverage made with tea leaves, salt, milk and a pinch of baking soda to give it its distinctive pastel color. Often, it’s topped with crushed pistachios and served with nuts and dried fruit.

Mango lassi
This dessert masquerading as a drink offers the perfect excuse to put several away during a meal. Lassi is yoghurt-based and can come in a variety of flavors, but there’s nothing quite as refreshing as a cold mango lassi on a hot day.

References:
Traditional Tajik Cuisine
Pursuit of Pleasure on the Roof of the World

Tajiks are rightly proud of their national cuisine and consider it one of the most attractive factors for the development of tourism. The national cuisine of the Tajik people is one of the oldest in the world. It has been formed over millennia as a result of the coexistence and mixing of several highly developed cultures, a long-term development in the region. The Tajik national cuisine is notable for its great diversity, including dozens of different types of various dishes: meat, dairy, flour, vegetable, etc. The methods of cooking and eating are varied and diverse, and differ from region to region. In the past, dishes also differed depending on the geographical and environmental conditions, as well as the social status of people. The main components of the Tajik cuisine are determined by the natural conditions of the country: the presence of a mountainous, subtropical-inland and continental climate led to the wide distribution of various products in this kitchen. The national cuisine of Tajiks is similar to the cookery of other Central Asian countries including rice, bread, and meat as staples and the use of subtle spices; however, it has its peculiar features expressed in the techniques of food preparation, products processing and, certainly, taste. Here are some favorite dishes.
Palav
Also called ‘osh’ throughout central Asia, Palav (pilaf) is the national dish in Tajikistan and occupy a very special place in Tajik culture, as in other countries in the region. It is a rice dish made with shredded yellow turnip or carrot and pieces of meat, all fried together in vegetable oil or mutton fat (traditionally a sheep’s tail) in a special kazan (a wok-shaped cauldron with a narrow bottom) over an open flame. The meat is cubed, the carrots are chopped finely into long strips, and the rice is colored yellow or orange by the frying carrots and the oil together, after which the meat is added, and finally a carefully measured amount of rice and water. Usually, whole bulbs of garlic are added and served atop the plate of Palav. Other common ingredients include onions, chickpeas, raisins, quinces, apricots, and other fruits.
The dish is eaten communally from a single large plate placed at the center of the table; traditionally, Palav is eaten with bare hands, and this practice is still often used in rural areas. Ugro-palav and Oshi-palav are among favorite types of this dish.
Although this meal is cooked in many neighboring countries, Tajik palov has its own character. This meal is served with local variations in every part of the country, and as an honored guest in Tajikistan, it will certainly be served to you. Isfara, Penjikent and Khujand are particularly famous for their palav.
Shish Kabobs

Tajik Shish Kabobs are delicious. There are several versions of them made from chopped meat and even vegetables. Mostly, they are made from mutton, but beef is also used. Tail fat is considered a delicacy. To make classical Tajik Shish Kabobs, mutton flesh and tail fat are cut in pieces and marinated in onions, spices and lemon juice. Then, the meat is left for two or three hours in a cool place on skewers. Pieces of meat are then alternated with tail fat slices and fried over heated coals.

Kaurdak

Very popular among the people, hot-kaurdak is cooked in a cauldron with the addition of a large amount of vegetable oil, lamb tenderloin and fresh vegetables: onions, potatoes, carrots, fresh tomato. The dish is always served with a lot of greens, clotted cream (heavy cream), suzma from cottage cheese and garlic.

Meat Dishes

In Tajikistan, meat dishes are mostly cooked from mutton and goat's flesh. Main courses in Tajiki culinary traditions contain meat which is used in kabobs, shish kebabs, kaurdak, golubtsi and others.

Kabobs

Kabobs are cooked from ground meat (mutton). Tender mutton is minced together with onion with addition of spices, salt, and pepper. The resulting mass is used to form sausages. Then they are floured and fried in fat until crispy. Onion rings are browned. Semi cooked kabobs are put into the onions with some meat broth and stew until ready and are served with greens and garlic.

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Qurutob
include chaka (a sour milk preparation), thick yoghurt, and kaymak (high-fat clotted cream). Qurut balls may be served as a snack or an accompaniment to cold beverages. Although not a traditional Tajik drink, kefir, a drinking yogurt, is often served with breakfast.

