

# Chapter 6

## Traditional Foods in Turkey: General and Consumer Aspects

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### 6.1 Introduction

Culture takes a significant role in shaping societies, and traditions are the skeleton of a culture (Dikici 2001). In 2006, the European Commission defined “traditional” as “proven usage in the community market for a time period showing transmission between generations; this time period should be the one generally ascribed as one human generation, at least 25 years” (Guerrero et al. 2009). Each culture, ethnic group or region has specific traditions, which are formed during long periods and can hardly be changed. Traditions include eating habits, reflecting an expression of culture, history and lifestyle of nations (Weichselbaum et al. 2009).

Certain food ingredients and food preparation methods being used and transmitted from one generation to the next one are called “traditional foods”, and Turkey is a very rich country in palatable traditional foods such as baklava, lokum, aşure, etc., due to the fact that the traditional Turkish cuisine has been influenced by many different cultures like Persian, Hittite and Byzantine. Moreover, since Turks have accepted Islam as religion, Arabs have also had an influence over the Turkish cuisine. In addition, the Celts, the Romans and the Turks occupied many countries over the centuries and left their culinary traces in those countries (Weichselbaum et al. 2009).

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Due to nomadic lifestyle of Turks in the past, they used to convert perishable foods into more durable ones like sucuk, pastırma, boza, yoghurt, jam, pekmez, and pickles by using different methods like fermentation, concentration and sun drying. Among these, yoghurt is a worldwide known fermented dairy product in today's world.

Turks have perhaps been more interested in home food preparation than other people in Europe. Therefore, traditional foods have been prepared at homes or in small-scale enterprises within the limited region. In spite of immigration from rural to urban regions, people do not give up consuming their traditional foods. For this reason, traditional foods are beginning to be produced industrially. However, a main problem about traditional foods is the lack of legislation and standardisation in order to protect the products as well as the producers and the consumers. This chapter highlights traditional foods, consumer aspects of Turkish traditional foods, general aspects of traditional foods and innovation in traditional foods.

## 6.2 Consumer Aspects of Turkish Traditional Foods

Traditional foods are perceived as well-known foods which are consumed often by consumers from childhood and which were already consumed by grandparents (Weichselbaum et al. 2009). These traditional foods are consumed regularly or related to specific dates, celebrations or seasons, produced in a specific way in a certain area, region or country (TRUEFOOD 2009). Regarding consumer aspects, traditional foods are distinguished as follows:

- *Traditional foods consumed regularly:* These are consumed without any distinctive purpose, such as black tea and Turkish coffee. Black tea is the most widely consumed non-alcoholic drink in Turkey. It is offered as a sign of friendship and hospitality especially before or after any meal. While the Chinese discovered the tea plant, Turks developed their own way of making and drinking the black tea. After boiling water in a large kettle, some of it is used to fill the smaller kettle on top and steep several spoons of loose tea leaves producing a very strong tea infusion. The remaining water is used to dilute the tea for producing weaker tea. It is served in little tulip-shaped glasses, boiling hot, with sugar, but without milk.

The other regularly consumed Turkish traditional food is Turkish style coffee. It is less popular than black tea. In fact, there is no special variety of cocoa bean, raw material of coffee, grown in Turkey. Since the preparation method is different, it is known as Turkish coffee in the world now. It is prepared by boiling finely powdered roast coffee beans in a pot, possibly with sugar, and served into a cup.

- *Traditional foods related to specific purposes,* dates, celebrations or seasons such as Ashura or Noah's pudding (aşure in Turkish), puerperant sherbet (lohusa şerbeti in Turkish), flour-based halva (un helvası in Turkish) and Gullach (güllaç in Turkish). Ashure is a Turkish dessert which is made of a mixture consisting of various grains, fruits and nuts. According to the belief, when Noah's Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat in Northeastern Turkey, Noah's family prepared a special dish for celebration with grains, fruits and nuts since their food supplies were

