

GASTRONOMY AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE TRABZON PROVINCE

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Abstract: Every society wants to transfer its culture, which is the sum of the value judgments it produces, to future generations and to leave a mark on the world. Culinary culture, which is a cultural heritage, reflects the culinary rituals such as the society's unique diet, table manners and cooking methods. It is very important that the culinary culture, as an intangible cultural heritage, can be transferred from generation to generation without changing. Failure to record the gastronomic heritage, which is the combination of food and culture, may lead to the culinary culture of a society being forgotten and lost over time. In this research, the aim of this study is to reveal the traditional culinary culture of Trabzon and to transfer traditional dishes to future generations. In addition, the study aims to examine the potential of Trabzon as a gastronomic tourism destination in terms of presenting it to tourists and evaluate Trabzon's culinary culture as a tourism product. The study includes the examination of gastronomic tourism products of Trabzon province. As a result of the study, Trabzon's culinary culture was evaluated and suggestions were made for the preservation, sustainability and marketing of its gastronomic heritage. Considering that the tendency towards gastronomic tourism, which is an alternative tourism type, is increasing today, the results of this study are important in terms of creating a gastronomic heritage route of Trabzon's culinary culture and marketing it to tourists.

Keywords: Türkiye, Trabzon, Tourism, Cultural Heritage, gastronomy.

INTRODUCTION

The representation of the values which are passed down from generation to generation by nations and that create a unique identity are conceptualized as cultural heritage. Cultural heritage represents the sum of is tangible and intangible values that show themselves in many forms by leaving traces in the geographical space where each society lives and are reshaped by the lifestyles of different societies.¹ At the same time, the act of eating, which is necessary for the continuation of human vitality, is a cultural element at all stages from production to consumption, apart from being a physiological need. The kitchen contains some cultural rituals of societies.² Societies living in the world have shaped their culinary cultures and understandings under the influence of many factors, starting from the beginning of humanity to the present day. Elements such as lifestyles of societies, traditions and customs, geographical features, habits and social structures can be among these factors. As stated by Gökdemir,³ besides environmental factors, lifestyle and cultural beliefs also play an important role in the formation of local food identity.

Food has also been accepted as an element of cultural identity in the region they belong to, and many behaviours shaped around it have formed important traditions of the culture in question. This situation has

¹ Usal, Kuşlvan 2002.

² Yazgan-Serinkaya 2017.

³ Gökdemir 2012.

enabled the emergence of culinary practices that are authentic and unique to the communities. Although they have undergone some changes over time, since these culinary cultures are important elements that reflect the cultural identities of societies, changes take place over a long period of time and are not easy. Societies want to continue their existence by transferring their culinary cultures to future generations.⁴ In this context, culinary culture, which has become a cultural heritage, is an important concept in preserving and recording the traditions of eating. In this context, Turkish Cuisine is accepted as an important cultural heritage that includes various dishes and production methods specific to these dishes, rituals and ceremonies, and has survived from the past to the present. Table manners in Turkish culinary culture and the practices developed accordingly also strengthen the unique gastronomic symbols of this cuisine. The cultural richness of the Turkish Cuisine is due to the fact that each region, even each city, has different culinary cultures. The fact that this society has hosted many nations in the historical process and experienced various climates has led to the diversity of the products used in the kitchens and cultural interactions. This has allowed the emergence of unique dishes in almost every region and various gastronomic symbols associated with these dishes.

Gastronomic heritage includes culinary cultures and cultural textures shaped around these heritages, as Turkey is home to many different societies in its rich geographical region. However, the fact that societies have a similar structure in many respects as a result of globalization leads to the risk of changing an important element of this heritage by threatening the originality of societies. In this context, the aim of this study is to reveal the culinary culture of Trabzon and to examine its potential as a gastronomic tourism destination in order to transfer the forgotten gastronomic heritage products of the Eastern Black Sea region, which is one of the important components of Turkish cuisine culture, to future generations.

THE CONCEPT OF GASTRONOMY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

A society's entire lifestyle, beliefs, traditions, art and other symbols are defined as culture.⁵ Culture can also include the heritage of a society from its past, its present lifestyle and the values it will pass on to future generations. Cultural heritage is the concept where all material and spiritual values created throughout the history of humanity and transferred from generation to generation coexist. These values reflect the history, traditions, beliefs, art and culture of a society.