**Soups**

Soup is often served as a main dish. Tajik soups are very thick, rich, sometimes spicy and often made with tomatoes and sour-milk products such as suz’ma, katyk, kimak, kurut. Tajiks cook their soups using meat or bone broth or frying thinly cut meat, sometimes with milk or vegetable broth. The most popular soups are shurbo and ugro. They are commonly cooked with red pepper, barberry, anise and saffron Spicy greens such as coriander, fennel, parsley, mint, raikhon, green onions, and sorrel are chopped up and added. Tajiks serve soups in a special deep, oval-shaped bowl called a kasa, pialah, or tavak. These ceramic bowls help soups remain hot for a longer period of time.

Javari is made from a type of local pulse called ‘javari’. Foreign visitors are unlikely to have tried it before. The ingredients are finely sliced onions and carrots, beef, oil, and mung beans. It is these beans which makes javari different from other soups. Most tourists enjoy this meal in a restaurant and ask the chef for the recipe.

**Dough Dishes**

Tajik women are skilled at making bread and dough-based food such as lagman, ugro, sambusa and etc. Tajiks use unleavened and yeast dough. The dough is usually rolled very thinly, producing a crusty bread that is especially tasty when eaten hot-out-of-the-oven. Traditional Tajik round bread, known as ‘non’, is baked in a ‘tandyr’ — a clay oven stoked with fire wood. Non accompanies meals and is treated with significant respect—it cannot be dropped, turned upside down, or have anything placed on top of it unless it is another piece of ‘non’.

The ingredients of traditional Tajik dough-based and grain-based dishes can be meat, vegetables, greens, spices, dairy products, eggs. Meat grain-based dishes include oriental dumplings (manty), every possible kind of noodles with meat (shima, lagman) and pies with ground meat (sambusa). Sambusa or somsa are triangular parcels of pastry filled with vegetables and meat, deep fried and delicious. Vegetarians can find sambusa stuffed with pumpkin and wild herbs gathered from the mountains.

Dairy Dishes

Usually served as part of the spread of appetizers in a Tajik meal and scooped with pieces of flatbread, dairy dishes include chaka (a sour milk preparation), thick yoghurt, and kaymak (high-fat clotted cream). Qurut balls may be served as a snack or an accompaniment to cold beverages. Although not a traditional Tajik drink, kefir, a drinking yogurt, is often served with breakfast.
Qurutob
Tajikistan claims mainly two national dishes: plov and qurutob. While plov is more famous, qurutob, a mix of bread and onions in a yogurt sauce (with the occasional extra meat and vegetables), is specifically Tajik. This popular Tajik dish combines fatir flatbread and qurut—dried cheese balls. The cheese is soaked in water, and the salty liquid is used to create the base of the dish, which is then topped with pieces of fatir. The dish is served on large qurutob plates and is usually topped with onions or other sliced vegetables such as cucumbers, tomatoes, and various fresh herbs. Optionally, the dish can also incorporate meat or it may be garnished with whole chili peppers. A serving of qurutob is meant to be shared, and local tradition suggests eating it with your hands.

Shakarob
Similar to qurutob is another national dish called shakarob, which is simply qurutob without its salty dairy part, but with a salad called shakarob (“sugar water” from Persian). Shakarob is a somewhat lighter dish, less like soup, and consists of the same fatir, tomatoes, onions, and yogurt, but without oil. Salt and slices of hot green pepper are added to taste. The result suggests an airy salad of dried daily bread (chabatta), tomatoes and onions, seasoned with vinegar and olive oil.

Kichiri
This is one of the oldest meals eaten in Tajikistan, and it could not be found in local cafes or restaurants. It is an excellent choice for vegetarians as it is delicious and rich in protein. The main ingredients are rice, mung beans, onions, and oil, and the sauce can be made from sour yogurt, linseed-oil, or tomato and onion.

Drinks
Tea accompanies every meal and is frequently offered between meals as a gesture of hospitality to guests and visitors. It is served hot in a china pot with a lid and is drunk with or without sugar or honey, from small saucer-like cups without handles (piala). Because of the universal popularity of tea-drinking, the chakhana or teahouse is the most common gathering place in Tajikistan. Tea drinking is a fixture of everyday life and special occasions. No guests’ reception, meeting of friends or a conversation is complete without a pialan (bowl) of hot tea. Even a dinner starts with tea. Tea pialans are brought in on trays. In many parts of Tajikistan, people drink green tea in summer and black tea in the winter. As is true throughout Central Asia, tea is usually consumed without sugar. Tea with milk is called “shirchai”. Among other characteristic drinks served are sherbets—fruit drinks with sugar.

