



GASTRONOMY TRADITIONS AMONG THE FRENCH AND UZBEKISTAN PEOPLES

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Abstract: *This article compares the gastronomic traditions of the French and Uzbek peoples. The relationship between the two cultures to food is studied through culinary arts, national dishes, holidays and customs. French gastronomy is distinguished by its delicacy, complexity and presentation, which makes it famous worldwide. Uzbek gastronomy, on the other hand, attracts attention with its rich history, traditional dishes and hospitality. The article also provides information on the culinary styles, ingredients and cooking processes of both peoples. This study aims to shed light on the unique characteristics of French and Uzbek gastronomy, their historical and cultural context.*

Key words: *French gastronomy, Uzbek gastronomy, food, culture, traditions, culinary art, hospitality, holidays, customs, ingredients.*

INTRODUCTION

The gastronomic traditions of the peoples of the world are the brightest reflection of the history, lifestyle, climate and culture of that people. Food is not only a means of satisfying biological needs, but also a symbol of social communication, celebration, identity and uniqueness. This article will analyze in a comparative way the gastronomic traditions of two great civilizations - France and Uzbekistan - their history, philosophy, characteristics and contribution to human culture.

French cuisine is included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and has become a symbol of high standards in the field of food all over the world. Uzbek cuisine, on the other hand, has centuries-old traditions formed in

the heart of the Great Silk Road and represents a harmonious synthesis of Eastern and Western tastes. Both cuisines have made a significant contribution to world gastronomy with their philosophy, rituals and unique flavors.

From a comparative methodological perspective, this article examines the food philosophies, cooking techniques, products and ingredients, table manners, and developments in modern gastronomy of both cultures. The aim is to reveal the unique yet multifaceted nature of human culture by identifying similarities and differences.

DISCUSSION

History of French cuisine

The roots of French cuisine go back to the Middle Ages. In the 14th–15th centuries, the art of cooking began to develop actively at the French court. Banquets at the court of the Dukes of Burgundy were unprecedentedly sophisticated and luxurious for that time. The book “*Le Cuisinier François*” (The French Cook), published in 1651 by François Pierre de la Varenne, considered the father of French gastronomy, laid the foundation for modern French cuisine. This work began the transition from the heavy, spice-rich dishes of the Middle Ages to a new style that revealed the light, tasteful taste of the product.

In the 18th century, the great chef Antonin Karem raised French cuisine to the level of a true art. He developed not only recipes for dishes, but also the aesthetics of their presentation. In the 19th century, Georges Auguste Escoffier promoted French cuisine internationally and, while working at the Savoy Hotel in London, formed the standards of kitchen management.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Nouvelle Cuisine movement emerged. Chefs such as Paul Bocuse and Michel Guerard replaced heavy sauces with lighter dishes that preserved the natural flavors of the produce. This revolution renewed French cuisine and gave it a modern spirit.¹

¹ Boniface, P. (2003). Tasting Tourism: Travelling for Food and Drink [Ta'mni tatib ko'rish turizmi: ovqat va ichimlik uchun sayohat]. Aldershot: Ashgate. Food, Culture & Society, 6(2), 145–160.

History of Uzbek cuisine

The history of Uzbek cuisine dates back to the centuries BC. With the emergence of the first cities in the Zarafshan, Amu Darya, and Syrdarya valleys, settled farming and animal husbandry traditions were formed. The combination of these two economic systems determined the basis of Uzbek cuisine - the combined use of cereals, meat, and vegetables.

As the Great Silk Road passed through Central Asia, cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva became trading centers where different cultures intersected. Influences from China, India, Iran, the Arab world, and Europe brought new ingredients, cooking methods, and flavors to Uzbek cuisine. For example, the widespread use of spices is believed to have come from Indian and Iranian influences, and some pastry dishes from Chinese influences.

The Timurid era (14th–16th centuries) was considered the golden age of Uzbek gastronomy. Hundreds of different dishes were prepared at the feasts held at the palaces of Amir Temur and Ulugbek. The Baburnama and other historical sources provide valuable information about the richness and diversity of the cuisine of this period.²

French table manners

French table culture is a complex system of social rituals. A formal French dinner consists of several stages: aperitif (drinks and snacks), entrée (first course - salad or terrine), plat principal (main course), fromage (cheesecake), dessert (dessert), café (coffee). Each stage is held at its own time and according to its own rules.

The arrangement of cutlery, such as cutlery and jewelry, at the French table is a work of art. The knife is placed on the left, the spoon is placed behind the knife, and wine glasses are placed in different sizes and arrangements. Each item has its

² Islamov, U., & Toshmatov, K. (2019). O'zbek milliy oshxonasini rivojlantirishning ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy jihatlari. O'zbekiston Milliy universiteti axborotnomasi, 3, 112–118.

own function and order of use. This clear order and aesthetics reflect the essence of French culture.