Cultural heritage is a treasure that must be preserved and emphasizes people's commitment to their past, identity and future. Therefore, it is very important for the preservation of cultural heritage and its transfer to future generations. Cultural heritage represents the values that reflect the whole of the values that a society has from its past to the present and ensure their transfer to future generations. The concept of tangible cultural heritage means immovable assets such as architectural works, monuments, bridges, historical parks, and movable assets such as sculptures, paintings, old coins, jewellery and ornaments, which have been the subject of social life in the historical process and have original value.⁶ Examples of intangible cultural heritage are festivals, rituals, social beliefs, practices, handicrafts, oral arts or performing arts.⁷ Culinary culture, that is, gastronomic values belonging to a community or region, is also an example of intangible cultural heritage. Person decides what to eat under the influence of culture, makes it a habit and transfers it to future generations without making any changes.

Events such as migrations, wars and natural disasters have contributed to the shaping of social identities and many different culinary cultures have become a legacy by being passed on through generations.⁸ Throughout the historical process, people have adopted their eating habits along with many factors that make up their cultures and identities. Each society creates different culinary cultures under the influence of unique lifestyles and unique cultural elements. Factors such as geography, agricultural activities and other cultural elements have become a defining part of regional and ethnic identities by reflecting on the processing, preparation and consumption of different foods. According to Bessi re,⁹ the food culture of a region is an important indicator of the identity of its inhabitants. Foods have a versatile structure that includes tangible and

⁴  ztemiz 2017.

⁵ Ađcakaya, Can 2019.

⁶ Demirbulat et al. 2015.

⁷ Pelit, T rkođlu 2019.

⁸ Alonso, Krajsic 2013.

⁹ Bessi re 2013.

intangible elements. Cuisines are a blend of tangible elements such as agricultural products, ingredients, and cooking utensils, as well as intangible elements such as flavours, recipes, social connotations, table manners, and other eating customs. It is stated that gastronomic traditions help to establish or strengthen regional or national character. Heritage is what is left to the next generations from the previous generation.¹⁰ In this context, the technical knowledge of a nation's food culture, the variety of food and beverage transferred from past generations, its preparation, presentation and features can also be described as gastronomic heritage. Based on the concept of cultural heritage, Kaşlı et al.¹¹ also mentioned that technical information about the cuisine of a society, the variety, preparation and service of food and beverages from past generations can be defined as gastronomic heritage. There are many studies in the literature on the relationship between food and the concept of heritage.¹²

Gastronomy, which is an intangible cultural heritage item; indirectly contributes to the development of tourism. The food and beverage culture and gastronomic richness of the regions constitute the main motivation source for tourists in their destination choices. With the intense interest of gastro tourists in the region, the creation of new gastronomic routes, the increase in the orientation to local foods, and the improvement in agriculture with the increasing demand also indirectly help the economic development of the people of the region.¹³ Gastronomy tourism is evaluated within the scope of cuisine, food and event tourism in the literature. People want to know and experience the unique cultural foods and beverages of the regions, their consumption patterns, food-specific rituals or museums and festivals related to food.¹⁴

One of the points where food culture can be reflected most effectively is in gastronomy museums. Tourists are curious about the production stages of the food they consume at the destination, the techniques used, the tools and equipment, and the story of the food. Currently, there are 34 gastronomy museums in our country, mainly in the cities of Çanakkale, Balıkesir, İzmir and Gaziantep. Honey, olive oil, chocolate and local products come to the fore in these museums. In touristic activities, food and beverage services are at the forefront of the areas where tourists spend the most. Although many gastronomy museums and routes have been designated, it is observed that they are insufficient when our country's potential is considered.¹⁵

