

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF STREET FLAVORS OF TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

Turkey is a country which has very unique and specific tastes on its lands. There is a great food variety depending on its historical evolution, geographic location and interaction of different cultures. Beside of food productions which are performed by domestically or industrially, there is another different food production and supply type which is called as “street foods”, “street tastes” or “street flavors”. Street foods of a country give some idea about advancement of food science in that country. It points the most preferred and consumed products, possibilities of industrial processing or the microbiological situation of food processing of that country. Street flavors are integrated into characters of the countries. These tastes had been born in the past and become current form with time by effects of cultural alterations. It is possible to reach street foods at the many corners of the cities in Turkey. There are many street food types and many of them are common in countrywide. However some special tastes are present for different regions. For example, Adana Kebap, Şalgam, Şırdan and Bici Bici are some special tastes which are peculiar to Cukurova region. Some of the general street flavors in Turkey may be stated as stuffed mussels, Kokorec, Boza, chicken and rice, bagels (Simit), Döner, boiled or roasted maize, wafer, cotton candy, Kumpir (baked potato), waffles, fish sandwiches, meatball sandwiches, Lokma dessert, apple candy, pickle juice, The Ottoman paste, roasted chestnut, wet hamburger, Çiğ Köfte (bulgur meatball) and desserts with sherbets by different regions and etc. The main problem which is related with street foods is hygienic conditions like all other countries. However they are indispensable for many Turkish citizens. The purpose of this research is conceptual analysis and presentation of the Street flavors of Turkey and these flavors were examined in terms of different regions.

INTRODUCTION

Food supplying from the markets have long history (6th century before BC) which is based on temporary open air markets present in public spaces such as streets, squares or specific buildings (Meng et al., 2017). Open-air markets promote the integration of both global and traditional trends (Gvion, 2017). It is generally preferred by many consumers depending on its convenience, competitive prices, product varieties, simple food availability and accessibility (Cherono and Otieno, 2016).

Street foods are ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared or sold by vendors especially in streets (FAO, 1989) almost all cities all over the world. They are widely consumed because of their unique tastes and easy availability. The demand of street food consumption has been increased by younger generation day by day (Anukampa et al., 2017; Trafialek et al., 2017) although some hygienic and pathogenic problems may be occurred depending on street food consumption. Therefore there are many scientific researches about safety of street foods in the world (Bezerra et al., 2014; Anukampa et al., 2017; Karimi et al., 2017; Trafialek et al., 2017; Zanin et al., 2017). The diversity of street foods in the world is very wide (Draper, 1996). Some of the important street foods from different countries may be specified as;

- Hot lentil soup in Greece,
- Italian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, and Chinese foods, Navajo fry bread, German bratwurst, Greek gyro and souvlaki, Indian samosas, Japanese yakitori, Caribbean roti and patties, and Argentine empanadas in America,

- Homemade foods such as jams, preserved fruit and cakes in Australia,
- Dairy products (70%), legumes (60%), fish (50%), meat (50%) and eggs (50%) in Africa,
- Fruits and juices, cooked snacks and meals in Mexica,
- Falafel, sunflower seeds, nuts, ice cream or pizza in Israel (Simopoulos, 2000).

MAIN STREET FOODS OF TURKEY

Turkish cuisine has both traditional and modern properties because of coming from Ottoman Empire and it is bounded and globalized with other cultures (Kumru and Cetin, 2017). All Turkish populations which are rooted in the Central Asia generally consume large amount of meat and dairy products and a low consumption of vegetables (Dogan et al., 2015). Turkish cuisine is one of the most important cuisines in terms of food and beverage diversity (Sariođlan, 2014). All regions of Turkey offer rich and diverse local cuisines (Okumus et al., 2007). On the other hand some tastes are common in every region in Turkey such as “Simit”, “Döner”, boiled or roasted maize, wafer, cotton candy, waffles, apple candy, roasted chestnut.

Simit: Simit has a special meaning for Turkish people in terms of creating social connections. The first written information about Simit was obtained by “Seyahatname” (Travelogue) work of Evliya Celebi. However he defined it baked dough which was shaped as a huge circle. Today Simit is smaller than this definition (Dikkaya, 2011). It is known that Simit have been consumed in our country since 16th century (Boz Semerci and Mutlu, 2016).

