The Development of Food Culture in Turkey

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Like every area of culture, food culture is influenced by politics, history and geography. In this article, the background of Turkish food culture shall be explained, by means of various examples, beginning in Central Asia and continuing until present-day Turkey.

As nomads, Turkish tribes covered a long distance from Central Asia before reaching Anatolia. From the beginning we will have to ask whether it is enough to seek the roots of Turkish food culture in Central Asia. After Constantinople had been taken in the 15th century, it was the biggest metropolis in the Orient, offering itself as a platform for different cultures[1]. Is the food culture that developed there an intercultural food culture or does it derive from one people?

Over time the sorts of things that we eat change; however, where and how we eat changes very slowly. In Central Asia, the area between the Caspian Sea and Sin Kiang, the nomadic tribes ate their food seated on a leather cloth they called *kenduruk*. In Anatolia today people also eat on such cloths, called *kendirik*. In the 11th century the leather cloths were exchanged for big trays called *tergi* or *tewsi* (Halıcı 1992: 202). Such trays were used in the Ottoman court in the 16th century (Ursinus 1985: 155) and are still used in Anatolia today.

The *sofra*, a round leather cloth originating with the Arabian Bedouin culture, was also often used by the Turks (Müller-Wiener 1995: 54). This custom was later modified by placing a tray, set on a small frame, on the leather cloth. This kind of feasting was adopted by Persian food culture. Usually these trays are round, but some are also square. In the beginning these trays were made out of iron, wood or stone. Later on they were also produced in zinc, copper or silver and decorated with ornaments. The size, form and decoration of such trays depended on the wealth of the purchaser.

The dining room

As nomadic tribes the Turks did not have any special place where they could eat. The food was prepared and eaten on the ground on the *sofra* or *kenduruk*. Later on in urban life this tradition was not broken. Neither in the architecture of the court nor in the palaces of the Seljuks or the Ottomans is it possible to detect the existence of a dining room. In the palace of the sultan, like in every other house, the biggest and most representative room was prepared for the given meal

1 Culture not nation, since the term "nation" first came up after the French revolution.

and afterwards cleared again (Müller-Wiener 1995: 55). The architectural structure of Topkapı Palace serves as a good example of this.

The food

Since the time of the Seljuk, the Turkish tribes had four meals a day – two main meals and two meals in between. Later on, the second main meal was placed later in the evening, and since the 19th century only three meals are taken.

Turkish nomads mainly fed on their livestock and on milk products like cheese, butter or yoghurt. Mostly sheep and goat meat were preferred. This tradition has endured from the time of the Ottomans until present-day Turkey. Vegetables were not a common food during the nomadic periods. This kind of diet is still seen in central Anatolia. This part of Anatolia is, like Central Asia, very suitable for the growing of cereals and for the breeding of livestock. Because of the high consumption of grain, bread is the main food staple in Central Asia and Anatolia.

As in Byzantine times, the grain for baking bread in Ottoman times was the monopoly of the state. One of the most important tasks of the state was to monitor the daily amount of grain needed to feed the people. Grain was stored by the state, which also controlled the price. The district of "Un Kapı" in present-day Istanbul was the place where grain was traded.

The preparation of bread had many aspects. To suit the exquisite tastes of the sultan, the sultaness and the dignitaries, the bakers of the seraglio delivered pure white bread. Officials and other servants at the court were served less tasty bread of a lower quality. Bread was made from wheat delivered from Greece. Only for the bread of the sultan was high quality flour from Bursa used (Coco 1997: 109). The bread was sprinkled with different herbs like caraway, poppy seed and even opium to make it tastier.

Food culture

The Turkish tribes' migrations from Central Asia to Anatolia and their transition from a nomadic to a sedentary life at the same time gave them the opportunity to encounter and become familiar with other people. The cultural mixture that occurred offered a variety of new possibilities. For that reason it would be wrong to look only for traces of Central Asia in the roots of Turkish food. Turkish food is much more than that; it is a mixture from Caucasia and the Balkans, from Crimea to Mesopotamia, combined with food from the eastern Mediterranean. In Central Asia meat and milk products are the main foods. The same kind of diet is found in Anatolia. From Mesopotamia comes the highly developed grain culture that in Turkish cuisine has enriched the Aegean and Mediterranean diversity of fruits and vegetables. A rich food culture is the result of these contacts, this richness also resulting from the expansion of the Ottoman borders. Turkish cuisine is a synthesis of all these cultures and has developed from Ottoman cuisine. The ability of the Turkish nomads to adapt to changing climate and geography made the exchange with other ethnic groups easier in Ottoman times. With the expansion of the Ottoman borders, Turkish cuisine developed to its highest form.