about to exhaust. Hence, the dessert is called Noah's pudding. Traditionally, it is prepared on the Day of Ashura, which marks the end of the Battle of Karbala. It is served to neighbours. Puerperant sherbet is a traditional cold drink prepared with rose hips, cornelian cherries, rose or liquorice and a variety of spices. Sherbet is thought to increase lactation after child birth, so it is served during celebrations after a woman gives birth. Halva is another traditional dessert. There are many types of halva such as tahini halva, summer halva, etc. Halva, prepared with flour, is cooked and served upon the death of a person. After the burial ceremony, it is served to neighbours and visitors. Gullach is another traditional dessert made with milk, pomegranate and a special kind of pastry and is consumed in Ramadan. Gullach dough is prepared with cornstarch and wheat flour. Gullach contains walnuts between the layers which are wetted with milk and some rosewater.

- *Traditional foods having a specific way of production:* Authenticity in terms of recipe, origin of raw material and production process are important to provide the distinctive trait of traditional foods. Generally fermentation and drying are the most widely used techniques in those traditional food productions. Pastirma, sucuk, boza (bosa), raki, kefir and tarhana are associated to a specific production process. Pastirma and sucuk are the most famous traditional delicatessen products. Pastirma is a dry-cured beef product whose characteristic flavour and aroma comes from the so-called cement (çemen). "Cement" is made from garlic, red pepper, paprika and ground fenugreek seeds. Sucuk is a fermented dry meat product which is produced mainly from beef meat and/or mutton and tail fat from sheep (Aksu and Kaya 2002, 2005; Batu and Kirmaci 2009; Bozkurt and Bayram 2006; Coşkuner et al. 2010; Dixit et al. 2005; Erkmén and Bozkurt 2004; Gök et al. 2008; Sagdic et al. 2010; Soyer et al. 2005; TRUEFOOD 2009; Turkish Food Codex 2009; Yıldız-Turp and Serdaroglu 2008).

Tarhana, raki, bosa and kefir are popular fermented products. Tarhana is a fermented and dried soup mixture. It is prepared by mixing wheat flour, yoghurt, yeast and a variety of cooked vegetables (tomatoes, onions, green pepper), salt and spices (mint, paprika), followed by fermentation initiated by the presence of yoghurt or sour milk, for several days. Raki is a traditional and national non-sweet, anise-flavoured spirit, which is consumed as an apéritif, in particular along with mezze, red meat and seafood dishes. It has 45 % alcoholic content made from grape. It is consumed with chilled water on the side or partly mixed with chilled water. Bosa is a thick fermented wheat drink with a low alcohol content. It is generally consumed in winter and served with cinnamon and roasted chickpeas (leblebi). Kefir is a fermented milk product prepared by the incubation of kefir grains with defatted cow milk. Fermentation by lactic acid bacteria, acetic acid bacteria and yeasts has been employed. Its viscosity is similar but lower than that of stirred-type yoghurt. Nowadays, it is available with various fruit aromas at markets (Soltani et al. 2010).

- *Traditional foods associated to a certain area, region or country:* Traditional foods should be associated to a certain region. Turkish delight (lokum in Turkish), floss halva (pişmaniye in Turkish), candied chestnut (kestane şekerini in Turkish),