One of the elements that combine gastronomy and tourism is gastronomic festivals. Such festivals contain many elements such as the simultaneous preparation and presentation of regional foods, food tasting, and narration of rituals and ceremonies. Gastronomic festivals have a great importance compared to other festival types with their features such as the development of local food and beverage businesses, ensuring the sustainability of local food production, increasing employment and contributing to the regional economy.¹⁶ A recent research examined the festivals in Turkey. It has been observed that there are 178 gastronomy festivals throughout the country and that some cities do not plan festivals or similar events even if they have developed in the field of gastronomy. It is thought that gastronomic festival approaches are important in terms of reviving tourism, especially for regions that do not have natural tourism resources. It is estimated that the effective continuation of advertising-promotion activities by both ministries and local governments will positively affect the interest in such festivals.¹⁷

When examining intangible tourism products in terms of gastronomic terms, one of the topics encountered is products with geographical indications. Geographically indicated products add a quality to local products and help them gain commercial value. In addition, the unique features of the products defined in this way are seriously protected, and they contribute to the development of the region and the branding of the destination. Within this scope, in Italy, the Tuscany olive oil's 20% increase in value after it entered the geographical indication list and is one of the best examples of this situation.¹⁸ According to

¹⁰ TDK 2023.

¹¹ Kaşlı et al. 2015.

¹² Cusack 2000; Holtzman 2006; Timothy, Amos 2013.

¹³ Onur 2021.

¹⁴ Erciyas Yılmaz 2021.

¹⁵ İnce, Varol 2023.

¹⁶ Cohen, Avieli 2004.

¹⁷ Çetin, Çetin, Demirel 2019.

¹⁸ Canbolat, Çakıroğlu 2020.

studies conducted in Turkey; tourists consume foods with geographical indications such as Ayvalık olive oil and Ezine cheese 58% and 43% more, respectively, compared to products without geographical indications.¹⁹

CUISINE CULTURE AND GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE PRODUCTS OF TRABZON

Since the beginning of human history, food has developed depending on the changes in the lifestyles and nutritional rituals of societies. As geographies change, culinary cultures can show similar characteristics with each other by interacting over time. However, eastern Black Sea cuisine is one of the rare cuisines that has a special place in Turkish cuisine and preserves its originality today.²⁰ It can be said that Trabzon has a rich gastronomic heritage because it is located in this region. The gastronomic heritage of Trabzon is very rich and diverse. Many flavours such as seafood, meat dishes, pita and desserts are among the most popular dishes of Trabzon cuisine. Many of these flavours have been preserved for centuries, and Trabzon cuisine offers a unique flavour to Turkish cuisine. In the study conducted by Şengül²¹ on gastronomy tourism in the province of Trabzon, it was determined that the participants chose Trabzon in the first place with a high rate regarding the choice of the city to be visited for gastronomy tourism in the Black Sea Region. Therefore, it will be possible to evaluate the existing gastronomic tourism potential in Trabzon by preserving and highlighting the local dishes.

Table 1. Geographical Indications Products in Trabzon Province

Name	Application date	Registration date	Type	Product Group	Registrant
Akçaabat Meatball	31.07.2008	10.05.2010	Geographical Indication	Meals and soups	Trabzon Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Hamsiköy Rice Pudding	6.10.2017	1.12.2017	Geographical Indication	Bakery and pastry products, pastries, desserts	Maçka Chamber of Craftsmen and Craftsmen
Sürmene Pidesi	10.06.2019	29.09.2020	Geographical Indication	Bakery and pastry products, pastries, desserts	Sürmene Chamber of Craftsmen and Craftsmen
Vakfikebir Külek Cheese	25.06.2018	25.05.2021	Geographical Indication	Cheeses	Vakfikebir Municipality
Yomra Apple	17.02.2020	15.12.2020	Geographical Indication	Processed and unprocessed fruits and vegetables and mushrooms	Yomra Municipality
Vakfikebir Bread	30.11.2017	3.08.2018	Geographical Indication	Bakery and pastry products, pastries, desserts	Vakfikebir Municipality
Tonya Butter	18.12.2017	18.08.2018	Origin Name	Fats and oils, including butter	Tonya Municipality
Arsin Foşa Hazelnut	15.02.2022	08.12.2022	Geographical Indication	Processed and unprocessed fruits and vegetables and mushrooms	Arsin Municipality

Source: Turkish Patent Institute 2023.

