

**BAKLAVA: THE HISTORY OF A MULTICULTURAL
DESSERT FROM EARLY MODERN TO
CONTEMPORARY ERA**

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CONTEMPORARY ERA**

by
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BAKLAVA: THE HISTORY OF A MULTICULTURAL DESSERT FROM EARLY MODERN TO CONTEMPORARY ERA

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To my father and daughter



DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and that this is the true copy of my thesis, including the final revisions, approved by my thesis committee. All data and information have been obtained, produced, and presented in accordance with the rules of research ethics and principles of academic honesty. As required by these rules, to the best of my knowledge I have acknowledged ideas, thoughts, and any copyrighted material in accordance with the standard referencing rules. I certify that any part of this thesis has not been submitted for a degree or diploma in another educational institution.

Cemile Özkan Hitay

ABSTRACT

This study approaches baklava not merely as a food item, but as a multidimensional cultural phenomenon situated at the intersection of history, cultural memory, and regional identity by evaluating its evolution, social and cultural significance, regional variations, and continuity. The first chapter investigates its origins by comparing thin-layered pastries in Central Asia, multilayered sweets in Byzantine sources, and syrup-based pastries in Arab-Persian traditions, concluding that baklava primarily evolved within Turkish culinary culture. The second chapter analyzes its refinement in the Ottoman palace kitchen, where techniques such as dough preparation, layering, and syruping reached their peak. Cookbooks from the Ottoman to the Republican era are reviewed to trace changes in recipes, production, and perception. Regional varieties across Turkey's seven geographical zones reveal differences in ingredients, layer counts, and cooking methods, reflecting local taste and identity. The research demonstrates that baklava, through its historical origins, technical development, and regional adaptations, constitutes a living culinary heritage; it also emphasizes that in the modern era, geographical indications and appellation certificates play a crucial role in preserving its cultural continuity and economic value. In conclusion, baklava is evaluated not only as a dessert but as a powerful symbol of national identity, cultural belonging, and social memory. By situating baklava as a dynamic heritage at the intersection of history, culture, and society, this research offers an original contribution to the field of gastronomy studies.

Keywords: Turkish cuisine, baklava, gastronomic heritage, regional diversity, cultural identity

ÖZET

Bu çalışma baklavayı yalnızca bir gıda maddesi olarak değil, tarih, kültürel hafıza ve bölgesel kimliğin kesiştiği noktada yer alan çok boyutlu bir kültürel olgu olarak ele alarak evrimini, sosyal ve kültürel önemini, bölgesel değişimlerini ve sürekliliğini değerlendirmektedir. İlk bölüm, Orta Asya'daki ince katlı hamur işlerini, Bizans kaynaklarındaki çok katlı tatlıları ve Arap-Fars geleneklerindeki şuruplu hamur işlerini karşılaştırarak kökenlerini incelemektedir ve baklavanın öncelikle Türk mutfak kültürü içerisinde geliştiği sonucuna varmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, hamur hazırlama, katmanlama ve şuruplama gibi tekniklerin zirveye ulaştığı Osmanlı saray mutfağındaki gelişimini analiz etmektedir. Tariflerdeki, üretimdeki ve algıdaki değişiklikleri izlemek için Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet dönemine kadar yemek kitapları incelenmektedir. Türkiye'nin yedi coğrafi bölgesindeki bölgesel çeşitler, yerel tat ve kimliği yansıtan malzemeler, katman sayıları ve pişirme yöntemlerindeki farklılıkları ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma, baklavanın tarihi kökenleri, teknik gelişimi ve bölgesel uyarlamaları yoluyla yaşayan bir mutfak mirası oluşturduğunu göstermektedir; Ayrıca, modern çağda coğrafi işaretlerin ve unvan belgelerinin kültürel sürekliliğini ve ekonomik değerini korumada önemli bir rol oynadığı vurgulanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, baklava yalnızca bir tatlı olarak değil, aynı zamanda ulusal kimliğin, kültürel aidiyetin ve toplumsal hafızanın güçlü bir simgesi olarak da değerlendirilmektedir. Baklavayı tarih, kültür ve toplumun kesiştiği noktada dinamik bir miras olarak konumlandıran bu araştırma, gastronomi çalışmaları alanına özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türk mutfağı, baklava, gastronomi mirası, bölgesel çeşitlilik, kültürel kimlik

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim and Scope of the Study

Culinary culture holds a significant place in the evaluation of civilizations and cultures. What people eat and drink provides insights into themselves, the society they belong to, and the societies they interact with. The Turkish cuisine, which has been in interaction with various states and societies across different geographies for centuries, offers a wide range of culinary diversity. This richness is especially evident in its dessert culture. Baklava, one of the most distinctive syrup-based desserts, holds a highly significant place in Turkish culinary culture. Having delighted palates on special occasions such as feasts, weddings, festivals, the month of Ramadan, and religious holidays, baklava has endured to the present day. Although it is now widely available and found everywhere, baklava is still most prominently seen in Anatolia, especially during holidays and wedding meals.

In this study, baklava—an important element of Turkish culture—has been examined from a broad perspective, focusing on its historical development since its first appearance, its place in culinary culture, and its symbolic meanings in society. The primary aim of this research is to analyze the evolution of baklava from its origins, its place in Turkish cuisine, and its socio-cultural significance in a holistic and objective manner. In line with this aim, the study seeks to answer the following questions: What are the etymological and historical origins of baklava? How has baklava been represented in Turkish culinary history and written sources? How has baklava diversified and become regionalized over time? What is the symbolic role of baklava in cultural memory?

To address these questions, both historical and regional data have been examined. This dual perspective allows the research to reveal not only the continuity and

transformation of baklava across centuries but also its geographical diversity in present-day Turkey. To conduct this study, both primary and secondary sources were utilized. Historical research based on Ottoman archival records, divan poetry, and folk literature was examined to trace early references to baklava and to understand its symbolic role in cultural life. Second, cookbooks published from the Ottoman period through the Turkish Republican era, up to the 1980s, were employed as primary sources. All baklava recipes found in these cookbooks were identified individually and systematically analyzed. Lastly, regional recipes were collected from the seven geographical regions of Turkey, drawing on provincial cultural web portals, television programs, and cookbooks devoted to the regional cuisines of Türkiye.

The analysis followed a combined approach. A comparative method is used to identify continuity and change in Ottoman and Republican era cookbooks. Recipes are systematically categorized according to number of layers, types of fat, filling ingredients, sweeteners, and cooking techniques. In addition, baklava is studied as a cultural element by analyzing its role in festive meals, religious celebrations, weddings, and its reflections in poetry and oral traditions. In order to trace baklava on a regional basis, provincial data are organized into tables and grouped into seven geographical regions. Through this system, similarities and differences between regions are identified, and clusters of shared features are determined on the basis of dough preparation, fillings, and cooking methods.

There are limitations in the data collection phase of the research. Although baklava is a very popular subject today, it is extremely difficult to find relevant data in historical sources. For instance, there is no surviving baklava recipe from the 15th or 16th century, and therefore conclusions rely on indirect data such as palace accounting records. Even if baklava is mentioned in palace kitchen documents, the lack of a direct recipe

limits the flow of data. Similarly, when tracing the presence of baklava in regional cuisines, the absence of comprehensive resources focused on all seven regions—or the lack of specific information about baklava in some of them—poses another limitation. Since this study is largely a compilation based on available recipes, it does not provide equal depth for every region. Moreover, the effects of industrialization and modernization complicate the picture of traditional practices. Finally, as baklava remains a very popular topic, it is subject to a great deal of popular discourse, which often results in misinformation.

Despite these limitations, the methodology of this study contributes to the field by combining historical and regional perspectives. Instead of a simple collection of recipes, it offers a systematic analysis supported by cultural interpretation. In this way, it provides an original framework that highlights baklava as a food with both historical continuity and regional variety.

1.2 Desserts in Ottoman Cuisine

In the Ottoman cuisine, desserts had an important place both in daily life and in banquets and festivals. Ottoman palace cuisine has a very rich dessert culture, as can be seen in Ottoman cooking manuscripts and cookbooks. Halvas, pastry desserts soaked in syrup, aşure, milk based pudding, fruit desserts, fruits-based beverages called “şerbet”, fruit compotes, jams and confectionery constitute the basic categories of desserts. All sugary foods, except jams, were prepared in the *Helvahane* (Confectionery Kitchen) of the Ottoman Palace. Examination of the *Helvahane Defteri* (Confectionery Records) reveals the ingredients used for the preparation of pastes and various desserts. In this record, seventeen types of jam are mentioned. The *Helvahane* also functioned in many ways like a pharmacy, where medicinal pastes and remedies were produced alongside

confections. The jams, however, were prepared in the *Reçelhane*, a subsidiary unit of the *Helvahane*, where numerous varieties of fruit preserves were made (Terzioğlu, 1992). From a historical perspective, it is evident that before the introduction of refined sugar, desserts were sweetened primarily with honey and molasses. Over time, the choice of sweetener came to signify social status, reflecting the increasing prestige associated with sugar consumption in Ottoman culinary culture.

Among various types of desserts, halva (*helva*)—prepared with flour or starch roasted in butter and sweetened with syrup—occupied a significant place both in imperial banquet menus and in the daily life of ordinary people. Halva appears as a dessert with a wide variety such as honey halva (*bal helvası*), grape molasses halva (*pekmez helvası*), almond based halva (*helva-yı levzine*), rice starch halva (*pirinç helvası*), fresh cheese halva (*taze peynir helvası*), semolina halva (*irmik helvası*). In Ottoman culinary culture, halva ceased to be an ordinary dessert and gained a sociological importance. “Helva” was a dessert that is cooked and eaten to glorify joy, to celebrate births or victory in war. In the 18th century, a new social gathering is organized around halva. When people gathered in winter evenings, they cooked halva. These meetings organized in Ottoman mansions in Istanbul, called “halva conversations” started to served as means of socialization among the Ottoman elites (Tufan, 2008).

Pastry desserts soaked in syrup are very important in Ottoman dessert culture. The doughs prepared with different techniques were flavored with syrup. Pastry desserts soaked in syrup served in the Ottoman palace during the banquets were numerous such as fried dough soaked in syrup (*lalanga, lokma*), *baklava*, thin pancakes or shredded pastry soaked in syrup (*kataif-kadayıf*) cakes soaked in syrup (*revani*), cookies (*şeker börek, şeker kurabiye*).

The most popular dessert in the Ottoman Palace was a pastry sweet sometimes referred to simply as *baklava* and at other times as *rikak baklava*. This dessert, an indispensable feature of *iftar* and festive tables, also held an important ceremonial role: it was distributed to the Janissaries on the day of *ulûfe* (salary) payment and on the fifteenth day of Ramadan, following the ceremonial visit to the *Hırka-i Şerîf* (the Holy Mantle of the Prophet). The dough sheets for *rikak baklava* were fried in clarified oil, and in the version prepared for the Janissaries, honey was used generously as the main sweetener, while sugar appeared in much smaller quantities. Almonds were also added to enrich its flavor and texture. (Bilgin, 2008a). It is possible to say that the content and preparation of baklava is shaped according to the status.

Another flavor that stands out in pastry desserts soaked in syrup in Ottoman palace cuisine was *kadayıf*. The varieties of *kadayıf* recorded in Ottoman and early Republican culinary sources include the following: *kadayıf*, *sütlü kadayıf* (milk *kadayıf*), *francalı kadayıf* (made with bread), *saray kadayıfı* (palace *kadayıf*), *kaymaklı kadayıf* (with clotted cream), *beyaz kadayıf* (white *kadayıf*), *kadayıf mücveri* (a fritter-style *kadayıf*), *yufkalı kadayıf* (made with thin dough sheets), *yağsız kadayıf* (without butter or oil), *âdî tel kadayıf* (plain shredded *kadayıf*), *künefe*, *saray tel kadayıfı* (palace-style shredded *kadayıf*), *yassı kadayıf* (flat *kadayıf*), *ceviz içli tel sarma kadayıf* (rolled shredded *kadayıf* with walnut filling), *ekmek kadayıfı* (bread *kadayıf*), and *fodula kadayıfı* (Bilgin, 2008a).