hamsi, raw meat ball (çiğ köfte in Turkish), kaymak, shalgam (şalgam in Turkish), butter, olive oil, baklava, pastirma and sucuk are associated to a specific region. Lokum (Turkish delight) is a sugar-based jelly-like confectionary product. Production of lokum is estimated to have begun in the fifteenth century. Since the nineteenth century, it is known as Turkish delight in Europe. The Safranbolu region is a very famous lokum producer. Lokum is a confection made from cornstarch and sugar. It is often flavoured with rosewater, lemon or some other fruit extracts. It has a soft and sticky texture and is often packaged and eaten as small cubes that are dusted with icing sugar to prevent sticking. Some recipes include small nut pieces, usually pistachio, hazelnut or walnuts (Batu 2010). Baklava is a rich, sweet pastry made of layers of filo pastry filled with chopped nuts and sweetened with syrup or honey. After mixing the ingredients, wheat flour, pistachio or other nuts, butter, wheat starch, cornstarch, water, egg, salt and lemon juice, the dough is kneaded to get baklava sheets. The sheets are baked in ovens sweetened with syrup or honey. The Gaziantep region is very famous for its baklava (Akyildiz 2010). Floss halva is a Turkish sweet made by blending flour roasted in butter into pulled sugar. The Kocaeli region is related to floss halva production. Another sweet, marron glace (kestane şekeri in Turkish) is produced specifically in the Bursa region. It is made with whole chestnuts candied in sugar syrup and then iced. Raw meatball is produced in east and south-east Anatolia. It is produced traditionally with a mixture of lean veal and bulgur, dried red pepper, salt, green or dried onion, black pepper, parsley and tomato and/or red pepper sauce. It is consumed as a raw material without heat treatment. Cream (kaymak) is a creamy dairy product, similar to clotted cream. Cream is mainly consumed today for breakfast along with the traditional Turkish breakfast. It is mainly produced in the Afyonkarahisar region. Shalgam is a fermented beverage consumed widely in southern parts of Turkey, especially with meat products like Turkish kebabs and gyros in the diets. It is produced mainly from purple carrot, bulgur and sourdough. Adana is famous for its shalgam. Hamsi is a small fish similar to the anchovy. Hamsi is used in many traditional dishes of the Black Sea region. Olive oil is the major type of oil used for cooking in Turkey. Olive trees are distributed mainly in the Aegean region of Turkey, especially in the cities of Balıkesir, Aydın and İzmir (Ötleş 2010). Sucuk and pastirma discussed above belong to Afyonkarahisar and Kayseri regions of Turkey, respectively.

- *Traditional foods consumed since childhood*: Typical traditional foods which have been consumed since childhood are set-type yoghurt (yoğurt in Turkish), ayran, pekmez and tahin. Yoghurt is a fermented dairy product which is known worldwide. It is the Turk's gift to the world. Yoghurt-based beverage, ayran, is prepared by mixing yoghurt with water and salt. It is especially consumed in summer. Pekmez is a molasses-like syrup obtained after condensing juices of fruit must, especially grape, fig or mulberry, by boiling them with a coagulant agent. It is used as a syrup or mixed with tahini or sesame paste (tahin in Turkish) for typical Turkish breakfast. Tahini is a paste of ground sesame seeds.

There are a lot of traditional foods consumed in Turkey. The foods mentioned above are only a few famous and major *e childhood*: Typical traditional ones.

### 6.3 General Aspects of Traditional Products

The importance of traditional foods has significantly increased in the last couple of years. Traditional foods play an important role in maintaining diversity of foods, in serving the specific needs of the local consumers and in the presentation of the local, national cultural heritage. Although the term “traditional foods” is widely used and everybody has a rough idea of what is meant by it, defining traditional foods is not as simple as it might be presumed. Published definitions of traditional foods include temporal, territorial and cultural dimensions (Bertozzi 1998; EU 2006), the idea of a transmission from generation to generation (EU 2006; Trichopoulou et al. 2007) and, more recently, elaborative statements about traditional ingredients, traditional composition and traditional production and/or processing (Weichselbaum et al. 2009). One of these definitions has been prepared by EuroFIR. This is an elaborative definition, which includes statements about traditional ingredients, traditional composition and traditional type of production and/or processing (EuroFIR 2007; Trichopoulou et al. 2007). Traditional food is a food with a specific feature or features, which distinguish it clearly from other similar products of the same category in terms of the use of “traditional ingredients” (raw materials of primary products) or “traditional composition” or “traditional type of production and/or processing method”.

The culture, lifestyle and economic conditions over a long period of time have formed the development of local food traditions. Over time, traditional foods have been influenced by many factors. One of these factors is the availability of raw materials; traditional food is thus influenced by agricultural habits and location. Geographical location has had a certain influence on the type of foods that have evolved; for instance, climatic conditions favoured the use of drying for preservation in southern European countries, while smoking was mainly used in northern countries. Regions at a lower altitude, for example, have different vegetation compared to regions at high altitudes; countries without access to the sea usually have a lower availability of fish and seafood compared to those with a large coastal area (EuroFIR 2007).

