

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TURKISH DINING CULTURE FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE REPUBLICAN ERA: AN ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF SPACE, RITUAL AND IDENTITY

OSMANLI'DAN CUMHURİYET DÖNEMİNE TÜRK YEME KÜLTÜRÜNÜN DÖNÜŞÜMÜ: MEKÂN, RİTÜEL VE KİMLİK BAĞLAMINDA BİR ANALİZ

Melih İÇİGEN¹ Ali ILGAZ²

ABSTRACT

This study examines in depth the evolution of Turkish culinary culture from the Ottoman Empire to the Republican era, emphasizing the interplay between space, ritual, and identity. It explores how the evolution of dining venues, table manners, cooking techniques, ritualized food practices, and banquet traditions reflect and influence the social structure and collective memory of Turkish society. The study cites various primary source categories referenced in the literature; however, the analysis primarily relied on secondary sources due to the impracticality of accessing archival documents during the research period. Consequently, the thematic content analysis relies heavily on scholarly interpretations and transcriptions of these documents located in published academic literature. This method guarantees a theoretically informed and historically anchored viewpoint, notwithstanding the constraints in direct access to primary data. Other studies in the literature also demonstrate that culinary practices during the Ottoman period were deeply intertwined with religious and ceremonial traditions. The study examines the importance of food in rituals encompassing events from birth to death, such as religious holidays, weddings, circumcision ceremonies, and state ceremonies. The founding of the Republic ushered in significant transformations in Turkish culinary culture, driven by modernization, urbanization, and globalization. The study concludes that despite the adoption of fast food practices and global culinary trends, traditional techniques, flavors, and rituals have demonstrated remarkable resilience.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Cumhuriyet dönemine uzanan Türk mutfak kültürünün evrimini mekân, ritüel ve kimlik arasındaki etkileşimi vurgulayarak derinlemesine incelemektedir. Çalışmada, yemek mekânlarının gelişimi, sofrada adabı, pişirme teknikleri, ritüelleşmiş yemek uygulamaları ve ziyafet geleneklerinin, Türk toplumunun sosyal yapısını ve kolektif hafızasını nasıl yansıttığı ve etkilediği ele alınmaktadır. Araştırmada literatürde atıf yapılan çeşitli birincil kaynak kategorilerine yer verilmiş olsa da araştırma dönemi içerisinde arşiv belgelerine doğrudan erişim mümkün olmadığı için analiz ağırlıklı olarak ikincil kaynaklara dayandırılmıştır. Bu nedenle tematik içerik analizi, yayımlanmış akademik literatürde yer alan bu belgelerin akademik yorumları ve transkripsiyonlarına büyük ölçüde yaslanmaktadır. Bu yöntem, birincil verilere doğrudan erişimdeki kısıtlara rağmen, kuramsal açıdan donanımlı ve tarihsel olarak temellendirilmiş bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Literatürde yer alan diğer çalışmalar da Osmanlı döneminde mutfak kültürünün dinî ve törensel geleneklerle yakından ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma; dini bayramlar, düğünler, sünnet merasimleri ve devlet törenleri gibi doğumdan ölüme uzanan ritüellerde yemeğin önemini incelemektedir. Cumhuriyet'in kuruluşu, modernleşme, kentleşme ve küreselleşme süreçleri doğrultusunda Türk mutfak kültüründe önemli dönüşümlere zemin hazırlamıştır. Araştırma bulguları; hızlı tüketim alışkanlıkları ve küresel mutfak trendlerinin giderek yaygınlaşmasına karşın geleneksel tekniklerin, tatların ve ritüellerin dikkate değer bir direnç göstererek varlığını sürdürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır.

Geliş Tarihi:

02.09.2025

Kabul Tarihi:

30.10.2025

Yayın Tarihi:

12.12.2025

Keywords

Turkish Culinary Culture

Table Etiquette

Food Rituals

Ottoman Palace Cuisine

Republican Era Dietary Practices

Anahtar

Kelimeler

Türk Mutfak

Kültürü

Sofra Adabı

Yemek Ritüelleri

Osmanlı Saray


Mutfağı

Cumhuriyet

Dönemi Beslenme

Uygulamaları

¹ Lecturer, Cappadocia University, Gastronomy and Culinary Art Department, melih.icigen@kapadokya.edu.tr,

 ORCID ID 0000-0002-4173-505X

² Assistant Professor, Cappadocia University, Gastronomy and Culinary Art Department,

ali.ilgaz@kapadokya.edu.tr,  ORCID ID 0000-0003-0838-2747

1. Introduction

Food and beverages have consistently been considered essential for the sustenance of human life. Historically, societies have developed unique food and dining cultures by amalgamating their knowledge, experience, and abilities with the geographical attributes of their environments (Çekiç, 2015). Every meal, in its symbolic framework, is a socially ordered action that consolidates group members (Douglas, 1972). Food has a pivotal role in shaping communal consciousness and social identity (Çaycı & Aktaş, 2018). Furthermore, culinary culture delineates an individual's social status inside their own community (Eker, 2018). By the symbolic significance of the meal and the environment in which it is consumed, individuals associate themselves with various socioeconomic classes and convey their identities accordingly (Çaycı & Aktaş, 2018). Consequently, food functions as a conduit for the expression of identity.

Identity is of paramount significance for individuals, as it shapes their perceptions of society, reactions to events, cognitive frameworks, lifestyle choices, social interactions, dietary selections, and decision-making processes (Çaycı, 2019). The historical evolution of societies can be examined through the analysis of culinary traditions. The Turks, with a profound historical past and a rich cultural heritage, partially convey this heritage through culinary traditions and the cultural features associated with them (Kapar, 2019). The primary and operational storehouse of Turkish culinary culture is cultural memory. The traditions embedded in the recollections of community members signify the culture and geography to which they are affiliated (Eker, 2018). Kitchens can develop distinct culinary identities through engagement with many environmental elements, although they may also experience assimilation due to the impact of dominant cultures (Düzgün & Özkaya, 2015). As regional conditions evolve, the cultural forms and significances associated with food in communities also alter. Cuisine is one of the most prominent indications of cultural diversity. The localization and diversification of food culture are profoundly influenced by the interplay of geographical characteristics, environmental conditions, religious beliefs, cultural heritage, social and ethnic diversity, and educational attainment with regional preferences (Sağır, 2016). Over the years, culinary culture has transcended mere sustenance, evolving into a vital component of ceremonies, religious rituals, weddings, funerals, celebrations, and festivals (Beşirli, 2010).

This study analyzes the evolution of Turkish dining culture from the Ottoman Empire to the Republican era, emphasizing space configurations, ritualistic practices, and the social production of identity. The objective is to examine the evolution of dining environments, eating practices, and symbolic food-related rituals, which mirror significant changes in cultural memory and national identity. Despite extensive academic interest in Turkish culinary culture, few studies explore these dynamics through the interconnected perspectives of space, ritual, and identity. This study addresses that gap by offering an integrative socio-cultural framework that has been largely overlooked in previous research.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a historical-cultural analysis framework to explore the transformation of Turkish dining culture from the Ottoman Empire to the Republican era. It investigates the evolution of dining environments, table etiquette, cooking techniques, ritualized food practices, and ceremonial feasts, emphasizing their roles in shaping cultural identity.

