



*Turkey*

# Menu

*Starter*

**STUFFED MEATBALLS  
(İÇLİ KÖFTE)**

*Main Course*

**KARNIYARIK  
(EGGPLANT STUFFED  
WITH LAMB)**

*Dessert*

**BAKLAVA**

*Drink*

**Turkish Tea And Coffee**

*TV Snack*

**Almond Cookies**

# Healthy Recipes

## Starter

## STUFFED MEATBALLS (IÇLİ KÖFTE)

### INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup walnut halves or shelled pistachios

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. pepper

½ tsp. paprika

½ tsp. hot red pepper flakes

125 g ground beef

1 small onion, finely chopped

1/3 cup fine bulgur

1 tbsp. ground beef

½ tsp. black pepper

¼ cup boiled, mashed potato

½ of 1 beaten egg

½ tsp. salt

1 small onion, grated

Sunflower or other light oil for frying



### Preparation:

Begin by making the meat and nut filling. In a small frying pan, sautee the meat until just cooked. Add the onion and continue to stir until the onion softens. Add the ground nuts and spices and continue to sautee. When all the flavors have combined, remove the pan from the heat and let it rest.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the bulgur, ground beef, egg, potato, grated onion and spices and knead together for several minutes to form a 'dough.'

Break off pieces of the dough about the size of walnuts and roll them into balls. With your index finger, push some of the meat and nut filling into the center of the dough and close the end. Shape the 'meatballs' to be narrower at the ends and thicker in the middle.

Heat a generous amount of sunflower oil in a large skillet and fry the 'meatballs' evenly on all sides until dark golden-brown. Drain them in paper towels. Serve them piping hot. Garnish with fresh Italian parsley.

## Main course

# KARNIYARIK (EGGPLANT STUFFED WITH LAMB)

### Ingredients:

6 medium size eggplants  
2 onions finely chopped  
3 tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
250 grams minced meat  
3 tablespoons of oil  
250 grams chopped parsley  
2 green peppers, sliced  
Salt, peppers

### Preparation:

Cut tops of eggplants. Make a deep lengthwise incision in each eggplant.

Soak them in salted water for about 45 minutes.  
Drain and dry well with paper towel.

Fry eggplants lightly in oil by turning them constantly. Remove from pan and set aside.  
Brown onions, minced meat and peppers lightly. Add tomatoes and continue to saute for several minutes. Remove from heat and add salt and pepper for its taste.

Place eggplants in deep baking tin, cut sides facing up. Fill each eggplant with the mince mixture. Top each eggplant with a slice of tomato and green pepper. Add a small amount of water to tin, cover and cook for 25-30 minutes in an oven or on a stove.



## Dessert

## BAKLAVA

### Ingredients

- 1 (16 ounce) Package phyllo dough
- 1 pound chopped nuts
- 1 cup butter
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup honey



### Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Butter the bottoms and sides of a 9x13 inch pan.

Chop nuts and toss with cinnamon. Set aside. Unroll phyllo dough. Cut whole stack in half to fit pan. Cover phyllo with a dampened cloth to keep from drying out as you work. Place two sheets of dough in pan, butter thoroughly. Repeat until you have 8 sheets layered. Sprinkle 2 – 3 tablespoons of nut mixture on top. Top with two sheets of dough, butter, nuts, layering as you go. The top layer should be about 6 – 8 sheets deep.

Using a sharp knife cut into diamond or square shapes all the way to the bottom of the pan. You may cut into 4 long rows the make diagonal cuts. Bake for about 50 minutes until baklava is golden and crisp.

Make sauce while baklava is baking. Boil sugar and water until sugar is melted. Add vanilla and honey. Simmer for about 20 minutes.

Remove baklava from oven and immediately spoon sauce over it. Let cool. Serve in cupcake papers. This freezes well. Leave it uncovered as it gets soggy if it is wrapped up.

## Drink

## Turkish Tea And Coffee



## Snack

## Almond Cookies

### Ingredients

scant 1 cup butter or margarine  
2 egg whites  
3/4 cup powdered sugar  
1/3 cup sugar  
1 cup almonds  
3/4 cup flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
2 tsp. European (powdered sugar) vanilla  
2 tbsp. granulated sugar  
whole almonds without the hull for garnish



### Preparation

First, put the almonds in a food processor and process them on high speed to make a fine powder.