Turkey has a great number of traditional foods as a result of its long history, diversity of cultures and different climates. Different areas of Turkey have different traditions; there are local specialities which must be eaten in their home region to be fully appreciated. Thus, Kanlıca in Istanbul is famous for its yoghurt, Bursa for its Iskender Kebab, Gaziantep for its pistachio nuts and baklava, the Black Sea region for hamsi (fried anchovies) and corn bread and the Syrian borderlands (Urfa and Adana) for spicy shish kebabs. Not only the location of a region but also its history has influenced the dietary patterns of its inhabitants.

Turkish food is usually not spicy, but some regions do enjoy spicy dishes. Sauces and seasonings are often used but tend to be light and simple and do not overpower the natural flavours of the foods. Most common seasonings include garlic, cinnamon, mint, dill and parsley. Yoghurt is often used in meals with both meat and vegetables. Vegetables, wheat and rice are often the basis of Turkish foods. Eggplant

is the favourite vegetable of the country and zucchini is a common second in addition to cabbage, beans and artichokes that are made with olive oil.

## 6.4 Historical Influences on Traditional Foods

The origin of traditional foods is generally lost in ancient history. Some of these foods have been widely accepted and their popularity has spread from country to country, while the consumption of others remains limited to local areas where they originally appeared. The history of regions has influenced the dietary patterns of its inhabitants (EuroFIR 2007). At the mention of Turkish cuisine, Turkish history should come to mind, because people do not readily lose their taste in food; they do not give up foods to which they have become accustomed over thousands of years.

Turkish cuisine is often regarded as one of the greatest in the world. Its culinary traditions have successfully survived over 1300 years for several reasons, including its favourable location and Mediterranean climate. The country's position between the Far East and the Mediterranean Sea helped the Turks gain complete control of major trade routes, and an ideal environment allowed plants and animals to flourish. Such advantages helped to develop and sustain a lasting and influential cuisine.

The Turkish people are descendants of nomadic tribes from Mongolia and western Asia who moved westward and became herdsmen around A.D. 600. Early influence from the Chinese and Persians included noodles and *manti*, cheese- or meat-stuffed dumplings (similar to the Italian ravioli), often covered in a yoghurt sauce. *Manti* has often been credited with first introducing *dolma* (stuffed foods) into the Turkish cuisine. Milk and various dairy products that became staple foods for the herdsmen were nearly unused by the Chinese. This difference helped the Turks to establish their own unique diet.

By A.D. 1000, the Turks were moving westward towards richer soil where they grew crops such as wheat and barley. Thin sheets of dough called *yufka* along with crushed grains were used to create sweet pastries. The Persians introduced rice, various nuts and meat and fruit stews. In return, the Turks taught them how to cook bulgur wheat. As the Turks moved further westward into Anatolia (present-day Turkey) by 1200, they encountered chickpeas and figs, as well as Greek olive oil and an abundance of seafood.

A heavily influential Turkish cuisine was well established by the mid-1400s, the beginning of the (Turkish) Ottoman Empire's 600-year reign. Yoghurt salads, fish in olive oil and stuffed and wrapped vegetables became Turkish staples. The empire, eventually spanning from Austria to Northern Africa, used its land and water routes to import exotic ingredients from all over the world. By the end of the 1500s, the Ottoman court housed over 1400 live-in cooks and passed laws regulating the freshness of food. Since the fall of the empire in World War I (1914–1918) and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, foreign dishes such as French hollandaise sauce and Western fast food chains have made their way into the modern Turkish diet.