A qualitative research design was employed, with document analysis serving as the primary method for examining textual sources. Document analysis involves the systematic and structured interpretation of written materials (Wach, 2013; Kırıl, 2020). Content analysis served as the principal analytical technique to identify recurring themes and patterns. The procedure involved coding the data according to predefined conceptual themes—specifically, ritual, space, and identity—alongside emergent subthemes identified in the reviewed textual and visual materials. For example, “ritual” comprised subthemes like religious ceremonies, life-cycle events, and state banquets; “space” encompassed both traditional and contemporary dining environments; and “identity” involved symbolic representations of class, gender, and culture through culinary practices. The codes were refined through iterative

comparison, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of how culinary practices reflect sociohistorical transformations. Content analysis remains a systematic and reliable approach for structuring and interpreting qualitative data within the scope of historical-cultural research (Krippendorff, 2004; Alanka, 2024).

A total of 62 secondary sources—including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and theses—were analyzed. The research spans the 15th century to the first quarter of the 21st century, focusing on historical and cultural transitions in Turkish culinary practices. Although the study acknowledges various categories of primary sources (e.g., archival materials, court records), the analysis was based on secondary literature, due to limited access to original archival documents during the research period.

To ensure comprehensiveness, a thorough literature review was conducted using academic databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. Search terms included: “Ottoman Cuisine,” “Dining Rituals,” “Turkish Table Etiquette,” “Culinary History of Türkiye,” “Cultural Identity and Food,” and “Ritualized Eating Practices.” Both Turkish and English sources were reviewed to provide a cross-cultural and comparative perspective.

The data were thematically categorized under four conceptual domains aligned with the study’s analytical structure: (1) Dining Areas, Eating Habits, and Table Etiquette; (2) Cooking Practices and Dietary Habits; (3) Eating and Rituals; and (4) Banquet Tables. Through this methodological approach, the study aims to construct a sociohistorical narrative of how food practices have both reflected and shaped evolving cultural, political, and economic dynamics in Türkiye.

2.1. Dining Areas, Eating Habits And Table Etiquette

In modern Türkiye, young individuals residing in urban areas typically conjure comparable mental images and symbols while envisioning a dining room. For some, this may entail a traditional dining room featuring a table, whilst for others, it could be a kitchen with a centrally located table. Among older generations, the concept of a “sofra” (traditional floor dining arrangement) is often recalled, even if it is not actively utilized in their present lifestyles. The understanding, recollection, and interpretation of the past constitute a collaboratively constructed reality, influenced by communities that share that history and participate in the formation of a collective memory (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2017). The amalgamation of shared imagery confers legitimacy upon the prevailing social order, accompanied by an implicit expectation that individuals within that order share common memories (Connerton, 1999/1992).

To comprehend the evolution of dining spaces from the Ottoman Empire to contemporary times, it is essential to grasp the comprehensive meaning of the term *sofra*. The Turkish Language Association (TDK, 2020) defines “sofra” as a table or tray set for dining, a collective gathering for meals, or a low, round, raised surface utilized for serving food. Associated compound terms encompass *sofra bezi* (the fabric placed beneath the *sofra*), *sofra başı* (the area surrounding the *sofra*), and *sofra duası* (a prayer done post-meal). In Turkish culinary culture, meals are primarily enjoyed at home, primarily due to considerations of sanitation, cost-effectiveness, and flavor.

Historically, in the Ottoman era, meals in palaces and mansions were served on low trays, lacking specific dining rooms similar to those in Western architecture. Meals were presented on circular trays (*sini*) positioned on diminutive stools, around which four to six individuals would congregate. These trays were generally lacking tablecloths, plates, cutlery, or knives, as meals were ingested manually. Notwithstanding the availability of spoons, rice was frequently consumed with three fingers (Yerasimos, 2019). A clean cloth would be spread on the floor, a tray positioned on it, and individuals would gather around to dine. The material culture of the *sofra*—including elaborate textiles, gemstone-adorned spoons, and costly metal implements—frequently mirrored the socioeconomic standing of the host. The alteration of utensils between courses, the employment of embroidered textiles, and the utilization of opulent serving sets highlighted social hierarchies. Before meals, hands were cleansed and prayers were uttered. Following the meal, prayers were recited once again, and hands were cleansed with water and a *peşkir* (a tiny towel) (Haydaroğlu, 2003). Meals generally concluded with

the prompt clearing of dishes and the application of rosewater for scent (Yerasimos, 2019). These practices were not limited to the elite but were evident across various socioeconomic strata (Haydaroglu, 2003).

Table etiquette is a defining characteristic of a society's culinary culture. It includes aspects such as seating configurations, dining etiquette, utensil utilization, napkin protocol, and dress codes (Yaşar, 2013). The term *adab* derives from the Arabic word *edeb*, signifying manners, regulations, and social decorum. Derivatives encompass *adab-ı muaşeret* (rules of social conduct), *adab-ı münazara* (discussion etiquette), and *adab-ı umumiyye* (generic morality). In this context, *sofra adabı* denotes the customs and practices related to communal dining (Uğur Çerikan, 2019). Mardin (2006) asserts that Türkiye is a status-oriented society rather than a class-oriented one. Within this framework, dining and table manners have become spatial contexts through which status is enacted within the social structure. The meal has evolved into a theatrical display that represents the host's status at the banquet or ball, encompassing a comprehensive composition that includes seating arrangement, dinnerware, menu, kitchen utensils, and their origin, quality, and style. Initially during the Ottoman era and subsequently with the establishment of the Republic, the evolution of the dining table altered both private and public domains, influencing daily interactions and socialization processes. The new regulations at the dinner table altered the modes of celebration, entertainment, and communication, while these changes became a benchmark for urbanization and social-political acceptability.

The performative nature of the dining table is historically grounded in the intricate etiquette practiced during the Ottoman period, especially among the aristocracy. In old Ottoman civilization, table etiquette held particular importance among the elite, regulated by ideals of hygiene, respect, and morality derived from religious and cultural traditions (Yaşar, 2013). Transgressions of Ottoman dining etiquette encompassed seating oneself prior to the host, commencing consumption without consent, taking excessive mouthfuls, misusing utensils, grabbing for food post cessation of others' eating, and exhibiting distasteful gestures when partaking from shared platters (Yerasimos, 2019). Maintaining cleanliness and refraining from objectionable conduct were crucial, particularly while meals were served from communal platters (Samancı, 2008).

In the 18th century, Western influence started to appear in the palaces and mansions of Istanbul. Sultan Mahmud II is usually regarded as the inaugural Ottoman ruler to forsake traditional floor dining in favor of Western-style dining at a table with chairs, hence introducing *à la française* table manners (Samancı, 2006). Until the mid-19th century, communal floor dining persisted among the affluent, who utilized spoons to eat from a common tray, eschewing forks and knives (Samancı, 2013). During the later part of the 19th century, the dining practices of the aristocracy experienced a swift evolution. The palace served as the nucleus from which Western cuisine and dining customs disseminated among the elite. This transformation resulted in significant alterations in both table etiquette and domestic spatial arrangement. Individual plates supplanted shared serving trays, and distinct utensils were implemented for various courses, augmenting the diversity and volume of table ware.

The transition from *sini* to dining tables established a designated eating area within the residence. In contrast to the uniform geographical distribution surrounding a circular tray, Western-style seating at a rectangular table established hierarchical positions determined by age, gender, and prestige. The host generally occupied the central position at the table, symbolizing authority. The primary difficulty faced by Ottomans during this shift was the acceptance of forks and knives, particularly the usage of the fork in the left hand, which starkly contrasted with the traditional practice of utilizing the right hand and spoon (Yaşar, 2013). Ahmet Mithat Efendi was among the pioneers to juxtapose *alafranga* (Western) and *alaturka* (traditional) dining etiquette, contending that although Eastern cuisine was more flavorful, its way of consumption lacked sophistication. He regarded Western etiquette as "the most exemplary of all the customs we have adopted from the West" (Yiğitler, 2018).