The world-famous Russian *borscht* became red cabbage soup. Food à la *pilaki* served cold seems to be of Greek origin, though it is now fully integrated into Turkish cuisine and regarded as typically Turkish. The main staples of Mediterranean cuisine are bread, wine and olive oil. In Central Asia, on the other hand, the characteristic foods are meat, fat and pasta. The cooking of dough, or cooking in water, could be of Chinese origin and may have been brought by the Turks first to the Middle East and then to the West (Yerasimos 2003: 65). Out of such mixtures of ethnic cuisine the Ottoman synthesis of rice, sugar and fat developed (Yerasimos: 2002: 13). Sugar came into common use in the Ottoman Empire after the Ottomans annexed Egypt in the 16th century. In addition, the 16th and 17th century saw the arrival of vegetables like tomatoes (Reindl-Kiel 1995: 61), red peppers, peas, beans, corn, potatoes, pumpkins and sunflower from the "New World", coming via Spain and North Africa to the Ottoman Empire, before reaching Italy and France. The reason why these vegetables reached the Ottoman Empire first lies in the political landscape of the time. Political occurrences had a direct impact on the food. The connections between Madrid and Constantinople advanced trade, and the new vegetables reached the Ottoman Empire via this Mediterranean route. The European route was defined by relations to the Habsburgs. By way of cultural exchange, for instance, the gobbler came from Mexico to Constantinople, from where it reached European cuisine via the cuisine of the Habsburgs (Fragner 2003: 52). An example of influence from the East is the eggplant; it came from India to the Ottoman court at the time when the Caliphate resided in Baghdad.

In the 16th century, the time when the Ottomans were expanding their borders, the cuisine of the empire became richer in diversity and higher in cost. Meat had high social prestige (Faroqhi 1995: 228), food was paid more respect, and there were often huge celebrations at which the guests were served exceptional specialities. For the Europeans and Mediterraneans, the Ottoman cuisine of the 17th century was the best, most modern and richest (Fragner 2003: 54).

From the Manas epos we already know which meat the Turkish tribes in Central Asia prized as the best and most expensive: that of the black-headed sheep. It is said that the meat of a black-headed sheep has less fat. These sheep are bred on mountain pastures, which enhances the quality of their meat. The distribution of the meat among the family and the tribe is subject to strict rules. This is also true for the distribution of the meat among the tribes themselves (Ögel 1978). Some Turkish tribes like the *Aqqoyunlu* and *Qaraqoyunlu* were named after their totem. This shows that food played an important role even in the political hierarchy.

The French traveller Bertrandon de la Broquiere described in his book *Le voyage d'outremer* a food ceremony at court in honour of the ambassador of Milan, during the rule of Murat II, in the year 1432 in Bursa, at that time the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The description shows that at the court of Murat II the customs originating in the steppes were still valid, and that meat and rice were the main dishes. Originally rice came to the Middle East in the 15th century from East Asia through the court of Timur (Yerasimos 2003: 65) and then to Constantinople. Presumably rice was brought back to Anatolia by Hajj pilgrims. Various sources provide evidence that India sent huge amounts of rice to Mecca and Medina every year.

Ottoman cuisine during the reign of Mehmet II

The essential features of Turkish cuisine have hardly changed since the 16th century. The manner in which meals were prepared and cooked was thus established very early. Because of the general standard in the preparation, it was not necessary to take down the recipes (Reindl-Kiel 1995: 58). That is why traditional Turkish cuisine was based on an oral tradition, with recipes handed down from generation to generation. Written sources on food culture provided information about the medicinal use of certain ingredients. Like today, foods were prepared with many herbs and spices, which also were used in medicines to cure various diseases. The manuscript of Hekim Mehmed bin Mahmud Sirvani, written during the reign of Murat II (in three phases between 1421 and 1451), is a work for such purposes. The book includes more than 250 recipes, with instructions on how to use them and which diseases they can cure (Yerasimos 2002: 34). For a long time this book was rather ignored since its recipes were considered to be Arabian cuisine. Due to the influence of Byzantium, the Ottomans were more interested in Mediterranean cuisine. The script gives a good overall view of Middle Eastern cuisine in general.