## 6.5 Traditional Products in Turkey

Turkish cuisine varies across the country. The cooking of Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir and the rest of the Aegean region inherits many elements of Ottoman court cuisine, with a lighter use of spices, a preference for rice over bulgur and a wider use of seafoods. The cuisine of the Black Sea region uses fish extensively, especially the Black Sea anchovy (*hamsi*), has been influenced by Balkan and Slavic cuisine and includes maize dishes. The cuisine of the south-east—Urfa, Gaziantep and Adana—is famous for its kebabs, *mezes* and dough-based desserts such as *baklava*, *kadayıf* and *künefe* (kanafeh). Especially in the western parts of Turkey, where olive trees grow abundantly, olive oil is the major type of oil used for cooking. The cuisines of the Aegean, Marmara and Mediterranean regions are rich in vegetables, herbs and fish. Central Anatolia is famous for specialties, such as *keşkek* (kashkak), *mantı* (especially from Kayseri) and *gözleme*. Some of the Turkish traditional foods are summarised in Table 6.1.

## 6.6 Innovation in Traditional Foods

Traditional foods represent a growing segment within the European food market, and they constitute a significant factor of culture, identity and heritage (Guerrero et al. 2009). Traditional foods contribute to the development and sustainability of the rural areas, protect them from depopulation, entail substantial product differentiation (Avermaete et al. 2004) and provide ample varieties for consumers (Guerrero et al. 2009).

Traditional food products are products of which the key production steps are performed in a certain area; are authentic in their recipe, origin of raw material and/or production process; are commercially available for at least 50 years; and are part of the gastronomic heritage (Gellynck and Kuhne 2008). Even though consumers show a favourable attitude towards traditional foods (Guerrero 2001), with the developments in food processing and changes in the consumer's choices, these products now face the challenge to further improve their safety and convenience by innovations which will enable them to maintain in the market and expand their share (Guerrero et al. 2009).

Innovation, by definition, is the commercialisation of an innovative idea for commercialising and selling a product or service at profit (Karantininis et al. 2010). While innovation in the food industry combines technological innovation with social and cultural innovation through the entire process including production, harvesting, primary and secondary processing, manufacturing and distribution, the ultimate innovation is to be the new or improved consumer product and service (Earle 1997). As indicated by Earle (1997), although innovation might focus in process technology including process engineering, product formulation and consumer needs, it might also ripple through the consumer eating patterns and in general

**Table 6.1** Some Turkish traditional foods in different regions

Location	Traditional food	Name in Turkish
Adana	Adana kebabı	Adana kebab
Afyon	Soudjouk	Sucuk
	Turkish delight, hashish, cream	Kaymaklı lokum
	Pastrami	Pastrma
Ankara	Carrot delight	Havuç lokumu
	Sıkma	Sıkma
	Turkish fairy floss	Pişmaniye
	Mumbar	Mumbar
	Sweet Turkish style fermented sausage	Tatlı sucuk
	A sweet made of unsalted cheese (halva with cream)	Hoşmerim
	Kapama	Kapama
	Black mulberry jam	Karadut reçeli
	Kül kömbesi	Kül kömbesi
	Rice in jug	Testi pilavı
Antalya	Locust bean molasses	Keçiboynuzu pekmezi
Aydın	Dry fig	Kuru incir
Balıkesir	Candied chestnut	Kestane şekeri
Beypazarı	80-Layer baklava	80 katlı baklava
	Tarhana	Tarhana
Bolu	Bolçi (Bolu chocolate)	Bolçi (Bolu çikolatası)
	Hazelnut jam	Fındık reçeli
	Şakşak helva	Şakşak helvası
	Keş	Keş
	Karakışlık rice	Karakışlık pirinci
	Mengen cheese	Mengen peyniri
	“Cevizli 4 divan” helva	Cevizli 4 divan helvası
	Uhut “wheat sweet”	Uhut “buğday tatlısı”
Bolu	Hoşmerim	Hoşmerim
	Pickle “bozarmut”	Boz armut turşusu
	Cranberry soup with dried yoghurt	Kızılıcak tarhanası
	Kaşık sapı	Kaşık sapı
	Keşkek	Keşkek
	Wedding soup	Düğün çorbası
	“Mudurnu saray” helva	Mudurnu saray helvası
Çukundur hoşafı	Çukundur hoşafı	
Bursa	Sliced meat on a vertical spit with round and flat bread	Pideli döner kebab
	M.Kemalpaşa semolina dessert with fresh cheese	M.Kemalpaşa peynir tatlısı
	Chestnut sweet	Kestane şekeri
	İnegöl meatball	İnegöl köftesi