The Tanzimat reforms of the 19th century institutionalized these alterations in culinary culture and dining etiquette. The tradition of table dining is thought to have originated during Sultan Mahmud II's reign, although its extensive adoption took place under Sultan Abdülmecid (Önçel, 2015). In Anatolia, traditional meals commenced with the eldest family member uttering *Bismillah*, and community

dining followed a stringent moral and ritualistic protocol. A prevalent adage—"A child's future can be discerned by their conduct at the table"—illustrates how table manners functioned as moral education (Önçel, 2015).

After the establishment of the Republic, urbanization and rural-to-urban migration hastened the implementation of individual plate dining, surpassing regional limitations. This transition was motivated by hygienic considerations and egalitarian ideals. Nonetheless, conventional floor dining utilizing a sini tray persists in numerous rural regions (Önçel, 2015). Kitchens have transformed from simple food preparation areas into multifunctional spaces for culinary activities, dining, and social interaction.

Urban families sometimes opt to dine in the kitchen when space permits, whereas formal meals or substantial gatherings occur in specialized dining rooms. Notwithstanding modernization, traditional floor dining continues to endure in some urban households (Aregem, 2020). This spatial transformation was further accelerated during the Republican Period, marked by technological advancements, economic restructuring, and increased female workforce participation. During this time, distinct dining areas began to emerge, reshaping both the physical configuration and temporal rhythms of shared meals. As a result, the traditional custom of the entire family gathering around the table gradually began to decline. Dining practices increasingly shifted outside the home, influenced by evolving gender roles, changing work schedules, and the proliferation of urban eateries (Göde, Kayaardı, Uyarcan, & Söbeli, 2021; Aydın, 2023). Although table manners and eating habits have evolved over the Republican period, religious and cultural practices persist in influencing dining rituals. Expressions like *Afiyet olsun* (enjoy your meal), *Ziyade olsun* (may you have more), and the tradition of presenting food to guests spontaneously illustrate the persistent principles of hospitality and thankfulness. It is seen discourteous for a host to commence or conclude a meal before to their visitor. Abandoning food on one's plate is disapproved, as it contravenes the religious tenet of minimizing waste. The saying "*İşten artmaz, dişten artar*" ("Savings come not from earnings, but from frugality") embodies a profound cultural focus on thrift and appreciation (Tezcan, 2020).

2.2. Cooking Practices And Dietary Habits

Despite similarities in culinary ingredients across global civilizations, variation in dish form and flavor emerges from the perception, transformation, and utilization of these ingredients within geographical and cultural contexts (Eker, 2018). Within this framework, the evolution of Ottoman palace cuisine coincided with the empire's territorial expansion and rise in political prominence during the 16th century. Control of principal spice routes, the conquest of key production areas, and the empire's multicultural composition collectively expanded the imperial kitchens' ingredient diversity and enriched the culinary repertoire (Bilgin, 2000; Yerasimos, 2019). Before the main courses were served in the palace, small plates featuring bread, salads, olives, jams, and assorted pickles were typically presented. These dishes correspond to contemporary appetizers or *meze*, consumed throughout the meal, and illustrate the continuity of Ottoman dining culture (Yerasimos, 2019).

Building on these developments, soups—originating from Central Asian traditions—reached their greatest diversity in the 16th century, particularly within the palace kitchens (Ağarı, 2018). Although Istanbul's coastal geography might suggest extensive seafood consumption, cultural preferences rooted in red meat traditions limited its prominence. However, Sultan Mehmed II's personal interest facilitated a wider range of seafood preparations by the 17th century, including fish soups, stews, and stuffed fish dishes, signaling a gradual diversification of palace offerings (Yerasimos, 2019).

In addition to soups and seafood, pilafs composed of rice, wheat, or bulgur represented another cornerstone of Ottoman culinary identity. These pilafs, termed *dâne* in palace records, diversified alongside the empire's growth and were classified by ingredients, such as *dâne-i kızıl* or *dâne-i sarı*. Due to the high cost and limited availability of rice until the late 17th century, pilaf was associated with wealth and occupied a central role in royal feasts and banquets. Consequently, the opulence of a meal could often be discerned by its selection of meats and variety of pilaf preparations (Ağarı, 2018; Yerasimos, 2019).

Complementing the significance of pilafs, meat—especially red meat—maintained a central position in Ottoman imperial cuisine, reflecting deeply rooted Central Asian customs. Although small livestock were favored, the kitchens also prepared dishes using cattle, poultry, and game meats. The term kebab broadly denoted any food, including meat, poultry, fish, or vegetables, cooked over direct heat or in clay pots without added water. Examples include *şiş kebabı*, *tandır kebabı*, and *cızbiz kebabı* (Yerasimos, 2019). Moreover, preparations such as *büryan*, involving roasting in a tandoor or on a spit, and *kavurma*, sautéing meat in rendered fat, offered further variation and were integral to festive meals (Ağar, 2018).

While meat dishes held prestige, vegetables also contributed to the richness of Ottoman cuisine through elaborate techniques. Vegetables were commonly cooked in clarified butter (*sadeyağ*) and water, often with diced lamb or minced meat. Methods such as *bastı* and *silkme* structured slow cooking and sautéing sequences, respectively. Prior to the introduction of tomatoes and tomato derivatives, sourness was achieved using unripe grape juice (*koruk suyu*), pomegranate molasses, green plums, lemon juice, and spices. The emergence of *dolma* in the 15th century, and the later adoption of olive oil during Westernization, symbolized culinary refinement and innovation.

These refined techniques also extended into other culinary categories. For example, the first written *zeytinyağlı* recipes appeared in 19th-century cookbooks, listed alongside other vegetable dishes. Deep-frying eggplant, zucchini, or carrots in olive oil or clarified butter and serving them with yogurt-, vinegar-, garlic-, or honey-based sauces was common. Since the 16th century, cardamom-infused coffee was customarily served after meals, and its preparation in palaces was entrusted to specialized staff (*kahvecibaşı*), reflecting coffee's social and ceremonial importance (Yerasimos, 2019).

Toward the late 19th century, increasing interaction with Western guests and chefs introduced French-inspired dishes labeled *alafranga*, while traditional Ottoman dishes were designated *alaturka*. Some transitional recipes blended elements of both traditions, illustrating the hybridization of elite cuisine. Over time, Ottoman culinary texts shifted toward clearer distinctions among sweet, salty, and sour profiles, and complex spice–fruit combinations gradually declined (Samancı, 2008). Similarly, limited historical access to refined sugar led to the use of honey and grape molasses; as sugar became more available—especially in palace kitchens—it gained symbolic value and was even offered as a wedding gift. Ottoman desserts were categorized into groups such as *helva*, fruit-based preparations, milk-based confections, and pastries (Reindl-Kiel, 2016).

With the transition into the early Republican period, Turkish cuisine became broadly categorized into two culinary traditions: Istanbul cuisine and Anatolian cuisine. Istanbul cuisine, shaped by imperial legacy and multicultural urban life, dominated early culinary literature and reflected elite gastronomic identity (Akın et al., 2015; Solmaz & Altın, 2018). Meanwhile, modernization, industrialization, and technological progress transformed domestic cooking across Anatolia. Processed food innovations encouraged the transition from clarified butter and tail fat to margarine and vegetable oils; granulated sugar supplanted honey and molasses, and white flour replaced whole wheat flour. Canned goods, chemical additives, and artificial sweeteners also became more common. In parallel, modern cooking technologies—such as natural gas stoves, gas cylinders, and electric ovens—gradually replaced wood and charcoal. Traditional clay, porcelain, and tin-coated copper vessels, once imparting distinctive aroma and flavor, became less prevalent, leaving behind sensory qualities emblematic of a lost artisanal heritage (Akın, Özkoçak, & Gültekin, 2015). Dietary customs evolved as well, shifting from two meals per day to a three-meal structure of breakfast, lunch, and dinner (Samancı, 2016b).

