



## EVALUATION OF SPECIAL DAY MEALS BY LOCAL PEOPLE

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### Abstract

Culinary culture, which is one of the most important elements of cultural heritage transfer, reflects the values of the society it belongs to and gives extensive information about the way of nutrition. It also contributes to the relationship between the members of society by increasing communication and cohesion in social terms. Especially special day meals made with faith or traditional motives bring people together and keep their cultural memory fresh. In addition, special day meals assume a responsible duty against the threat of degeneration and forgetting of culture. However, the approach of each society towards special day meals may differ. The aim of this research, which is made in this direction, is to evaluate the perspectives of local cultures that continue to prepare special day meals (wedding meals, religious feast meals, condolences and festival meals) towards these traditions. It is planned to obtain information about the most common types of dishes, serving methods, and cooking methods by considering the approaches of the people participating in the research toward special-day meals. According to the research findings, it is understood that special day meals are carried out intensively in different geographies, while in some regions it is seen that they are provided with ready-made meals. Due to the transportation costs and the results of the individuality approach, participation in special day meals is gradually decreasing. It is necessary to raise awareness of family members to preserve and sustainably prepare special day meals, which are an important building block of culture. In addition, it is recommended that authorized institutions and organizations keep the cultural memory alive by organizing activities related to the subject.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Culture, Society, Special Day Meals

### Introduction

At the beginning of the factors that give an idea about the traditional lifestyle of the society and affect its behavior are the cultural values it has. Cultural values, in addition to having distinctive features of societies, maintain their existence with their authentic and original structure. These values are transferred to the next generations by developing over time and are accepted as cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is expressed as a set of values that serve as a bridge from the past to the future, approach the identity problem with a solution-oriented approach, create awareness of history and belonging, and ensure intergenerational communication (Yıldız and Derman, 2017). As a result of cultural heritage values, popular culture influence and periodic trend approaches, it may face the danger of being forgotten in recent years. Especially with the increase in the demand for ready-made food and takeaway, negative effects can be seen from the traditional kitchen understanding (Olsen et al., 2009; Alkerwi et al., 2015; Kočańska et al., 2021).

Similar to the traditional culinary understanding, the meals made in special day events are made less in this respect. This situation poses great threats to the richness of traditional culinary culture. However, the culinary culture, which carries the deep traces of a society from the past to the present, reminds future generations of history and allows them to connect with their past. In this context, special day meals are at the forefront of the activities carried out in order to feel the culinary culture the most. With these events, cultural dishes that are not often made at home can be cooked and served more. At this point, it is aimed to record with recipe recipes while revealing how special day meals reflecting the heritage of the society they belong to are perceived with this research. It is expected that important contributions will be made to the related literature on how special day meals are met on the basis of society. In addition, it will be possible to get an idea about whether special day meals and local food products are used.

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## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Cuisine Culture**

It is possible to get an idea about the geography and lifestyle of a society by considering the eating and drinking habits of a society. Climate and vegetation are among the main dynamics that affect culinary culture (Rosenzweig et al., 2001). Examples can be shown in the Asian continent, such as a fertile rice-based diet due to climate and population reasons, meat-based consumption habits in the Scandinavian region due to cold weather conditions, and the frequent use of seafood in island countries. In addition, ethnic structures and belief views of societies are also considered as factors affecting culinary culture (Dean et al., 2016). There are approaches that directly affect the culinary culture, such as the prohibition of pork and alcohol products in societies with the Muslim faith, the need to cook food in special containers in the Jewish faith, and fasting in some periods in the Christian faith.

While the culinary culture, which dates back as far as human history, was seen as a basic nutritional requirement at first, it is accepted as a gastronomic variety today (Zahari et al., 2009). Culinary culture, which is an important figure of the traditional lifestyle, preserves the traditional culture and heritage of a society and represents the identity, value judgments, religious beliefs, culture and eating habits of the local people (Galani-Moutafi, 2004). In order to talk about the traditional culinary culture, the food must be homemade or prepared by artisans. In this way, culinary culture can be transferred from one generation to another (Lin, 2019).

Depending on the increase in population and the development of trade, it has been possible for food items to reach different geographies. As a result of the delivery of spices and dried foods to different intercontinental destinations, local cuisines have undergone profound evolution. The fact that the use of salt and pepper is an important food element in the kitchen of almost every society can be given as an example for this situation (Van der Veen and Morales, 2015).

Culinary culture covers all processes from the preparation of the food to the serving. In this context, the way of serving and consumption is as important as the recipe of the meal. In addition, it can give information about the historical development and purpose of the culinary culture in the tools and equipment used. The whole process, from copper kitchen utensils to the use of wooden spoons, to silver mealware and porcelain artistic plates, bears traces of culinary culture (Wilson, 2012).

