



Research Article

EVALUATION OF LOCAL DISHES AS AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE IN TERMS OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM: THE CASE OF AYVALIK

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Abstract

As an intangible cultural heritage value, local dishes are accepted as one of the important elements that contribute to the formation of the identity of a region and reflect the culture of that region. Evaluation of local dishes in terms of gastronomic tourism is important to increase and maintain the positive economic, social, cultural and environmental effects of tourism development. Many indicators such as its cultural richness, geographically marked products, climatic features, and diversity of food and beverage show that Ayvalık is an important region in terms of gastronomy. In this context, the aim of the research is to reveal the importance of Ayvalık's local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage value in terms of gastronomic tourism and to bring suggestions to stakeholders in terms of touristic promotion of Ayvalık's local dishes. The data were obtained and compiled using the document analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods. This research is important in terms of providing insights to the ministry, local and sector organizations in order to preserve and sustain the local dishes of Ayvalık as an intangible heritage value, to spread tourism over twelve months and to increase tourism incomes.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Local Dishes, Gastronomy Tourism, Ayvalık

Introduction

Recently, the desire to know different culinary cultures and the increase in travels to research culinary cultures have led to the concepts of gastronomy and tourism being mentioned together (Timothy and Ron, 2013: 99). The curiosity and consumption of every tourist participating in tourism activities in the dishes of the region they visit has increased the interest in gastronomy tourism (Avcıkurt and Sarioğlu, 2019: 2). In the face of the increasing interest in gastronomic tourism, the regions have started their efforts to promote and present their culinary cultures in the best way (İbiş, 2020: 88). Because gastronomy tourism is very important due to its features of spreading tourism throughout the season, supporting other tourism activities, increasing tourism revenues, expanding income distribution, providing employment, increasing the service quality of businesses producing and serving food and beverage, contributing to the development of the region and tourism in terms of protecting and sustaining its cultural values (Kargiglioğlu, 2018: 35; Ongun, İnanır and Kiliç, 2019; Gül and Şeyhanlıoğlu, 2021).

It is thought that gastronomy tourism, which is becoming more important both in the world and in Turkey (Gülen, 2017), is better understood day by day and has many positive economic, social, cultural and environmental effects (İbiş, 2020: 99), is of great importance for Ayvalık as well. However, very few written sources have been found in the literature regarding the development of gastronomic tourism in the Ayvalık region. As an intangible cultural heritage value, which is the most important component of gastronomic tourism, no written source has been found regarding the local dishes of Ayvalık. Recording the local dishes of the Ayvalık region, which has a rich culinary culture, is very important in terms of transferring and promoting the culture of this region to future generations. Because culinary culture; depending on globalization, the development of technology, applied policies, climate and seasonal changes and population mobility, it is either forgotten or undergoes change (Demirel and Karakuş, 2019: 1386).

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The aim of this research is to reveal the importance of Ayvalık's local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage value in terms of gastronomic tourism and to bring suggestions to stakeholders in terms of touristic promotion of Ayvalık's local dishes. This study is important in terms of revealing the culinary culture of Ayvalık, developing gastronomic tourism in the region and developing suggestions for its regional development. In the study, conceptual information about local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage value was mentioned and information was given about Ayvalık district and its local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage value.

Conceptual Framework

Intangible Cultural Heritage

The term intangible cultural heritage emerged and became widespread as a result of UNESCO's work on the protection of cultural heritage. The invention of the term has a long history within UNESCO (Oğuz, 2013: 5). UNESCO has taken important decisions for the protection of intangible cultural heritage, starting with the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted in 1972 (Oğuz, 2008a: 26). These decisions were influential in the preparation of the 2003 Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and in determining the name of the intangible cultural heritage.

The fact that the cultural heritage defined in the Convention for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972 is fully concrete has been effective in determining the reason for the preparation and the name of the Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003. In the period following the adoption of the 1972 Convention, terms such as folklore, popular and traditional culture, intangible heritage and oral and intangible cultural heritage were used in order in UNESCO documents. The terms folklore were preferred in the Bolivia Declaration of 1973, intangible culture for the section established in 1982 within UNESCO, popular and traditional culture in the 1989 Recommendation, and verbal and intangible cultural heritage terms in the 1997/98 Masterpieces Announcement Program. However, in the intergovernmental expert meetings held in 2002-2003 during the preparation period of the Convention text within UNESCO, it was concluded that the most appropriate term to cover the area to be protected was intangible cultural heritage (Oğuz, 2013: 5).