Despite these changes, traditional foods retain cultural, regional, and symbolic significance. Items such as yogurt, ayran, bulgur, tarhana, boza, mesir paste, mantı, lavaş, pekmez, pastırma, pişmaniye, sucuk, and hoşmerim continue to characterize Turkish food culture (Karakaş & Törnük, 2016). Additionally, geographical resource availability influences dietary practices, with seafood prevalent in coastal regions, cereals in grain-producing areas, and meat and dairy in livestock-oriented zones (Ertaş & Karadağ, 2013). Vegetables—enhanced by onions, herbs, and wild greens—remain foundational to everyday cooking. Bulgur is frequently incorporated into meatballs and vegetable dishes, mint and red pepper provide flavor and color, grape molasses serves as a natural sweetener, and salt is typically

added during cooking rather than afterward. Unlike Western practices, sauces and garnishes are generally incorporated directly into the dish. Popular meat dishes include kebab, döner, and *yahni*, while yogurt often accompanies meals. Beverages such as *hoşaf* and *şerbet* hold festive significance, and some main dishes traditionally incorporate dried fruits (Seyitoğlu & Çalışkan, 2013).

Finally, from the 1950s onward, foreign migration and globalization further accelerated Türkiye's exposure to Western food culture. Urbanization intensified work life, and rising female employment, shifting household dynamics, limited apartment kitchen space, and decreasing time allocated to cooking collectively accelerated and simplified domestic food preparation. These changes contributed to increased dining out and the rise of fast food—conceptualized in Türkiye as *ayaküstü beslenme* (standing-up eating). Common Turkish fast-food items include simit, börek, syrup-drenched pastries, chickpea pilav, fish sandwiches, döner, meatballs, and various grilled skewers. Establishments such as *pideci*, *kebapçı*, *dönerci*, *köfteci*, *börekçi*, and *muhallebici* reflect this development (Keskin, 2012; Canpolat & Çakıroğlu, 2016; Kadioğlu, 2019). As technological innovations in kitchen equipment improved efficiency, globalization reshaped culinary habits including meal timing, dining spaces, and traditional hierarchies of age, gender, and social status at the table—patterns that continue to evolve within emerging socioeconomic contexts (Fendal, 2014).

2.3. Eating And Rituals

An individual is a comprehensive entity influenced by their physical, biological, and psychological environments, as well as their social context, culture, habits, and belief systems. These factors directly affect the development and perception of the self. Goffman underscores the importance of rituals in self-development, contending that these rituals inspire individuals and imbue them with values such as respect, courtesy, pride, and dignity (Goffman, 2017). In light of Goffman's framework on ritual and identity formation, the following table classifies ritual practices associated with food in Turkish culture according to their thematic domains.

Table 1. Classification of Rituals in Turkish Culinary Culture

Ritual Type	Subcategory	Occasion / Event	Typical Foods / Practices
Life-Cycle Rituals	Birth	Loğusa şerbeti, chicken pilaf, flatbread	Celebration of new life; strengthening kinship ties
	Teething	Hedik (boiled wheat)	Commemorating child's development; neighborhood sharing
	Circumcision	Banquets, pilaf, sweets	Marking male social/religious identity; status display
	Wedding	Traditional banquet meals	Social union; hospitality; communal identity
	Death	Funeral meals, helva, mevlid	Mourning and remembrance; collective prayer and support
Religious Rituals	Ramadan	Iftar meals, güllaç, baklava, zerde	Fasting break; spiritual reflection; community solidarity
	Eid al-Adha	Meat-based dishes, sharing with neighbors	Sacrifice; charity; religious obligation
	Muharram	Aşure	Interfaith solidarity; symbolic memory of Karbala; oral tradition

	Mevlid	Mevlid meal with pilaf and zerde	Religious commemoration and thanksgiving
State / Dynastic Rituals	Prince circumcision festivals	Çanak yağması, şeker alayı	Dynastic legitimacy; grandeur; public participation
	Diplomatic Banquets	Formal service with symbolic foods	Representation of imperial power and hierarchy
Urban / Modern Rituals	Afternoon tea / café gatherings	Tea, coffee, pastries, desserts	Urban identity; gendered socialization; middle-class taste
	Public Ramadan Tents	Free communal meals	Political legitimacy; social welfare

Table 1 presents a thematic classification of food-related rituals observed in Turkish culinary tradition. These practices—ranging from religious observances to dynastic banquets and life-cycle ceremonies—illustrate how food functions as a cultural marker across different social domains and historical periods. This classification highlights the embeddedness of culinary practices in rituals that reinforce identity, hierarchy, and social cohesion. These ritual practices are not merely symbolic; they occur in culturally significant spaces and embody collective identities influenced by historical and social dynamics. The triadic relationship among space, ritual, and identity is evident in the architecture of Ottoman public banquets, domestic family gatherings, and the modern commercialization of traditional meals. These ritual categories are not confined to symbolic representation; they manifest vividly in daily practices, shaping how individuals and communities relate to food in social and religious contexts. In daily life, religion-based practices and food-centered rituals significantly influence the formation of personal habits. These ceremonies represent essential behavioral characteristics that differentiate one group from another. Rituals linked to religious, national, or other significant events are anticipated to embody the cultural identity of individuals and align with their socioeconomic status. Within this framework, decisions are made concerning the type of cuisine to be offered, the choice of ingredients, the methods of preparation and presentation, and the protocols for hosting guests (Beşirli, 2010). Religious convictions may affect these decisions, resulting in the incorporation of specific foods and the omission of others (Önçel, 2015). Ceremonial family meals during religious festivals like Ramadan and Eid al-Adha reinforce familial group identity, the smallest yet most impactful social unit. These meals stimulate the folkloric function of communal identity. The aşure tradition, in particular, stands as a significant emblem of culinary and collective memory. Aşure, a revered and commemorative dish, is shared among Sunni and Shia Muslims as well as Jewish communities, symbolizing a cultural link between diverse religious heritages. Its religious, social, and oral-historical components ensure the continuity of culinary heritage (Eker, 2018).

While traditional rituals remained strong in domestic settings, the early Republican period introduced new spatial and temporal dynamics that reshaped social interaction around food. The rising prevalence of dining out and public banquets, alongside the dissolution of social barriers, positioned food as a central medium of urban sociability (Meriç, 2007). During this time, patisseries and cafés became integral to everyday life; the emerging urban class moved away from the Ottoman kiraathane culture and began to assert their identity as consumer-citizens in these novel settings. Afternoon tea gatherings featuring desserts with coffee or tea became popular, while alcoholic venues emerged as new spaces for evening entertainment (Özer, 2014).

Culinary culture, as a core dimension of social life, transcends basic nourishment and takes on symbolic and ritualistic meanings. It plays a pivotal role in lifecycle ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and religious observances (Sağır, 2012). In this context, wheat and bulgur-based dishes—such as soups, breads, and pastries—are frequently featured in weddings, holidays, and special events, reflecting foundational values of Turkish food culture (Ardıç Yetiş, 2020).