Traditional Turkish cuisine began to take shape in the 15th century. After Constantinople was taken, a cuisine was born out of the mixture of the foods of local aristocrats and travelling warriors. Further mixtures with Greek, Jewish, Armenian, Levantine, Circassian, Georgian and Cappadokian food habits further enhanced and refined the Ottoman cuisine.

After Constantinople was conquered, the demand for meat was covered by stock breeders (*celepkeşan*). After the Tanzimat-reforms the state granted the *celepkeşan* tax privileges as an incentive to engage in wholesale trade. This wholesale trade was conducted by Greeks and Albanians for the Ottoman needs in Macedonia and Thessaly and, for their needs in Anatolia, by Turks and Armenians.

During the reign of Mehmet II the kitchen at court was divided into four departments. The first department (kuşhane) only cooked for the sultan himself. The second department (*haş mutfak*) prepared the meals of the sultan's immediate family. The other two departments took care of the sultan's closer kinship and the servants of the harem.

Süheyl Ünver's book *Fatih Devri Yemekleri* gives examples of dishes that were prepared in the Kuşhane of Mehmet II, dishes such as rice soup, bulgur soup, knuckle, lamb goulash, and *börek* (flaky pastry filled with spinach and rice). In the year 1473 an unusual entry appears in the kitchen book. The entry mentions that fish had to be purchased for the sultan's meal (Bozis 2002: 52). A closer look at such books reveals that shrimp and oyster were also purchased for the palace kitchen (Ünver 1995). Such entries are extremely important since a Muslim of the Hanafitic school is not allowed to eat shell fish. This leads us to the question of who in the palace ate such food, or since when the Turks eat seafood. These questions remain unanswered until today. It may be assumed that Byzantine princesses and, later on, European women in the harem introduced the habit of eating fish and seafood at court. In Byzantium fish was traditionally eaten by the poor and the monks; later, fish began to be eaten at the Ottoman court. To meet the needs of the Ottoman court, sweet-water fish was brought to Istanbul from far away (Yerasimos 2002: 17). In the Muslim world, fish did not have the same religious function as a special food for fasting, which made it a culinary speciality in Christian cuisine (Reindl-Kiel 1995: 77). In Byzantine times, fish was consumed in the daily life in the same amount as bread. The most fish was eaten during the orthodox period of fasting. When today in Eminönü, in Istanbul, *balık ekmek* (fish and bread) is sold as fast food, it can be traced back to this tradition of fasting. Also, during the Ottoman era, fish was the main food product of the Jewish and Christian communities. For the Ottomans, on the other hand, fish was at the bottom of the list of common food products. The Turkish tribes did use some sorts of fish as a supplement to their daily meals. The main source of fish was primarily the Caspian Sea and Lake Aral. Sweet-water fish like trout and carp were known to the Turks. When the Turkish tribes came to Anatolia, they were introduced to other sorts of fish by the Byzantine, Armenian and Greek populations of the coastal region, and added those fish to their cuisine (Knich 1990: 16). According to Professor Ilber Ortayli, it is evident that the Turks started to use fish in their cuisine very late since the different sorts of fish bear Italian or Greek names. There are two kinds of fish with Turkish names; the swordfish and the turbot.

The political occurrences in the 17th century changed the eating habits of the Ottomans generally. The consequences of the defeat against Austria were especially significant. In the years between 1593 and 1606 Walachia and Moldavia offered strong resistance to the Ottomans. This resistance had a negative effect on the meat trade. As a result, the Ottomans had to loosen the state monopoly on meat. The changes in the meat trade led to higher prices, and people could no longer afford to eat large amounts of meat. From then on many dishes were prepared with olive oil in place of meat. The cuisine also began using intestines instead of meat(Yerasimos 2002: 48).