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage consists of nine chapters and forty articles. In the first article of the second part of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, titled Definitions, intangible cultural heritage; It means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills and related tools, materials and cultural spaces that communities, groups and in some cases individuals define as a part of their cultural heritage (SOKÜM Convention, 2003: 2). This intangible cultural heritage, which is mentioned in the rest of the article and transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated depending on the interaction of communities and groups with their environment, nature and history, and this gives them a sense of identity and continuity; thereby contributing to respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

In the second article of the second chapter titled definitions, the intangible cultural heritage areas that the convention aims to protect are stated as follows (Türker and Çelik, 2012: 89):

- a) Oral traditions and narratives (epics, legends, folk tales, proverbs, tales, anecdotes, etc.),
- b) Performing arts (karagöz, meddah, puppet, folk theater etc.),
- c) Social practices, rituals and feasts (engagement, wedding, birth, nowruz, etc. celebrations),
- d) Knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe (traditional cuisine, folk medicine, folk calendar, folk meteorology, etc.),
- e) It is the tradition of handicrafts (weaving, evil eye bead, filigree, coppersmithing, folk architecture).

Local Dishes as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Value

Local dishes are foods that are traditionally consumed by people living together in the same region for many years, consumed on special occasions and placed in the culture that local people prefer to other dishes (Hatipoğlu et al., 2013: 6). According to another definition, local dishes are foods that are made with products grown in a certain region and region, and that arouse curiosity with their unique production, cooking, consumption and presentation (Yenipınar and Kart Gölgeci, 2015: 314). It is possible to say that intangible

cultural values such as the lifestyles, cultural identities and beliefs of the local people, as well as the effects of livelihoods, climatic conditions and environmental conditions, are of great importance in the formation and settlement of the local food culture (Çakır, Sezer and Küçükaltan, 2014: 49).

In terms of heritage, cuisines are a mixture of tangible (e.g. ingredients and cooking utensils) and intangible (e.g. flavors, scents, recipes and eating traditions) elements that contribute to the cultural values and characteristics of regions (Timoty and Ron, 2013: 99). Kaşlı et al. (2015: 32) also stated that, starting from the concept of heritage, the technical knowledge of a nation's cuisine, the richness of variety, preparation, presentation and characteristics of foods and beverages from past generations can be considered as gastronomic heritage. According to Bayram (2018: 362), gastronomic cultural heritage includes the behaviors, habits, customs and traditions of the local people to provide food in the historical process, the tools and equipment they use, presentations and activities, and reflects the local culture. As long as these elements can be transferred to future generations, societies can preserve their cultural identities.

Preservation of local cuisines as an intangible cultural heritage value is very important and extremely difficult for societies. Unrecorded intangible cultural heritages can be forgotten with the deaths of those who know and try to keep these heritages alive (Fereli and Alyakut, 2018: 476). For this reason, societies, on the one hand, protect their own cultural values, on the other hand, they carry out various studies to protect the cultural values of other societies (Ağcakaya and Can, 2019: 799). With UNESCO's inclusion of French Cuisine in the list of "World Cultural Heritage" in 2010, it succeeded to enter the list of works that should be protected as a world cuisine, art and culture branch for the first time (Kaşlı et al., 2015: 32). There are 5 gastronomic elements in Turkey's Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity. These elements are (UNESCO, 2023);

- Culture of Çay (tea), a symbol of identity, hospitality and social interaction,
- Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka,
- Turkish coffee culture and tradition,
- Mesir Macunu festival,
- Ceremonial Keşkek tradition.

With the acceptance of the dishes as an intangible cultural heritage, the traditions and other cultural components of these dishes are also taken under protection. Thus, the continuity of the said culture is ensured (Yeşilyurt and Kurnaz, 2021: 798). By taking the cultural heritage under protection, the recognition of these values is increased and contribution is made to its sustainability. The reputations of destinations in the field of culture and tourism are in line with the number of their assets on the list. Countries and regions are making an effort to be included in this list with their intangible heritage values, and they see this as equivalent to increasing the income from tourism (Çapar and Yenipınar, 2016: 106).