References:
Nutritional habits are shaped according to the prevalent cultural - geographical - ecological - economic characteristics and features and the historical process. When one talks about the Turkish cuisine, the term should be understood as the totality of foods and beverages which provide nutrition to the people living in Turkey, the ways of preparing and preserving them; techniques, equipment and utensils required for this, eating manners and all the practices and beliefs which are developed around this cuisine.

The richness of variety Turkish cuisine possesses is due to several factors. In summary, the variety of products offered by the lands of Asia and Anatolia, interaction with numerous different cultures over a long historical process, the new tastes developed in the palace kitchens of the Seljuk and Ottoman empires have all played a part in shaping the new character of the country’s culinary culture. Turkish Cuisine, which in general consists of sauced dishes prepared with cereals, various vegetables and some meat, soups, cold dishes cooked with olive oil, pastry dishes and dishes made from wild vegetation has also produced a series of health foods such as pekmez, yogurt, bulgur etc. The eating habits which reflect the tastes changing from one location to the next, gains a new meaning and near-sacredness on special occasions, celebrations and ceremonies.

Turkish Cuisine, while rich in variety and taste-bud friendly, also contains examples which could provide a source for healthy and balanced diets and vegetarian cuisines. This paper deals with only a small fraction of multitudes of delicious food cooked across the country.
Vegetable Dishes

**Yaprak Sarma**
Vine leaves wrapped around a filling of rice and onion flavored with mint, currant, pepper and cinnamon are steamed to prepare what is an exquisitely healthy Yaprak Sarma. It is a traditional food in Turkey that is packed with enormous amount of flavours. This dish has an influence of ottoman Empire and is famous from Middle East to South Eastern Europe. The preparation of this dish is a bit time-consuming but it is all worth it.

**Imam Bayildi**
This Turkish delicacy consists of eggplant stuffed with rice, bulgur and other veggies such as tomato, onion and garlic mixture simmered in olive oil. It is one of the zeytinya ğ (olive oil-based) dishes and is found in most of the formerly Ottoman regions. The dish is served at room temperature or warm. Since Turks love meat very much, almost all the zeytinya ğ dishes are cooked with meat, too. But that's not it. There are many other delicious meat dishes to discover.

**Dolma**
Fresh vegetables or dried eggplants, peppers, tomatoes or zucchinis are stuffed with a mixture of rice and onion before cooking in water and butter. These are usually served at room temperature. It is a popular Mediterranean cuisine and is found in regions beyond Turkey. It is believed that this dish was originated in the Ottoman Topkapi Palace back in the 17th century.
Meat Dishes

**Karnıyarık**

Fried eggplants with a minced meat, onion, parsley, garlic and tomato filling. This dish is a must. To make sure that what you get is a good one, check the eggplants. The dark color of the peel should not smudge on the peeled parts and the meat should not look too dark or dry.

**Kurufasulye**

It is made primarily with white beans and olive oil, onion, tomato paste or tomato sauce with or without meat or even with dried spiced thin slices of beef called pastırma. Kuru fasulye is often served along with sade pilav (plain rice) turəu (pickles and sauerkraut), or bulgur.

**Lahmacun**

It is a flaky thin and crispy round of dough with a topping of finely minced meat, onions and spices. It is served with tomatoes, lettuce, parsley or rocket and most people prefer to squeeze lemon on it and roll to eat easier like tacos. It originates from the early Syrian cuisine of the Levant and the name comes from Arabic “dough with meat”. It has been a popular fast food like dish in Turkey.

**Kebaps**

Kebap is the common name for a dish where meat is coated around a skewer and grilled over a charcoal fire. Originally the meat consisted of lamb or beef, but nowadays you can also choose chicken. There are many varieties of kebap including Adana and Urfa (spicy and non-spicy hand kneaded seasoned lamb meat grilled on skewers), Beyti (ground beef or lamb grilled on skewer, wrapped in lava bread and topped with yogurt and tomato sauce), and ı (skewered and grilled seasoned cubes of lamb or chicken meat).

**Döner**

In essence, it is a dish of beaten pieces of meat seasoned with suet, local herbs and spices, skewered on a spit and grilled vertically. Döner kebap comes in many forms
Kuzu Tandır
An ancient dish that was made by cooking lamb in a tandır (a clay oven in the ground), nowadays kuzu tandır is still made traditionally from extremely tender meat and served with iç pilav (rice with nuts, diced liver and currants).