The traditional lifestyle that separates societies from each other causes decreases over time with the cooperation between culinary culture. Especially with the cooking of common meals in the kitchens of the neighboring communities in two close geographies, prejudices began to be broken and positive developments were experienced at the level of communication. As a result of the culinary culture coming to the fore in catering and sharing, the bonds between societies have strengthened and the motivation to act together and the culture of tolerating differences has developed (Hegarty and O'Mahony, 2001).

Culinary culture, appears as one of the indicators that reflect the economic situation of the society. The welfare level of the society is directly reflected in the culinary culture, and the tables are diversified or decreased according to the income situation. In every period of history, culinary culture emerges as a reflection of economic power and is shown to the other communities as a symbol of power (Parasecoli, 2019).

### **Wedding Meals**

Wedding is expressed as a ceremony that brings two different individuals together under the roof of the family. In its most general form, announcing marriage is gaining approval and blessing in the eyes of society. Weddings held for the realization of the unification ritual are among the most valuable rituals in the eyes of the society (Bulut, 2018). In order to increase the magnificence of the wedding ritual and to provide unique experiences to the participating guests, various food and beverage treats are offered. It is considered valuable in terms of carrying and keeping the wedding meal rituals alive for future generations, strengthening the memories of social identity and the continuity of traditional culture (Haukanes and Pine, 2003). Wedding meals can attract the attention of tourists by coming to the tourist attraction center because of their ethnic and cultural themes. Cultural transfer can be realized by hosting domestic and foreign tourists at wedding events with the hospitality of the wedding owner (Atabey, 2022).

Although the history of wedding meals dates back to ancient times, the first examples are seen in Greco-Roman culture. At Greco-Roman weddings, the banquet service was intensely offered to the guests, thus creating a culture. In this period, it is observed that rich tables are set beyond the classical dishes (Marks, 2012).

In ancient Germanic culture, wedding meals were prepared as a whole system of symbols and signs, encompassing authentic food considered to be the food of the people. Supernatural attributes were ascribed to wedding meals, and great importance was attached to healing and blessing aspects. In this respect, sauerkraut, which is thought to be healing, was offered to the people who attended the wedding, and bread was always placed on the tables in order to bring blessings. Again, within the scope of wedding meals, it was aimed to remove the evil forces from the wedding ritual by offering wine, tea with pie and coffee with scone. Serbs living in the Central European region do not eat at weddings, while Poles in Krakow do not consume meat. On the other hand, while the Catholics of Osipovka in Gorkovskoye District banned poultry at weddings, they offered various treats to the wedding table (Kurmanova, 2014).

In the Uzbek house living in Central Asia, all family members are invited to the wedding meals, with elaborate and rich preparations. Within the scope of the wedding, wedding soups consisting of Uzbek pilaf, chickpeas with meat and explosion are offered to the guests. The cost of all meals served at the wedding is covered by the family elders (McBrien, 2006). In the African country, wedding meals usually start with meal preparations early on Thursday. Most of the meat and vegetables are cut and brought before they are brought to the wedding venue. In the shade of the big mango trees, food is cooked on the burning wood using several large iron pots to prepare meals for all its guests. Some of the women peel the garlic and crush it in a large wooden pestle, while others do not wash the remaining vegetables and help. The simple realization of South African dishes at weddings are explained by limitation sources. On the other hand, traditional wedding meals offer people the opportunity not only as an important lesson in wealth, but also as a source of purely richest content food (Bohman et al., 2007).

In Indian cuisine, which stands out with its spices and street flavors, wedding meals accompany the main rites of the wedding cycle and are provided by the bride's family. The wedding meal is held in front of the honorees and is believed to confer great prestige. While the importance of halal rules for Muslims draws attention, the sensitivity of vegetarianism stands out for Hindus and societies with other beliefs. In addition, meat dishes have a distinctive feature in defining religious differences between ethnic groups at weddings (Bradby, 2002).

In Anatolian Turkish traditions, wedding meals are accepted as a symbol of abundance and an indicator of the spirit of sharing. It was believed that the food consumed at the wedding would have positive effects on the people who would get married and would bring peace to their future (Çetin, 2008). In the ritual of wedding meals, thimble soup, dolma, wrap, keskek, sour meatballs, oruk (stuffed meatballs), green beans, aubergine variety, rice-bulgur and firik pilafs, soups with yoghurt (lebeni/lebeniye), dolma, pilaf drum, veiled pilaf, sherbet varieties, Nuriye with milk, Burma kadayif, baklava, compote and zerde nesting split soup, babukko, compote, okra, stuffed leaves, grape bowl, grape compote, tandoori bread, cheese, pita almond pastry, baklava, heaven's cake, bride's face and lahmacun such dishes are served (Özer, 2020).

When we look at wedding meals in general, it is a richness of rituals that reflect the life of societies in different ways. Wedding meals, which are directly influenced by religious beliefs and dogmatic values, as well as cultural backgrounds, offer extensive information about the lifestyle of the society. It also offers ideas about the communication of the social structure, the spirit of sharing and the economic situation. While wedding meals play an important role in sharing the happiness of the people who will get married, they can also contribution enable a tighter bond between the members of the society.