The French consider it rude to use a mobile phone during a meal. Conversation around the table is the most important part of the dinner. Politics, art, literature, philosophy are traditional topics of French table conversation. Criticism of the chef is avoided - this is an art that requires subtlety.

The quality indicator in French cuisine is the Michelin star system. First awarded by its founder in 1926, these stars have now become the benchmark for restaurants around the world. Three Michelin stars are the highest award for a chef. This system is an important mechanism for maintaining professional standards in French gastronomy.³

Uzbek table manners

The reception of guests at the Uzbek table has its own complex rituals and rules. As soon as a guest enters, tea (green tea or black tea) is immediately served. If bread and fruit are not placed on the table, the guest is not considered fully welcomed. This tradition dates back to the time before the Mongol invasion and has been preserved for centuries.

In an Uzbek family, the head of the house or an older man sits at the head of the table and is the first to offer food to guests. Reciting the Fatiha is a sacred ritual at the beginning and end of the table. During this, hands are raised open and the prayer is said "Amen". This ritual is an expression of religious and national values in the table culture.

Drinking tea occupies a special place in Uzbek culture. Tea is not poured completely for the guest - this means that the host wants to send the guest away as soon as possible. On the contrary, pouring less and "refreshing" more often indicates

³ Capatti, A., & Montanari, M. (2003). Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History. *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies*, 3(1), 88–90.

a desire to keep the guest longer. This subtle social language reveals a unique aspect of Uzbek communication culture.⁴

French cooking techniques

French cooking is one of the most technically complex and delicate schools of cooking. Sauté (rapid frying), braise (slow cooking), poché (boiling in water), flambé (flaming), en papillote (cooking in paper) - each of these techniques requires a specific temperature and time. Students in French cooking schools spend years mastering just these techniques.

The art of minimizing waste is also well-developed in French cuisine. In the direction called "cuisine de terroir" (cuisine of the land), all available products are used, nothing is wasted. Sauces are made from fish bones, broths from meat bones, and salads from vegetable skins. This philosophy is in harmony with the modern "zero waste" movement.

The role of wine in cooking is a unique feature of French gastronomy. Wine is not only a drink, but also an essential ingredient. "*Coq au vin*", "*Boeuf bourguignon*", "*Moules marinières*" - the names of these dishes also reflect the role of wine. French chefs adhere to the rule: "*Whatever wine you drink with the dish, cook with it.*"

Modernist cuisine – molecular gastronomy – plays a major role in modern French cuisine. Influenced by chefs such as Ferran Adrià and Heston Blumenthal, French chefs are also reinventing traditional dishes using modern technologies – liquid nitrogen, sous-vide, emulsification.⁵

Uzbek cooking techniques

⁴ Mussabekova, D. (2021). Gastroturizm va milliy meros: O'zbekiston tajribasi. Turizm va mehmonxona biznesi jurnali, 8(2), 44–53.

⁵ Girard, A. (2017). Cultural Heritage and Foodways: The Role of Gastronomy in National Identity [Madaniy meros va ovqatlanish odatlari: milliy identitetda gastronomiyaning o'rni]. International Journal of Heritage Studies, 23(7), 623–636.

At the heart of Uzbek cooking lies the tandoor and cauldron technique. A tandoor is a special clay oven in which bread, samosa, and other dough products are baked. The temperature inside the tandoor reaches 300–400 degrees, and this high temperature provides a unique browning and aroma to bread and samosa. Each region of Uzbekistan has its own tradition of making tandoors.

A cauldron is the second important element of Uzbek cooking. A round cauldron made of thick steel or cast iron is heated over coals or wood. Frying, simmering, boiling - all this is done in a cauldron. When cooking pilaf, it is extremely important that the cauldron is thick and heated evenly - this skill requires years of experience.

Spices play a big role in Uzbek cuisine. Cumin, coriander, red pepper, turmeric (turmeric), and black pepper – these spices make Uzbek dishes not only tasty, but also fragrant. Each spice has its own place in culinary science: cumin is used for pilaf and other meat dishes, and coriander is used more for salads and relishes. Uzbek cuisine also has a developed tradition of fermentation. Yatiq (hardened yogurt), suzma (a thick product squeezed from yogurt), kurt (dry yogurt) – these are not only dishes, but also methods of preservation that have been tested for centuries. These products helped to preserve food longer in the hot climate of Central Asia and remain constant elements of the Uzbek table today.⁶

RESULTS

There are a number of important similarities between French and Uzbek cuisines, even though they were formed in different climates and cultural traditions. The first and most important commonality is the respect for local products and adherence to seasonality. The French chef's philosophy of "terroir" and the Uzbek

⁶ Zubaida, S. (1994). National, Communal and Global Dimensions in Middle Eastern Food Cultures [O'rta Sharq ovqat madaniyatlarida milliy, jamoa va global o'lchamlar]. In S. Zubaida & R. Tapper (Eds.), Culinary Cultures of the Middle East (pp. 33–45). London: I.B. Tauris.

gardener's love of local fruits and vegetables stem from essentially the same idea: the best food is made from the freshest and most locally sourced produce.