Köfte
It is commonly referred to as meatballs, but they come in all shapes. The köfte basics are ground meat (usually lamb or mutton) mixed with crumbled bread, minced onions and spices. There are many different types of köfte and their taste will vary depending on the region that recipe originates from. The most common dish is İzgara Köfte, Çıg köfte is raw meatballs originating from the south east of Turkey and these are traditionally eaten as a snack or appetizer.

Mantı
You could think of mantı as some kind of dumplings. This excellent dish contains, popular across so many countries, mainly contains dough stuffed with grounded beef or lamb, onion, salt and pepper.
Street Food

**Borek**
Always flaky and delicious, this Turkish pastry is filled with minced meat or spinach and cheese. It can be rolled, served as puffs, or layered like lasagna. It is a famous dish found in the regions of Balkans and Mediterranean. The dish dates back to the Classical Era and have most significant elements of a Turkish cuisine.

**Kumpir**
Kumpir is another form of street food that is popular in the beach side resorts and cities. It is simply a jacket potato with a crisp outer skin and soft inside, mashed up with butter. Choose a variety of fillings to top it off, including cheese, sausage, pickles, and Russian salad. If you are in Istanbul, the most popular area to eat it is Ortakoy.

**Durum**
The Turkish version of a burrito, dürüm is slow cooked chicken, lamb, or beef served inside a wrap. It is made using lavash, a thin Turkish flatbread. the bread used in this wrap is way thinner than the bread used for Doners and other dishes. It has almost similar ingredients that are used in making doners like doner meat and veggies.

**Gozleme**
Cheap and very tasty filling, Gozleme is a popular street food sold at local markets. It is layered pastry filled with a variety of fillings including spinach, cheese, potatoes and parsley. Cooked on a large grill and normally accompanied with tea or Ayran, it is a perfect choice for lunch and ideal for people travelling on a budget.
Sweets

Turkish cuisine is very rich in desserts. The diversity comes from the fact that Turkish cuisine is the successor of the Ottoman culture. Another factor is the geographic scene. The country spreads over a land of 783,562 km² with different regions and variations on vegetation within its borders and also the Mediterranean and Persian neighbors had their influence. Only a few of the Turkish deserts are as follows:

**Baklava**
Possibly the most popular Turkish food is baklava which will suit anyone with a sweet tooth. Taking its influence from the Ottoman Empire, it is layers of filo pastries, filled with nuts and then covered with a sweet honey or syrup.

**Mozzaik Pasta**
Fancy a chocolate cake with broken biscuits—that's what Mozzaik Pasta is. Available in almost any café, it is artfully delicious. Every Turkish mom makes this dish for her children and nearly every pastry shop in Turkey has it on display.

**Lokum**
Also known as Turkish Delight, this nougaty dessert is a firm jelly-like cube flavored with rosewater, lemon, or mastic, and dusted with powdered sugar, but there are many variations.

**Sütlaç**
All over the world people love and eat rice pudding. It is so widespread that every country has its own preparation style. In Turkey people cook rice pudding with water, milk, rice, sugar and rice flour. In modern versions people added vanilla flavor, too. Cinnamon or ground hazelnuts are the two main dressings.

**Aşure**
One of the only Turkish desserts with no animal products, Aşure is a type of pudding made with grains, fruits, dried fruits, and nuts. You’ll see people enjoying this dessert in large quantities during Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar.

**Halva**
Halva is made of sesame seed paste also known as tahini and sugar. It has a dense and crumbly texture and sometimes flavored with cocoa powder or vanilla. Some of them also contain nuts like almonds, pistachios or walnuts. The Turkish halva is made from tahini (crushed sesame paste) and sugar, sometimes with other ingredients added.
Other Popular Dishes

**Pilav**

There is a great variety of pilaf in the Turkish cuisine, yet the easiest one to make is the most favorite and available one: sade pilav. It is plain rice cooked in water with butter/vegetable oil and noodle like small pasta pieces – əehriye. Varieties are rice cooked with eggplants, chickpeas, meat or liver slices; and of course, spices like cinnamon, pepper, thyme, cumin and even almonds.