Döner: It is a traditional meat product which is prepared by marinating whole or minced meat for 12 hours at 4°C with red or black pepper, salt, onion powder or pieces, sliced tomato or tomato sauce, olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, milk or milk powder, yogurt and eggs. Then it is shaped as a cone around a skewer and cooked vertically on roller grill skewers (Liuzzo et al., 2016). It is one of the most consumed fast-food products in Europe and other parts of the world and it is sold in many countries by its local name (döner kebab, donair, dona-kebab, etc.). Traditional Döner is made of beef or lamb. However the use of chicken and turkey meat has become very popular (Bingöl et al., 2013; Simsek and Kilic, 2016).

Kokorec: it is described as grilled sheep intestine and is one of the most widely consumed traditional Turkish meat products. It’s also widely consumed in Greece and some Adriatic countries (Babaoglu et al., 2017).

Cigkofte: It is meat-based product produced by mixing raw meat, onion, bulgur(pounded wheat), vegetable oil, tomato paste and different spices, including red and black pepper, cumin, allspice and salt (Ozturk et al., 2016).

Boiled or roasted maize: Boiling and roasting of maize are very common application in the world (Özkaya and Sarican, 2014; Chukwuma et al., 2016). Although maize is widely consumed as different maize products in Black sea region in Turkey (Sisman, 2009), it is possible to see boiled or roasted maize in the streets all over the country at summer seasons. It is boiled in a huge boiler and sold inside of this boiler. The leaves of maize are used as plate and it is consumed by adding some salt. Roasted maize is made by cooking maize on the barbecue.

Wafer (Kağıt helva): It was made by adding gum halva to the circle wafers by domestically in Turkey. However most of the production is performed industrially today. In the production of wafer, metal molds which have patterns on it are used. It is known that it has been made for 1400 years (Anonymous, 2014a).

Cotton candy: It is made by melting crystalline sucrose above 210°C in a bowl which shoots molten liquid sucrose into the air where it rapidly cools and dries into an amorphous glassy solid state (Labuza and Labuza, 2004). It is possible to find it which is sold in small

cabin cars in the streets, squares and malls of Turkey. Generally it has pink color and its appearance fosters consumer demands.

Waffles: Waffle is very popular in Turkey such as other many countries. Firstly it was popular in Ortaköy in Istanbul. However it can be found in all cities in the country. It is served with melted chocolate, cream and fresh fruits (Anonymous, 2016a).

Apple candy: Apple candy is an old dessert and widely consumed in many countries. It is made by washing, trimming, sorting, coring and pricking of apples and candied by standardized method (Sharma et al., 1998).

Roasted chestnut: It is prepared by cutting, boiling and roasting of chestnuts, sold inside of paper bags and widely consumed at winter season in all cities of the country.

Some tastes are special and peculiar a region and these regions of Turkey which has unique street flavors are given as below.

THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

The Mediterranean region has very special tastes in all cities and almost all of them are peculiar to themselves. Adana province has the highest street food diversity in this region. The most known street foods which are peculiar to Adana province can be specified as Adana Kebap, Şırdan, Bici bici, Salgam (Turnip juice), Aşlama (Licorice Syrup) and Halka Dessert. Adana Kebap is a grilled meat dish that is prepared by sticking sheep meat which is grown at natural environment and local highlands that have specific flora to skewer and cooking it on the oak charcoal fire. It may be found in a small counter which is on a street corner or in very luxury restaurant. Şırdan is a part of an animal stomach, generally lamb stomach is used. For making this food, firstly spicy rice mixture is prepared. The mixture is filled into Şırdan and the aperture on the meat is sewing. Then the cooking process is carried out by boiling. Bici bici is a dessert type which is consumed in summer season and its main ingredients are grated ice, cooked starch, powdered sugar and sherbet. Turnip (Şalgam) juice is a fermented product that is obtained by mixing of bulgur flour, sour dough, potable water and table salt and fermenting them by lactic acid fermentation. Turnip, purple carrots and preferably hot pepper flakes are added to the obtained extract and they are fermented again. Licorice Syrup (Aşlama) is generally consumed in summer seasons and at Ramadan. For making it, licorice is cleaned and washed. It is cut as pieces into 20 cm and it is smashed by knob. It is taken in a bowl and some water added to it. It is kneaded like dough. Then some water added to it again and the obtained extract is called as “yeast”. When some water added to this yeast, licorice syrup is obtained. Halka dessert is prepared by semolina and flour mixture is shaped as a circle and fried in hot oil. After frying process, it is sorted to sherbet for one or two minutes. Other traditional and popular street foods of Adana are Bumar, Hummus, Sıkma, Gözleme, Phyllo bread, Peppery bread, Karsambaç, Shredded wheat dessert (Taş Kadayıf), Damask (Şam) dessert, Karakuş dessert, Kaynar, Misis Ayranı, Liver, Kırkkat, Simit (bagel), prickly pear, boiled chickpea, Kelle paça (head and foos of animal), milk with banana (Ballı, 2016; Güzeler et al., 2016; Zaimoğlu, 2017). Hatay is another province whose food culture is also very rich. Some special street foods which are peculiar to Hatay province can be stated as broad bean hummus, Sini and Kağıt Kebap (meat meal), Künefe (cheesy dessert), “Katıklı” bread (cheesy and peppery), Haytalı dessert (milky dessert with ice cream and rose syrup), Atom (milk, honey, pistachio, banana and avocado mix) and sahlep. Mersin province has also unique street foods such as Tantuni, Kerebiç (special dessert with a foam and pistachio), Cezerye (dessert made by carrot) and Mamul (dessert made by walnut, pistachio or date). Also Kahramanmaraş ice cream and tarhana, Osmaniye kahke (cookie) and bagels, Antalya bean salad can be specified as street foods of Mediterranean region (Lokmanoglu, 2013; Anonymous, 2017a; Anonymous, 2017b).