Ayvalık District and Local Dishes as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Value

Ayvalık, which is the district of Balıkesir province, is located on the Aegean Sea coast. Ayvalık district was established on an area of 285 km² located in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. Bergama is located in the east of the district, Altınova in the south, Gömeç district in the north and the Aegean Sea in the west (Balıkesir Valiliği, 2023). Ayvalık, with its natural beauties, beaches, historical and cultural places, climate and islands, is one of the regions with high tourism potential (Gökdeniz, 2015: 3). Şeytan Sofrası, İlk Kurşun Tepesi, Tımarhane Island (Taşlı Monastery), Alibey (Cunda) Island and Sarımsaklı Beaches, Taksiyarhis Church, Aya Nikola Church, Ayazma Church, Saatli Mosque, Çınarlı Mosque, Moonlight Monastery and neo-Roman and Hellenistic structures. -Old Ayvalık houses with classical architectural style are among the important natural and historical attractions of Ayvalık (Yılmaz, Doğru and Yumuk, 2014: 29).

Ayvalık is a district that stands out with its culinary culture, which has an important place among the touristic supply sources as well as its natural and historical attractions (Yılmaz, Doğru and Yumuk, 2014: 29). Ayvalık cuisine has a rich culinary culture that is both unique and influenced by Greek, Balkan, Bulgarian, Thessaloniki, Bosnian, Cretan and Middili cultures (Gökdeniz, 2015: 17). Culinary culture in Ayvalık center consists of fish dishes, herb dishes, lamb dishes, vegetable dishes cooked with olive oil and various pastries. In the surrounding villages of Ayvalık, more lamb meat, poultry meat and game meat are used, especially as you move away from the sea. Olive oil, butter, tail and body fat of animals are used as oil in local dishes (Yılmaz and Akman, 2018: 861). Geographical indication products of Ayvalık; Ayvalık Tostu, Ayvalık

Zeytinyağı, Ayvalık Lor Tatlısı and Ayvalık Sakızlı Kurabiye (Turkish Patent, 2023). As a result of the literature review, the regional dishes of Ayvalık cuisine are given in Table 1 (Gökdeniz, 2015; Taşlı and Kahraman 2015; Yılmaz and Akman, 2018; Yalın, 2021; Turkish Patent, 2023);

Table 1. Local dishes of Ayvalık cuisine

Soups	Zeytinyağlı Deniz Fasülyesi, Yoğurtlu Deniz Börülcesi, Deniz Börülcesi Salatası, Zeytinyağlı Turp Otu, Yumurtalı Asfaraca, Radika Salatası, Hardal Otu, Zeytinyağlı İstifno Otu, Yumurtalı Arapsaçı, Ot Mucveri, Sıcak Ot Çeşnisi, Ispanaklı Isırgan, Zeytinyağlı Zoho
Seafood Dishes	Papalina, Terbiyeli Otlı Kalamar, Tereyağlı Kalamar Güveç, Fener Balığı Kavurma, Kupa Tava, Otlı Balık, Mercan Tava, Lipsos Buğulama, Kakavya, Akkızlı Fener Balığı, Mırmır Tava, Tekir Tava, Barbun Tava, Kiremitte Levrek, Levrek Pilaki, Tuzda Levrek, Fırında Çipura, Arapsaçlı Çipura, Melanur Tava, Balıklı Bamya, Tuzlu Balık, Kalamar Dolması, Izgara Ahtapot, Ahtapot Kavurma, Sirkeli Kalamar, Levrek Marina, Kalamar Tava, Soğanlı Sübye, Sübye Tava, Sübye Salata, Sübyeli Enginar, Midyeli Pilav, Midye Tava, Karides Güveç, Balık Köftesi
Dishes With Olive Oil and Hot Meals	Kabak Çiçeği Dolması, Kabak Çiçeği Kızartması, Kelle Peynirli Enginar Çanağı, Lorlu Patlıcan (Rum Böreği), Zeytinyağlı Börülce Yemeği, Kuzu Etli Akkız, Zeytinyağlı Enginar, Gardum (Barsak Dolması), Taze Bakla Yemeği, Tavuklu Akkız, Kabak Haşlama, Pabucaki, Ada Köftesi, Keşkek, İç Bakla Kavurma, Kaburga Yemeği, Kaburga Yemeği, Kuzu Etli Mühliye, Sakızlı Dolma
Pastries	Boşnak Mantısı, Boşnak Böreği, Nohutlu Tepsi Mantısı, Nohutlu Ekmek, Nohutlu Börek, Ayvalık Tostu
Desserts	Lorlu Baklava, Domates Tatlısı, Kavala Kurabiyesi, Sakızlı Dondurma, Girit Lokumu, Lor Talısı, Höşmerim, Dudove Tatlısı, Sakızlı Kurabiye

Source: Gökdeniz, 2015; Taşlı and Kahraman 2015; Yılmaz and Akman, 2018; Yalın, 2021; Turkish Patent, 2023.