**Corba**

Corba is a simple soup dish which is very popular in Turkey and is served for breakfast. Popular choices are lentil or tomato soup but if you are adventurous with your culinary preferences try tripe, sheep brain or tongue soup. Black cabbage soup is traditional to the north east of Turkey, in the black sea region. The daily and ceremonial foods of different regions of Turkey show how rich and varied this cuisine is.

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Delicacies of Turkmenistan Cuisine

Ancient stories and legends which have come down to our times tell us about lavish feasts and rich repasts which Turkmen rulers and generals made to celebrate their victories; they amazed foreign ambassadors by abundant dastarkhans, rich treat and delicate dishes. They usually organized parties to mark successful completion of an important business, national ritual ceremonies, different family celebrations. For Turkmen people, meal has always meant a bit more than just eating, it is an integral component of everyday life culture, etiquette, good-neighborliness and hospitality. The dishes of Turkmenistan are part of the country’s culture and are directly connected with the rich history and lifestyle of the Turkmen people. These dishes, coming from one of the world’s most delicious kitchens, amaze the imagination with its unusual, great taste and variety, are appreciated by gourmets. Nowadays acquaintance with national cuisine helps foreign tourists to know character of Turkmen people better, to enrich their knowledge of culture of our country, to feel «taste» and «aroma» of its traditions. As in any other culture of the world, culinary traditions of the Turkmens are the result of two interrelated factors such as geographical setting and history of the people.
Most famous Dishes

The national cuisine has been formed for more than one thousand years. During that period, it absorbed traditions of the numerous neighboring peoples, and shared its rich experience and findings with other people exchanging secrets of culinary art. Absorbing new ideas, however, the Turkmen cuisine has remained faithful to itself - lots of its traditions which were formed as long ago as in the infancy of mankind, have been kept inviolate up till our times. In addition to usual dishes which are always served during the Turkmen feasts or celebration parties, these days, half-forgotten recipes and culinary methods are being restored again, and totally new dishes representing an original combination of traditions and novelty are being introduced.

The Cuisine

Nature has taught the Turkmens to value every blade of grass and every fruit, even mountain and desert plants are often used - their delicate taste imparts piquancy to many dishes. It is well known that culinary traditions of various nations develop under the influence of two conditions: historical and geographical. A nomadic lifestyle, severe conditions of living in the desert - all these factors affected Turkmenistan cuisine formation and culinary traditions. Turkmenistan’s cuisine is very similar to that of other Central Asian countries and predominantly comprises rice and vegetables, and of course various meats (mutton, lamb, beef and poultry). However, it differs from them in a number of features. It is mainly distinguished by a variety of fish dishes owing to the country’s proximity to the Caspian Sea.

Turkmen Pilav

The most popular dish in Turkmenistan is pilav. It is cooked from lamb (mutton is the best), carrots, rice and onions. To make Turkmen pilav cut moderately fat mutton into small pieces and fry it a small amount of cotton oil, which gives it an original flavor. When the fried slices of meat become brown, chopped onions are put in the cauldron, followed by thinly cut carrots. When the entire water evaporates, the onions and carrots are ready. Then slightly salty hot water added and the entire mixture is cooked for another five to 10 minutes. After that rice is added. It should be applied evenly to cover the meat completely. After that the heat is turned up. When water is completely absorbed by rice the upper layer of rice should be carefully overturned and the entire dish is cooked further under the cover on small fire. The rice is ready when the grains turn yellow. The cauldron is removed from the fire and left to cool for another 10 minutes. The rice is then placed on a big plate and the carrots and juicy meat are placed on top. Traditionally pilav is eaten with hands.
Soups
A characteristic feature of local cuisine is the abundance of soups, soups in meat broth (“chorba”) with various seasonings prevail – pea “gainatma” and “dograma”, soup with “gara-chorba” tomatoes, flour soup “umpach-zashi”, bean soup with unash noodles, soup with mash “shurpa-mash”, soup with dumplings – “etli-borek-chorbasy”, from beans with noodles – “u-our”, milk noodle soup “sweet-unash”, meat soup with peas and lamb “nokhudly” – chorba “or soup with rice and vegetables –” mastava “.

Mastava
Shurpa is one of the most popular Turkmen and Central Asian soups, made from mutton broth and complete with the addition of potatoes and tomatoes. The boiled vegetables are cooked together with fried onions, carrots, flour, bay leaves, salt and pepper. The broth and vegetable mix are served in a bowl, along with boiled mutton and a dollop of sour cream.