Aşure (wheat pudding flavored with dried fruits and nuts) was also an important traditional dessert in the Ottoman Empire. It was cooked every year on the 10th day of the month of Muharrem in Halvahane in the Ottoman palace.

It was customary for *aşure* (ashura pudding) to be distributed with a special ceremony to the sultan, members of the imperial harem, high-ranking state officials, the

imarets (public soup kitchens), and the general populace. The *aşure* prepared in the palace was presented to state dignitaries in specially designed *aşure* jugs, symbolizing imperial generosity and ceremonial order. This palace version of *aşure* differed from the one prepared for the public. Known as *süzme saray aşuresi* (“strained palace *aşure*”), it was made with crushed wheat, a small amount of rice, almonds, and only a few chickpeas, resulting in a smoother and more refined texture (Samancı, 2008a).

Zerde, rice pudding flavored with saffron was a dessert that people of every status can eat in the palace. It is cooked during the banquets in the palace and in soup kitchens (*imarethane*). It is made with rice, sugar, starch and, for coloring saffron, ground hazelnuts and almonds are used in the palace kitchen. It was sweetened with honey and molasses until sugar introduced. Stating that sugar was used only to prepare the meals of the highest level in the 1720 festival, İşkorkutan said that only honey was used for the meals of other groups. With the advent of sugar, we can imagine that the zerde is shaped by the status of the palate (İşkorkutan, 2017).

Milk puddings are among the desserts that are definitely included in both daily menus and the banquet in the Ottoman palace cuisine. The principal varieties of milk-based desserts include *muhallebi* (milk pudding), *tavukgöğsü* (milk pudding with shredded chicken breast), *sütlaç* (rice pudding), *güllaç* (layered starch sheets with milk and rosewater), *sütlü zerde* (a milky version of saffron rice pudding), *sütlü şekerli muhallebi* (sweetmilk pudding), *su muhallebisi* (water pudding), *keşkül* (almond-flavored milk dessert), *kazandibi* (caramelized milk pudding). References to *muhallebi* appear in the morning menus prepared for Sultan Mehmed II (*Fatih Sultan Mehmet*). However, since seven pairs of chicken breasts were used in the preparation of this pudding, it is believed that the dessert in question was actually *tavukgöğsü* (Yerasimos, 2002). Milk-

based desserts are also found in the pre-dawn meals served before fasting during Ramadan (sahur) in palaces and mansions (Samancı, 2011). Contrary to modern assumptions, *güllaç* was not a dessert consumed exclusively during Ramadan in Ottoman cuisine; it was also served at weddings, banquets, and other celebratory occasions throughout the year.

With the cultivation of a wide variety of fruits in the imperial geography and their supply to the palace, the fruits were used in many different desserts and confectioneries. The fruits desserts can be classified as as jam, *murabba*, *perverde*, *paluze* and *çevirme*. *Murabba* is a concentrated jam / marmalade filtered without grains. *Perverde* is a dense marmalade made from crushed and drained fruit or flower. *Paluzes* were made with water, sugar and starch. *Çevirme* is a candy that is turned into a paste by mixing in one direction while cooking. The range of fruit-based desserts (*meyveli tatlılar*) recorded in Ottoman culinary sources is extensive. These include *kayısı tatlısı* (apricot dessert), *kabak tatlısı* (pumpkin dessert), *ayva tatlısı* (quince dessert), *şeftali tatlısı* (peach dessert), *elma-armut tatlısı* (apple and pear dessert), *portakal-mandalina tatlısı* (orange and tangerine dessert), *patlıcan tatlısı* (eggplant dessert), *vişne tatlısı* (sour cherry dessert), *Frenk üzümü tatlısı* (red currant dessert), *sumak paluzesi* (sumac pudding), *güllaç paludesi* (starch pudding with milk), *gülbeşeker* (rose preserve), *pekmez tatlısı* (molasses dessert), *nar macunu* (pomegranate paste), *limon macunu* (lemon paste), *Hindistan cevizi macunu* (coconut paste), *altın varak macunu* (gold leaf paste), *haşhaş macunu* (poppy paste), *kızılcık macunu* (cornelian cherry paste), *turunç reçeli* (bitter orange jam), *ufak limon reçeli* (small lemon jam), *kabak reçeli* (gourd jam), *kavun reçeli* (melon jam), *ayva reçeli* (quince jam), *elma reçeli* (apple jam), *kızılcık reçeli* (cornelian cherry jam), *patlıcan reçeli* (eggplant jam), *taze ceviz reçeli* (fresh walnut jam), *armut reçeli* (pear jam), *şeftali*

reçeli (peach jam), *vişne reçeli* (sour cherry jam), *kiraz reçeli* (cherry jam), *havuç reçeli* (carrot jam), *muşmula reçeli* (medlar jam), *ağaç kavunu reçeli* (citron jam), *havuç perverdesi* (carrot conserve), *ayva perverdesi* (quince conserve), *zencefil perverdesi* (ginger conserve), *elmasiye* (apple dessert), and *ayva murabbası* (quince preserve) (Bilgin, 2008b).

Fruits were used not only in desserts and confectionery, but also in the production of fruit compotes called “*hoşab*”, beverage called “*şerbet*”, syrups called “*şurup*”. These beverages made of fresh or dried fruit, flower extracts or spices in syrup were prepared in imperial confectionary. It is possible to think that the main starting points are for medical purposes. Later, it became indispensable for palace menus and banquets. These sweet beverages were also status indicators. Based on the various banquet menus offered at the palace in the 17th century, studied by Hedda Reindl-Kiel, it is revealed that *şerbet* was not served to everyone. Only pashas and high ranking people drink *şerbet* (Reindl-Kiel, 2016).

Hafiz Mehmed, the author of one of the *Sûrnames* of the 1720 festival, notes that the hierarchy even determines the bowls in which *şerbet* is served. According to his statement, the sherbet was served with a bowl for the top ranks, telatin whip (soft calf or ox leather flask) for the middle level, and a leather whip (leather flask) for the lower ones. It is seen that the sherbet served in a leather whip and served to the janissaries was made with honey (İşkorkutan, 2017).

The names of fifty-three desserts are mentioned in *Bir Ziyafet Defteri*, which records the circumcision festival held in 1539. During this grand feast, fifteen varieties of *helva*, twenty kinds of jam, as well as *perverdes*, *paluzes*, various confections, milk-based sweets, sugar pastries, and *zerde* were served. This event—organized to celebrate the

circumcision of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent's sons Mehmed, Mustafa, and Selim—was one of the most magnificent public festivities of the sixteenth century. The celebration lasted for fifty-two days and nights and was immortalized in both written accounts and miniature paintings known collectively as the *Sûrnâme-i Hümayûn*. The detailed record of the menu in *Bir Ziyafet Defteri* provides valuable insight into the diversity, sophistication, and ceremonial importance of palace cuisine in the classical Ottoman era. The wide range of desserts served during the festival reflects not only the abundance and prosperity of the imperial kitchen (*Matbah-ı Âmire*) but also the symbolic function of sweets as emblems of joy, generosity, and imperial grandeur.

With the shift in the political orientation of the Ottoman rulers from the second half of the nineteenth century onward, European-style banquets began to be organized for hosting foreign guests (Samancı, 2007). Alongside traditional dishes, European-style courses and desserts also started to appear on these menus. Moreover, the sequence of service in these banquets departed from the traditional Ottoman order. Desserts, too, reflected this transformation: creamy European confections replaced sometimes many of the traditional sweets, and while desserts had formerly been served midway through the meal, they were now placed at the end of the menu in accordance with European dining customs.

1.3 Literature Review About the Baklava

One of the emblematic desserts of Turkish cuisine, baklava draws attention not only as a gastronomic product but also as a multifaceted cultural element with historical and social dimensions. From the kitchens of the Ottoman palace to everyday family tables, from religious and festive rituals to guild organizations, baklava has appeared across a wide spectrum, attracting interest from multiple disciplines through both its

methods of production and its commercial value. In recent years, studies in history, literature, cultural anthropology, and gastronomy have approached baklava not merely as a dessert, but as a part of identity, power, and daily life. This study aims to present a holistic evaluation of baklava's journey from Central Asia to the present, by situating existing academic and archival research within its chronological, thematic, and conceptual contexts.

In this regard, Charles Perry's article "The Taste for Layered Bread among the Nomadic Turks and the Central Asian Origins of Baklava" (1994) presents one of the most comprehensive discussions on the origins of baklava. Perry argues that the sweets called *gastris* and *koptoplakous*, often traced back to Ancient Greece, were in fact not layered pastries and therefore cannot be directly linked to baklava's origins. Instead, he examines linguistic and ethnographic evidence that nomadic Turkic groups of Central Asia had been producing layered breads since the 11th century; he interprets Mahmud al-Kaşgari's expression *qatma yuvgha* as an early example of this tradition. Perry also views Azerbaijani *paklava* as an "intermediary form" between the layered bread culture of the nomadic Turks and the sweet traditions of settled Iran, and he argues that the paper-thin pastry version of baklava known today developed particularly in the kitchens of Topkapı Palace. This approach offers a strong framework that connects baklava both to the culinary traditions of nomadic Turks and to the sophisticated practices of the Ottoman court.

Another important work on the subject is *Tatlıların Sultanı Baklava* ("The Sultan of Sweets: Baklava", 2016), prepared under the auspices of BAKTAD with the support of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce by history scholars Arif Kolay, Nurgül Bozkurt, Şakir Turan, and Hacı Murat Arabacı. This book stands out as the first comprehensive

study that treats baklava across a wide frame—from its etymology, to its place in the Ottoman palace, to its representations in literature. By highlighting baklava as a rooted element of Turkish culture, this book serves as a key reference. However, some of the information presented in the work lacks critical verification. For instance, Sula Bozis claims that the Byzantine sweet known as *kopte* (*koptoklous*) was baklava. The book reproduces this claim without question. Yet, as Charles Perry (1994) also notes, the term *koptoplakous* in Athenaeus’ text is not directly defined but associated with *gastris*, a Cretan dessert. Prepared by mixing crushed sesame with honey into two layers and inserting fillings such as walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, and poppy seeds, it resembles baklava superficially due to its layered structure; however, it does not contain the paper-thin sheets of dough that characterize baklava.

The work *Kırk Kat Baklava Tarihi* (“The Forty-Layered History of Baklava”), written by Mary Işın and Burak Onaran and published in 2024, is composed of two parts. The first, written by Mary Işın, traces the history of baklava up until the 1900s. She begins with grains and, by extension, pastry sheets as her point of departure, discusses etymological debates, and touches on baklava’s presence in the palace, during Ramadan, and on special occasions, as well as its representations in oral and written literature. Her narrative, however, is conveyed in a more popular and informal style than in a chronological or systematic fashion. In the section where she provides information on the makers of baklava and the ingredients used, a striking debate emerges. Işın finds misleading a record suggesting that walnuts were purchased for baklava in the 16th century, stating that there are no recipes using walnuts as filling until the 1900s, and that almonds were more widely used. She also cites and questions Reşat Ekrem Koçu’s remark: “In an Istanbul mansion, the filling for baklava was always walnut; pistachio and

clotted cream baklava are recent innovations for Istanbul.” In this context, Işın’s claim appears debatable, since walnuts in Istanbul’s historical geography are not only culinary ingredients but also linked to the city’s ecological fabric. The core of Istanbul—the area within the city walls, especially around Sultanahmet and Gülhane—was historically covered with walnut trees. As mentioned in Cem Karaca’s famous song, these naturally growing walnut trees were part of the city’s endemic flora, and monumental walnut trees still survive under protection today (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Monumental Tree Inventory). This strengthens the argument for the historical continuity of walnut in Istanbul’s culinary culture.