### **Religious Feast Dishes**

According to the belief structure of the societies, special religious meals are served on the days that are considered sacred. On religious days, people strengthen their spiritual feelings by preparing their meals in the best way possible. Because he believes that food will improve the bond between man and God, and he thinks that the more he values, the more he will be rewarded.

In all three major monotheistic religions, dishes specific to holy days are cooked. While the iftar tables are important on the days of Date and Fasting in Islam, bread and wine come to the fore in Christianity. In Judaism, Maror Sufganiyah and Charoset meals are always served on religious holidays. (Vatika, 2018). In Buddhism, fish is consumed by applying the rules of Ahimsa, but animals with protective spirits such as beef, snakes and dragons, which are in the red meat group, are not eaten. However, according to some opinions, they eat red meat, thinking that they can eat the meat of animals that do not eat human flesh. Although Buddhist religious holiday meals vary regionally, liquid consumptions are made after the fasting days of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death days. Buddhism has also traditionalized the vegetarian diet in holy day meals (Koluman, 2009). According to other religions; In Shintoism, holy feasts are held in the last part of worship.

In these feasts, the "kami" dish known as "naorai" is served. In the belief of Manichaeism, not drinking alcohol and not eating meat on holy days are considered as the basic elements of life. People of this belief consume plant foods instead of meat and meat products. Vegetables and fruits, especially cucumbers, melons and watermelons, are among the most preferred products. It is known that there are sacred rituals related to food and drinks in the belief of Jainism. In this belief, the measure in eating is usually that the food is clean, devoid of meat products, and that the food is eaten without praising the person who cooks it. In addition, Jainists adopt the principle of not harming any living thing. For this reason, adherents of this faith are usually vegetarians. Since the point of difference is considered alive in plants with stem cells, they are not consumed either. The philosophy that the plant is not destroyed when the apple is eaten, but the plant is destroyed when the root vegetable is consumed is presented as a justification for this. In the traditions of Sikhism, some culinary rituals are encountered, especially on holy days. For example; sweets are served on holy days and the sacred food known as "Laavan" is presented to many guests and enjoyed with tons of food and drink (Şengel, 2020).

In today's religious holidays; Baklava, Water Pastries, Sarma, Stuffed, Zerde, Meat Rice, Roasted, Gülle, Easter Bun, Babka, Tsoureki Simnel Cake, Blynai Vedarai, Minestra Maritata, Latke and Sufganiya dishes stand out as dishes that are known by everyone and are frequently made on holy days (Greenberg, 2011; Woźniczko and Orłowski, 2020; Belber and Güneren, 2022).

### **Condolence Meals**

Human life emerges in different ways every day, with birth and death. While birth symbolizes happiness, death is accepted as mourning. The sadness that comes with the end of an individual's life is shared by other people. In case of death, people maintain the culture of condolence to express their sadness (Klass, 2014). We may receive condolence messages or accept condolence visits from others when a family member dies. Considered a culture of condolence, it includes spiritual beliefs, rituals, expectations, and etiquette (Pishghadam and Morady Moghaddam, 2013). One of the most common situations in condolence situations is the condolence meals given to the guests who come to condolences.

Condolence food culture was first encountered in ancient times. Herodotus reports that in Scythian traditions, a piece of food is separated and placed in front of the dead. It states that 40 days passed between the day of death and the day of burial in Scythians. During the mourning, the dead are taken around by car and those who see that the caravan come to them also give food. Then the burial takes place. In addition, it is understood that food was given during the burial ceremony in the Scythians. The ceremony held on the day of burial was held with the participation of all the people, and all members of the tribe to which the deceased belonged would attend the meal given for the dead (Onay, 2013).

It is seen that condolence meals are given between three and seven days after death in the traditions of Turkish states in the pre-Islamic period. While the owners of condolence houses in the Kumuk community performed a ceremony by cooking "dead vaccine", the Nogay community used to vegetables and meats fry food in oil and serve it to the guests on the seventh day of the dead. On the forty and fifty-second days of the death day, a special condolence dinner is held and a ceremony is held. In Circassian society, the household does not eat anything until the dead are buried. On the fourth day, a ceremony held by distributing food called "lokum" made from flour and oil. The Crimean Tatars did not give food on the first day after the death and only distributed halva. In Azerbaijan, the tradition of giving halva on the third day of death is a part of the condolence culture (Bayat and Cicioğlu, 2008).