Dogroma chorba
Dogroma is another meat soup with an amazing taste. Easy to prepare, “dogroma chorba” is made by boiling mutton, or lamb meat, with the kidneys, heart and lungs, using salt and pepper for seasoning, while throwing in a few tomatoes. Cut into small pieces, the boiled ingredients are mixed together and cooked in their broth. Broken pieces of flatbread and chopped onion round out the dish right before it is served. The dish is normally prepared for special religious holidays and occasions.
Meat Dishes

Fish Dishes

Fish dishes are popular among Turkmen living on the shores of the Caspian Sea. They mainly use sturgeon, beluga, herring, stellate sturgeon and as well as sea and river pike perch, catfish, mullet, sazan and kutum. Even pilav there is cooked with fish. The basic condition for cooking Turkmen fish dishes is the availability of absolutely fresh just-caught fish. A fish is roasted on a roasting-jack, fried in cauldrons, dried, stewed, boiled. Fish is normally served with sweet-sour sauce and spices. Fish is cooked in the same way as meat.

Balyk Shara

For “balyk shara” marinated pieces of salmon fish are put on a roasting-jack alternating with onion rings and roasted on heated coals. For “balyk gavurdak” (as well as for ordinary “gavurdak”) small bones-free pieces of salmon are fried in own grease in a cauldron. Sometimes, a little amount of sesame oil is used. Other fish dishes - “gaplama”, “chyome”, “balyk berek”, “balykly yanakhly ash” - are much more complex.
Dough Dishes

Turkmen cuisine is distinguished by various dishes made of flour. Traditional national bread is called Chorek. Very popular are various flatbreads from the sour dough (katlama), patties (gutap) with different stuffing; meat cakes (etli nan). Unleavened dough is used for cooking pelmeni (borek) and noodles (unash) seasoned with sour milk. Tandyr, (a clay oven) where chorek is baked, is considered the most sacred place in a house and chorek itself has been always honored as a protecting charm. Turkmen have a special attitude toward bread. Gutap, meaning “half-moon”, is a kind of flatbreads stuffed with beef or lamb and onions. They are cooked in a pan over the stove, and eaten with one’s hands. Turkmen gutab has several variants for the stuffing, including meat, potatoes, spinach or pumpkin.
Dairy Dishes

One feature of the nomadic steppe culture is that milk-based foods are subjected to various procedures and stored for the winter. Turkmen prefer camel and sheep milk. It is used as the basis for fermented dairy products. The most known Turkmen dairy products are “agaran”, “chal”, “kara gurt”, “telemeh”, “sykman”, “sargan”. Cow milk is used for making creamy and melted butter, sour milk (“gatyk”), a special kind of sour milk – “suzmeh” and original cheese called “gurt”, “Peinir”. Cheese is made from goat’s and sheep’s milk. Camel milk is used for making Turkman favorite beverage “chala”. Most dairy products are served with soups and main courses.
Turkmen sweets are mainly similar to the traditional sweets of the peoples of Central Asia, Turkey and the Caucasus. Of special note among them are halva, baklava, sherbet, nabat, and bekmes. In addition to traditional sweets of the East, the pastries of Turkmen national cuisine should be also noted. The cookies “pishme” and crumpets “chapada” are especially loved by the Turkmens. Pishme represents cookies from diamond-shaped dough, which is fried in oil as pastry straw. Chapada is a cake of the size of a small plate, made of dough and fried until golden brown. Another dessert after a hearty meal among the Turkmens is considered melons and watermelons. These gourds are a favorite delicacy among the Turkmen people and often eaten instead of sweets.

**Conclusion**

In addition to the fact that Turkmen dishes have their own unique taste, they are also distinguished by their original design. The traditions of cooking these dishes, dating back centuries, have been carefully preserved and passed down from generation to generation, reaching our days. Nowadays, Turkmen, of course, use the modern achievements of civilization for the preparation of national dishes. But if it is a holiday or a festival, then this is always an excellent reason to return to tradition.

Being a unique part of their legacy, Turkmen cuisine not only preserves its importance for the everyday life of Turkmenistan people but it is moving forward in the sphere of tourism industry and restaurant business, enriching itself with new regales created by the skillful cooks, connoisseurs of ancient recipes and modern food technologies who also know how to serve the cooked dishes. Moreover, superb treating has always been a good means for establishing friendly relations, strengthening alliances, and sometimes even winning hearts. In this respect the Turkmen cuisine has a great potential and possibilities offering the visitors the most «delicious» way to learning unique traditions of the people as Turkmen Dastarkhan is a sort of symbol of welfare and kindness, peace and accord.