Although wedding banquets for royal women and çanak yağması (ritual food distribution) for Janissaries were notable events at the Ottoman court, the most magnificent occasions were the

circumcision festivals of princes, viewed as heirs to the throne and custodians of dynastic continuity. These festivals epitomized the empire's grandeur and authority (Boyalı, 2019). Events like the şeker alayı (sugar procession) and çanak yağması were distinguished by their theatrical quality, facilitating unrestricted interaction between men and women during public celebrations. Yerasimos contends that these celebrations served as "opportunities for transgressing social taboos. "During these festivals, approximately 15 tons of sugar sculptures depicting roosters, giraffes, churches, mermaids, and priests were displayed and subsequently pilfered by the public. The çanak yağması comprised large platters of pilaf, adorned with flatbread, offered to the audience, engendering a moment of heightened communal fervor and symbolic chaos" (Yerasimos, 2002). The length of the banquet demonstrated the Sultan's esteem for his diplomatic visitors. The meals adhered to a designated ceremonial sequence: dishes from the Matbah-ı Amire (Imperial Kitchen) were transported in silver and porcelain containers to the Has Oda and the Divan, subsequently being transferred from servant to servant until they arrived at the Sultan's chamber and were arranged on the table (Vroom, 2015). Although the Sultan and his guests dined at distinct tables, they occupied the same room. Commencing with Mehmed II, the Sultan exclusively dined with royal family members, while foreign envoys were received in the Divan by the grand vizier. Upon the meal's conclusion, the envoy was permitted to present himself before the Sultan (Vroom, 2015).

The Turkish dessert tradition, significantly shaped by Arab culture, thrived following the adoption of Islam. Consequently, religion exerted a considerable impact on the Ottoman confectionery repertoire. The commencement of fasts with dates, the preparation of güllaç, baklava, and kadayıf during Ramadan, the creation of aşure in Muharram, and the provision of helva and lokma (fried dough) post-funerals exemplify the esteemed role of confections in religious traditions (Yerasimos, 2019). Zerde, a saffron-hued rice pudding, was traditionally presented at celebratory occasions including religious holidays, weddings, and mawlid ceremonies. Its vivid yellow hue represented joy. It was additionally provided at public kitchens (imarets) on Fridays and special occasions, usually accompanied by pilaf—a custom originating in the 15th century (Işın, 2017).

The selection of saffron in zerde was intentional. It not only achieved the intended hue but was also thought to possess soothing properties, thereby diminishing the probability of conflicts during communal dining. The exorbitant expense also exemplified the ruler's authority and magnanimity (Ağarı, 2018). Throughout the human life cycle—from birth to death—specific foods and beverages are offered during rituals and commemorations, embodying cultural traditions. For example, upon the birth of a baby in Anatolia, guests are greeted with loğusa şerbeti (a traditional postpartum beverage), accompanied by chicken pilaf, flatbread, and ayran. Upon the emergence of the child's initial tooth, hedik—boiled wheat—is presented to family and neighbors. These practices exemplify longstanding traditions transmitted across generations (Halıcı, 1997). Ritualistic meals are essential to ceremonies associated with death. On the day of interment and on the 40th day post-mortem, it is customary for the family of the deceased to provide sustenance to relatives, friends, neighbors, and those who aided in the funeral, accompanied by communal prayers (Tezcan, 1997).

Other longstanding traditions include hosting communal iftar meals during Ramadan and organizing mevlid ceremonies with meals for pilgrims returning from Hajj. Weddings and circumcision feasts also continue to feature communal dining; however, while these were traditionally prepared at home, they are now predominantly catered and held in banquet halls (Güler, 2010). These ritualized food practices function as sites of collective memory, preserving communal identities and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations, as Connerton (1989) posits in his theory of bodily and commemorative memory.

A distinctive Ramadan tradition in the Ottoman Empire was "diş kirası" (tooth rent) symbolic gifts presented by affluent hosts to their guests in appreciation for accepting an iftar invitation, metaphorically "renting their teeth" to eat the meal. These gifts often consisted of silver coins, akçe, gold, or prayer beads, typically enclosed in velvet pouches. The underlying purpose was to assist the less fortunate while maintaining the aesthetics of generosity and social refinement. This practice illustrates how Ottoman society embedded charity within a language of elegance and civility (Bezci, 2018).

Ottoman sultans also partook in this tradition. Ayşegül Osmanoğlu, daughter of Sultan Abdülhamid II, recalled in her memoirs: “Each evening, a battalion of soldiers would break their fast in Yıldız Square with provisions sent by the Sultan.” Following the prayer, the Chief Chamberlain would distribute the *diş kirası* to the soldiers (Georgeon, 2016).

Similarly, Ottoman *imarets* (public kitchens), which historically provided free meals to the public, served both charitable and legitimizing political functions. In contemporary Türkiye, Ramadan tents sponsored by municipal or state institutions fulfill a similar dual role—offering sustenance while reinforcing the symbolic visibility and benevolence of political authority (Fendal, 2014).

Religious dietary customs, such as Ramadan meals and the preparation of *aşure*, should therefore be understood not merely as devotional acts but also as frameworks for social bonding and identity construction. Transmitted across generations, these practices ensure cultural continuity (Çetin, 2020).

Finally, these culinary rituals, deeply embedded in social interactions, exemplify what Goffman (2017) describes as the “presentation of self” in everyday life, wherein individuals perform culturally scripted roles that reinforce collective norms and values.

2.4. Banquet Tables

In Turkish communities, communal dining has been a prevalent tradition since their inception. Historically, ceremonial, festive, and banquet meals have been essential to social life. Communal dining was integral to pre- and post-war rituals, weddings, funerals, and religious ceremonies. The persistence of these traditions in contemporary Anatolia is apparent during weddings, circumcision ceremonies, religious holidays, birth celebrations, preparations for extended journeys, and hospitality events. These events are meticulously organized, showcasing the finest and most cherished dishes, complemented by food, beverages, and entertainment. Nonetheless, regional discrepancies in these traditions endure (Yasa, 1969; Gücbilmez, 1972; as cited in Tezcan, 2020). These differences exemplify the richness and vibrancy of Turkish culinary heritage. Consequently, meals crafted for special occasions are essential for the preservation and advancement of culinary traditions. These days signify a departure from routine existence and encompass unique activities. The differentiation between family meals and those for significant social events underscores the symbolic significance of food during times of joy and sorrow. Sharing meals at such events exemplifies Turkish hospitality (Halıcı, 1997). Ritual gatherings focused on food, termed *şölen*, contrast with ordinary meals due to their communal essence, intricate preparations, and symbolic displays. Various types of *şölen* existed during the Ottoman era. Notable among them were hunting feasts, which represented the Sultan's power and authority. These events visually manifested social hierarchies through the allocation and quality of food provided to various societal groups (Boyalı, 2019).

Circumcision festivals (*sünnet şölenleri*) constituted a notable Ottoman tradition, acting as a public exhibition of imperial power. For instance, at the 1539 festival orchestrated by Sultan Suleiman I for his sons Bayezid and Cihangir, distinct tables were set for the Sultan, his viziers, janissaries, cavalymen, artillerymen, and scholars, totaling thousands of participants (Yerasimos, 2002).

The spatial configuration of these feasts, the nature and presentation of the cuisine, and the seating arrangements of attendees served as explicit indicators of political and social hierarchy (Erdoğan İşkorkutan, 2017). Official banquets, particularly those held at the palace, were intended to exhibit the grandeur and sophistication of the Ottoman culinary heritage. Beginning in the 15th century, these feasts were routinely organized for foreign ambassadors, royal ceremonies, and official celebrations, adhering to stringent seating protocols determined by social hierarchy (Yıldız, 2014).

The quantity of dishes, along with the variety and amounts of ingredients utilized, functioned as indicators of social status (Reindl-Kiel, 2003). The foods served at these banquets, their preparation techniques, and the guests' proximity to the Sultan all held symbolic significance. Protocol stipulated that individuals positioned to the right and left of the host possessed specific importance (Beşirli, 2010). Meats including lamb, mutton, poultry, and game were flavored with spices such as black pepper, cinnamon, cumin, and saffron, while specific dishes and desserts like baklava, *aşure*, and *pelte* were designated for the upper elite. Conversely, individuals of lower status and servants frequently

had limited access to these opulent items. This culinary hierarchy encompassed vegetables, legumes, and condiments, thereby reinforcing social stratifications through the act of dining (Erdoğan İşkorkutan, 2017).