The second part, authored by Burak Onaran, examines the development of baklava from the 1900s to the present through a sociological lens. This section evaluates the discourse of the national cuisine in relation to baklava, and discusses the impact of technological advances on baklava production. It also notes that while Tarsus baklava initially held prominence in the search for a geographical anchor in national identity-building—being distributed by train to other cities—it was later the entrepreneurial spirit of Antep masters opening shops in Istanbul that brought Antep baklava to increasing prominence. Over time, the term “Antep Baklavası” took root in collective memory and became widely used.

More recent academic studies directly focusing on baklava from various disciplinary angles also draw attention.

Gözükara (2007) assessed baklava in the context of geographical indications (GI). This study of the national and international GI processes of Antep/Gaziantep baklava suggested that such mechanisms could function as a form of resistance against inequalities within the global food regime.

Acar (2012) analyzed the quality characteristics of flours used in baklava production and their effects on the final product. Through experiments on chemical, physicochemical, and rheological parameters, the study demonstrated that flour quality is decisive for the stretchability of pastry sheets, as well as for texture and sensory qualities.

Akkaya (2017) investigated the effects of storage on baklava's sensory quality. Research on storing both syruped and dry baklava through freezing revealed that storage duration significantly affects flavor and appearance, offering a practical solution for delivering fresh products to domestic and international markets.

Ömeroğlu (2020) explored the reusability of baklava waste in microbial production processes. Syrup residues were tested as substrates for the production of citric acid, ethyl alcohol, pigments, and polymers, showing potential as a sustainable resource.

Özsoy (2020) examined occupational health and safety awareness in the baklava sector. A field study in Gaziantep revealed perceptions of risk, safety training, and views on workplace accidents, emphasizing the need to strengthen a culture of occupational safety in the sector.

Güngör (2021) studied the impact of consumer-based brand equity on purchase intentions using Gaziantep baklava as a case. Statistical analysis of survey data showed that brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty significantly influence purchase intentions, highlighting the role of GIs in shaping brand identity and consumer behavior.

Güneş (2022) researched the use of acorn flour in baklava production. Experiments with different ratios showed, through sensory analysis, that a 15% ratio yielded acceptable results, suggesting that alternative ingredients can be integrated into traditional recipes and hold potential for sustainable gastronomy.

Tufan (2022) examined the transition from artisanal to industrialized production in Gaziantep baklava from a sociological perspective. Interviews with masters revealed transformations in production tools, work organization, and craftsmanship, showing how increasing mechanization reshaped production relations.

Karabudak (2024) approached baklava within Gaziantep's gastronomic culture from a multidimensional perspective, exploring its history, ingredients, production techniques, cultural representations, place in folk literature, master-apprentice relations, and role in festivals, as well as its media presence and urban imagery. He concludes that baklava is not only food, but also a living cultural identity.

Serdar (2024) investigated baklava's supply chain and economic performance. By examining production-to-consumption processes, logistical challenges, and export potential, the study emphasized the critical balance between freshness, quality, and cost, highlighting baklava's role in the Turkish economy and its potential in international markets.

Aslan (2025) analyzed the impact of GI-certified Gaziantep baklava on gastronomy tourism. Semi-structured interviews showed that GI status enhances brand reliability, influences destination choices, and allows baklava production processes to be experienced as part of experiential tourism. The study underscores the strategic importance of GI-certified products for sustainable tourism.

Taken as a whole, the literature has examined baklava from diverse perspectives: geographical indications and brand value (Gözükara, Aslan, Karabudak, Güngör); production techniques and quality (Acar, Akkaya); supply chain and economy (Serdar); sustainability and alternative ingredients (Güneş, Ömeroğlu); labor and production relations (Özsoy, Tufan). This variety demonstrates that baklava has become not only a

part of culinary culture, but also a multifaceted research object with economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions.

My study offers a complementary perspective to these multidimensional approaches in the literature. It examines together the origins of baklava, its historical development in Ottoman–Turkish cuisine, its cultural and symbolic meanings, and its regional varieties across Turkey’s seven geographical regions. In doing so, baklava is evaluated not merely as an economic or touristic product, but as a cultural symbol reflecting historical continuity, regional culinary traditions, and collective memory.

2. WHAT IS BAKLAVA? A MULTILAYERED CULINARY DEFINITION

2.1 Definition and Geographical Diversity of Baklava

Baklava is a traditional pastry dessert prepared by adding walnuts, pistachios, almonds or hazelnuts between thin layers of dough and sweetened with sherbet, depending on the geographical region where it is produced. This dessert, which has a deep-rooted history in the Anatolian, Middle Eastern and Balkan cuisines, continues to be widely consumed today. Baklava has developed various variations depending on the ingredients and cooking techniques used in different geographies. For example, while in Anatolia, versions with walnuts and pistachios, which are also commonly sweetened with sugar syrup, stand out, in Greek cuisine, additional ingredients such as cinnamon and honey are often preferred. Meanwhile in Azerbaijani cuisine, baklava is similar to the Anatolian examples in terms of its filling, but it differs in terms of dough thickness and usually consists of 7-8 layers. In Arab cuisine, the syrup of baklava is flavored with rose water to give the dessert its unique character. These regional differences show that baklava has evolved within a broad cultural interaction and has been adopted and diversified by different societies. At the same time, such a wide geographical spread of baklava has brought about ongoing debates about its origins.

The earliest written sources on the history of baklava have given rise to many different views on the origin of this dessert. In this section, different interpretations of the historical origin of baklava and the academic debates that have formed around these interpretations will be discussed.

2.2 Academic Discussions on the Origin of Baklava

The debates on the origin of baklava stem from the fact that this dessert has been adopted and diversified in different geographies throughout history. Today, baklava, which is embraced by various cultural communities as an inseparable part of their national cuisines, has become not only a gastronomic product but also a symbol of identity and cultural heritage. Therefore, the discussions on the historical origin of baklava are not limited to the origin of a dessert but also include issues of cultural belonging and representation. Three main approaches stand out in the literature on this issue: the view that baklava originated in Central Asia and is a continuation of ancient Turkish pastries, the thesis stated that the dessert is based on Byzantine culinary tradition, and lastly the approach that attributes the origin of baklava to the Middle East, especially the Arab-Persian culinary culture of the Abbasid period (Perry, 1994; Perry, 2013; Nasrallah, 2007). Each view bases its thesis on historical documents, similar recipes and cultural continuities. However, the available data make it difficult to reach a definitive conclusion about the origin of baklava, which is why the debates around baklava remain relevant even today.

Despite the popular claims that baklava comes from the Assyrians (TasteAtlas, t.y.) the written sources we have about Assyrian cuisine mostly consist of recipes on cuneiform tablets about grains, meat and some desserts (Bottero,1985). However, there is no direct, concrete evidence that a dessert similar to baklava in the modern sense existed in the Assyrian period. This relationship, suggested by some popular discourses, is not based on any archaeological or written documents and therefore does not carry academic validity. In this context, it is not possible to establish a direct connection between the Assyrian culinary tradition and baklava in the light of the available scientific data.

The debate over the origins of baklava sheds lights not only on the origin of a dessert, but also on the centuries-long cultural interactions, migrations, and evolution of culinary techniques between the Eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. Both the Greek and Turkish sides put forward various claims about the historical antecedents of this multilayered dessert.

The claim that traces of desserts resembling baklava exist in ancient Greek sources is based particularly on the interpretations of some researchers who study Byzantine cuisine. The most notable of these is the view put forward by Professor Speros Vryonis in his work “The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor”. In the chapter titled “The Byzantine Residue in Turkish Anatolia”, Vryonis argues that there is a continuity of taste and content between modern Turkish and ancient Greek desserts, especially pointing to similarities in the use of honey and dried nuts. Moreover, he claims that the dessert called “*kopte*” or “*kopton*” (also known as *koptoplakous*), which is thought to date back to the Byzantine period, is identical with Turkish baklava. This claim is based on the work of Athenaeus, “*Deipnosophistai*”, from the 2nd century AD, and the work of Phedon Koukoules, “*Vyzantinon Vios kai Politismos*” (Vryonis, 1971).

However, the text and recipe that form the basis of this interpretation do not contain sufficient technical details to establish a direct resemblance to baklava. In Athenaeus’ text, the expression “*koptoplakous*” only occurs as a word and is associated with the Cretan dessert called “*gastris*” that follows. The product described consists of crushed sesame mixed with honey and formed into two layers, with fillings such as walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts and poppy seeds placed between them. Although it has a similar surface appearance due to its layered structure, there is no element of thin layers of dough or pastry in this dessert. Although some interpretations associate the words in

this recipe with dough in the modern sense, the production techniques included in the text clearly indicate that this is a sesame-based dessert (Perry, 1994).

Although the *placenta* dessert from Ancient Roman cuisine (Apicius, 1936) is presented in some studies as a precursor to baklava, establishing a direct continuity between the two is not accurate, either technically or in terms of ingredients. *Placenta* is a baked pastry made by layering thick sheets of dough with fresh sheep's cheese and honey, and is more akin to a baked dessert bun (Dalby, 1998). Baklava, on the other hand, is defined by its extremely thin layers of phyllo dough, a nut-based filling, and a syruping technique. It stands out particularly due to the refined cooking methods developed in the Ottoman palace cuisine. Therefore, although there are some superficial similarities between *placenta* and baklava, their preparation methods, ingredient preferences, and cultural contexts do not support the claim that these two desserts belong to the same culinary tradition.

Therefore, when evaluated in terms of both content and structure, the claim that this Byzantine dessert is a direct ancestor of today's baklava does not seem convincing. Instead, a more plausible explanation is that such desserts may have developed in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern geography with similar ingredients but different techniques.

Based on the recipes in the cookbook written by Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, it has been suggested that the dessert *lawzinaj*, which was widely prepared in the 10th century Baghdad cuisine, may have been one of the predecessors of baklava (Nasrallah, 2007). These claims stem from the fact that the “*mugharra*”, its syrup-soaked variety, is prepared with a nut filling between thin layers and a syruping technique. However, when the recipe details are examined, *lawzinaj* reveals a very different structure; it is typically

prepared not with layers of dough, but with thin, bread-like sheets cooked on a pan or stone, and in some variations, it is even served without being cooked at all. Moreover, the variety of ingredients and techniques used shows that the name *lawzinaj* does not correspond to a single standardized recipe, but covers different groups of desserts. Therefore, *lawzinaj* cannot be considered a direct predecessor of the classical baklava in terms of technique and structure, despite its formal similarities.

In *Sweet Delights From A Thousand and One Nights* (2013), a dessert called *judhab khubz al-qata'if* is mentioned as a historical version of baklava. This recipe is found in the cookbook *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh* written by al-Baghdādī in the 13th century. However, directly associating this dessert with baklava is not accurate. Although it shares certain similarities—such as its layered form, use of pistachios, and sweetening with syrup, the absence of thinly rolled phyllo dough, one of baklava’s defining elements, makes it impossible to classify this dessert as baklava. In this respect, it becomes clear that the recipe in question represents a type of *kadaif* in the classical sense.

A clearer understanding of baklava’s early history appears when the earliest Turkish, Persian, and Syrian sources are read together. The first known written reference to baklava is found in a fifteenth-century poem by Kaygusuz Abdal, who speaks of “two hundred trays of baklava, some with almonds, some with lentils.” As Priscilla Mary Işın explains, this line is important because it is the earliest textual evidence of the dessert and shows that baklava was already a recognized and ceremonial sweet within the Turkish cultural world (Işın, 2018). The unexpected use of lentils as a filling is confirmed in both the sixteenth-century Persian *Kārnāme* and in *Maddetü’l-Hayât*, where several baklava-like pastries are prepared with lentils, helva-style mixtures, fried layers, and syrup flavored with rosewater and musk (as seen in *Kārnāme* and *Maddetü’l-Hayât* recipes;

Kılıç, 2023). These methods match the wider Anatolian and Turkic tradition of layered and syruped pastries. This is also visible in the *Baqlâvâ-ye Qaramâni*, which is directly connected to the Turkish region of Karaman and describes a layered sweet filled with lentil purée, fried in butter, and slowly sweetened with warm honey (Işın, 2018). Charles Perry supports this Anatolian-Persian link. In addition to the *Karamânî* recipe, he examines the thirteenth-century Syrian dessert *kul va-şukr*, also recorded under its clearly Turkish name *karnıyaruk*, where folded layers of dough are fried, covered in syrup, and topped with pistachios (Perry, 2013). Perry describes this dessert as “a baklava turned inside-out,” because it uses the same main steps—layering, folding, frying, and syruping—that later became highly refined in the Ottoman palace kitchen (Perry, 2013). When the Turkish terminology in *kul va-şukr/karnıyaruk*, the region-specific Karamânî recipe, and the early evidence of Kaygusuz Abdal are considered together with the layered and syruped pastries described in *Kārname* and *Maddetü'l-Hayât*, the result is not unclear or inconsistent. Instead, these sources show a strong continuity of Turkish layered-dough techniques long before classical Ottoman baklava took shape. All of this supports the view that the basic foundations of baklava were formed within Turkish culinary traditions well before the dessert reached its fully developed form in the Ottoman Empire.