**References:**
Uzbekistan Cuisine
Festival of Tastes

Although the modern-day Uzbekistan may seem like a new country, gaining its independence after the dissolution of the ex-Soviet Union in 1991, but in fact its culture and history are one of the most refined and ancient one in the world. One of the of the most unique and well-developed aspect of Uzbek culture is their cuisine.

The seasons, specifically winter and summer, greatly influence the composition of the basic menu. In the summer, fruits, vegetables, and nuts are ubiquitous. Fruits grow in abundance in Uzbekistan - grapes, melons, apricots, pears, apples, cherries, pomegranates, lemons, figs and dates. Vegetables are no less plentiful, including some lesser known species such as green radishes, yellow carrots, dozens of pumpkin and squash varieties, in addition to the usual eggplants, peppers, turnips, cucumbers and luscious tomatoes. The winter diet traditionally consists of dried fruits, vegetables and preserves. Hearty noodle or pasta-type dishes are also common chilly weather fare. There are numerous tasty meals in the dietary tradition of the Uzbek people, such as plov, chuchvara, lagman, samsa, jizza and many others which cannot be summarized here and need detailed assessment and appraisal. Every meal has its own taste, and these meals are very famous among the tourists and the countries in contact with Uzbekistan.
It is impossible to imagine the Uzbek food without meat. Traditionally, mutton is the most popular meat among Uzbek people. Traditional Uzbek meat dishes include cutlets (tukhum-dulma), shashlik (kebab), stewed meat with greens (kazan-kabob), cold meat snacks (kavurdak and khasib), roasted meat (jarkop), layered meat and vegetables stewed (dimlama) and others.

**Dimlama**

Usually Uzbek meat dishes are served with fresh vegetable salads or stewed with vegetables. During the preparation of major dishes, meat is not separated from bones. To improve the taste, it is roasted in tempered cottonseed or sunflower oil. Some meat dishes are steamed.
Floury Dishes

**Chuchvara**
Meaning dumplings, Chuchvara is the most widespread national dish, sometimes found under different names such as Varak-chuchvara (pelmeni). Chuchvara is very small in size. Their stuffing is made of finely chopped meat instead of forcemeat and pork is never used. Chuchvara is boiled in broth with fried meat, vegetables and greens, so it turns out that chuchvara is a soup, almost “shurpa with dumplings”. There is such a variety of chuchvara alone in the national cuisine of Uzbekistan. Chuchvara is served with sour cream or sour milk and greens.

**Guzlama**
Guzlama is yet another type of dumpling popular in Uzbekistan. These fried dumplings are pressed flat and then fried, giving them a taste closer to a Mexican empanada. We mainly encountered these in Khiva where, like shivit oshi, they were on every single menu.

**Lagman**
There are two kinds of Lagman: Kesma-lagman and Chuzma-lagman (prepared more often). Kesma-lagman has more ancient history than chuzma-lagman. Stiff dough is mixed up from flour, eggs, water and salt; left for swelling under a napkin. Then, the dough is unrolled on layers. They are then put in a pile, covered with flour and cut in noodles with a sharp knife. Noodles are boiled in salt water and slightly stirred up. Before serving, a special sauce, prepared from meat, potato, carrots, onions and tomatoes is added. These ingredients should be fried, then cooked in water and stewed. In Ferghana and Tashkent areas, Lagman is prepared differently.
Manty
After Plov, Manty is the most popular and favorite Uzbek dish. That is why in many regions, it is served at the end of the meal. In Ferghana Valley, Samarkand, Tashkent and Bukhara, Manty is one of the major dishes for the populations. In other places, it is prepared less often. It is made of dough and water, which is unrolled in layers and cut in squares. Meat, vegetables or greens can be used as a stuffing. Manty is cooked on steam in a special pot (kaskan). It is then served with sour milk or with sour cream.

Samsa
Samsa is prepared in all areas of Uzbekistan with various forcemeats: meat, pumpkin, greens, etc. Samsa is baked in a tandoor oven, and also in gas ovens and electric plates. For samsa, average stiff dough is mixed, left for some time, then unrolled in plaits and cut to pieces. Edges are thinner than the middle. Forcemeat, mutton or beef fillet, onion and spices are put in the center, formed in dough and baked in high temperature.