The use of olive oil is documented by historical sources, such as the reports of travellers. The Muslim population mainly used olive oil in oil lamps. In his book *Histoire generale du serrail et de la cour du grand seigneur de turcs,* Michel Baudier mentions in 1626 that the olive oil used in the cuisine of the court came from the Pellepones and that the oil used in the sultan's food was delivered from Crete. He added that the Turks ate a lot of butter and butter fat and that they did not drink milk. Instead they drank yoghurt. Milk was consumed by the Christian and Jewish community (Bozis 2002: 52).

The cuisine of Constantinople has developed over a long time period to this day, first by way of oral tradition from the cuisine of the court and the aristocrats, then through *aşevleri* (taverns), and finally through restaurants and pubs (Bozis 2002: 1). Even though the Ottoman Empire participated in World War One, Ottoman cuisine survived as the most sublime cuisine of the Turks. Although the Ottoman court no longer exists today, the cuisine of the palace has survived in the soul of Istanbul. The city of Istanbul, for 500 years the capital of a vast empire and, until today, a multi-cultural metropolis, also took on the leading role in matters of cuisine. Istanbul was best supplied with all different kinds of food. This allowed the palace and the court to try out the newest recipes and to experiment with recipes in the preparation of special dishes. Thus the palace cuisine was developed, varied, refined and renewed. The art of cooking at court and the imperial cuisine in the different metropolises like Constantinople, Edirne, and Bursa were adopted by the people. The Anatolian *tarhana* soup (made from dried yoghurt and tomatoes) was varied with dates and cornels at court and so transformed into a delicacy (Knich 1990: 17). This so-called palace cuisine is still considered the golden age of Turkish cuisine (Halıcı 1992: 202). Ottoman aristocrats, made up of viziers, pashas and the elite military officers, spread this fine cuisine outside Istanbul. Still, it is not possible to attribute this cuisine to one group or people. Rather, Turkish cuisine was created from a multicultural mixture that includes such dishes as Circassian-style chicken, Arabian or Kurdish meatballs and liver Albanian style (Halıcı 1992: 204).

The custom of eating on the ground was left behind in the 19th century with the Tanzimat reformation period (1839-1876), making way for European tables and chairs (Ursinus 1985: 155). Such furniture was first seen at the Ottoman court and in the houses of aristocrats. The traditional lifestyle was first abandoned in the 19th century in the Pera district of Istanbul by the new aristocrats. The first modern restaurants were opened in Pera. The interior changed from Oriental to European style. In these times of changes two parallel lifestyles existed, one *á la Franca* and the other *á la Turca*. By eating at table, a new food culture began in the Ottoman Empire that centered on the individual. With the *á la Franca* table culture, the food culture began a socializing process and, in connection with this, new standards of hygiene arose (Samancı 2003: 71).

Until the 19th century the cuisine of the court used meat, rice, flour, oil, vegetables and fruit. Olive oil was not used as an ingredient in cooking. Relishing a cup of coffee after dining has a long tradition in Ottoman history, though coffee was not immediately accepted as a “national beverage”. Constantinople had to wait until 1543 to be introduced to coffee. One year later the export of mocha from Yemen through Damascus and Aleppo started. In the year 1555 the first coffee house was opened in Istanbul by two Syrians. Not until 1617, during the reign of Ahmet I, do the kitchen books contain written evidence of the purchase of coffee for the Ottoman court. Coffee did not become popular at the Ottoman court until the 17th century. Apart from the long coffee culture, the Ottoman court also drank tea in daily life. Due to the loss of Yemen in World War One, coffee became an import article (Reindl-Kiel 1995: 63). The growing of tea on the eastern coast of the Black Sea around Rize began after 1920. The custom of drinking tea after dining was first observed after 1950. In the time of the new Turkish Republic, coffee was a luxury item that fetched a high price on the black market (Bozis 2002: 26). During Turkey’s military regime, the situation became aggravated, and in 1982 the import of coffee was frozen as an austerity measure (Knich 1990: 12). Since then tea has been served after dining. Even though the economic policy and the coffee prices have changed so that drinking coffee is affordable today, tea has found its place in daily life and is not to be missed.

European influences

In the 19th century French cuisine gained a world-wide reputation for excellence. French cuisine was largely developed by the aristocrats and the chefs in their kitchens. About 20 years before the French revolution, a restaurant culture began in France. With the revolution this culture spread (Mennell 1988: 187).