In most societies, the sadness of death is shared and the bond between each other is tried to be kept strong. In particular, a family who lost a family member offers condolence meals to the visitors, while providing the poor people with the opportunity to be fed. For this reason, condolence meals, which combine both prayer and food ritual, proven that they have a social value. Condolence meals, which are exhibited in different ways in many cultures, basically contain cultural values and past traditions (Sauner-Leroy, 2012). For example, in Germanic society the condolence meal is an instrumental support to the people who attend the funeral, as they share their pain. It is an emotional meet for the relatives of the deceased to gather and speak in memory of him at an invitation. On the other hand, food is eaten and drunk for the deceased in these condolence meetings (Morgenthaler et al., 2012).

It is known that post-mortem food rituals are scientifically examined due to their close relationship with gastronomic heritage on the one hand, and their originality on the other. Condolence food culture reveals that death traditions are intertwined with many religious and traditional practices. Considering that different cultures meet death and their approach to death is different, it is seen that condolence meals are prepared in

different ways. Condolence meals are usually on the menus; products such as soup (with lark, keskek or lentils), roast meat (tas kebab or potato with meat), vegetable dish (green beans, eggplant or dried okra depending on the season), pilaf, pastry, salad, compote, halva or lokma. are encountered. It can also be seen that noodle soup, chickpea stew, juicy meatballs, salad, bread, sacrificing and distribution of the sacrificed meat to the poor and various fruits according to the season can also be seen in the menus of condolence meals (Akdağ et al., 2019).

### **Festival Meals**

The festival is accepted as an event and a social phenomenon encountered in the cultures of all societies. It deals with the colorful variety and dramatic intensity of the dynamic, choreographic and aesthetic aspects. The signs of deep meaning underlying these values, their historical roots and the "involvement of locals" have always attracted the attention of ordinary visitors and have become the focus of curiosity of travelers and men of letters. Covering disciplines such as religion, anthropology, sociology, and folklore, festivals are folk traditions that promote the past and innovation, suggest nostalgic revivals, and ensure the survival of culture (Falassi, 1987).

Festivals bearing the traces of social and ethnic identity have an important role in diversifying the food culture and making it unique to the society. These festivals provide a taste experience by contributing to the relationship of food with cultural interaction. As an indicator of this integration, almost every society devotes a certain part of its time to food with certain rituals and ceremonies. In this context, festival meals appear as an instrumentalized form of social integration and solidarity. Social phenomena such as entertainment, friendly conversations, hosting guests and festival events develop in parallel with the food culture and contribute to the formation of a communication network in the society (Sagir, 2012).

Festivals can be held in many genres and in different disciplines. One of them, the gastronomy festival, is a set of activities that allow food and beverages belonging to a certain geography or culture to be prepared and shared with all visitors. Festivals are usually held in the summer months due to the characteristic features of the products, seasonal and weather conditions (Ekerim and Tanrıseven, 2020). With the growing awareness of food festivals, they are considered niche events and are rapidly increasing in numbers around the world. The celebration of local food culture and traditions within the scope of festivals is also seen as the rebirth of the self-identities of societies (Rotherham, 2008). Food festivals are also one of the tools used to increase the marketing and positioning of local products. In addition, food festivals create opportunities for local producers who want to promote their geographical food products. Festivals need identities to be understood by stakeholders. This festival identity provides guidance to all parties involved in the organization and is often transformed into traditional culture through leadership processes (Einarsen & Mykletun, 2009).

While archaeobotanical and archaeozoology studies give an idea about the history of food, analyzes such as caterpillars, seeds, bones and fish bones reveal the period and community where local products were made. In this process, the dishes preferred within the scope of various events and festivals are presented. For example, it is known that there are books from the households of the princely courts, from the well-to-do citizens and monasteries, with occasional mentions of festive meals (Maria, 2003).

When we look at the examples of the food festival, we come across the Hungarian ethnic food festival held in 1974 as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the city. About 50 000 visitors were entertained with ethnic food, flags, costumes and cultural music. In this festival, it is aimed to cook special dishes collectively using symbols of a real or legendary peasant past. In the festival where more than one ethnic food was served, there were sensory pleasures in the consumption of local foods and in an environment of complete tolerance in eating (Van Esterik, 1982). It is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus on December 25 every year. It is also known as the Nativity Festival, the Holy Nativity or the Feast of the Annunciation. Christmas celebrations, the preparations for which started months in advance, are quite colorful in Christian countries. There is a special kind of brioche (farsangi fánk) made in Farsang. Made with milk, flour and eggs, this dessert is fried in oil and eaten with powdered sugar and jam. This is the only special food made for this carnival. On Easter day, sheep are slaughtered and mutton meat is cooked in various ways (Türkyılmaz, 2013). When we look at other festival dishes that are well known around the world; Orange Festival (Italy, Ivrea), Gilroy Garlic Eating Festival (United States, Gilroy), Sugar Toss Festival (Spain, Vilanova), Truffle Festival (Italy, Alba), Tomato Festival (Spain, Valencia), Food and Wine Festival ( United States, Hawaii), Sydney Food Festival (Australia, Sydney), Alaçatı Herb Festival (Turkey, İzmir), Hampton Watermelon Festival (United States, Hampton), The Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival (Ireland, Galway), Lemon Festival (France, Menton), National Grape Harvest Festival (Argentina, Mendoza), Vegetarian Festival (Thailand, Bangkok).