Geographical Indications Products

A geographical indication is a sign that shows the product that is identified with the region of origin due to a certain feature and awareness. According to the definition of Turkish Patent Institute, the geographical indication is a quality mark that shows and guarantees the definite connection between the quality of the product, its qualifying features and the geographical area.²² The effect of geographical indications on the economic development of the region cannot be ignored.²³ Geographical indications will contribute to the promotion and marketing of the destination, as the product is directly referred to with the region it is connected to. To give an example, products with geographical indications such as Van Breakfast, Urfa Kebab, Sürmene Pide, Rize Muhlama attract the attention of tourists and motivate them to visit the region.²⁴ Looking at the province of Trabzon, there are 12 registered geographical indication

¹⁹ Sezgin, Bağcı 2021.

²⁰ Cömert, Özata 2016.

²¹ Şengül 2017.

²² Turkish Patent Institute 2023.

²³ Çukur, Çukur 2017.

²⁴ Müfettişoğlu, Köşker 2022.

products. Eight of these products are in the food and beverage group, and these are listed in the table below.²⁵

Gastronomy Festivals

Local governments and tourism-related units have started to organize new festivals in different regions by evaluating the increase in demand for gastronomy tourism. Increasing tourism mobility and providing a competitive advantage by using gastronomic richness in destinations has been the primary goal.²⁶ In this context, the festivals organized in Trabzon are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Festivals in Trabzon Province.²⁷

Festival Name	Scope	Frequency of Occurrence	Date of Incorporation
Tonya Butter Culture and Art Festival	Butter	18 th time	July 26
Çayırbağı, Potato, Egyptian Culture and Art Festival	Potatoes, Corn	9 th time	September 9
Hamsiköy and its Surrounding Village Rice Pudding Festival	Rice pudding	8 th time	August 23
Arsin Hazelnut and Nuts Festival	Nuts and Nuts	Unknown	July 29-30
Vakfikebir Bread and Culture and Art Festival	Bread	6 th time	August 3-4-5
International Akcaabat Music and Folk Dance Festival and Traditional Hıdırnebi Plateau Festival	Akcaabat meatballs	29 th time	July 18-21
Anchovy Festival	Anchovy	Unknown	February 10-18

Local Foods

Local food is one of the most important elements of a region's culture. These products are foods that are produced in the region, transferred between generations and represent the region. As in every region, Trabzon has its own unique food culture and food varieties.²⁸ According to the data of Trabzon Governor's Office, the regional dishes of the region are concentrated on black cabbage, corn, anchovy and its derivatives. In addition, different types of food such as Trabzon doner, kaygana, Laz pastry, pickled beans, Akcaabat meatballs, buttered trout, corn bread with milk are also offered within the scope of local foods.²⁹ In the table below, information about the names and contents of some local dishes of the city of Trabzon is given.

Table 3. Some Local Dishes of Trabzon City.³⁰

Food name	Content
Split Corn Soup	Cooking in water with broken corn kernels and kidney beans. Adding yoghurt during service.
Black Cabbage Soup	Cooking with the addition of split corn and red kidney beans on chopped black cabbage leaves. The essential oil is burned and poured over it.
Gecin	The beans that are stringed and dried are thrown into the boiling water. After the onion, oil and tomato paste are roasted, they are left to cook together with the beans.
Simira	Roasted vegetables or herbs made with butter and crushed garlic.
Tomara Slate	Tomara, a wild herb resembling chard leaves, is boiled, then mixed with corn flour and egg and fried in a pan.
Kuymak	After adding water, the butter burned in the pan is combined with corn flour and cooked. Kolot cheese is added to it and left to melt.
Anchovy Rice (Fried Stuffed)	After the sorted anchovies are arranged on the bottom and sides of the pan, the cooked stuffed rice is placed inside after it has cooled. Anchovies are lined up so that they are completely covered and cooked in the oven.
Laz pastry	After the thinly rolled yufkas are wrapped 5 times, like baklava yufka, pudding is added. Spread plenty of butter on the phyllo dough, which is laid out again in 5 layers, and bake. Cold syrup is poured onto the hot dessert that comes out of the oven.
Anchovy Meatballs (Anchovy Bird)	The mixture of parsley, onion, mint, flour, salt is mixed with fillet anchovies, combined with beaten egg, and fried in hot oil.
Yoghurt Chop	It is consumed by slicing hot and fresh corn bread in fresh yoghurt.