The word “gastronomy” was used for the first time in a poem by Joseph Berchoux in the year 1801. The origin of the word is Greek, and today this word also signifies gourmet and chef (Mennell 1988: 339).

French influence also found its way to the Ottoman court and Ottoman cuisine. This influence began with the visit of Ottoman ambassadors to Paris. The changes taking place in Ottoman society and lifestyle as well as the reforms that were carried out are also connected to this influence. The sultan moved from Topkapı Palace to Dolmabahçe Palace, which was built on the French model of Versailles. Sultan Abdulaziz visited Europe, and in the Pera district Istanbul began to take on the shape of a European city. Restaurants, hotels, theatres and clubs were opened. Together with these changes, an Ottoman bourgeoisie arose in Istanbul, in the beginning made up of non-Muslim citizens who brought new and different tastes to Ottoman cuisine. Dishes prepared with béchamel sauce go back to this era. The dish *hünkar beğendi* is a good example of this: an eggplant *mousakka* originally from Iran, in Ottoman cuisine it was prepared with béchamel sauce and became an eggplant gratin called *hünkar beğendi*.

The Ottomans did not use much cutlery when eating. In the early 19th century (during the reign of Sultan Mahmut II), however, the use of cutlery was more widely adopted and eating with one's hands stopped (Coco 1997: 105). The climax of this change was reached when during the reign of Abdülhamit II, instead of the traditional wooden spoons and fruit knives, gold-plate cutlery for 120 persons, including oyster forks, was ordered (Bozis 2002: 57).

In addition to French influence, Russian influence is also worth mentioning. After the Bolshevist takeover of Russia in 1918, about 200,000 regime opponents, amongst them members of the aristocracy, bourgeoisie and high-ranking military officers, came via the Crimea to Istanbul. These refugees brought a fresh spirit of life to the streets of Pera and to Cadde-i Kebir. They opened new bars, restaurants, nightclubs, pastry shops and cafés. They contributed much to the Europeanization and modernization of Ottoman society. In 1940 a pastry shop was opened which changed ownership in 1950; shortly thereafter the first fast food restaurant in Turkey was opened there under the name *Atlantik*. The *Atlantik* served hamburgers and various kinds of cold and warm sandwiches (Bozis 2002: 87).

Istanbul has two Russian restaurants that have stayed in business until today. The *Rejans* and *Ayaspaşa* became famous in Istanbul for their Russian salad, chicken Kiev, lamb Karski and *borscht* soup. Interestingly the name *Rus salatası* (Russian salad) was changed to *Amerikan salatası* (American salad) as a consequence of the rising sympathy for America after 1950 (Eksen 2001: 19).

During the time of the Ottomans, tradesmen and guilds retained their international character. The kitchen chefs and cooks at the Ottoman court were mainly Christians from Cappadocia, both Greeks and Armenians. Regulations after 1922 led to the exclusion of non-Turkish tradesmen and cooks from the guilds. As a result, the internationality of the guilds dramatically decreased.

Traditional fast food: Kebab

In the year 1501 Beyazıt II had the guilds instructed about hygiene and prices in a document in which the word *kebab* was mentioned for the first time in writing. „*Ahcılar, kelleciler, kebapçılar ve börekciler yiyecekleri iyi pişirtsinler; satıcılar bunları iyi pişirtsinler ve tabaklarını temiz suyla yıkasınlar ve onları temiz bezlerle silsinler…*" (Mantran 1995).

In the 19th century the famous "Ottoman Walk" (*kır gezisi*) was replaced by the Kağıthane grill party (Kağıthane mangal). When Edmondo de Amicis, a famous traveller and author from Italy, visited Istanbul in 1874, he witnessed such a grill party. He considered eating kebab in bread (*pide*) spread with butter a punishment for small sins.

In the 1940s, kebab became popular in the big cities. Shortly thereafter, meatballs (*köfte*) became a common fast food for the lower classes. One of the reasons for this was the introduction of margarine instead of butter in 1950. Margarine was cheaper than butter. Even though margarine was declared to be healthier than butter, the aim of the *köfte* makers was definitely to keep the sales price as low as possible. That is why such fast foods were generally prepared with margarine.