Tukhum Barak
Tukhum barak are filled with a mixture of eggs and milk that tastes a bit like cottage cheese. Sometimes a bit of fried onion is added as well. They are then steamed and served with yogurt for dipping.
Breads

The wide array of breads, leavened and unleavened, are a staple for the majority of the population. Flat bread, or Nan, is usually baked in tandyr (clay oven), and served with tea, not to mention at every meal. Some varieties are prepared with onions or meat in the dough, others topped with sesame seeds or kalonji.

The main Uzbek bread, called generally lepeshka, is round and flat and is baked in tandyr, after which it comes out toasted and crispy. There are two types of lepeshkas: plain (obi-non) and festal one (patyr).

Also they are differed by fancy, flaky dough, by appearance and taste, they are even differed by regions – Samarkand, Bukhara and others. Each region has own method of leaven, own peculiar technology of baking, own inimitable taste. Traditionally Uzbek bread is never cut with knife. At the start of the meal, it is broken into pieces by hand and placed on the table. For Uzbek people, bread is sacred and respectful. So, never place it upside down (with its flat side up).
Soups are very popular in Uzbekistan and take an important place in the national culinary traditions. Uzbek soups are quite thick and rich of such vegetables as carrot, beet, onion, greens and various spices.

### Shurpa

Among liquid dishes, various kinds of Shurpa take an important place in Uzbek national cuisine. Shurpa is subdivided in Kaytnama (shurpa from fresh meat) and Kovurma (shurpa from fried meat). Kaytnama – shurpa is the most popular and has gentle taste and aroma. Meat is cooked in large pieces, vegetables - entirely or in large pieces. Cooking should be done on a slow fire and it is impossible to allow vigorous boil.


### Mastava

Another popular Uzbek soup is mastava – soup with meat and vegetables, in which the sour milk, pepper and greens are added at serving. Shurpa and Mastava are prepared from fresh or preliminary fried meat, more often from fresh mutton. Important components are sliced carrot and onion rings, which are added fresh. Sometimes Shurpa is prepared with turnip or peas. In several areas potato, fresh tomatoes and sweet pepper are added. Also, not less popular soup is mashkhurda – soup with green gram, rice, potato, which is also dressed with sour milk, greens and onion, and chloph – cold soup with cucumbers, radish, greens and sour milk. The general name of soups with sour milk is katikli.
Drinks
Tea is the main drink in Uzbekistan. Any meal starts with Uzbek tea and ends with it. The most popular is green tea (kuk-choy). Black tea (kora-choy) is most popular in Tashkent. Generally, Uzbek tea is taken without sugar. Uzbek tea with sugar has its own name – kand-choy. Frequently various herbals and spices are added to Uzbek tea. In Karakalpakstan, people drink tea, both black and green, with milk.
Uzbek tea, as a ceremony, is one of the most wonderful oriental traditions. In any house, a guest will be offered a piala (cup) of tea. Green tea is also the sign of hospitality. Uzbek tea drinking has its own beautiful traditions.

Dairy Products
The most predominant - katyk, or yoghurt made from sour milk, and suzma, strained clotted milk similar to cottage cheese, are eaten plain, in salads, or added to soups and main products, resulting in a unique and delicious flavor. To enhance the flavor, pepper, salt and fresh herbs are often added to it.
Kaymak is a whipped milk fat that can make an excellent substitute for butter. It is produced by removing the top milk fat from the cooled milk. Milk in Uzbekistan is high in fat (up to 5.2 percent), so getting kaymak is relatively easy. It is eaten in a frozen form, spreading on a flat cake. Kaymak also acts as an additive in different dishes.

Kurt
Uzbekistan is world famous for its kurt or white balls made from suzma. Salt, pepper and other spices are often added to the finished mass, if desired, and then left to dry in the open air for 3-5 days. The resulting kurt can be stored for a long time without a refrigerator in the heat itself and will not deteriorate due to this and will not lose its taste, is an independent delicacy.
References:

Established in 1995, ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) is a specialized, international organization, located in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, which aims at fostering public awareness and preserving the rich cultural heritage of its member states.

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To this end, ECI has always organized a diverse range of art, cultural, literary, research, academic and sporting events and has published books and journals in English, Farsi, Russian and Urdu with the approach to strengthen cooperation and preserve the common cultural heritage of the member countries.

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