As seen in Table 1, local dishes belonging to Ayvalık cuisine; soups, herb dishes, seafood dishes, dishes with olive oil and hot dishes, pastries and desserts. Manav Tarhana, which is in the category of soups, is prepared in ceremonial meetings such as weddings and charity (Aygör, 2000: 51). Papalina fish, which is in the category of seafood dishes, is only grown between Ayvalık and Cunda in the world. It is often confused with Sardines because of its similarity. Actually, this little fish is Sardine's baby. Since its bones are quite soft, its tail and bones do not separate while eating. Besides the grill, it is also fried in olive oil by dipping it in flour. It is also very popular as an appetizer (Taşlı and Kahraman, 2015: 92). Some items of Ayvalık's local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage value are listed as follows.

Boşnak Böreği (Pita): Boşnak Böreği is a pastry from Ayvalık. It is prepared as the wedding meal of Ayvalık Küçükköy. It is also considered as a daily meal (Yalın, 2020). It means pita pastry in which the stuffing prepared with minced meat, vegetables, potatoes, cheese and other ingredients is added, and it is named according to the material put into it. Sirnica (cheese pie), Zeljanica (spinach pie), Krompirusa (potato pie) and Burek (meat pie). The way the pies are wrapped is also different. Most of the Bosnians make sheet pastry. (Özer, Albayrak and Ağan, 2022: 418).

Picture 1. Boşnak böreği



Source: Ayvalık Ticaret Odası, 2023a.

Lor Tatlısı: Lor Tatlısı was brought from the Greek island of Crete in the 1920s by families who settled in the Ayvalık district of Balıkesir. It is a dessert belonging to the cuisine of Cretan Turks (Ulu, 2019: 41). Ayvalık Lor Tatlısı was registered by the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office on 26.12.2022 and received a geographical indication (Türk Patent, 2023). The making of the Lor Tatlısı is as follows: A dough is prepared from curd, carbonate, semolina, flour and olive oil. Add curd, flour, semolina, egg, baking powder, olive oil and vanilla in a bowl and mix. Small pieces of dough are taken and flat balls are made. After cooking, the syrup is poured while the dessert is hot (Demirel and Karakuş, 2019: 1394).

Picture 2. Lor tatlısı



Source: Ayvalık Ticaret Odası, 2023b.

Keşkek: Keskek is made at weddings in Ayvalık (Demirel and Karakuş, 2019: 1391). The making of the Keşkek is as follows: Wheat and chickpeas are soaked overnight. Then the soaked chickpeas and wheat are placed in the pressure cooker. Meat and salt are poured on it and enough water is added to cover it. It is cooked for 2 hours. On the other hand, the butter is melted, and tomato paste and spices are added to the oil that is close to boiling. The cooked keskek is beaten well. Then it is placed on a plate and this oil is poured on it and served (Yalın, 2020: 101).

Picture 3. Keşkek



Source: Yalın, 2020: 101.

Boşnak Mantısı (Ribitsa): The dough, which is rolled out by hand and formed into small squares, is put into the dough with minced meat, onions and spices and baked in the oven like a pastry. After cooking, yoghurt with garlic is poured on it and left in the oven for a few minutes. It is served with tomato paste or pepper butter and poured over it (Özer, Albayrak and Ağan, 2022: 418).

Picture 4. Boşnak mantısı



Source: Yalın, 2020: 102.

Lokma: Lokma dessert is prepared on special occasions and charity days of the Ayvalık region. The making of the Lokma is as follows: Put the sugar and water in a saucepan and bring it to a boil. When it boils, a slice of lemon is thrown into it, the pot is removed from the fire and the syrup is left to cool. Mix flour, water, sugar and yeast. Salt is dissolved in little water and added to the dough. Potatoes are boiled and crushed and added

to the dough. The dough is covered and left to rise. Sunflower oil is put in the frying pan and the oil is heated. Take some dough and squeeze it with the left hand. The nut-sized dough that comes out between the thumb and forefinger is taken with a spoon inserted in oil and fried in hot oil. The fried donuts are thrown into the very cold sherbet. It is served by pouring coconut, cinnamon or chocolate sauce on it (Taşlı and Kahraman, 2015).