In addition to *balık ekmek*, *köfte ekmek* made its way into the history of Turkish food as a traditional fast food, before the advent of the hamburger. In the 1920s a family came to Istanbul from Turkmenistan and became famous as the founders of *Sultanahmet Meshur Halk Köftecisi*. They have been in business for four generations (Eksen 2003: 31), and still today the best *köfte* in Istanbul is said to be served in their restaurant.

With the changing *Zeitgeist*,, hamburgers became more popular than *köfte*. Then, the menus of the fast food restaurants began featuring the *döner*-sandwich (slices of lamb grilled on a rotating spit, served in pita bread), a lower calorie variation on Turkish fast food. The actual *kebab* boom began in the last 15 or 20 years. In Turkey as well as in the rest of the Middle East, *kebab* reached the height of its popularity. In addition, this form of fast food has become popular in Europe through Turkish guest workers and entrepreneurs who specialize in *döner* and *kebab* restaurants. Today it is not possible to imagine European fast food without the *kebab*.

Eating outside one's home was not always a symbol of wealth; at times it was a sign of poverty. As in the Roman Empire, the 16th-century inhabitants of Cairo and Istanbul did not cook at home. They either ate out or brought cooked food to their homes. In the 16th century, only six percent of the houses in Istanbul had a kitchen. The food demand was supplied by official food supply houses or similar institutions. Not only the poor and homeless but also the working classes, students, teachers, etc. were fed there. This tradition continued for a long time, with the government leading and controlling these houses (Yerasimos 2003: 68).

Besides those organizations that took care of feeding the community, a separate coffee house culture also existed that has to be mentioned here. When the sultans began to prefer ruling from the harem rather than the battle field, the Janissary became unemployed. As a result, they settled in the cities and, one by one, opened coffee houses. Besides enjoying coffee, tea and water pipes, the coffee house customers also ate small snacks while discussing politics. As time went on, the Janissary became politically involved and powerful as coffee house owners. In 1730 Sultan Ahmet was dethroned after an uprising which went down in Ottoman history as the Patrona Halil Uprising and was masterminded out of such a coffee house. Sultan Mahmut II recognized the threat of the Janissary and ordered them removed of their power and their coffee houses closed (Kırlı 2003: 76).

The fast food phenomenon

"Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral" says Berthold Brecht in his *Threepenny Opera.* Through globalization and rapid economic growth, fast food has gained an important role in our lives. When we speak of fast food today, we think not only of hamburgers or *döner*, but also of a habit or variation of eating that has become multinational. The fast food phenomenon transcends the social pyramid as it serves both low and high income earners. Modern fast food enjoys an extraordinary popularity. Its success probably lies in the progress that fast food culture has experienced over the time. And for many fast provides the feeling of unlimited freedom.

It is clear that there are two kinds of fast food: "traditional fast food" and "industrial fast food". When comparing them, various questions arise: What does fast food mean? Is it eating fast? Is it preparing fast? Is it fast service? Is it the American way of eating that has made its way into our lives?

Fast food in the sense of eating fast was invented by businessmen and not by restaurant owners (Zischka 1993: 370). This shows that fast food is a product of industrialization and, therefore, first appeared in highly developed countries.

As fast food is presented as an industrial product of America, consumers are led to believe that they are not only exercising the freedom to choose what they want to eat but also are partaking in the imagined wealth associated with America. What the big fast food companies are selling is not only food but also a total package of American style, standards, wealth, freedom and the universal feeling of being at home, things that bring even the hardest fast food opponents down. Therein lies the secret of fast food's immense success.

Companies such as *McDonald*'s have a systematic "global production-consumption" marketing orientation, which first brought them success in the working-class suburbs of America. In order to reach a broader spectrum of consumers, they opened their first restaurant outside of America in1968 and, from then on, continued to globalize their business. Certainly the flexibility and the adaptability of the company also contributed to its success. The corporation tries to reach every layer of society: their low prices target consumers with low incomes, and with the addition of salads to their menus, they attempt to attract consumers who are more aware of what they eat and who wish to eat healthier.