A study of baklava within the framework of Central Asian Turkic cuisine must first and foremost focus on *yufka* known as phyllo dough, one of the dessert’s fundamental components. Because the main element that makes baklava unique is the layers of dough that are rolled out thinly and layered. *Yufka* is not merely a simple dough product; it is also a tangible and enduring expression of a deep-rooted culinary tradition that stretches from Central Asia to Anatolia. Within the context of the Central Asian steppes, where nomadic pastoralism was predominant, the development of techniques for producing thin,

layered doughs capable of long-term preservation assumed a pivotal role. These techniques were instrumental not only as practical modes of food preparation but also as essential factors in ensuring the sustainability of the regional dietary culture (Perry, 1994; Ünver, 2005). In this context, *yufka* should be considered as one of the historical predecessors of multi-layered desserts, especially baklava, not only with its functional but also formal features (Yerasimos, 2002).

In parallel, the expression “*qatma yuvgha*” (folded *yufka*) in the 11th century *Divan-I Lugati’t-Türk* by Kashgarlı Mahmud, a comprehensive dictionary of the Turkic language that records words, meanings, and cultural practices, reveals the historical experience of the Turks in layered pastries (Perry, 1994). The word “*yubqa*”, which is at the root of “*yuvgha*”, has a linguistic background that carries both the meanings of “thin” and “layered”. This term defines both a technical and formal quality. Pastry products such as *qatlama*, *yupka*, *yoka*, *pakhlava*, which still exist in the cuisines of Central Asia today, are multi-layered, developed in accordance with the conditions of nomadic life, cooked on a sac and sometimes enriched with fillings. These products support the existence of layering skills in early Turkish cuisine in Central Asia. Examples such as the Baki *pakhlavası* - Baku-style baklava - seen in Azerbaijan are transitional forms of this tradition adapted to the use of ovens. The fact that they exhibit a simpler structure than Ottoman palace baklava in terms of the number of layers, dough thickness and cooking technique makes it possible to evaluate them as an intermediate link in this gastronomic evolution (Perry, 1994).

The sophisticated baklava in today’s sense took its final form in terms of form and technique, largely in the Ottoman palace kitchen. Thanks to the thin dough rolling techniques, multi-layered arrangements and refined syrup-making methods developed by

the master chefs of the palace, baklava became a representative of high cuisine rather than a simple folk dessert (Bilgin, 2002). The helva and confectioner masters working in Topkapı Palace played a major role in this process. Techniques such as increasing the number of layers to 40, rolling each dough individually by hand and thinning the dough with starch to give it a silky texture made baklava not only a delicious food but also an aesthetically pleasing artisan product. In this context, baklava ceased to be a dessert that appealed only to the palate, and turned into a symbolic food reflecting the magnificence, aesthetic understanding and ostentatious culture of the palace.

2.3 Etymology of the Word “Baklava” and the Mongolian Theory

The etymological origin of the word baklava has long been a subject of academic debate. Various explanations have been proposed across different languages regarding its roots, yet no consensus has been reached to date. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the earliest known use of the noun baklava dates back to the mid-1600s, with the first recorded evidence appearing in 1650 in a translation by R. Withers (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.).

Studies on the etymological origin of the word baklava include various theories from different language families, but the strongest possibilities point to a structure of Turkish origin. Sir Gerard Clauson, in his work “An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish”, states that the verb root “*bak-*” in Old Turkish means “to nourish, to feed,” and suggests that the form “baklava” may have been created by adding derivational suffixes (-la, -va) to this root (Clauson, 1972, p. 311). This view is also supported by the Turkish Language Association and the word is accepted as being of Turkish origin (Türk Dil Kurumu, t.y.)

Similarly, Hasan Eren (1999) states that the word baklava is derived from the forms *baklağu*/*baklağı* in Old Anatolian Turkish and argues that it is an original structure that has taken shape in Turkish. He states that it is structurally similar to words such as *oklava* (rolling pin) and that the changes *-a*, *-u*, *-ı* at the end are consistent with the Turkish phonetic evolution process.

There are different views about the origin of the word *baklava*. According to Nişanyan Dictionary, the word comes from the Arabic *baqlawī* (بقلوي), meaning “woven chain,” which itself is derived from *baqla(t)* (بقلة), meaning “bean” or “chain link.” In this context, the word *bakla* is said to mean “chain link” or “the eye of a woven armor.” In addition, another view suggests that the name of the dessert may have come from the Balaklava port in Crimea when it was first made in Topkapı Palace in 1473 (Nişanyan Sözlük, n.d.).

An alternative view on the origin of the word baklava suggests that the term is derived from Mongolian. According to this approach, the word is derived from the Mongolian verb *bayla-* (to wrap, tie, stack), and the layered, wrapped structure of baklava is interpreted as supporting this etymological connection (Buell & Anderson, 2020, p. 216). However, this claim is contradicted by data showing that the verb in question, although present in Mongolian, is not originally Mongolian but a borrowed element from Turkish. Indeed, in Sukhbaatar's work “A Dictionary of Foreign Words in Mongolian” (1997), the verb *bayla-* is among the words of foreign origin that have entered Mongolian and is defined as of Turkish origin. This situation seriously weakens the claim of Mongolian origin from a philological perspective, and even largely invalidates it. Nişanyan (2024) also states that this etymological approach lacks direct evidence at the historical and phonological levels, and therefore is essentially a speculative proposal.

On the other hand, the occurrence of the word “baklava” in Ottoman culinary records supports the idea that the word is formed with Turkish morphology. The earliest example is the phrase “*baklava-i ağayan*” found in a 15th-century Ottoman palace kitchen register (Barkan, 1959, p. 261). This expression not only provides a written record of the word but also shows that it was used as an established term in the Ottoman palace.

In conclusion, in the light of the available philological and historical data, the view that the word baklava was derived from Turkish and institutionalized during the Ottoman period has a more solid basis. Suggestions that it is of Mongolian origin remain weak in terms of linguistic continuity and documentary support.

Some researchers suggest that baklava did not only develop in the Ottoman palace cuisine but may also have a history connected to the layered dough tradition of the Central Asian and Mongol periods. These views are based on the widespread use of yufka-like dough techniques in nomadic Turkish and Mongol communities, and the refinement and reinterpretation of these techniques in different geographies over time. Studies on the Mongol period and the Central Asian Turkish culinary heritage have presented new perspectives on the origin of baklava.

Paul Buell and Eugene Anderson (2010) suggest that the term “baklava” may have been derived from the Mongolian verb *bakla-*, which carries meanings such as “to pile up” or “to stack.” The same authors also note that some dessert recipes found in Chinese sources from the Mongol period, particularly those resembling *güllaç*, share structural and technical similarities with baklava (Buell & Anderson, 2010, p. 147; 2020, pp. 231–232). However, since the verb *bakla-* is a word that passed from Old Turkic into the Mongolic language, this is not considered a valid approach (Sukhbaatar, 1997).

These approaches associate the historical roots of the thinly rolled *yufka*, one of the technical components of baklava, with the nomadic cuisines of Central Asia. These approaches link the historical roots of one of baklava's technical components, thinly rolled dough, to the culinary traditions of Central Asian nomadic cultures. Indeed, the phrase "*qatma yuvgha*" found in Mahmud al-Kashgari's 11th-century dictionary "*Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*" indicates that folded and layered thin doughs existed in Turkish cuisine from early on (Buell & Anderson, 2010, p. 584). Products such as *pakhlava* and *pāxlāwā* in Azerbaijani and Tatar cuisines can also be considered simpler versions of this layered tradition.

However, this view does not disregard the contribution of the Ottoman palace cuisine, where baklava took its present form. On the contrary, refined practices such as the technique of rolling dough to paper-thinness, the multi-layered arrangement, and the method of syruping were largely systematized in the kitchens of the Topkapı Palace. This positions baklava as a multi-layered dessert that carries the legacy of nomadic traditions while gaining a sophisticated identity through palace culture. In this context, baklava can be seen both as an heir to the layered dough tradition brought from Central Asia and as a dessert refined within the Ottoman palace cuisine.

In this context, Mongol-influenced theories regarding the origin of baklava should be evaluated not as a direct "invention" but rather as a reflection of technical and linguistic interactions (Buell, 1999, pp. 204–216).

3. BAKLAVA IN OTTOMAN-TURKISH FOOD HISTORY

3.1 A Look at Baklava in the Central Asian and Seljuk Periods

Although baklava became institutionalized and symbolized in Ottoman cuisine, its point of origin can be traced back to *yufka* (thin dough), which appears in Central Asian nomadic culture. Due to the nomadic lifestyle of Central Asian Turkic societies, the absence of ovens and storage problems led them to cook this bread on a griddle (*sac*), and over time, this evolved and managed to win over palates.

The phrase *qatma yuvgha* found in Mahmud al-Kashgari's *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* means “folded” or “layered *yufka*,” offering an important clue about the production of layered bread. The word *qatma* in this expression is derived from the verb “to fold,” and can be considered a precursor to today's *katmer* and *qatlama* pastries. Traces of this tradition continue among modern Central Asian Turkic communities. The multi-layered dough products known as *poshkal* and *yupqa* among Uzbeks, *yoka* among Tatars, and *Baki pakhlavası* among Azerbaijanis are contemporary reflections of the historical concept of layered bread. In these products, dough is layered with different fats or fillings and stacked, sometimes baked to create a layered structure. In particular, *qatlama* is known among many Turkic tribes and is obtained by rolling, cutting, and flattening fatty dough to create a layered pastry.

These data suggest that within the limited possibilities of the nomadic lifestyle, Turks developed layered forms in their breads to create variety, and that over time, this could have evolved into more developed sweet varieties, especially baklava. In this context, the layered breads and dough desserts of Central Asia may represent the “missing link” in the evolution of baklava (Perry, 94).

According to Ögel (1978), the expression “*ötmek türmeklendi*” used during the early phases of the Seljuk period refers to types of bread that were rolled or wrapped. This usage indicates the existence of breads that could be rolled out in the form of *yufka*, whether thick or thin, and points to varieties such as *bazlama*, *pide*, *büskeç*, and *sinçü* being produced in foldable and rollable forms within Turkish culinary culture.

The *yufka* tradition continued in the Seljuk culinary culture as well and was mentioned in Mevlana’s work *Divan-i Kebir* (Erdoğan, 2010). Similarly, from the following verses in Mevlana’s *Masnavi*, we understand that *yufka* was also an important part of the culinary culture at that time:

*“O my master, please come home for a breath... For breakfast I had
yufka bread prepared. When you reach the door, tell Kaymaz to bring
the yufka bread along with the goose” (Mevlânâ, 2015, Mesnevî-i
Ma’nevî, beyit 2178–2179).*

Additionally, from the following couplets in Mevlana’s *Divan-i Kebir*, we may infer that baklava was made during the Seljuk period:

*“What a kiss, what a kiss; neither halva nor samsa baklava;
It makes even stone gush milk; pickaxe and shovel are powerless before
it.”*

However, Mary Işın has stated that here, due to a translation error, “*samsa*” was rendered as “*samsa baklava*” (Işın & Onaran, 2024). In conclusion, although there is no evidence that baklava was prepared as “baklava” in the culinary cultures of Central Asia and the Seljuk period due to the limited written sources, the continuous presence of *yufka* in the cuisines of both periods can be considered an important clue.