Picture 5. Lokma



Source: Ayvalık Ticaret Odası, 2023c.

Transition period practices are rituals applied in order to introduce and impose the changes that occur in the life of human beings from the cradle to the grave, to the society and the environment, and to make the individual aware of this change (Çınar, 2019: 20). During the transition period called birth, marriage and death, the meals that people share and their collective eating habits are important in terms of intangible cultural heritage. In her study, Yalın (2020) stated that there is no tradition of giving any meal at birth in Ayvalık, the meals made at weddings are lentils, keskek, pilaf, halva and compote, and the meals made at funerals are chickpeas and rice.

Some regional dishes of Ayvalık cuisine are in danger of being lost. Yılmaz and Akman (2018) stated in their study that the dish known as Gardum-Barsak dolma is made only by old women from Ayvalık today and is in danger of being forgotten and lost. Gardum-Barsak dolma, after the intestines of the fresh milk lamb are taken and cleaned thoroughly, the spleen and liver, which are chopped into small pieces, are stuffed into the intestines. It is a very demanding dish cooked in low acid olive oil by adding laurel and rosemary, garlic and very little tomato paste.

Methodology

In line with the purpose of the research, it was decided that it would be appropriate to use the qualitative research method as the research method. Qualitative research is the research that deals with the subject in detail and is aimed at understanding rather than the features that can measure events, people or phenomena in quantity, average and number. In qualitative research, data is obtained through observation, interview and document analysis (Kozak, 2014: 86; Kırıl, 2020: 172). In the study, scanning and document analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was carried out. For this reason, printed and electronic materials and documents were used. Therefore, there is no need for any ethics committee approval.

Results

Ayvalık has a rich culinary culture due to the fact that it hosts various ethnic groups (Greek, Balkan, Bulgarian, Thessaloniki, Bosnian, Cretan and Middili) in its geography. Many indicators such as geographically marked products, climatic characteristics, cultural richness, food and beverage diversity indicate that Ayvalık is a region with significant gastronomy. Revealing, promoting, marketing and using the local dishes of Ayvalık cuisine for gastronomic tourism will both contribute to the extension of the tourism season to 12 months and

allow these riches to be preserved and kept alive in the future. In this research, which was carried out to reveal the importance of Ayvalık's local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage value in terms of gastronomic tourism, some inferences were made by using the information in the literature. In the light of these inferences, various suggestions have been presented to the ministry, local governments and sector organizations:

- It is predicted that encouraging tourists to stay longer in Ayvalık due to the availability of local dishes and related activities will contribute to the region economically. Thus, a solution to the seasonality problem of tourism can be produced.
- Thanks to geographical indication, products with certain characteristics are recorded with their local themes due to their distinctive features. Registered products play an important role in the promotion of those destination centers. It is seen that geographical indications have been obtained for a total of 4 products belonging to Ayvalık so far. Other assets suitable for geographical indication in the region should be identified and geographical indication should be obtained.
- By accepting the dishes as an intangible cultural heritage, the traditions and other cultural components belonging to these foods are also taken under protection, unlike the protection methods such as the geographical indication system; It is of great importance for the continuity of the culture in question. For this reason, local dishes should be protected as an intangible cultural heritage element.
- Detailed information about Ayvalık cuisine culture should be included on the official website of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Efforts can be made to open museums where the culinary elements of the region can be exhibited, and training centers where regional dishes can be presented and taught. Local dishes, which are in danger of being forgotten and lost, should be taught to the local people in accordance with their originality, through courses to be opened in training centers. Thus, the sustainability of local dishes will be ensured.
- An inventory list of forgotten local dishes should be made. Then, standard recipes should be created and included in the menus of local restaurants and accommodation establishments in the region.
- In order to promote Ayvalık culinary culture in the best way, national and international conferences, panels and congresses should be organized. Again, festivities and festivals that are effective in promotion (for example, Ayvalık wedding food festival) can be organized, and appropriate environments can be created for the promotion, sale and experience of regional food specific to the region's cuisine.

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