(continued)



**Table 6.1** (continued)

Location	Traditional food	Name in Turkish
Çorum	Çorum roasted chickpea	Çorum leblebisi
	İskilip stuffed green peppers	İskilip dolması
	Gül burma baklava	Gül burma baklava
	Hingal	Hingal
	Leblebi (roasted chick pea)	Leblebi
Denizli, Çal	Grape molasses	Üzüm pekmezi
Elazığ	Orcik candy	Orcik şekeri
	Mulberry flour	Dut unu
	Çedene coffee	Çedene kahvesi
Erzincan	Bryzna	Tulum peyniri
	Cottonseed	Çiğit
	Povik pickle	Povik turşusu
	Avreñç (special dry cottage cheese)	Avreñç (has çökelek)
	Şavak cheese	Şavak peyniri
	Kesme soup	Kesme çorbası
Erzurum	Curd dolma	Lor dolması
	Haşıl	Haşıl
	Kaysefe	Kaysefe
	Kuymak	Kuymak
	Thick soup of chickens, wheat, meat, tomato and onion	Halim aşı
Gaziantep	Pomegranate syrup	Nar ekşisi
	Coarse bulgur/coarse cracked wheat	Pilavlık bulgur
	Baklava	Baklava
Gediz	Soup with dried yoghurt	Kuru tarhana
Hatay	Pomegranate syrup	Nar ekşisi
	Kunefe	Künefe
İğdır	Aubergine jam	Patlıcan reçeli
	Lepe	Lepe (kırık nohut)
Isparta	Rose jam	Gül reçeli
İzmir	Stuffed artichoke with rice, minced meat	Enginar dolması
	Rolled pastry with nettle	İsırgan otlı kol böreği
	Black-eyed bean salad	Börülce salatası
	Stuffed fig	İncir salatası
	Dry fig	Kuru incir
Karaman	Coarse bulgur	Pilavlık bulgur
Kayseri	Evlik soudjouk (irişkrik)	Evlik sucuk (irişkrik)
	String cheese	Tel peyniri
	Soudjouk	Sucuk
	Pastırma	Pastırma
	Meat pasty	Mantı
Kırşehir	Grape molasses	Üzüm pekmezi

(continued)

social and cultural areas. Based on this, innovation strategies in the food industry  
**Table 6.1** (continued)

Location	Traditional food	Name in Turkish
Manisa	Mesir paste	Mesir macunu
Kahramanmaraş	Soup with dried yoghurt	Kuru tarhana
	Maraş ice cream	Maraş dondurması
Mersin, Mut	Coarse bulgur	Pilavlık bulgur
Mersin	Pomegranate syrup/dip roman	Nar ekşisi
	Tantuni	Tantuni
	Cezerye	Cezerye
Safranbolu	Turkish delight	Lokum
South East Anatolia	Dried layers of grape pulp	Üzüm pestili
	Grape molasses	Üzüm pekmezi
Şanlıurfa	Bastık	Bastık
	Gün pekmezi (a thick syrup made by boiling down grape juice)	Gün pekmezi
	Küncülü akıt	Küncülü akıt
	Mırra (bitter coffee with cardamon)	Mırra
	Pomegranate molasses	Nar pekmezi
	Isot jam (preserve of urfa red peppers used as spread)	Isot reçeli
	Urfa isot	Urfa isotu
	Çiğköfte (steak tartar a la turca)	Çiğköfte
	Şıllık	Şıllık
	Lahmacun (very thin Turkish pizza covered with seasoned minced meat and onions)	Lahmacun
Çekçek	Çekçek	
Uşak	Soup with dried yoghurt	Kuru tarhana
Ürgüp	Dried layers of grape pulp	Üzüm pestili
Van	Ayran aşısı	Ayran aşısı
	Bulgur aşısı	Bulgur aşısı
	Kurutlu erişte aşısı	Kurutlu erişte aşısı
	Borani	Borani
Van	Quince meal	Ayva yemeği
	“Kurutlu” minced meat ball	Kurutlu köfte
	Semgeser	Semgeser
	Şille	Şille
	Roasted plum	Erik kızartması
	Şor fish	Şor balık
	Herby cheese	Otlı peynir