In a mixer bowl, beat the softened butter or margarine until fluffy. Beat in the sugars until well combined. Add the egg whites and vanilla and beat again. Add the almond powder and flour, beat well. You should now have a sticky dough to work with.

Turn the dough out on a floured surface and knead it for about five minutes with floured hands until you have a very smooth dough.

Line a cookie sheet with non-stick parchment baking paper. Break off a piece of the dough about the size of a walnut. Roll it between your palms to make a round ball.

Lightly roll one side to the ball in the granulated sugar. Turn the ball over so the sugared side is on top. Using the tines of a fork, gently press down on the ball to flatten it slightly. The edges of the cookie may crack a little. This makes the cookie look pretty after it cooks.

Arrange the cookies 1/2 inch apart on the cookie sheet covered with parchment. Press a whole almond into the center of each cookie.

Bake them in a 350° F / 175° C oven until lightly browned, about 15 minutes.

Allow the cookies to cool completely before serving.

## INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT TURKISH CUISINE

Turkey has always been famous for its robust Turkish coffee and strong black tea. Did you know that along with the beverages themselves, the preparation and consumption of tea and coffee are an integral part of Turkish culture and daily life?

### **Turkish 'Çay'**

It's not only the British who are famous for their tea. Turkey has a tea, or 'çay' (CHAI) culture all its own that's steeped in hundreds of years of tradition.

To start, Turkey is among the world's top five tea-growing countries, producing about six to ten percent of the world's tea. Most of this is consumed domestically. Turkey's tea-growing region stretches along the country's northern Black Sea coastline from the Georgian border through the city of Rize further West.

In Turkey, tea is consumed all day long starting with breakfast and continuing right on through until bedtime. Offering tea and drinking tea together is a gesture of friendship.

"Teatime" is usually between three and five in the afternoon, where tea is served along with delicious sweet and savory biscuits and cakes. But tea drinking is not limited to these few short hours.

### **Turkish Coffee Culture**

To me, there is nothing like the fragrance of freshly ground Turkish coffee, better known as 'Türk kahvesi' (TURK' KAH'-vay-see). Turkish coffee is like a rough version of espresso. Each cup is prepared individually in a small hand-held kettle, called a 'cezve' (jez-VEY') and served in elegant little cups and saucers.

The ground coffee is measured with the water and the amount of sugar desired, and slowly cooked to perfection. Once in the cup, the grains settle to the bottom, so drink it slowly!

Did you know that Turkey is the only country in the world located on two continents? Bridging Europe with Asia and the Middle East, it's one of the world's true melting pots. That's why when it comes to cuisine you get several different countries all in one.

### **Cuisine and History**

This fusion of Eastern and Western influences really shows in the food. Starting with the westward migration of Turkic peoples from central Asia to Anatolia in the 6th Century, many Asian cooking techniques like grilling meats came westward with them. The best example of this is shish kebab. By the 16th Century, the Ottoman Empire stretched through the Balkans as far west as Vienna, and included most of the Middle East and North Africa. And we can't forget ancient Anatolian civilizations like the Lycians and the Hittites that were simply absorbed into Turkish culture.

All of these influences have made their way into Turkish cooking. In today's modern Turkey, the best way to experience this rich and diverse cuisine is to approach it like the Turkish people do -- by region.

## **Inner Anatolia**

The food culture of Anatolia goes back thousands of years. Foods rich in carbohydrates and protein are characteristic of the inner regions of Turkey. Legumes, wheat products and rice are staples. The climate can be harsh, so fresh foods are often dried and pickled in preparation for long storage.

'Tarhana' is a pulse made from onions, peppers, flour and yogurt. After it's left to ferment, it's dried and crumbled.

Crumbled tarhana can be stored for long periods to be used year-round. To make nutritious tarhana soup, just mix a few spoons of crumbled tarhana with boiling water, butter, milk and spices.

Wholesome dishes made with legumes like red lentils, navy beans and chickpeas are stewed with vegetables and served along with rice or bulgur pilaf.

## **The Aegean Region**

The Aegean region is the area bordering Turkey's western coastline. Here, in what used to be ancient Greece, the Greek influence is evident. Or is it the other way around? Turkish and Greek cuisine are very similar. Many of the same dishes and cooking methods exist on both sides of the Aegean Sea.