3.2 Baklava in the Ottoman Period (15th-19th Century)

In the Ottoman Empire, culinary culture was not only an element reflecting dietary habits but also a representation of the state's splendor and power. The palace cuisine was enriched by the diverse cultures within the empire's vast borders, and this accumulation formed the uniqueness of Ottoman gastronomy. One of the most well-known and symbolic elements of this culinary heritage was undoubtedly baklava. The place of baklava in the Ottoman context carried a profound meaning beyond simply being a dessert, both socially and culturally.

In the palace cuisine, baklava stood out primarily as a dessert made with rich ingredients and masterful skill, but over time, it also became popular among the people throughout the empire. This process transformed baklava from merely a dessert into a symbol of status and power. In the palace, the contents of baklava, the ingredients used, and the way it was made reflected the grandeur of the empire, while among the public, it became particularly associated with festivals and important celebrations. Additionally, the ingredients used in baklava also provide information about the economic structure, trade routes, and cultural interactions of the Ottoman Empire.

In this context, baklava can be regarded not merely as a dessert but also as a reflection of the historical and social structure of Ottoman culinary culture.

3.2.1 Baklava in Topkapı Palace

In Ottoman cuisine, sweets and confections held great importance overall. Among the pastries, baklava was one of the most favored desserts of the period (Bilgin, 2020). There is no surviving direct baklava recipe from the 15th and 16th centuries. The first written record of baklava in palace kitchen records appears in the account books from the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (Fatih Sultan Mehmet). In these records, baklava is mentioned

under the name *baklava-i ağayan*, but no details about its recipe are provided (Bilgin, 2016a). However, there is a note indicating the use of *rikak yufka* (very thin phyllo). In palace kitchen records, baklava sometimes appears as “baklava” and sometimes as “*rikak baklavası*”, and it was among the most highly regarded sweets in the Ottoman palace.

Baklava was especially an indispensable delight on iftar and festive tables; it was offered to the janissaries after the *Hırka-i Şerif* visit on the fifteenth day of Ramadan and on the days when soldiers received their pay (*ulufe*). During this period, baklava was fried in clarified butter, sweetened with honey and a small amount of sugar, and almonds were added to its filling (Bilgin, 2002; Bilgin, 2008b).

In the Topkapı Palace kitchen records from 1469, 1471, 1473, and 1474, the names of 86 different dishes prepared in the palace are identified, among which baklava is included (Bilgin, 2021a).

Baklava also stands out among the foods served during the 13-day circumcision and henna celebration organized by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1539 for his sons, Sultan Bayezid and Sultan Cihangir (Tezcan, 1998). Additionally, baklava was served at the feast held during the race organized in Kabak Square (Ok Meydanı) as part of the same festivities (Kut, 2008).

In 1574, during the reign of Sultan Selim II, a large naval campaign was organized under the command of Koca Sinan Pasha and Admiral Kılıç Ali Pasha to recapture Tunis from the Spanish. The fleet included 268 galleys, 15 barges, and 15 galleons, with 48,000 rowers and a total of 40,000 soldiers (Altıntaş, 2020). The fleet traveled via Yedikule, Gallipoli, Koyun Island, Çeşme, and Kızılhisar, eventually reaching Navarino. A feast organized by Sinan Pasha there is described in an exaggerated style in the work *Tarih-i Feth-i Yemen* by Rumûzî, the Yemen treasurer who participated in the campaign:

“Baklava was seen and became honored / Even palude (a type of pudding) became inferior to it” (Altıntaş, 2020).

As understood from these lines, baklava also had its place in this feast. Although the exact order in which the dishes were served is not entirely clear in this work, it appears that *sambusa*¹ and *muhallebi*², baklava and *palude*³, *sour stew*⁴ and *zırbaç*⁵, *sütlü aş*⁶ and *salma*⁷ were presented either together or consecutively; that *tutmaç*⁸ was served after *börek*⁹, followed by sweet *güllaç*¹⁰; and that stuffed gourd was offered after *herise*¹¹ and *mahmudiye*¹² (Altıntaş, 2020). From this, we can infer that sweet and syrupy flavors were served either after the main course or alongside it to balance the palate.

It is understood that when the Ottoman army went on campaigns, they not only carried military equipment but also took Istanbul’s culinary culture with them. The resemblance of the dishes served at campaign banquets to those prepared in the palace and mansions supports this cultural transmission. Moreover, the ability to prepare elaborate, labor-intensive dishes for such a large army demonstrates the Ottoman’s superior organizational skills and the sophistication of its culinary system.

¹ Sambusa: Sweet pastry made by shaping dough into a triangle shape.

² Muhallebi: Milk pudding made by mixing milk, flour or starch and sugar and cooking it.

³ Palude: It is a dessert with a jelly-like consistency, bound with fruit and starch.

⁴ Sour stew: Lamb stew with dried fruits.

⁵ Zırbaç: Lamb stew with dried fruits and molasse of grape.

⁶ Sütlü aş: Traditional milk desert made by mixing milk, sugar and rice.

⁷ Salma: A dish cooked with or without meat using small pieces of dough.

⁸ Tutmaç: Yogurt soup made with small pieces of dough cut into four corners.

⁹ Börek: Savoury pastries.

¹⁰ Güllaç: Thin wafers of dough made with starch. Güllaç layers are soaked in milk syrup flavoured with rose water.

¹¹ Herise: A dish cooked by pounding wheat and meat (or meat broth).

¹² Mahmudiye: Mahmudiye is a dish made at palace weddings and is prepared with ingredients such as chicken, honey, dried apricots, almonds, grapes, onion, butter, lemon juice, cinnamon, salt, water and dill.

In Gelibolulu Ali's Surname (Ağarı, 2018), we see baklava mentioned as a dessert served at the 1582 imperial festival: *"A sacred presence was a boundless sea of grace / Layer upon layer, baklava and sambusa were prepared"*.

The 1582 Festivities, organized for the circumcision of Sultan Murad III's son, Prince Mehmed, were among the most magnificent ceremonies showcasing Ottoman splendor and left a significant impression both within Ottoman lands and in Europe. The details of the celebration are extensively described by the historians Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli and Intizâmî in their works *Surname-i Hümayun* (Kut, 2008). Among the dishes served in this grand organization was baklava, once again highlighting its place on the palace tables. Intizami describes:

"After the water carriers cleaned and watered the square in the morning, upon the sultan's command, royal banquets were laid out at great length neighborhood by neighborhood. Various dishes were presented before both the common people and the elite. Colorful pilafs filled the platters, trays were lined with baklavas made from many thin layers of yufka, then the cooks, in groups, roasted enormous oxen on spits, which they filled with other animals after cooking, then the people (all classes, commoners and nobles) sat down and ate..."

According to Abdi's accounts, after the 18-day wedding of Hatice Sultan and Mustafa Pasha in 1675, among the gifts presented by the sultan were twenty trays of baklava. The inclusion of baklava trays among dowry items is a significant indicator that baklava preparation was common not only in the palace kitchen but also in mansions around the court (Kut, 2008).

In the 1720 Festivities, baklava was served only to the highest-ranking guests. Records from ingredient lists show that it was made with honey and almonds, indicating that baklava had become an image representing social status (İşkorkutan, 2017). Not only baklava itself but also how it was sweetened served as a marker of social rank. For example, in the 17th and 18th centuries, baklavas prepared for the janissaries were sweetened with honey (Kara, 2019).

Hedda Reindl-Kiel (2016), in her study on feasts organized for palace members during Eid al-Adha in the 17th century, describes eight different menus prepared for viziers and bureaucrats. The *Ta'âm-ı Paşayân* (vizier's dishes) typically consisted of six courses and were served after council meetings. Analysis of these lists shows that desserts were usually served as the fourth course; however, in some menus, baklava appeared in both the third and fourth courses.

3.2.2 Baklava Outside of the Imperial Kitchens

The record that baklava was made in soup kitchens was found in the soup kitchen of Sultan Bayezid in Amasya. This baklava was made of nine layers of phyllo dough. However, there is no information about the content of the phyllo itself. 150 dirhams of ghee and 200 dirhams of honey were applied to each layer. There is no clear information about its preparation method. In Amasya, baklava was served once a year, only on an unspecified evening during Ramadan (Faroqhi, 2008). It is also observed that baklava was served in imarets (charitable soup kitchens) during Ramadan. Records show that baklava was distributed at Sultan Bayezid II's imaret in Edirne during Ramadan (Singer, 2011). It is also observed that baklava was served during holidays (bayram), on Berat and Mawlid nights, and on Ashura day (Singer, 2015).

Minas of Tokat, an Armenian compiler who also worked as a registrar for the Armenian Patriarchate at the Hakhtamar Monastery and as clerk of records for the Lvov Kipchak Armenian court during Archbishop Grigor's tenure, fled Anatolia in the early 16th century. In the poems he wrote expressing longing for his homeland and its foods, baklava is also mentioned (Singer, 2015). The reference to baklava in the poems of Tokatlı Minas indicates that by the 16th century, this dessert was both popular and highly appreciated across diverse cultural and religious communities within the Ottoman Empire, reflecting its widespread consumption at the time.

The *Sohbetname* written by Sünbuli Sheikh Seyyid Hasan in the 1660s contains significant information on Ottoman Istanbul's 17th-century culinary culture. The first volume is important for illuminating dish names and dining customs of that era. It also offers insights into daily life, Istanbul neighborhoods and structures, natural phenomena, and various professions through the foods and drinks consumed at religious gatherings (Can, 2015). In this book, baklava appears 37 times as part of the meals served. Moreover, the term *sükkeri baklava* indicates that most of these baklavas were sweetened primarily with honey (Bilgin, 2025).

In two fixed price regulation (narh) lists dated 1680 and 1691, sales of fine flour for baklava are recorded (Bilgin, 2006). The first official record of baklava being sold in the marketplace dates to the 18th century, in Istanbul court's price register number 201. According to this register, on 9 Ramadan 1190 (22 October 1776), high-grade flour for baklava was being sold. Additional records from 27 Zilkade 1197 (24 October 1783) and 4 Safar 1204 (24 October 1789) also mention baklava being sold in the market (Çakmak, 2012). Another record in Üsküdar Sharia Court Register number 402 from the 18th century shows evidence of baklava sales. These records demonstrate that by the 18th

century, baklava had become a commercially traded product, widely available in the marketplaces of the Ottoman Empire, indicating its integration into urban economic and social life.

During this period, it is not accurate to say that there were dedicated baklava shops; rather, baklava was sold in *helva* shops. Records show that in the 18th century, *helva* makers in Eyüp, Galata, and Üsküdar (a total of 98 shops) not only produced *helva* but also baklava and similar products, serving the city's residents. *Helva* makers and their apprentices repeatedly filed complaints in court when their monopoly over producing and selling baklava and similar items was violated by other trades. In 1755, they sued pastry makers; in 1768, a fruit seller was sued for selling baklava; and in 1785, two individuals producing and selling various *helva* makers' products without permission were ordered to stop by court ruling (Bilgin, 2022).

Baklavas was mentioned also in Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* which depict 17th century Ottoman social and cultural life. According to Yerasimos, baklava with different types and styles were present in the book: baklava, almond baklava, Belgrade baklava / Belgrade güllaç baklava, güllaç baklava, hamsi baklava, kaymak baklava (baklava with clotted cream), and sarığı burma (baklava in rolled shape/coiled baklava) (Yerasimos, 2021). In his *Seyahatname*, Evliya Çelebi mentioned baklava in connection with several cities and regions he visited, showing both its geographical spread and cultural value. While describing the dialects of the Turks in Tosya, Bolu, and Dörtdivan, he used the term "*sarığı burma*", noting that it was "like baklava." In Erzurum, he narrated the story of Defterzade Mehmed Paşa and reported that baklava brought from Damascus was present on his table, which indicates the special fame of Damascus baklava at that time (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a). During his journey to Mardin, he recorded that baklava was given

as a gift at the Mardin Castle station, while in Bitlis he listed baklava among the foods he saw and tasted (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a). In Belgrade, he gave a detailed description of “*Belgrad baklavası*” and noted:

“Among these, the Belgrade baklava is famous in Anatolia, Rumelia, Arabia, and Persia. At great wedding banquets it is prepared like a cartwheel with a thousand layers of güllaç, made with fine flour pastry, butter, and almonds. They bake it in an underground tandır oven, and it is so large that it does not fit in a tray. Even if 300 men were to eat one baklava, they would be satisfied. It is so big, delicious, and rich, yet if you were to put a small coin on top, it would sink into the pastry. Such is the fineness and quality of their baklava” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a).