AEGEAN REGION

Aegean foods which have light but delicious taste are different from other foods that are producing other regions of Turkey. Although meat and meat products are dominant in the nutrition of Turkish people, in this region, vegetables, herbs, fruits and oils are most consumed food types. Samphire is widely consumed appetizer which is generally consumed with fish meals. The most consumed street foods are Boyoz, Gevrek (bagel), Kumru (sausage sandwich), almond with ice, stuffed mussels in İzmir, Döner with vegetables in Muğla, semolina halva with ice cream in Denizli, sucuk sandwiches in Afyonkarahisar (Anonymous, 2017c; Anonymous, 2017d; Anonymous, 2017e). Lokma dessert, Şambalı dessert, Zerde dessert are the main dessert types that are peculiar to Aegean region (Anonymous, 2017f).

MARMARA REGION

Marmara region is the most advanced and crowded area of Turkey. Therefore the demand and the diversity of street food are significant in this region. Istanbul represents whole Marmara region in terms of street flavors. One of the most consumed street foods is fish sandwich which is sold in Istanbul. Grilled or fried fishes are prepared as a sandwich with salad and it is a good alternative in terms of easy availability. Kokorec is another traditional street food in this region. It is made by wrapping sheep bowel in a metal stick and cooking. Then it is cut and mixed with spices. It is served as sandwich. Kumpir (baked potato) is a popular street food in Istanbul. It is made by cooking of potato in the oven and mixing with cheese, sausages, salami, corn, olives, salads and etc. Stuffed mussels are popular in generally the coastline parts of Turkey. In the production of this food, some rice mix is prepared and it is filled into mussels. It is consumed with lemon. Chicken and rice can be found in small cars in the streets of Istanbul. Rice is made with chickpea and mixed with boiled chicken. Meatball sandwiches are also popular in this region and the most popular place to find it is in front of the stadiums after football games. Pickle and pickle juices are also common and they are sold in small cars or small stores. Albanian liver is another type of street foods and it is peculiar to Albanians. Livers are fried with flour, cut as cube and served with fried potatoes. Boza is a traditional beverage which has been sold in the street since Ottomans. Boza is a cereal based fermented beverage which is produced with millet, maize, rice and wheat. It has a characteristic sweet-sour taste, light yellow color and acidic-alcoholic odor (Anonymous, 2014b; Anonymous, 2017g; Anonymous, 2017h; Levent and Cavuldak, 2017)

BLACK SEA REGION

When Black sea region culinary culture is examined, it can be seen that tea, hazelnut, corn and anchovy have important place for this region. Butter and cheese are also remarkable for this cuisine. Traditional meals are generally made at homes in Black sea region. However some special tastes which are sold in the streets are present. Anchovy meals have great diversity in this cuisine and one of the most liked anchovy meal is anchovy meatball which is an important street food especially in Ordu province. The difference with regular meatball is using anchovy rather than lamb. Steamed anchovy, rice with anchovy and fried anchovy sandwiches are also popular street foods in Black sea region. Akçaabat meatball is also important street food for this region. It is made in Trabzon province and made by mixing of minced meat, rusk, garlic, black pepper and salt. Corn flour is the most used flour type in this region. Many of meals and bakery products are made with corn flour. The most important food that corn flour is used for making is corn bread which is peculiar to Trabzon province. It can be consumed with meals or directly like a cake. There is another unique bread type which is called as "Pileki" bread and peculiar to Artvin province. It is made by using corn flour, water, salt and Daphne leaves and baked on tin plate. Mıhlama is one of the most important foods peculiar to Black sea region. Its origin is Trabzon province, too. It is made by using corn flour and cheese. "Laz Böreği" (patty) is a traditional street food