Cultural differences enrich humanity as long as they are not used as a tool for discrimination. The main argument of fast food opponents is that through the globalization of food, the fast food consumers lose their awareness towards cultural differences and diversity. The fast food companies' answer to this dilemma is adaptability and flexibility. While spreading American idealism, they also make an attempt to reflect national and regional diversity and religious considerations in their menus. For instance, it is not possible to order a burger made out of pork in Turkey. For every country there is an adapted menu; in Norway

Mclaks, in Holland *Groenteburger* (Ritzer 1997: 127), in Turkey *Dürüm Köfte*, *Mcpide* and the traditional yogurt drink *ayran*. Special menus are made for the fasting month of *ramazan* for consumers in Turkey as well as the Middle East. Despite such efforts and attempts to adapt, the opponents of fast food still see it as the evil face of globalization that creates cultural impoverishment and degeneration. As the pace of daily life becomes faster, speed at work and in private life is in ever higher demand. This contributes to the success of fast food. If one opposes fast food, this means that one at the same time opposes the speed of daily life. In the same way that fast food represents a certain lifestyle, its opponents are seeking an alternative or anti-fast-food ideology.

In human history, traditional fast food mostly developed in response to states of emergencies. Soldiers ate what they could carry and things that were quick and easy to prepare. The same was true for travellers. Because of the distances and the long journey times, *khans* and caravanserais were built. Their function was to offer exhausted travellers and their beasts of burden a place to rest, to supply them with food and to give them shelter for the night. In such resting places, guests could not order à la carte, but had to eat whatever was being served. The era of eating while travelling began in the 19th century with the railway and railway stations. Later, there followed highways and resting places with gasoline stations, providing food and gasoline.

During the Crimean War, 1853-1856, canned food was used for the first time in history and mass production had its breakthrough (Zischka 1993: 371). Today it is impossible to imagine life without canned food.

Some of the first fast food chains in Europe were seen in the 1970s near American housing areas, for example, in Munich in 1971. The first fast food restaurant in Turkey was opened in the Taksim district of Istanbul in 1986 (Aytar 2003: 117).

Even though *McDonald*'s was founded in 1940 in San Bernardino, California by Maurice and Richard McDonald, who implemented the first fast-food assembly line production of hamburgers there in 1948, it was not until six years later, when Ray Kroc, the founder of the *McDonald*'s empire, took over and bought the rights to sell licenses for further *McDonald*'s restaurants, that the key development for the growth of fast food restaurants through franchising took place. With the selling of licenses the first step was made towards globalizing fast food. Ray Kroc was the first to use franchising in the fast food business, a concept first used in the sewing machine and automobile industries (Ritzer 1997: 121). With this concept the company was also able to expand outside of America. Through Ray Kroc's marketing strategies, by 1996 *McDonald*'s was able to open 18,000 restaurants in 89 different countries on six continents. While in America and Europe *McDonald*'s targets low-income consumers who want good food cheap, the target consumers in Turkey are those with a higher income. These consumers are sold the idea that being able to eat at *McDonald's* is a privilege. The main issue here is not the fast eating but the fact that one can afford it. A similar situation was seen in Russia when the first *McDonald*'s restaurant opened in Moscow in 1990. The price of a meal was equivalent to the average monthly salary.

Today the franchise system is not only used by American companies but by Turkish companies also. Local investors quickly recognized the potential of franchising. Many Turkish catering companies and fast food restaurants operate according to this model. This is a good example of thinking globally and acting locally.

McDonald's-style franchising is used for both Turkish and international cuisine. We cannot imagine contemporary Turkish gastronomy without the Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Mexican specialities served by Turkish restaurant owners. Even though one from time to time might think that the traditional cuisine is being displaced and degenerated by industrial fast food, the Turkish or Istanbul cuisine has been able to develop its own character and to offer a platform for the international specialities which have found their place in Turkey since 1990 when the Turkish economy opened up to foreign investors.

Research on food and food culture in Turkey began in the 1980s (Faroqhi 2003: 19). Since then, a lot has been examined and written and, as a result, the population has become more sensitive to the issues of food and food habits, regarding both the cuisine of Istanbul as well as the regional Anatolian cuisine. Even though traditional Turkish cuisine may be threatened by the ever-growing international fast food and franchising, the latter two constitute an enrichment of Turkish cuisine in general.

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