(continued)

**Table 6.1** (continued)

Location	Traditional food	Name in Turkish
Various	Turkish delight	Lokum
	Pişmaniye—Turkish fairy floss	Pişmaniye
	Grape molasses, <i>Juniperus drupacea</i>	Andız pekmezi
	Turkish raki	Raki
	Almond paste	Badem ezmesi
	Yoghurt	Yoğurt
	Ayran (yoghurt mix)—buttermilk	Ayran
	Turkish coffee	Türk kahvesi
	Fermented pickle	Turşu
	Tel kadayıf (shredded dough baked in syrup topped with crushed nuts)	Tel kadayıf
	Tahin (crushed sesame seeds)	Tahin
	Turnip juice	Şalgam suyu
	Turkish bagels	Simit
	Sahlep	Salep
	Dried layers of mulberry pulp	Dut pestili
	Semolina dessert/semolina helva	İrmik helva
	Güllaç (rice wafers stuffed with nuts/cooked in milk)	Güllaç
Fenugreek	Çemen	
Various	Boza	Boza
	Kefir/kephir	Kefir
	Curd	Çökelek
	Brynza	Tulum peyniri
	White cheese	Beyaz peynir
	Aşure (Noah's pudding/wheat pudding with dried nuts)	Aşure
	Herby cheese	Otlı peynir
	Fig molasses	İncir pekmezi
	Stuffed grape leaves with olive oil	Zeytinyağlı sarma
	Rice pudding	Sütlaç
	Pudding/duff	Muhallebi
	Keşkül (a milk pudding with coconut)	Keşkül
	Kazandibi (pudding with a caramel base)	Kazandibi
	Döner	Döner
Zile	Zile grape molasses	Zile pekmezi

and also in traditional foods should concern both the production and social-environmental changes to satisfy the personal, nutritional and social needs with the safety issue.

Innovation in the production of traditional foods might be a novelty by replacing a traditional technology with an innovative process, an improvement in any step of

the processing or a fundamental change without affecting any traditional aspect of the food product. In addition, the innovations might include the packaging and changes in products size and shape for possible new ways of using the product (Kuhne et al. 2010). All these approaches might be based on the consumers' needs, behaviour and attitudes with the changes in the social, economical and cultural environment. Incorporation of the opinion of the consumers supports the realisation of competitive advantage through the implementation of innovation (Earle 1997). Hence, a consumer-based research prior to developing and introducing innovation is generally acknowledged to be useful (Verbeke et al. 2007).

The food industry is characterised by a larger number of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and this applies in particular to the traditional food sector (Kuhne et al. 2010). In the current globalising food market, innovation is the strategic tool for these enterprises to achieve a competitive advantage especially by traditional foods despite the controversy between innovation and tradition (EC 2007) as innovations in the traditional foods bring the chance to strengthen and widen the market to increase the profits.

## 6.7 Conclusion

Culture takes a significant role in shaping societies and its traditions. The European Commission defined the “traditional” as “proven usage in the community market for a time period showing transmission between generations ascribing a human generation for at least 25 years”. Due to the effect of many different cultures that the Turkish people faced during their history, Turkey is one rich country in palatable traditional foods. Traditional foods constitute a significant factor of culture, identity and heritage and contribute to the development and sustainability of the rural areas, protect them from depopulation, entail substantial product differentiation and provide ample varieties for consumers. With the developments in food processing and changes in the consumer's choices, these products now face the challenge to further improve their safety and convenience by innovations to maintain in the market and expand their share, as in today's globalising food market, innovation became the strategic tool to achieve a competitive advantage.

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**Further details could also be retrieved on June 2015 from the following websites**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_cuisine)

<http://www.foodbycountry.com/Spain-to-Zimbabwe-Cumulative-Index/Turkey.html>