Events such as the Toronto Rib Festival (Canada, Toronto) and the Date Festival (Morocco, Erfoud) stand out (Skyscanner, 2022).

### **Methodology**

In this study, which deals with the evaluations of local cultures where special day meals (wedding meals, holiday meals, condolence meals and festival meals) are made, qualitative research method was preferred and face-to-face interview (interview) type was used as the data collection technique. Although face-to-face interview is one of the qualitative research methods, it comes to the forefront compared to other types in terms of detailing and explaining the answer. This technique is a mutual and interactive communication process based on a predetermined, serious purpose, questioning and answering style (Stewart and Cash, 1985).

In the process of collecting the targeted data within the scope of the research, semi-structured interview technique has been used. While preparing the interview questions, the study by Gunay Erol and Akif Alaşhan (2020) was used. The interview questions took their final form after being examined by three academicians and two supervisors. While preparing the interview questions, care was taken to ensure that these questions would not lead the participants and be easily understood by the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The data to be obtained has been evaluated by content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. In content analysis, the researcher takes the first two processes as a basis and adds his own interpretations to the data analysis process. Here, the participatory and subjective aspect of the researcher emerges more, and he plays an active role in data analysis with his own interpretations and understanding (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2000).

Within the scope of the research, easily accessible (convenience) sampling method was used. This method is expressed as a method that accelerates the research and the researcher chooses a situation that is close and easily accessible (Kılıç, 2013). The fact that the regions included in the research have significant potential in the field of local cuisine supports the relevant sample fit.

In this study, which was carried out in some cities of Turkey, answers are sought for the following questions in order to explain the approach to special day food culture and to detail the process related to the current situation;

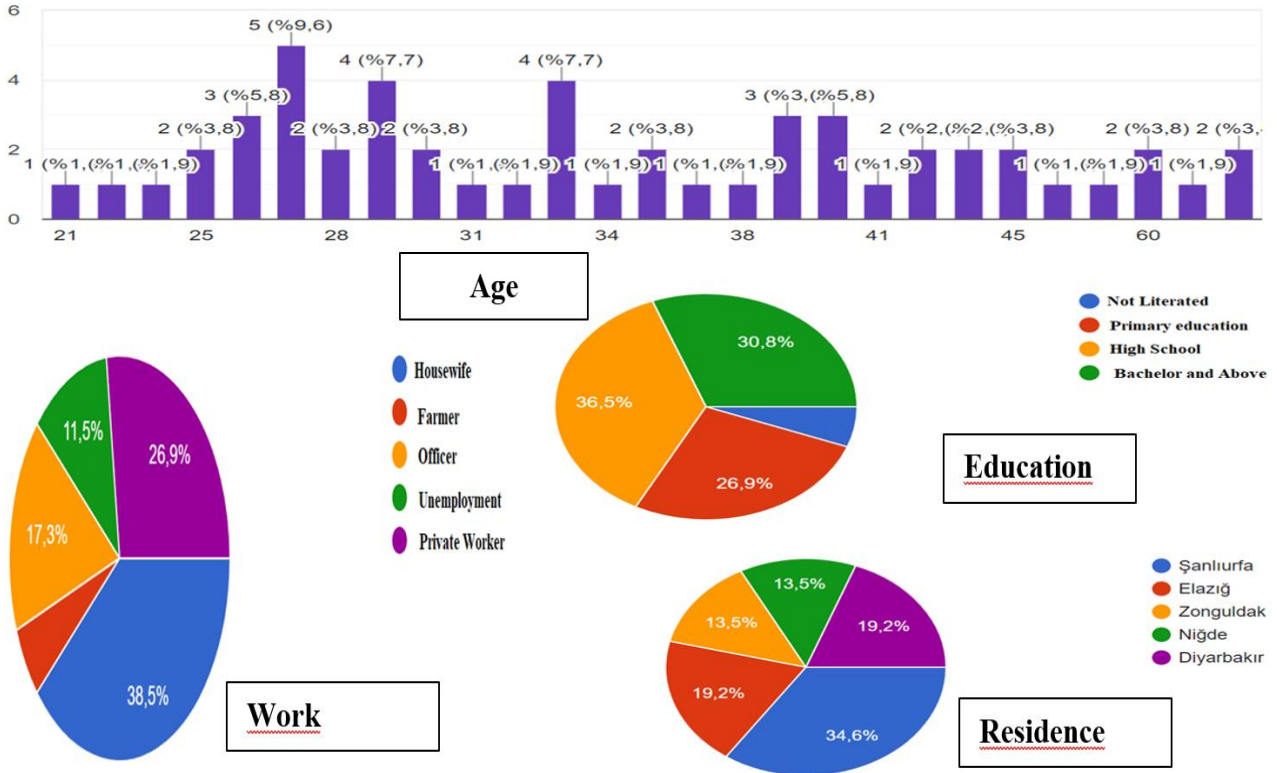
1. What do you think about the culture of special day meals (wedding meals, holiday meals, condolence meals and festival meals)?
2. What are your special day meals?
3. How do you cook your special day meals?
4. Should special occasion meals be made in the future?