When visiting Bosnasaray, he emphasized that *kaymak baklava* was among the most appreciated foods (Evliya Çelebi, 2010b). When describing Trabzon, Evliya Çelebi noted that anchovy was so widely used in the local cuisine that he even remarked, in a humorous tone, that a kind of baklava was made from it. This statement should not be taken literally but rather as an illustration of how central anchovy was to the city’s food culture (Evliya Çelebi, 2008b). These observations collectively demonstrate that by the 17th century, baklava had become a widely recognized and regionally diverse dessert, reflecting both its popularity and its cultural prestige across the Ottoman Empire.

3.2.3 Kitchen Utensils Used in Baklava Production and Consumption

It is possible to find information about baklava in Istanbul’s 1640 fixed price registers. Since the mid-17th century, blacksmiths were selling iron tools specially prepared for baklava, while shops selling metal materials produced small mills for grinding baklava and pastry ingredients. The fact that such products were mentioned in a

price list indicates that baklava had begun to spread beyond a limited wealthy group. However, it is also possible to say that it remained a rare and festive treat (Faroghi, 2018). In the palace kitchens, special trays were used for the presentation of baklava. A record from the 16th century shows that a “wooden tray for baklava” was purchased specifically for Ramadan; while another document dated 1790 mentions 300 tin-plated baklava plates belonging to the Janissaries. These sources suggest that as much care was given to the presentation of baklava as to its preparation, and that baklava was offered to Janissaries on *ulufe* (salary) days (Işın & Onaran, 2024).

For cutting baklava, tools such as the "baklava cutter," "baklava knife," or "baklava and pastry mill" were used—likely designed to avoid scratching the tin-plated copper trays. These tools, made from cast brass or bronze, had components like rotating gear wheels and cutting molds. The Istanbul price register of 1640 confirms that such tools were known in the 17th century (Işın & Onaran, 2024).

According to entries in a 1640 price register, these trays were approximately 70 cm in diameter. A document from 1768 reports that 40 trays commissioned for the palace each weighed about 3.2 kg (Işın & Onaran, 2024). Işın also notes that in inheritance records, alongside the term “baklava tray,” there are also entries like “baklava sini” and “baklava pan.” She states that the “baklava sini” is equivalent to the baklava tray, while the “baklava pan” appears to be something different—always recorded in pairs (Işın & Onaran, 2024).

In the 19th century, copper trays were used in the palace for baking baklava (Samancı, 2008b).

3.2.4 Baklava in Divan Poetry

In Ottoman Divan poetry, food was not merely a matter of nourishment but an aesthetic element enriched with layers of meaning. Poets, while drawing inspiration from the culinary culture of the period, also succeeded in transforming these everyday elements into symbols of love, divine experience, and inner transformation. Especially sweets, sherbets, and wine gained deep connotations in the metaphorical universe of poetry; sometimes appearing as the pleasure dripping from a lover's lips, other times as the spiritual intoxication of a dervish. In this sense, food became a language of both worldly pleasure and metaphysical quest in Divan poetry. Baklava, too, was frequently used by Divan poets; at times, it described a delicate heart with its fine layers, at other times it was likened to the lips of a beloved. In Ottoman Divan poetry, baklava appears not just as food but as a multifaceted image reflecting the social and cultural codes of the era (Tökel, 2019). Beginning to appear in poems from the late 15th century onward, this dessert draws attention both within metaphors of love and in themes related to daily life. The 15th and 16th century Divan literature display the presence of baklava in Ottoman poetry (Tökel, 2019).

Zâtî (who lived between 1471 and 1546) metaphorized baklava through both its layered nature and its sweetness, relating his own “thin-skinned” heart to this dessert. The poet preferred to describe the taste on the beloved's lips not with sugar, but with baklava (Tökel, 2019).

In the 16th century, the image of baklava diversified and became richer. Lebîb-i Amîdî used baklava as a metaphorical element, saying that even an insult from the sweet lips of the beloved would taste sweeter than a baklava filled with clotted cream Bursalı Rahmî, on the other hand, created a visually and thematically striking image by likening

the moon appearing within a halo in the night sky during Ramadan to baklava, and the halo itself to a tray (Tökel, 2019).

During the same century, Nazmî of Edirne made baklava the subject of an entire poem. However, before that, it is worth looking at how he referenced baklava in some of his other couplets. The idea that a person under the influence of fasting would transform into a sweet-tongued parrot just by hearing the word baklava demonstrates how Nazmî connected language and taste. In another couplet, the beloved's lips are equated with baklava remembered during fasting. Nazmî also references the culinary customs of the time, mentioning the custom of asking for baklava after pilaf (Tökel, 2019).

Nazmî's most striking work is his special ghazal dedicated to baklava. In this poem, baklava is compared to börek, güllaç, and other desserts, highlighting its aesthetic and sensory aspects. It is likened to börek in appearance, to güllaç in delicacy, and directly to the beloved in taste. Baklava is exalted as both an object of public admiration and an emotional counterpart for the lover. The idea that a visible dessert can bring relief to the heart and the desire for it to be constantly present at gatherings form the central themes of this ghazal. It is repeatedly emphasized that baklava is more valuable than other sweets for those who are fasting. The connection of baklava to iftar is reinforced through reference to the hadith "Believers are sweet" (Tökel, 2019).

Vecdî, who lived in the same period as Nazmî, also wrote a special ghazal dedicated to baklava. Throughout the ghazal, baklava is associated with images of light and the sky; the moon and the sun are likened to baklava, while the almonds on top are turned into stars. The poet compares the kitchen to a rose garden and baklava to the rose of this garden. Vecdî, saying that this dessert — eaten only once a year — had not been granted to him for years, expresses his longing for baklava with the image of seeing the

moon and the sun as baklava when he looks up at the sky. The metaphor of his hand being *yufka* is highly meaningful on a metaphorical level; it contains both his poverty and his desire for baklava. The poet conveys his request for baklava from the sultan not directly but in the form of prayers, praise, and wishes. From the note at the end of the ghazal, it is understood that the poem was written while he was serving at a madrasa in Hayrabolu and that it was presented along with baklava to the students. Additionally, from another remark by Vecdî, it can be inferred that there was a type of baklava known at that time as “*helvâyî*” (Tökel, 2019).

One of the poets whose passion and longing for baklava is most intensely reflected in his poetry is Cinânî. In his qasida titled as “*Kaside-beçe der-İltimâs-ı Baklava*”, he expresses the hardship that he experiences during the long days of Ramadan. Although he states that they fast in obedience to God's command, he complains of not being adequately nourished. He mentions that he has only heard of baklava but has never tasted it. In this way, the poem becomes both a humorous and a sincere expression of desire. Similar themes are found in other poems by Cinânî as well. In particular, in his piece titled “*Baklava Bahâsı Ricâsına*” Nazm, he appeals to a high-ranking official, requesting baklava. Despite being offered various delicacies throughout Ramadan, he expresses his disappointment that baklava had still not reached him. In another poetry he states that his days and nights pass constantly thinking about what to eat; that he deserves sweets like baklava and kadaif but is forced to make do with dry bread. These expressions show that baklava had become not only a physical object of desire but also an emotional and social symbol of longing in Ottoman culture (Tökel, 2019).

In the 16th century, Tîrsî especially expresses his love for Edirne baklava. Even though he has grown tired of other sweets, Edirne baklava always pleases him. He

mentions that not even egg fritters (*yumurta kayganası*) can take its place. In another poem, he mentions a school teacher dreaming of baklava and börek. When the image of teachers having their eyes on trays of baklava combines with the expression that the true ornament of schools is their students, the meaning acquires a multilayered structure. In this context, baklava transforms into a symbol that gains significance not only as a physical taste but also within social relationships (Tökel, 2019).

All these examples reveal that in Divan poetry, the image of baklava is treated not merely as a sweet food but as a cultural element that gains meaning in different social contexts. Beginning in the late 15th century, especially within the themes of Ramadan and iftar, the image of baklava became more prominent and, by the 16th century, had diversified to such an extent that it occupied a central place in ghazals and qasida. This is noteworthy in terms of showing baklava's social value and cultural resonance.

3.2.5 Baklava in Ramadan

In the Ottoman Empire, the month of Ramadan was not only a period marked by intensified religious devotion but also one of the times when culinary culture reached its most magnificent form. While various dishes unique to this period were prepared in the palace kitchen, special care was taken in making sweets, and among these, baklava held a particularly important place. In the final days of Ramadan, baklava was included among the dishes prepared for the holiday feast, carrying special significance for both the palace residents and the janissary corps.

In addition to Ramadan, it also became a tradition to bake baklava on the days when *ulufe* (salaries) were distributed to the janissaries. In this context, baklava appears not merely as a dessert but also as a part of military organization and the hierarchical structure of the state in the Ottoman Empire. The trays of baklava distributed to the

janissaries can be seen as symbols of the sultan's authority over the army and his generosity. This practice demonstrates that the Ottoman palace kitchen was not just a place to meet nutritional needs but also an institution imbued with political and social meanings. Due to the increase in baklava production during this period, elderly women known as *pirezenan* were appointed to roll out the dough and prepare the baklavas in the palace kitchen (Bilgin, 2004).

One of the most striking traditions unique to Ramadan in the Ottoman palace was the Baklava Procession (*Baklava Alayı*). On the days when *ulufe* (salaries) were distributed to the janissaries, baklavas meticulously prepared in the palace kitchen were presented to the army on trays. This ceremony, which began with the orderly exit of the janissaries from the palace, was an important symbol emphasizing the Ottoman military order and the sultan's authority over the army. It can be said that this offering not only demonstrated the sultan's generosity but also revealed how food and offering culture were used as political tools within the Ottoman state structure. Balıkhane Nazırı (Fish Market Supervisor) Ali Rıza Bey (2017) describes the Baklava Procession as follows:

“Since it was customary to distribute baklava to the military divisions on the fifteenth day of the holy month of Ramadan, on that day the janissaries would go to the imperial palace, and in the presence of their commanders and officers, receive baklava trays in the presence of the Silahdar Agha; the next day, they would return the trays and cloth covers to the imperial kitchen.”

During the reign of Sultan Suleiman, the Magnificent, the practice of serving a meal consisting of pilaf, zerde (a saffron rice dessert), and stew to the army returning victorious from campaign gradually evolved under later sultans into the custom of

distributing baklava on the fifteenth day of Ramadan. This ceremony, in which one tray of baklava was given to every ten janissaries, followed its own specific ceremonial protocol. Ahmet Cevat Pasha describes the distribution of baklava from the Topkapı Palace kitchens to the janissaries in his work *Târîh-i Askerî-i Osmânî* (Budak, 2016) as follows:

“On the aforementioned day, the janissary units, along with their water carriers, masters, and assistants, and other officers would take their positions in front of the kitchen courtyard beyond the divan area sofas located on both sides of the middle gate of the New Palace [Topkapı Palace], in line with the baklava trays tied and prepared in covers. After the middle gate was turned, the Silahdar Agha, who was waiting at the Gate of Felicity (Babüssaade), would appear, with the Chief Doorkeeper (Anahtar Ağa) at his right, the Chief Tutor (Baş Lala) at his left, and behind them seven officers carrying knives; further behind, the Chief Cellarer (Kilercibaşı) with his axe-bearer and the trusted officer of the imperial guard known as emin haseki, and following them the Silahdar Agha’s pudding master (palûdeci). The Silahdar Agha would exit through the gate, leaving everyone else except the Kilercibaşı and palûdeci in front of the gate, and would approach the line of baklava trays together with these two. The Kilercibaşı and palûdeci would then take the baklava tray prepared for the Sultan and deliver it to the Silahdar Agha. Subsequently, pairs of soldiers would hang the baklava trays and their covers on green-striped poles they carried in their hands. Once they were signaled to proceed at the middle

gate, the gate would open, and each division's master, water carrier, steward, chamberlain, assistant, and standard-bearer would lead their divisions, with the baklava bearers following behind. The procession would then proceed in an orderly manner back to the barracks. After consumption, the next day, the trays and covers would be returned to and presented back at the Imperial Kitchen."