Many foods even have the same names, like 'istakoz' which means 'lobster,' and 'dolma' (Turkish) or 'dolmades' (Greek) - the name for a group of stuffed vegetable dishes. Heated discussions still continue today about the true origin of many well known dishes like baklava and Turkish coffee. Or is that Greek coffee?

The Aegean region is also olive country with many dishes made with olives and olive oil. The warm climate and long growing season also mean fresh seasonal vegetables are plentiful almost all year round.

That's why you get the most fantastic selection of starters, or 'meze,' in the country. Endless mixtures of artichoke bottoms, baby peas, fava beans and other vegetable delicacies are cooked in olive oil and served cold. Some of my favorite meze recipes from this region are stuffed squash flowers, steamed samphire and pinto beans in olive oil.

Aegean meals often feature fish and seafood, as well as classic Turkish lamb and beef. In general, meats and fish are lightly seasoned, letting their natural flavors show through.

All spice, dill weed, oregano and mint are the most common spices here.

## The Most Popular Spices In Turkish Cuisine

### **The Southeast Region**

If you're travelling in Turkey, you can witness the transition in the cuisine from Aegean to Middle Eastern influences as you move eastward. Dishes get spicier and meat takes over where fish leaves off.

This is spicy kebab country. Grilled meats from this part of Turkey are famous all over the world. 'Kebab' is actually a general term in Turkish for all seasoned, grilled meats.

Lamb, beef and poultry are mixed with vegetables and sometimes fruits and cooked over a wood fire. The meat is often marinated with different mixtures of olive oil, pepper paste and spices. When ground beef and lamb are used, the spices are kneaded into the meat before grilling.

### The 10 Best Turkish Kebabs

The most common spices are hot red pepper flakes, paprika, dried sumac and dried mint.

Eating a long lineup of starters, or 'meze,' is just as important in the southeast as it is near the Aegean. However, the selection of meze is very different.

Hot flat bread spread with sweet butter and crumbled goat cheese, hot pepper and tomato salsa drizzled with pomegranite syrup , roasted eggplant with garlic in olive oil are meze selections that are perfect before a plate of spicy kebab.

The southeast is also famous for 'Çiğ Köfte' (CHEE' kuf- TEH'), the Turkish version of steak tartar. Raw beef is kneaded together with hot pepper paste and fine bulgur.

The raw 'meatballs' are shaped by hand. Each meatball is served inside a small cup of crunchy Romaine lettuce with a squeeze of lemon juice.

The Southeast also has its own version of pizza called 'lahmacun (LAH'-MAH'-jun). Lahmacun is made with dough rolled out in a thin, round shape.

A thin layer of minced lamb or beef, onions, garlic, tomatoes and parsley is spread over the top before it is cooked on a wooden slab in the oven. Ideally, lahmacun should be crunchy, but still soft enough to roll.

Before rolling, squeeze some lemon juice on top and add some fresh parsley and onions.

**TIP:** Keep some breath mints handy. If you are in a group, do as Turkish people do -- make sure all of you eat lahmacun at the same time.



### **The Black Sea Coast**

Travel northward in Turkey and you'll enter a whole new world. The Black Sea region is also bordering the coast, but the culinary influences are very different.

Here, the growing season is short and much of the land is mountainous. The cooler, wet climate yields dark green, leafy vegetables like spinach, collard greens and Swiss chard.

These cooking greens are used for wrapping around mixtures of meat, rice or bulgur and eaten almost every day. These dishes are called 'sarma.' A favorite from this area is ground lamb wrapped in Swiss chard or collard greens, or 'etli sarma' .

Here, cornmeal replaces wheat flour to make bread, thicken soups and desserts and as a coating for frying. For breakfast it's also mixed together with melted local cheese to make a dipping paste called 'mıhlama'

The abundance of grassy highlands means great grazing. Dairy products like plain yogurt, butter and cheeses are famous here for their richness and quality.

### **The Most Popular Turkish Cheeses**

This region is also known for its sardines. The most famous Black Sea dish is 'Hamsili Pilavı' which is rice pilaf baked inside a shell of sardines.

And I can't forget 'Pide', the Black Sea version of pizza. It's topped with a special cheese and other local ingredients. Some people request an egg cracked on top for an extra protein boost.