The universe of this research consists of the whole of Turkey, while the sample consists of people residing in Şanlıurfa, Niğde, Elâzığ, Zonguldak and Diyarbakır. Face-to-face 52 interviews were held between 15.08.2022 and 19.09.2022 by reaching limited people due to time and cost constraints. In order to carry out this research, E-76244175-050.01.01-150673 approval was obtained from Harran University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision of 2022/121 on 03.08.2022.

### **Findings**

The findings regarding the demographic information of the participants are as in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Demographics Variables\*



\*Total Number of Participants: 52

According to the answers given by the participants as a result of the interviews, the findings are discussed in 4 groups;

Culinary culture, which has an important place among the traditional values of the society, gives a special importance to special day meals. Participants also draw attention to the fact that special day meals have a critical role in terms of social memory and are necessary for the continuity of cultural heritage.

Table 1. Perceived meanings of special day meals

Theme	Frequency
Sharing Pain and Happiness	11
Unnecessary	7
Charitable	8
A Social Event	13
Cultural Heritage	10
Remembering Traditional Dishes	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 1 shows the frequency values for the perceived meanings of special day meals. Emphasizing that their participation in special day meals is a social event, they express that pain and happiness are shared with cultural heritage. In addition, it is accepted as a low level of remembering traditional dishes. However, there are also participants who consider special food culture unnecessary.

The answers of the participants about the culture of special day meals are listed as follows;

*Sharing Pain and Happiness*

P5 'I see it as an element that enriches our culture by remembering and celebrating special days and decorating them with meals. Every special day has its own beauties and I think that these beauties should be maintained. However, with globalization, cultural values are on the verge of extinction, and the continuity of these values has unfortunately started to be discussed. Therefore, I think that our traditional values should be appreciated, protected and adopted'

P43' *Special day meals bring together even our relatives from different cities. On our special days, we usually have local dishes as well as barbecue. We sit at the dinner table for a long time and have our meals while chatting*"

#### *Unnecessary*

P8' *The couples who will get married in this region spend enough for their marriage needs such as house, goods, gold and furniture, the cost of the wedding dinner is an extra difficulty. On the other hand, the large number of guests increases this difficulty. It also causes people who are in bad financial situation to get into debt. This culture should no longer be seen as a necessity for these people'*

P23' *I think the condolence food culture is a misunderstood tradition. They think that the undertaker gives the food, but the undertaker does not have to. If a meal is to be given, the neighbors do it and the neighbors feed the people who come to condolences, which is not obligatory, but it is customary. and it is perpetuated in very different ways in different cultures. Usually, neighbors and relatives who do not have a funeral share the catering amongst themselves. If the food is not cooked in the funeral home, everyone cooks it at home and brings it. Meals are also prepared for those who travel long distances for the funeral. Apart from that, a table is set for everyone in the funeral home once, eaten and left. In other cultures, the funeral is done in a way that is a burden to the person who has it and thoughtlessly'.*

#### *Charitable*

P49' *On the 10th day of Muharram, it means that it is time for Ashura. Legendary ashura, which is loved by everyone, from young to old, is cooked in pots and distributed to spouses, friends, neighbors and relatives during this blessed month. Because Ashura means sharing, abundance, abundance. Also, St. As it is the first food that Noah made after the Flood and ate with the leftover meat, ashura represents a kind of beginning again. Every year, I make sure to practice this culture."*

P16' *I think that special day meals are one of the traditions that reflect the identity of our society. The tables prepared and shared by everyone in a collaborative manner with love and respect also support the communication images of the society and will contribute to transferring this culture to future generations'*

P29' *Special day meals are very important in our culture. It allows us to come together. It provides fellowship. We attach great importance to special day meals and always prepare them with care'*

#### *A Social Event*

P4' *It appears as a social event. Traditions and customs are almost identical with special day meals'*

P31' *We gather together with all our loved ones for special day meals. Special day meals bring together even our relatives from different cities. On our special days, we usually have local dishes as well as barbecue. We sit at the dinner table for a long time and eat our meals while chatting'*

#### *Cultural heritage*

P38' *Special day meals are very important in our culture. It allows us to come together. It provides fellowship. We attach great importance to special day meals and always prepare them with care',*