During the late 19th century Westernization movement, Ottoman dining culture began to integrate European influences. Chefs educated in Vienna reintroduced Western cuisine, presented on porcelain plates at dining tables rather than conventional floor trays. Cutlery supplanted the practice of eating with hands, and women commenced dining in the company of their husbands (Onaran, 2015). During the wedding festivities of Saliha Sultan, daughter of Sultan Mahmud II, a banquet was conducted at Dolmabahçe Square featuring European-style table arrangements and the unprecedented participation of foreign diplomats' wives (Ünsal, 2020).

By the conclusion of the 19th century, menus for foreign dignitaries increasingly showcased Franco-Ottoman fusion cuisine, inscribed in both Turkish and French (Samancı, 2008). Menu items were frequently designated in tribute to guests, exemplified by "Sea Bass à la Valide Sultan" or "Sultan-style foie gras pastry," highlighting the performative and symbolic significance of cuisine. Subsequent instances comprise "Sea Bass à la Admiral" and "Pilaf of Liberty with English cheddar crisps," presented at a banquet honoring Admiral Gore Assheton Curzon-Howe in 1910 (Ünsal, 2020).

In contemporary Türkiye traditional celebrations such as weddings, births, and circumcisions coexist with newly established rituals like graduation ceremonies. The iftar menus provided by upscale restaurants during Ramadan have transformed into commercialized religious celebrations, showcasing opulent multi-course meals that commence with dates and olives and culminate with desserts and sherbets (Boyalı, 2019).

Historical records indicate that palace banquets during Mehmed II's reign featured meats, pilafs, vegetable dishes, desserts, and sweet sherbets. In esteemed Istanbul residences, the culinary offerings may include soup with egg yolk, lamb kebabs, tandoori preparations, fried chicken, stewed artichokes, stuffed grape leaves and eggplants, meats filled with apple and egg, rice pilaf, noodles, cheese-filled pastries, baklava, dried apricot compote, rice pudding, aşure, and an assortment of sherbets (Akın, Özkoçak, & Gültekin, 2015).

Contemporary Turkish feasts generally commence with soup, succeeded by a main course—frequently a meat dish—accompanied by pilaf, pastry, a vegetable dish, and dessert. In the case of a more intricate meal, the sequence may encompass fish, poultry, red meat, olive oil-based dishes, noodles, and fruit, culminating with coffee (Yeğen, 1977). In Anatolia, celebratory menus often feature as many as forty distinct dishes (Halıcı, 1985).

Although the political significance of public banquets has waned over time, contemporary feasting practices frequently function as venues for the exhibition of individual cultural capital, as articulated by Bourdieu. Today's emphasis has transitioned from showcasing state authority through elaborate feasts to highlighting the symbolic power of the table itself (Ünsal, 2020). In this context, Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital is evident in how individuals utilize food and dining practices to signify taste, status, and distinction within social hierarchies. This shift reflects a broader transformation in how social identity is constructed and communicated through culinary rituals. Republican-era balls were emblematic events of the new regime, functioning as venues for the incorporation of Western lifestyles into social life. They served as platforms for the introduction of reforms, including the dress code revolution and the socialization of men and women (Kasimoğlu, 2024).

2.5. Comparison Of Turkish Culinary Culture: Ottoman Era vs. Republican And Contemporary Period

This comparative framework delineates the principal cultural, spatial, and sociological transformations in Turkish culinary practices from the Ottoman era to contemporary times. Each category emphasizes changes in food-related behaviors, values, and social functions influenced by historical, religious, political, and global forces.

Table2. Comparison of Turkish Culinary Culture: Ottoman Era vs. Present

Category	Ottoman Era	Republican Era and Present
1 Dining arrangement and spatial use	During the Ottoman period, dining practices were centered around collective floor seating. Meals were typically consumed while seated on cushions around a <i>sini</i> (large round tray) placed on a cloth on the floor. This arrangement fostered a strong sense of communal interaction and hierarchical order within the household. Dining areas were not architecturally distinct; instead, a multipurpose room was converted into a dining space at mealtime. Tableware was minimal and often shared, and the act of eating was highly ritualized, incorporating moral and religious principles such as handwashing before meals, silence while eating, and deferring to elders. The spatial organization of dining reflected status, discipline, and respect.	In modern Türkiye, dining arrangements have shifted towards Western-style configurations. Fixed dining tables and chairs are standard in urban households, with separate dining rooms or designated kitchen dining areas becoming more common. Individual plates, cutlery, and personal space at the table are now the norm, replacing shared serving practices. Urbanization and architectural changes—especially in apartment living—have redefined the kitchen as both a social and functional space. Moreover, modernization has diminished the ritualized aspects of mealtime, transforming dining into a more flexible, individual-centered activity. The influence of work schedules, education, and gender roles—particularly the rise in female employment—has further contributed to the spatial and temporal restructuring of domestic dining.
2 Food Rituals and social function	In the Ottoman Empire, food rituals were deeply intertwined with religious observances, communal values, and social hierarchy. Meals often served as symbolic acts of faith, generosity, and social bonding. Events such as Ramadan iftars, <i>ashura</i> distribution, funeral meals (<i>mevlid</i>), and circumcision feasts were not only religious obligations but also reinforced collective memory and kinship networks. These rituals were governed by Islamic ethics and infused with a moral sense of duty, charity, and hospitality (<i>misafirperverlik</i>). Food functioned as a tool for maintaining social order and spiritual merit. Moreover, imperial banquets in the palace served political purposes, reinforcing the sultan's legitimacy and the hierarchical structure of the empire.	In contemporary Turkish society, many traditional food rituals persist, albeit in modified forms. Religious feasts like Ramadan and Eid continue to play a significant role in family and community life. However, their organization has become increasingly commercialized and individualized—exemplified by luxury iftar menus in hotels or restaurant-based celebrations. Likewise, traditional ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and birth-related events still feature ritualized foods (e.g., <i>helva</i> , <i>hoşaf</i> , <i>hedik</i>), though often prepared externally rather than communally. Urbanization, time constraints, and lifestyle changes have reduced the frequency and scale of home-based ritual meals, while simultaneously expanding their performative dimension in public and digital spaces.
3	Ottoman cuisine was characterized by time-intensive cooking methods and a rich diversity of ingredients. Techniques such as slow cooking in <i>tandır</i> ovens, braising (<i>bastı</i>), and boiling in large copper pots were common. Meals were often prepared with clarified butter (<i>sade yağ</i>), tail fat (<i>kuyruk yağı</i>), and natural sweeteners like honey or grape molasses. Dishes combined	Contemporary Turkish cooking practices have become more standardized, time-conscious, and technologically driven. Traditional techniques have been largely replaced by modern appliances such as gas stoves, pressure cookers, microwaves, and electric ovens. Industrialized food products—margarine, granulated sugar,