The second important similarity is the time and attention spent on the cooking process. The French "cassoulet" or "pot-au-feu" is simmered for hours; the Uzbek dimlama or "kavordok" also requires several hours of demanding attention. In both cultures, fast food is perceived as a sign of poor quality.

The third commonality is the social function of the table. For the French, "le repas gastronomique des Français" is a social ritual, a means of communication and unity. For Uzbeks, the table is also a bridge of communication, a place to strengthen relationships and restore community spirit. In both cultures, eating is a symbol of unity.

The main difference between the two cuisines is in the technique and aesthetic approach. French cuisine is based on a more precise, scientific approach and aesthetic presentation. Each dish is a true work of art, and the order of presentation, color harmony and portion size are extremely important. In Uzbek cuisine, abundance, satiety and guest satisfaction are the main goals; presentation is secondary.

Religious and cultural influences also create a significant difference between the two cuisines. Uzbek cuisine has been shaped for many centuries under the influence of Islam, and pork and alcohol are not found in traditional recipes. In French cuisine, pork products (ham, saucisson, pâté) and wine are still important elements.

Geographical and climatic differences also determine the differences in cuisine. The different climatic zones of France - coastal, mountainous and inland - ensure the diversity of its cuisine. Uzbekistan is a dry region with a predominantly continental climate, where vegetables and fruits are consumed in large quantities. The French consume a lot of fish and seafood, while Uzbeks consume more meat (mutton, beef, chicken) and fat.

In the 21st century, globalization is having an impact on both cuisines. Although French cuisine is widely known worldwide, modern French chefs are creating fusion dishes, influenced by Asian, African and American cuisines. The “Neo-bistro” movement, in which Japanese, Lebanese or Mexican influences are noticeable, is actively developing in Parisian restaurants.

Uzbek cuisine is also changing. Restaurants in Tashkent and other cities offer traditional dishes in new forms of presentation, with modern decor and service standards. At the same time, a fast food culture is expanding among young people - it is not replacing, but somewhat displacing, traditional long table rituals.

Both cuisines are experiencing strong growth in the field of “gastrotourism”. France is the backbone of European gastrotourism - millions of tourists come every year not only to see the Eiffel Tower, but also to taste authentic French cuisine in Parisian restaurants, Burgundy wineries or Normandy bakeries. Gastrotourism also plays an important role in the tourism flow that has increased in Uzbekistan in recent years.

The French gastronomic heritage was recognized by UNESCO in 2010 - this fact in itself determines the place of culinary culture in human culture. Efforts are also underway to officially recognize Uzbek cuisine at the international level. The tradition of making pilaf was included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2016 - this is an important step towards the international recognition of Uzbek gastronomy.

The modern world also poses new challenges to cuisines. Climate change, population growth, food security issues - all this inevitably changes gastronomic traditions. French chefs are developing menus based on the principles of sustainable development; Uzbek farmers are increasing interest in organic farming.

The most important task in both cultures is to preserve tradition and not separate it from the times. This rule is relevant not only for cuisine, but also for all cultural heritage. The French "maître cuisinier" and the Uzbek chef together fulfill the same task: they bring the wisdom of the past to the present, and the present to the future.

CONCLUSION

A comparative study of French and Uzbek gastronomic traditions shows that the art of cooking is a deep cultural code. Both cuisines, formed in their historical context, reflect the spirituality, values, and philosophy of life of their people. French cuisine is a harmony of order, delicacy, technique, and aesthetics; Uzbek cuisine is a symbol of abundance, warmth, community, and hospitality.

If we consider the similarities, we see that both peoples treat food not only as a biological necessity, but also as a social, spiritual, and aesthetic phenomenon. Respect for local products, attention to the cooking process, and the social function of the table - these common values unite both cultures.

In the era of globalization, preserving gastronomic traditions is not only a matter of cultural heritage, but also a matter of the connection and strength of society to its roots. French baguette and Uzbek tandoori bread, French wine glass and Uzbek tea cup - these are not just food products, but living symbols of thousands of years of history and wisdom. Treating them with care and passing them on to future generations is the responsibility of all of us.

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