Through archival documents, we can see that in 18th-century Istanbul, baklava was one of the products prepared in the palace kitchen during Ramadan (Aşık, 2019). In the Ramadan markets set up in Istanbul during this month, people would spend time shopping or chatting with others until iftar. In these markets, which featured many different tradesmen, baklava also found its place.

Ramazan-name (Çelebioğlu, 2019), which compiles the folk rhymes (manis) recited during Ramadan in Istanbul, is an important source reflecting the cultural structure and social traditions of the 18th century Ottoman culture. The mani serve as cultural actors, shedding light on the social life, tastes, customs, and even culinary culture of their time. In this context, it is noteworthy that a special section was dedicated to baklava. Indeed, Ramazan-name includes manis composed for baklava, one of the indispensable desserts of iftar tables, and through these manis, the place of baklava in the Ramadan tradition and its social perception are reflected.

"Get çörek from Ayasofya

Baklava and börek are a must

The simit from Hocapaşa

One must have it at iftar¹³”

“Olives and honey from Crete

Delicate is Çorlu’s kashkaval cheese

The salad of the egg

Is another form of baklava¹⁴”

In these lines, the phrase “another form of baklava” is significant. Here, two questions come to mind: Is it referring to a different cooking method from the traditional form of baklava, or is it speaking of a difference in shape and form?:

“Drink a pitcher of water on top,

So no pain remains in you at all.

Fast with baklava,

Do not eat chicken or pullet.¹⁵”

“Laugh at my words,

Know the words in their season.

Only for Ramadan, however,

Buy güllaç for baklava.¹⁶”

¹³“Ayasofya’dan al çörek

Lazımdır baklava börek

Hocapaşa’nın simidi

İftarda bulunmak gerek”

¹⁴ “Zeytun ile Girid balı

Naziktir Çorlu kaşkavalı

Yumurtanın salatası

Baklavanın başka hali”

¹⁵ “Üstüne bir desti su iç

Ağrı kalmasın sende hiç

Baklavayla perhiz eyle

Sakın yeme tavuk piliç”

¹⁶ “Benim sözlerime gülün

Sözü mevsiminde bilin

Ramazan’a mahsus ancak

Baklavalık güllaç alın”

After these lines, one cannot help but wonder: “Were g  lla   sheets perhaps being used in baklava making?”

3.2.6 Baklava in the 19th Century İstanbul’s Cuisine

From the second half of the 19th century onward, during feasts at the Ottoman palace, in addition to traditional Ottoman dishes, refined flavors from French cuisine also began to be presented. Travelogues and newspapers from the period contain valuable records of this cultural blending. For example, at a banquet held in honor of the Indian ambassador on 2 October 1917, baklava was among the twenty-three dishes served. Including baklava — one of the most magnificent desserts of the palace kitchen — in the menus of official banquets held for special guests demonstrates that it was not merely a dessert but also a part of an offering tradition (Samancı, 2018).

During the Crimean War, Lady Emelia Hornby, who was in İstanbul, described in 1856 a banquet at Dolmabah  e Palace held in honor of the Crimean victory, noting that, in addition to core Ottoman dishes like pilaf and kadayıf, many French dishes were also served (Samancı, 2008c). Yet even at such receptions influenced by French cuisine, baklava maintained its place on the table and continued as one of the strongest desserts of Ottoman cuisine. Indeed, its service as the fifth dish at a banquet on 10 November, and as the eleventh dish at another banquet on 24 November, reveals baklava’s firmly established position in the Ottoman palace cuisine (Samancı, 2018).

During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, large quantities of sugar and honey were used for making desserts such as *baklava*, *yassı kadayıf*, *ekmek kadayıfı*, *lokma*, *helva*, *a  ure*, *kaygana*, *g  lla  *, and *zerde* in the palace kitchens (Samancı & Bilgin, 2010). This variety reflects the rich dessert tradition of the Ottoman palace tables. The Ottoman cookbook, titled as *Melce  ’t-Tabb  h  n*, published in 1844, preserves the culinary habits

of that period and includes dessert recipes consistent with the ingredients used in the Ottoman elite cuisine. Baklava is among these recipes, showing its enduring prominence in Ottoman cuisine. Additionally, the fact that baklava was available in the Istanbul market at the time shows that it was not only part of palace cuisine but also accessible in the bazaar, making it relatively attainable (Bilgin & Samancı, 2010).

In the 19th-century Ottoman cuisine, baklava was not only part of palace cuisine but also an inseparable part of important social rituals in the society. In his memories written by the Balıkhane Nazırı (Fish Market Supervisor) Ali Rıza Bey it is noted that baklava was listed among the most favored foods served in elegant mansions in late 19th century Istanbul (Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, 2017).

The offering of baklava at weddings and circumcision feasts continued as a deeply rooted tradition in Ottoman culture during this period. While the palace cuisine preserved traditional Ottoman flavors, it also began to incorporate Western influences, especially evident in palace banquets. Indeed, in 1856 at Dolmabahçe Palace, during the reception hosted by Sultan Abdülmecid in honor of the palace's opening and the Crimean War victory, both traditional Ottoman dishes and European dishes were served, and baklava was also included in this elite menu (Samancı, 2008c). This shows that baklava maintained its deep-rooted place in Ottoman cuisine and was also presented as a prestigious dessert at banquets for Western guests

Abdülaziz Bey (1995), in his book titled as "Ottoman Customs, Ceremonies and Expressions: Social Life", in which he wrote about Ottoman social life and traditions, during the late 19th century in Istanbul beautifully describes the importance and place of baklava in society. He states that during Ramadan, regardless of whether they were Muslim or Christian, merchants and tradesmen would send large trays of baklava to all

their acquaintances. Abdülaziz Bey also mentions that during Ramadan, for the madrasa students who did not return to their hometowns, baklava was sent on trays in turns by the mansions. In addition, he notes that among the upper-class tables, referred to as “the refined ones” (kibarlar), the most famous desserts were *baklava*, *samsa*, *revani*, and *dilber dudağı* (Arısan & Arısan Günay, 1995).

In his book *Voyage en Orient* (Journey to the East), published in 1851, Gérard de Nerval mentions foods sold outside during the nights of Ramadan in Istanbul, describing baklava as “a type of phyllo pastry much loved by women, made with butter and sugar syrup” (Nerval, 1851). Mrs. Walker, in her 1866 work *Eastern Life and Scenery with Excursions in Asia Minor, Mytilene, Crete, and Roumania*, provides a detailed account of Ottoman Istanbul’s social life, customs and traditions, architectural structures, natural beauties, and food culture. In the chapter titled “Iftar,” she states that she was invited to an iftar at the mansion of an Ottoman statesman referred to as “A__ Pasha.” Based on her observations, she describes in detail the dishes served at the iftar table and the iftar rituals; in this context, she mentions that she ate a baklava sweetened with honey and containing almonds (Walker, 1866). This account of baklava being sweetened with honey during this period may indicate that the use of honey in desserts continued outside the palace kitchen.

4. BAKLAVA IN OTTOMAN AND TURKISH COOKBOOKS

4.1 A Study of Ingredients, Techniques and Gastro-Cultural Continuity

Cookbooks are more than just practical texts that convey recipes; they are important historical documents reflecting the socio-cultural structure, consumption habits, and culinary technologies of the period in which they were written. These works provide a rich panorama of the culinary culture of the period: they reveal many elements such as which foods were produced and consumed, which cooking techniques and tools were used, and how the perception of taste was shaped. They also allow us to understand the permeability and hybridization between cuisines by reflecting different geographical and cultural interactions. In this respect, cookbooks are primary sources that can be evaluated not only gastronomically but also in historical, anthropological, and cultural contexts. Since they shed light on the daily life and world of values of the society in which they were written, they are also important as cultural narratives and historical witnesses.

In this context, qualitative analyses conducted on cookbooks provide meaningful data under many headings such as the use of certain ingredients, the transformation of recipes over time, regional variations or differences in consumption among social classes.

Cookbooks, especially from the Ottoman period, reveal the richness of the palace and elite cuisine, while also making dynamics such as religious rituals, seasonal cycles and social hierarchy traceable. The linguistic preferences and narrative styles in these texts show that food is not only a physical need but also a form of cultural expression. Therefore, the content analysis of cookbooks offers an interdisciplinary research ground in the fields of literature, linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies, as well as gastronomy history.

In this context, examining baklava recipes in cookbooks from the Ottoman period not only traces the history of a particular dessert; it also provides important clues about the culinary culture, dessert concept and social structure of the period. Analysis of baklava recipes in terms of content, technique and form reveals how this dessert evolved over time, which ingredients were prominent in which periods and how it diversified with cultural interactions. This study aims to understand how baklava was positioned in Ottoman cuisine and to reveal how the dish was documented and transmitted as a form of cultural narrative.

4.2 Cookbooks in the Ottoman and Turkish Republican Eras

Cookbooks from the Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods are not only documents that compile recipes; they are also historical sources that reflect the cultural, social and economic structure of the period they belong to. According to Özge Samancı's study, cookbooks in the Ottoman period appear in both as manuscripts and in printed formats. One of the earliest examples is the culinary treatise, which dates back to the 15th century and is based on the translation of Şirvani's *Kitabü't-Tabih*. In the 18th century, culinary treatises existed that would later serve as the foundation for subsequent cookbooks. By the 19th century, with the influence of modern printing, the first printed Turkish cookbook, *Melceü't-Tabbâhîn* (1844), emerged (Samancı, 2007).

In the early years of the Republic, books such as "The Perfect Cookbook in Turkish and European Styles) (Alaturka ve Alafranga Mükemmel Yemek Kitabı)" by Fahriye Nedim and another one titled as "Cookbook in Turkish and European Styles (Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Kitabı)" published in 1944 by Ekrem Muhittin Yeğen. These cookbooks are written with a pedagogical aim that addressed women's education. Hygiene, rational kitchen planning, and modern nutrition constitute the themes. These

cookbooks reflected the traces of modernization in culinary culture. Thus, cookbooks came to represent not only culinary knowledge but also the broader transformation of society (Samancı, 2007).

4.3 Baklava Recipes in Ottoman Cookbooks

One of the earliest known written sources on Ottoman cuisine is *Kitâbü't-Tabîh*, translated from Arabic into Turkish in the 15th century by the physician Muhammed bin Mahmud Şirvani. Şirvani translated a work of the same name originally written in the 13th century by al-Baghdadi of Baghdad, but he did not limit himself to translation; he also added recipes that were not included in the original text, incorporating elements from the Central Asian Turkic-Seljuk culinary tradition. This indicates that the work reflects not only the Arab-Persian culinary heritage but also Central Asian Turkic influences. The recipes in the text also include health-related content based on the humoral medical theory of the time. Furthermore, the fact that many of the recipes in Şirvani's work appear in palace kitchen registers and banquet lists from the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries highlights the manuscript's representative nature for classical Ottoman cuisine. But in this manuscript baklava recipes did not exist. Until the 18th century, there are no known examples of written cookbooks specifically dedicated to the Ottoman palace cuisine (Samancı, 2020).

4.3.1 Baklava Recipes in 18th Century

Another important source shedding light on 18th-century Ottoman cuisine is a culinary manuscript believed to have been written around 1764, known as “A Culinary Treatise from the 18th Century (XVIII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir Yemek Risalesi)”. This treatise contains original recipes related to the fundamental dishes of Ottoman cuisine and was

translated into modern Turkish by Nejat Sefercioğlu in 1985. Around the same period, another culinary manuscript called *Ağdiye Risalesi* also appears, and it is even thought that this manuscript might be a precursor to the one known as A Culinary Treatise from the 18th Century (Samancı, 2020).