which has sweet taste and is peculiar to Rize province. It is prepared by using some different ingredients such as vanillin and grounded hazelnut (Anonymous, 2016b; Anonymous, 2017i).

CENTRAL ANATOLIA REGION

Central Anatolia region is not as rich as other regions of Turkey in terms of culinary diversity. However there are some unique flavors which are peculiar to this region. Ankara which is the capital city of Turkey is in this region and it is a cosmopolite city. Its street foods reflects general street food types in the country such as Döner, Cigkofte, Kokorec, Simit (bagel) and etc., but some special versions of these foods are present in Ankara. “Ankara Simidi” (bagel) is the most known and consumed street food type in this region. It is little harder and thinner than regular bagels. There is another popular street food called as “Gobit”. It is similar with sandwich but it has different small round pita bread and boiled egg, fresh onion, seasonal herbs, tomatoes, pepper and spices are present inside of this bread. It is sold in small cars in Ankara. Hawthorn is a fruit which is sold by stringing and consumed as street food. Eskisehir is another important city in this region and its main street foods can be specified as “Çiğ Börek” (patty) and Balaban meatball. Kayseri is also important province in terms of gastronomy. “Kayseri Mantısı” (pasty) is very famous in the country. “Yağlama” also belongs to Kayseri province and it is a kind of patty with meat. “Gazete baklavası” is a special dessert which is made in Sivas province. Soda, vinegar, flour, yogurt, margarine and lemon juice are used for making this dessert and it is preferred to consume it with walnut (Anonymous, 2015; Anonymous, 2016c; Anonymous, 2017j).

EASTERN ANATOLIA REGION

Meat and meat products have important place in Eastern Anatolia region culinary culture. There are not so many kinds of street foods in this region because generally meals are prepared at homes and great and crowded feasts are arranged for the guests. The origin of Cigkofte belongs to Eastern Anatolia and Southeast Anatolia regions. Diyarbakır province is important for this region in terms of cuisine. Liver which is cooked on sticks are the most popular street food of this province. Fresh chickpea which is called as “Firik” is sold in small cars in this city as a street food. Additionally “Diyarbakır çöreği” is an important bakery product which is produced in this province. Erzurum is another important province for Eastern Anatolia region. The most important food which is made in this city is called as “Cağ Kebabı” that is made by lamb. Another unique taste peculiar to Erzurum province is “Kadayıf dolması” which is a dessert type produced by wrapping shredded wheat and filling it with nuts. “Kete” and “pişi” which are bakery products of this region are known countrywide. They are obtained by frying dough and it is possible to find them in the street venders (Anonymous, 2017k; Anonymous, 2017l).

SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA REGION

Gaziantep is the most important province in Southeast Anatolia region in terms of culinary culture. This province has very specific and unique flavors and street foods. Desserts have a great diversity in Gaziantep. Baklava is the most known dessert type in this city. It is made by thin dough and pistachio with sherbet. Most part of pistachio production is performed in Gaziantep province. Therefore it can be seen that all dessert types. Katmer is another famous dessert which is consumed at breakfasts. Chickpea roll is one of the main courses which can be found in the street venders. Beyran is another main course is a kind of soup made by lamb and rice and traditionally it is consumed at breakfasts. Other special street foods can be specified as Bakısma or Peksimet in Mardin province, Tirit, Loğlaz roll in Şanlıurfa province (Anonymous, 2017m; Anonymous, 2017n; Anonymous, 2017o).

CONCLUSION

Street flavors are one of the most important groups in nutritional choices. It is preferred because of easy availability, low cost and their unique flavors. Most of the countries have special street foods which are peculiar to themselves. Turkey is a country that has rich food diversity also in terms of street foods. This diversity is important in terms of cultural wealth and gastronomic situation such as gastronomy tourisms. Therefore it is required to protect unique flavors of street foods and control the production techniques. It is required further researches about street flavors of Turkey because of irritability of information and contribution to food science and gastronomy.

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