	Cooking techniques and dietary practices	fruits, meats, grains, and legumes in elaborate flavor profiles reflecting the empire's multicultural geography. Seasonings were measured and moderate, with an emphasis on balance over intensity. Daily meals typically included two main servings—one in the morning and one in the evening—accompanied by fresh bread, soups, and pickled items.	and white flour—have supplanted natural alternatives. Urban diets now commonly include three daily meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), following Western patterns established during the Republican modernization process. Convenience foods, frozen meals, and processed snacks have also gained popularity, especially in urban households. However, traditional staples like <i>tarhana</i> , <i>bulgur</i> , <i>yogurt</i> , and <i>olive oil</i> remain widely consumed, particularly in rural areas and among older generations.
4	Social and Culturel Identity	In the Ottoman period, food was a significant marker of social status, religious identity, and ethnic belonging. Culinary practices differed markedly across social classes, from the elaborate palace cuisine of the elite to the modest diets of commoners. Food-related rituals and etiquette were heavily influenced by Islamic values and regional traditions, shaping a shared moral and cultural code. Dining arrangements, types of dishes served, and even the timing of meals conveyed one's position within the social hierarchy. Moreover, the multicultural composition of the empire—comprising Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and others—enriched Ottoman cuisine with diverse culinary influences, creating a layered cultural identity expressed through food.	In modern Türkiye, food continues to play a vital role in the construction and expression of cultural identity, albeit in more individualized and globalized forms. While traditional foods still symbolize regional and national belonging, contemporary culinary identity also reflects lifestyle choices (e.g., vegetarianism, gluten-free diets), social status, and exposure to global trends. The dining table has become a performative space where cultural capital is enacted—through restaurant selection, cooking styles, or even social media representation. Although secularization and urbanization have diluted many religious and communal food practices, cuisine remains a key medium through which Turkish people assert both continuity with tradition and engagement with modernity.
5	Banquet Culture	In the Ottoman Empire, banquets (<i>ziyafet</i>) were not merely gastronomic events but highly choreographed expressions of political authority, social hierarchy, and religious observance. Imperial feasts—such as those held during circumcision festivals, military victories, or royal weddings—were orchestrated to project the sultan's generosity, legitimacy, and divine favor. These events followed elaborate protocols, with food served in hierarchical order, reflecting status distinctions among guests. Outside the court, communal feasts during Ramadan, <i>mawlid</i> celebrations, and religious holidays also reinforced neighborhood solidarity, spiritual devotion, and mutual aid. Banquets functioned as performative spaces where both state ideology and communal ethics were enacted through food.	In contemporary Türkiye, banquet culture has shifted from state-centered and religiously codified spectacles to more privatized and commercially oriented celebrations. While weddings, religious feasts, and official receptions still include large-scale meals, the setting has become more individualized and professionalized—often organized in hotels, restaurants, or catering halls. The symbolic function of the banquet has also evolved: it now serves as a display of personal wealth, taste, and modern lifestyle, rather than imperial grandeur or communal obligation. Additionally, televised cooking shows, celebrity chefs, and curated social media posts have transformed feasting into a visual and virtual experience, decoupled from physical gathering.
6		Transformations in culinary culture during the Ottoman era were largely driven by imperial expansion, religious doctrine, and	In contrast, the transformation of Turkish culinary culture in the Republican and contemporary periods

Driving Forces of Transformation	<p>intercultural exchange within the multi-ethnic structure of the empire. The inclusion of diverse ethnic and religious communities—such as Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews—brought about a syncretic culinary landscape. Seasonal trade routes, palace demands, and Islamic dietary laws also influenced the evolution of food practices. However, structural change in dining habits was relatively slow, shaped more by tradition, geography, and courtly refinement than by technological innovation or mass consumption.</p>	<p>has been propelled by rapid social, political, and technological shifts. Westernization initiatives beginning with the Tanzimat reforms and accelerating under the Republic introduced new dining norms, food products, and meal structures (e.g., the adoption of breakfast–lunch–dinner routines). Urbanization, industrialization, and globalization have further reshaped how food is prepared, consumed, and experienced. The expansion of multinational food corporations, increased female workforce participation, migration, digital media, and consumer culture have all contributed to the fragmentation and diversification of food practices. Additionally, lifestyle trends such as fast food, veganism, and fine dining reflect global gastronomic currents.</p>
---	---	--

This comparative framework demonstrates the transformation of physical food practices as well as the evolving cultural significances and social structures inherent in dining. These findings establish a basis for understanding the wider sociopolitical ramifications of culinary transformation in Türkiye.

3. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the evolution of culinary practices in Turkish culture from the Ottoman Empire to contemporary times, emphasizing dining environments, table manners, cooking techniques, food rituals, and ceremonial banquets. The origins of Turkish culinary identity reach beyond Anatolia into Central Asia, while the imperial cuisine of the Ottomans—especially the distinction between palace and popular cuisine—functioned as a significant means of cultural integration and identity development.

Historically, food has served not only as nourishment but also as a social and symbolic instrument to convey hierarchy, hospitality, and collective memory. Transformations in communal floor dining to contemporary individual table service, along with alterations in spatial configurations, tableware, and serving methods, reflect significant changes in social structure, gender dynamics, and class distinctions.

Food-related rituals, including weddings, circumcision feasts, religious holidays, and funerals, have traditionally reinforced communal bonds and collective identities. In Ottoman palace culture, banquets served as performative instruments of political legitimacy, whereas in Republican Türkiye, dining progressively transformed into a sphere for the expression of personal status and cultural capital.

Notwithstanding the Westernization process and socioeconomic changes during the Republican era, numerous traditional culinary techniques and ritualistic dining practices have been maintained or modified. Turkish cuisine has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, assimilating external influences while maintaining its cultural essence.

Food is fundamentally integral to Turkish social life, influencing and being influenced by economic, political, and technological transformations. According to Giddens (2008) and Mead (2017), identity is simultaneously a social construct and an individual internalization. In this context, food functions as both an indicator of identity and a medium for the ongoing negotiation and performance of that identity.

The current study has primarily concentrated on the historical and cultural aspects of Turkish dining culture. The increasing impact of social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, YouTube) and television cooking shows on modern culinary trends—such as veganism, gluten-free diets, and fine-dining culture—necessitates additional scholarly investigation. Future research may investigate the influence of digital media and prevalent culinary discourses on the perception, consumption, and presentation of food within contemporary Turkish society.

By examining these practices within a combined framework of space, ritual, and identity, this study contributes an integrative sociocultural perspective by conceptually linking dining environments, ritualized food practices, and identity formation throughout history—a relationship that has not been comprehensively addressed in previous research.

Ethics Statement: Since the study does not require a survey or interview on any institution, organization or person, it is not included in the studies requiring an ethics committee.

Author Contribution Statement: The authors contributed equally to the study.

Declaration of Interest: There is no conflict of interest declaration among the authors.