²⁵ Burnaz 2022.

²⁶ Kargiglioğlu, Kabacık 2017.

²⁷ Ekerim, Tanrısever 2020.

²⁸ Yılmaz 2020.

²⁹ Trabzon Governorship 2023.

³⁰ Şen, Koç 2023; Kurt, Badem 2021; Bayrak 2014; Boran, Albayrak 2009.

CONCLUSION

The gastronomic culture of Trabzon was discussed, based on a literature review. As a result of this study, the importance of evaluating Trabzon's culinary culture within the scope of gastronomic tourism has emerged. In addition, since it is known that gastronomy and tourism affect each other interactively, it has been concluded that local foods and geographically marked products have a great effect on reflecting the food culture of the region. Geographically indicated products attract tourists, especially to the region where the product is produced and grown, and indirectly contribute to the regional economy. Transferring the same recipes to future generations will prevent the product from being lost or changed in the historical process. Serving local foods, especially in touristic restaurants and introducing them to tourists with off-the-menu treats will increase the interest in food, and as individuals get to know the food, they will have a desire to consume. This adventure, which starts with curiosity about the new food, will cause an increase in interest in different areas of the region such as the area where the food is produced, the businesses where the food is served, the events where the food is promoted, and the festivals. In this context, it will have a positive effect on the revival of tourism, the increase in employment with new job opportunities and the development of the regional economy.

Gastronomy tourism has had an important place in the tourism sector throughout the world in recent years. Today, tourists not only explore different cultures and historical places, but also seek the opportunity to experience the local culture by tasting local dishes. For this reason, gastronomy tours, where local dishes are presented with their cultural and historical contexts, have an important potential in the tourism sector. Trabzon, located in the Eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey, is a city that attracts tourists with its historical and cultural riches. Trabzon's local dishes attract the attention of tourists with the originality and richness of the Black Sea cuisine.³¹ Trabzon cuisine, while carrying the characteristics of the Black Sea cuisine, also attracts the attention of tourists with its unique tastes. Seafood in the region, especially anchovy, is one of the most important food ingredients in Trabzon cuisine.³² Trabzon cuisine is also famous for meat dishes, pita bread, cabbage rolls, corn bread, cheese varieties and desserts, in which ingredients such as corn, cabbage, and pickles are frequently used.

Trabzon's tourism potential increases even more when considered together with gastronomic tourism. Trabzon's gastronomic tourism potential is not limited to its rich cuisine. At the same time, the historical and cultural texture of the city offers an important potential in terms of tourism. By organizing gastronomic tours of Trabzon cuisine, the products of local producers can be introduced and tourists can discover local tastes. In addition, by considering historical and cultural tourism and gastronomy tourism together, tourists can be provided with a more comprehensive exploration of Trabzon. Trabzon's tourism potential increases even more when considered together with gastronomic tourism. In addition to the existing tourism potential, gastronomy tours related to Trabzon cuisine can be organized, products of local producers can be promoted and tourists can discover local tastes. At the same time, by considering historical and cultural tourism and gastronomic tourism together, tourists can be provided to explore Trabzon more comprehensively. Regional flavour routes can be created with the support of experts in the field, and the gastronomic potential of the Eastern Black Sea Region can be activated by sharing the created routes with travel agencies and tour operators. In addition, the demands of tourists looking for local cuisine delicacies should be taken into account, and businesses serving regional cuisine can be opened instead of the meals they can consume in the place where they live. The number of geographically marked products in Trabzon can be increased by working in coordination with all the culturally relevant stakeholders of the region. In addition, there is no culinary museum that can serve as a bridge between the past, present and future of the cuisine of the province of Trabzon. Studies can be performed to open museums where the culinary elements of the region can be exhibited, and training centers where regional dishes can be presented and taught. As a result, it can be said that Trabzon has a very high potential for gastronomy tourism and with the necessary investments, the city can become an important destination in terms of gastronomy tourism.

³¹ Yılmaz 2020.

³² Şengül 2015, 49.

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