P9' *Food is also a part of our culture. We must continue this tradition from the past to the present. At the same time, there are different wedding dishes in each different region. It is very important to reflect our culture', while there are positive approaches such as P19' I think special day meals are getting simpler. There are also opinions such as If we look at the historical time, it has taken the form of a tradition that used to be a variety of dishes, but now it is passed on only with dry cake and coke'.*

#### *Remembering Traditional Dishes*

P51' *The meals we make on special occasions are our traditional dishes that have been going on for years. The dishes we rarely make on normal days are made on special occasions. In this way, it is unforgettable and passed on from generation to generation. For this reason, our special day meals should continue to be made in the future'*

The answers of the participants about the special day meals are listed as follows;



**Table 2.** Special day meals

Residence	Meals
Zonguldak	Turkish delight, roasted rice, salted rice pudding, stuffed chicken soup with vinegar, egg zılbıt, stuffed mançara, stew meat, roasting, mangar bread, baklava, pancake with zucchini, ereğli pita with minced meat, rolled walnuts. stuffed black cabbage, walnut kömeç, hoşmen, pumpkin pie, chicken in a tin, white baklava trash, cabbage wrapped, stuffed leaf, cizleme, leek mançara, gartlaç, walnut stuffed, tirit, milk pear, shelled broad bean, zılbıt peruhi, black mançar, zerde, meat meal, corn soup, chullus pastry, twisted...
Şanlıurfa	Varieties of kebab, raw meatballs, lahmacun, baklava, tray kebab, şıllık dessert, liver, borani, stuffed meatballs, tray kebab, stuffed leaves, Urfa kebab, roasted, barren, cabbage rolls, tirit lahmacun, closed mouth, open mouth, pistachio baklava, künefe, şıllık dessert, halva, kadayif dessert, onion kebab, bulgur pilaf with almonds, dried beans pilaf, chickpea rice, zerde dessert kebab (with vegetables), eggplant kebab, chicken kebab, juicy food, bakery dishes, meat varieties, halva, casserole...
Niğde	Black cabbage soup, pickled beans, stuffed black cabbage, black cabbage dible, cherry salted highland soup, juicy meatballs, leaf wrap, cubed roasted rice, arabaşı, meat bread with minced meat, meat on rice, chicken dishes, fresh pie, Niğde pan, ayran soup, chicken soup, black cabbage rolls, roasted meat with rice, salad, baklava, sini dessert, ashura soup, halva, meat keskek wedding soup, three brothers, keskek – chickpea dish, rice, eggplant dish, potato dish, zerde, creamy halvah, tirit, roasted rice, ayran...
Elâzığ	Harput meatballs, stuffed peppers, stuffed meatballs, ayran soup, roasted rice, buttermilk, yoghurt soup, pilaf, pita, halva, doner kebab, broth, juicy dish with cubed meat, tzatziki, salad, stuffed meatballs, curtain pilaf, damask pastry, stuffed dry, stuffed mumbar, stuffed chicken, appetizers, liver, kebab, kombe. banduma, bagel tiridi, cirik dessert, uryani plum compote, roasting, rice pilaf, dry beans with meat, compote. Firik pilaf, pırpırim vaccine, katmer.
Diyarbakır	Rice, Kebabs, Dry beans, Lahmacun, Tas kebab, Casserole, Halva, Cartlak Kebab, Stuffed, Stuffed Wrap, Gevre, Liver Kebab, Serbizer Soup, Bostana Salad, Spicy Paste, Bulgur Pilaf, yoghurt soup, chickpea, meat dish with potatoes, tzatziki, salad yoghurt soup, Lahmacun, Ripped belly, Ravioli, legumes, walnut baklava, black cumin cookies, sesame buns, Ashura, hedik bulgur pilaf, burma kadayif, raked, almond halva...

Table 2 shows the types of local dishes expressed by the participants. When looking at the special day meals of the participants in general, it is seen that products such as baklava, lahmacun, pita, Turkish delight, rice varieties, bakery desserts, halva, künefe, ayran, dried beans, meatballs and stuffed meat stand out. It is understood that especially halva and baklava are made on special occasions in almost every region.

**Table 3.** Preparation of Special Day Meals

Preparation Technique	Frequency
Decoction	44
Frying	19
Baking in a Stone Oven	23
Grill	55
Saute	16
Drying	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>

In the answers given about how special day meals are prepared, it is understood that grilling and boiling techniques are frequently used (Table 3). Considering that the number of people attending special day meals is very high, it seems logical to prefer these cooking methods. As a matter of fact, the participants mentioned that fast cooking and serving is very important in special day dinner events. In addition, food products prepared with drying technique and frying technique, albeit a little, are offered to the guests at special day meals.

**Table 4.** Should special occasion meals be made in the future?

Answers	Frequency
Yes	39
No	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

Although special day meals are a legacy of traditional culture, it is stated that they have recently revealed some problems. Especially the cost and temporal density of food products can attract the reaction of the societies. In this respect, the participants mostly respond positively to the question of whether special day events should be continued in the future (Table 4). However, there are also a number of people who look negatively at special day events due to bad intentions and the heavy responsibility of the special days meal owner.