References

- Ağarı, G. (2018). Osmanlı mutfak kültürü üzerine araştırmalar. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- Akın, M., Özkoçak, A., & Gültekin, A. (2015). Geleneksel Anadolu mutfağında değişim süreci. *Anadolu Gastronomi Dergisi*, 3(2), 45–63.
- Alanka, D. (2024). Nitel Bir Araştırma Yöntemi Olarak İçerik Analizi: Teorik Bir Çerçeve. *Kronotop İletişim Dergisi*, 1(1), 64-84.
- Aregem. (2020). Anadolu'da sofraya düzeni ve yemek alışkanlıkları. *Kültürel Miras Araştırmaları*, 7(1), 55–72.
- Aydın, R. (2023). Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyete değişen sofralar: Yemek ve âdâb-ı muâşeret. *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 25(4), 1583-1594.
- Beşirli, A. (2010). Yemek kültürü ve kimlik inşası. *Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(1), 15–29.
- Bezci, G.(2018) “*Osmanlı Toplumunda Ramazan Kültürü*”, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Kütahya.
- Bilgin, N. (2000). Osmanlı saray mutfağı ve baharat yolları. *Tarih ve Toplum*, 8(4), 33–47.
- Boyalı, H. (2019). Şenlik ve iktidar: Osmanlı'da törenler. İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları.
- Canpolat, H., & Çakıroğlu, F. P. (2016). Fast food alışkanlıklarının Türk mutfağına etkisi. *Gıda ve Toplum Dergisi*, 4(1), 22–36.
- Çaycı, B. (2019). Kimlik, yemek ve toplumsal aidiyet. *Sosyoloji İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 6(2), 41–60.
- Çaycı, B., & Aktaş, H. (2018). Yemek ve sosyal kimlik ilişkisi üzerine bir değerlendirme. *Anadolu Kültürü Araştırmaları*, 9(1), 60–75.
- Çekiç, N. (2015). Türk mutfağında gelenek ve coğrafya ilişkisi. *Gastronomi ve Kültür Dergisi*, 2(1), 13–24.
- Çetin, O. (2020). *Geçmişten bugüne Ramazan gelenekleri ve geleneklerin yaşatılarak geleceğe aktarılmasına dair öneriler*. *Türk Ekini Dergisi*, 6, 14–36.
- Dilsiz, B. (2010). Türkiye'de gastronomi ve turizm (İstanbul örneği) [Yüksek Lisans Tezi]. İstanbul Üniversitesi.
- Düzgün, G., & Özkaya, B. (2015). Kültürel etkileşimler bağlamında mutfakların dönüşümü. *Antropoloji Notları*, 3(1), 77–89.
- Eker, M. (2018). Gıda, kimlik ve kültürel bellek ilişkisi. *Antropoloji Dergisi*, 6(1), 88–102.

- Ertaş, E., & Karadağ, H. (2013). Yöresel gıdaların Türk mutfağındaki yeri. *Yerel Gıda Dergisi*, 1(2), 30–48.
- Fendal, A. (2014). Yemek kültürü ve siyasal temsil: Ramazan sofraları örneği. *Toplumsal Yapı Araştırmaları*, 2(1), 99–118.
- Georgeon, F. (2016), “*Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyete İstanbul’da Ramazan*”, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Ankara.
- Giddens, A. (2008). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Goffman, E. (2017). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Göde, G, Kayaardı, S, Uyarcan, M & Söbeli, C. (2021). Tarihin Gelişim Sürecinde Türk Yemek Kültürü ve Beslenme Alışkanlıklarının Değişimi. *Food and Health*, 7(3), 216-226.
- Güler, H. (2010). Türkiye’de düğün yemeklerinin dönüşümü. *Antropoloji Dergisi*, 3(1), 40–53.
- Gürhan, M. (2017). Yemek kültüründe modernleşme etkileri. *Kültürel Dönüşüm Dergisi*, 4(1), 38–54.
- Halıcı, N. (1997). *Anadolu mutfak kültürü ve geleneksel yemekler*. İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları.
- Haydaroğlu, C. (2003). Osmanlı’da yemek ve sofrası kültürü. *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri*, 10(3), 50–67.
- Işın, M. (2017). Ziyafet sofralarından halk mutfağına: Osmanlı’da tatlılar. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.
- Kadioğlu, A. (2019). Kentsel yaşamda fast food kültürü. *Tüketim Kültürü ve Medya Araştırmaları*, 7(1), 90–112.
- Kapar, A. (2019). Kültürel bellekte yemek ve kimlik ilişkisi. *Bellek ve Toplum Dergisi*, 8(1), 28–40.
- Karakaş, A., & Törnük, F. (2016). Türkiye’de geleneksel gıdaların önemi ve korunması. *Gıda Bilimi Dergisi*, 21(4), 112–125.
- Kasımoğlu, S. (2024). *Cumhuriyet dönemi baloları (1923–1938)* (Yüksek lisans tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü). Marmara Üniversitesi Tez Merkezi.
- Keskin, Y. (2012). Türkiye’de ayaküstü beslenme kültürü. *Gıda ve Toplum Dergisi*, 3(2), 18–25.
- Kıral, B. (2020). Nitel bir veri analizi yöntemi olarak doküman analizi. *Siirt Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 8(15), 170-189.
- Krippendorff, K.H., (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, London: Sage Pub.
- Mardin, Ş. (2006). *Türkiye’de Toplum ve Siyaset*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Meriç, N. (2007). *Adab-ı Muaşeret: Osmanlı’da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi*. İstanbul: Kapı Yayınevi.
- Özer, İ. (2014). *Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Yaşam ve Moda*. İstanbul: Truva Yayınları.
- Reindl-Kiel, H. (2003). Prestige goods and the Ottoman elite: Food as a status symbol. *Turcica*, 35, 121–145.
- Reindl-Kiel, H. (2016). Osmanlı mutfağında tatlılar ve toplumsal göstergelik. *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 39(1), 85–104.
- Sağır, T. (2012). Geleneksel yemekler ve toplumsal ritüeller. *Halkbilim Dergisi*, 5(2), 43–58.
- Sağır, T. (2016). Yemek kültüründe farklılık ve coğrafyanın etkisi. *Toplum ve Kültür Dergisi*, 3(1), 31–47.
- Samancı, Ö. (2006). *Saray mutfağında batılılaşma*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.

- Samancı, Ö. (2008). Alaturka'dan alafranga'ya geçişte yemek kültürü. *Türk Mutfak Tarihi Dergisi*, 5(2), 75–89.
- Samancı, Ö. (2013). Osmanlı mutfağında kaşık ve sofrada davranışlar. *Yemek Kültürü Araştırmaları*, 7(1), 18–32.
- Samancı, Ö. (2016a). Osmanlı saray mutfağında çok kültürlülük. İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi.
- Samancı, Ö. (2016b). 19. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Osmanlı Elitinin Yeme-İçme Alışkanlıkları. (S. Faroqhi ve C. K. Neumann, Ed.). *Soframız Nur Hanemiz Mamur Osmanlı Maddî Kültüründe Yemek ve Barınak*. İstanbul: Alfa Yayıncılık.
- Seyitoğlu, F., & Çalışkan, S. (2013). Meyvelerin Türk yemek kültüründeki kullanımı. *Gastronomi ve Beslenme Dergisi*, 4(1), 45–59.
- Tezcan, M. (1997). Ölüm törenlerinde yemek geleneği. *Kültürel Antropoloji Dergisi*, 2(2), 30–44.
- Tezcan, M. (2020). Sofra kültürü ve toplumda dönüşüm. *Sosyal Yapı ve Değişim Dergisi*, 4(1), 55–71.
- Ünsal, A. (2020). Saraydan sofraya: Osmanlı'dan günümüze yemek kültürü. Ankara: Kültür Sanat Yayınları.
- Vroom, J. (2015). Ceremonial meals in the Ottoman court. In D. Fairchild Ruggles (Ed.), *Feasts: Archaeological and ethnographic perspectives on food, politics, and power* (pp. 109–128). Springer.
- Wach, E. (2013). Learning about qualitative document analysis (IDS Practice Paper In Brief 13). Institute of Development Studies. <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/2989/PP%20InBrief%2013%20QDA%20FINAL2.pdf?sequence=4> (Erişim tarihi: Mayıs 24, 2025)
- Yaşar, T. (2013). Sofra adabı ve geleneksel yemek kültüründe değişim. *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, 66, 271–292.
- Yasa, M. (1969). Yemek kültürü üzerine notlar. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi.
- Yerasimos, M. (2019). Osmanlı mutfağı. İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi.
- Yiğitler, K. (2018). Ahmet Mithat Efendi'nin mutfak yazıları. *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Dergisi*, 10(1), 59–74.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2017). Sosyolojik anlamda toplumsal bellek. *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 14(2), 101–115.
- Yıldız, M. (2014). Osmanlı sarayında resmi ziyafetler ve protokol. *Tarihsel Süreçte Saray*, 2(3), 45–61.