Yes;

P44 '*Since special days enrich and beautify our culture, bring us together and reinforce our unity, they should always be celebrated and celebrated, and these dishes should be conveyed in a way that sets an example for the future*'

P2 '*Local dishes should continue to be made in the future, especially on special occasions*'

P29 '*The meals we make on special occasions are our traditional dishes that have been going on for years. The dishes we rarely make on normal days are made on special occasions. In this way, it is unforgettable and passed on from generation to generation. For this reason, our special day meals should continue to be made in the future*'

P52 '*If our local dishes from past to present were not prepared by our elders, they would be forgotten and we would not be able to taste these dishes. Special occasion meals should continue to be done in the future so that our culture is not lost*'

No;

P11 '*It depends on the will of the societies that want to maintain this culture. But I don't think it's that necessary*'

P37 '*I think that giving food to hundreds of people who came for 3 days left the hosts in an economically difficult situation. Homeowners, who try to cover their meal expenses sometimes by taking loans from the bank and sometimes by borrowing from their relatives because their financial situation is not good, are faced with economic problems. That's why I don't think it's right to do it in the future*'

P9 '*I find it unnecessary because special occasion meals require too much responsibility and abuse by other people. Special day meals should not be made in the future*'

## Results and Suggestions

Culinary culture, which is one of the basic dynamics of the society, reveals food and beverage products specific to the traditionally considered special days. In this process, cultural motifs are effective at all stages, especially preparation, cooking and presentation techniques, and social values can be seen. Special day meals served in accordance with the spirit of sharing on religious holy days, festivals, holidays and condolences are offered to people from all walks of life. In addition to bringing social solidarity, this situation plays an important role in transferring the cultural heritage to the future. However, it is also observed that special day meals are made less and less due to the increasing cost elements in food products and the responsibilities being completely assigned to the hosts.

In this research, in which the perspective of the local people towards special day meals is evaluated, it is understood that there is a generally positive approach to the continuity of this culture and to the understanding of social cooperation. It is stated by the participants of the research that happiness is shared by serving the most delicious products at wedding meals and brings blessings to the people who get married. It is said that various desserts (baklava, künefe, tulumba, hoşmerim, rice pudding, gullaç, etc.) are served at the feast meals, where distant relatives meet, problems are resolved and the conversation improves. It is stated that during the festival meals, activities where bakery products are distributed, especially juicy meat dishes boiled in large cauldrons. It is seen that many products are distributed for donation purposes at condolence meals. However, not helping the condolence house and avoiding the principle of helping by taking all responsibility negatively affected the approach of many people towards special day meals.

In the light of the research findings, it is understood that societies serving special day meals in different geographies meet in certain dishes such as pilaf with meat, ayran, pita, salad, baklava, bread, Ashura, kebab. In addition, it can be seen that they offer visitors geographical products such as black cabbage dible, leaf wrap, egg zılbit borani, juicy dish and with cubed meat. As a matter of fact, Tregear (2003) supports the result of this research by stating that societies located in different geographies may have authentic characteristics in terms of food.

In special day meals, fast cooking techniques such as grilling and boiling are applied because of the fact that a large number of people are usually served. In this research, it is observed that the societies that provide special day meals mostly benefit from grilling, boiling, frying and stone oven cooking techniques. In addition, it is understood that they cooked special day meals with sautéing and drying techniques, although not as much as other cooking techniques.

Special day meals are mostly desired to be made in the future in terms of carrying cultural values, reminding the traditional way of life and providing social information to future generations. However, there are also participants who want to be disposal in the future due to not taking common responsibilities in the production of special day meals and displaying behaviors that are far from empathy.

It has been concluded that the participants have generally positive approaches towards special day meals through the following dimensions; Reflecting the values of the society, preserving and maintaining the cultural heritage, bringing people together by bringing them together, making the forgotten dishes sustainable and having signs that show the identity of the society. Another result obtained in this research is the need for communication and the spirit of sharing that people feel for each other despite the negative climate brought about by individualization. For this reason, the suggestions obtained within the scope of the research and suggested to be made considering the binding role of special day meals are presented to other stakeholders as follows;

- Special day meals should be seen and maintained as a value of cultural heritage.
- It should be done at the international level and strengthen the relations of nations.
- It should be used as a tool in local cuisine branding.
- Contrary to catering services, traditional methods should be preferred.
- Participation of new generations, especially young people, in special day events should be encouraged.
- Responsibilities should be shared and help should be provided in all special day meals, especially condolence meals.
- It should be supported by public and private organizations and financial aid should be provided in case of need.
- It is also recommended to make a specific comparison of special day meals with the size of different nations cuisine culture, to scientists working on the subject.

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