Both 18th century manuscripts, which have similar content, include recipes for baklava (Table 4.1). In these recipes, baklava dough is typically kneaded with butter, sweetened with honey syrup, and usually baked over embers beneath a *sac* (a convex metal griddle). As for the filling, almonds, *kaymak* (clotted cream), or alternatives such as milk-based pudding and fresh cheese like *lor* or meadow cheese are recommended. Notably, the layers of baklava dough are described for the first time in *Ağdiye Risalesi* with clear instructions specifying 30 to 40 layers (Ağdiye Risalesi, 2015).

Table 4.1 *Baklava Recipes in 18th Century Cookbooks*

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
Manuscript of the 18 th century (18. Yüzyıla ait Bir Yemek Risalesi) ¹⁷	<i>Terkib-i Nuriye</i> (In Nuriye Style)	Layered with 3-4 sheet of pastry	Almond, clotted cream
	<i>Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with clotted cream)	Multi-layered	Clotted cream
	<i>Pirinç Baklavası</i> (Rice Baklava)	Multi-layered	
	<i>Kavun baklavası</i> (Baklava with melon)	16 layers	Melon
Manuscript of Ağdiye (Ağdiye Risalesi) ¹⁸	<i>Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with clotted cream)	30-40 layers	Clotted cream mixed with egg whites
			Fresh white cheese (<i>lor</i> or <i>çayır peyniri</i>) and almond

¹⁷ Sefercioğlu, N. (1985). *Türk Yemekleri (XVIII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir Yemek Risalesi)*. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Mifad.

¹⁸ Özener, M. E. (Translated). (2015). *Ağdiye Risalesi*. İstanbul: İşaret Yayınları.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
			Custard made of puréed white cowpea, milk and egg whites
			Purée of boiled rice in milk mixed with egg whites

In the first manuscript titled as “A Culinary Treatise from the 18th Century (XVIII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir Yemek Risalesi)”, four baklava recipes appear: *terkib-i Nuriye* (baklava in Nuriye style), *kaymak baklavası* (baklava with clotted cream), *piringç baklavası* (rice baklava), and *kavun baklavası* (baklava with melon). An interesting point here is that the recipe for *terkib-i Nuriye* might be the origin of the modern “*Sütlü Nuriye*” (Nuriye baklava in milk), a baklava often associated with the post-September 12 period and even called the “Coupe Dessert.” Although in this recipe the baklava dough is prepared in an unusual way—kneaded with lemon extract or unripe grape juice (*koruk suyu*)—and its syrup is not made with milk, the inclusion of almonds and clotted cream clearly shows it as a prototype of today’s *Sütlü Nuriye*. The naming also supports this connection. Additionally, the dessert called *piringç baklavası* (rice baklava) resembles *helva* more than baklava in terms of its ingredients and production technique. It was likely named baklava due to its cutting style.

In the manuscript titled *Ağdiye Risalesi*, five baklava recipes are recorded. Four of these belong to baklava with clotted cream (*kaymak baklavası*), since alternative fillings were suggested for cases when *kaymak* was not available. In addition, one recipe presents a version of baklava made with melon (*kavun baklavası*). The baklava with melon which appears in both manuscripts, has been described as a “*nekre*” meaning a peculiar or unusual recipe, due to its unusual ingredients.

4.3.2 Baklava Recipes in 19th Century

By the 19th century, we encounter cookbooks such as Ali Eşref Dede's Food Treatise (Yemek Risalesi), Refuge of Cooks (Melceü't-Tabbahin) (1844), A Manual of Turkish Cookery (1864), Istanbul Style Food Recipes (İstanbul Usulü Yemek Tarifleri) (1870), New Cookbook (Yeni Yemek Kitabı) (1880) and Housewife (Ev Kadını) (1883) (Table 4.2). When examining these cookbooks, we observe that a large portion of the recipes found in the two 18th-century culinary manuscripts also appear in the cookbooks written during this period (Samancı, 2020).

Table 4.2 *Baklava Recipes in 19th Century Cookbooks*

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
Ali Eşref Dede's Food Treatise (Ali Eşref Dede'nin Yemek Risalesi) ¹⁹	<i>Terkib-i Nuriye</i> (In Nuriye Style)	3-4 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Almond + Clotted cream
	<i>Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	30-40 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Clotted cream
		30-40 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Clotted cream
		30-40 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Fake cream made with milk and rice
		30-40 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Fresh white cheese (<i>lor</i> or <i>çayır peyniri</i>)
	<i>Kavun Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Melon)	6-11 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Melon
		10-20 layers / Made on a tray, no cutting information provided	Melon

¹⁹ Halıcı, F. (Ed.) (1992). Ali Eşref Dede'nin Yemek Risalesi. Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını. (It is thought that this cookbook has been written before 1275 according to the Hijri calendar.)

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
Refuge of Cooks (Melceü't Tabbahin) (1844) ²⁰	<i>Adi Baklava</i> (Simple Baklava)	If the dough is thin, 50-60 layers, if the dough is thick, 35-40 layers / Baklava form	Crushed hazelnuts or almonds
	<i>Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	If the dough is thin, 50-60 layers, if the dough is thick, 35-40 layers / Pastry form	Clotted cream
	<i>Kaymaklı Musanna Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Fake Clotted Cream)	If the dough is thin, 50-60 layers, if the dough is thick, 35-40 layers / Baklava form	Custard made of puréed white cowpea, milk and egg whites/ Purée of boiled rice in milk mixed with egg whites/ kneaded fresh white cheese (<i>lor or çayır peyniri</i>) and sugar
	<i>Kavun Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Melon)	16-21 layers / Cutting information is not given.	Melon
	<i>Pirinç Baklavası</i> (Rice Baklava)	Diamond shaped	
	<i>Adi Baklava</i> (Simple Baklava)	50 layers / Diamond shaped	Crushed almonds/ pistachios/ hazelnuts
A Manual of Turkish Cookery (1864) ²¹	<i>Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	40-50 layers / Diamond shaped	Clotted cream
	<i>Musanna Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Fake Clotted Cream)	50 layers / Diamond shaped	Milky thick pudding
	<i>Kavun Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Melon)	30-40 times / Cutting information is not given	Melon
	<i>Pirinç Baklavası</i> (Rice Baklava)		
	<i>Nuriye</i> (In Nuriye Style)	Multi-layered / Cutting information is not given	Clotted cream
Istanbul-style Food Recipes (İstanbul Usulü Yemek Tarifleri) (1870) ²²	<i>Sade Baklava</i> (Simple Baklava)	If the dough is thin, 50-60 layers, if the dough is thick, 35-40 layers / Diamond shaped	Crushed hazelnuts or almonds

²⁰ Mehmet Kâmil. (1844). Melceü't-Tabbâhîn (Günümüz Türkçesine aktaran: Turgut Kut). İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları.

²¹ Turabi Efendi. (1864). A Manual of Turkish Cookery. London: W.H. Allen & Co.

²² Slaveykov, P. (2023). İstanbul usulü yemek tarifleri: Çeşitli mutfak tavsiyeleri, 1870. (H. Mevsim, Çev.) İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	If the dough is thin, 50-60 layers, if the dough is thick, 35-40 layers / Cut like pastry	Clotted cream
New Cookbook (Yeni Yemek Kitabı) (1880) ²³	<i>Baklava Hamuru</i> (Dough of Baklava)	13-14 layers / Baklava form	Unspecified
	<i>Kavun Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Melon)	Multi-layered / Cutting information is not given	Melon
	<i>Pirinç Baklavası</i> (Rice Baklava)		
	<i>Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava)	10 layers	Clotted cream
Housewife (Ev Kadını)(1883) ²⁴	<i>Adi Baklava</i> (Simple Baklava)	Multi-layered	Hazelnut
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	Multi-layered / Diamond shaped	Clotted cream
	<i>Musanna Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Fake Clotted Cream)	Multi-layered / Diamond shaped	Clotted cream
	<i>Bademli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Almond)	Multi-layered / Diamond shaped	Almond
	<i>Fıstıklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Pistachio)	Multi-layered / Diamond shaped	Sugar + Common Pine Nuts or Unsalted Pistachios
	<i>Yağsız Baklava</i> (Baklava without oil)	Multi-layered / Diamond shaped	Almond
	<i>Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava)	Baklava form	Hazelnuts or Almonds
	<i>Kaymaklı Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava with Clotted Cream)	Baklava form	Clotted cream
	<i>Ay Baklavası</i> (Crescent Baklava)	Multi-layered / Crescent shaped	Hazelnut/Almond/ Peanut
	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like Sarıgıburma)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin	Hazelnut/Almond/ Pistachio/Cream
	<i>Samsa</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Hazelnut/Almond/ Peanut

²³ Samancı, Ö. (Translated). (2017). Yeni Yemek Kitabı. İstanbul: Çiya Yayınları.

²⁴ Ayşe, F. (1883). Ev Kadını. İstanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
	<i>Sarığırma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin	Hazelnut/Almond/ Peanut

The cookbook of “A Manual of Turkish Cookery” is the English translation of *Melceü't-Tabbâhîn*, translated by Turabi Efendi in London and published in 1864. Although the content is largely the same, some additional recipes have been included. Among them is a recipe titled *Nuriye*, which does not appear in the original *Melceü't-Tabbâhîn* but is identical to the *terkib-i Nuriye* recipes encountered in the 18th century.

Petko Slaveykov (1827–1895), 19th-century Bulgarian intellectual and journalist, lived in Istanbul for about ten years, a period during which he produced one of the earliest cookbooks in Bulgarian, *İstanbul Usulü Yemek Tarifleri* (1870). The book reflects the richness of Ottoman-Turkish cuisine while also including practical notes influenced by European culinary traditions, thus bridging two gastronomic cultures. Among its many recipes, two baklava variants are described: *sade baklava* (like simple baklava), prepared with multiple layers of dough, nuts, and syrup, and *kaymaklı baklava* (baklava with clotted cream), which suggests special techniques to prevent the cream from melting during baking. These recipes, closely resembling those in Mehmed Kâmil's *Melceü't-Tabbâhîn*, not only highlight the continuity of baklava preparation within Ottoman culinary literature but also show how such dishes were transmitted across cultures, later influencing Bulgarian food traditions.

The New Cookbook, which includes European-inspired recipes popular among Istanbul's elite in the late nineteenth century, documents the changes in Istanbul's cuisine between 1850 and 1880. The author states that the book was written to introduce cooking techniques that had evolved compared to those used thirty years earlier (Samancı, 2017).

The book, which also contains a baklava dough recipe and three baklava variations, mainly reproduces previously published recipes and does not introduce any new ones.

In the baklava recipes within these books, butter was generally used, and sweeteners like honey or sugar syrup were used up until the Housewife cookbook. In this cookbook sugar is used in the preparation of syrup. The number of *yufka* layers is not consistently specified across all books or recipes; some mention 3–4 layers, while others indicate 50–60 layers if the dough is thin, or 35–40 if the dough is thicker.

Regarding cooking techniques, the traditional method of baking baklava over embers beneath a sac was largely replaced by oven baking during this era. Although recipes for *terkib-i Nuriye*, baklava with clotted cream (*kaymak baklavası*), baklava with melon (*kavun baklavası*) and rice baklava (*pirinç baklavası*) appear in nearly every cookbook, Ayşe Fahriye's Housewife cookbook stands out with twelve distinct new baklava recipes, showing a diversification of baklava varieties (Table 4.2).

In addition to the existing recipes, this cookbook includes recipes of simple baklava (*adi baklava*), baklava with fake clotted cream (*musanna kaymak baklavası*), almond baklava (*bademli baklava*), pistachio baklava (*fıstıklı baklava*), butter-free baklava (*yağsız baklava*), *güllaç baklavası* with clotted cream (*kaymaklı güllaç baklava*), baklava in moon shaped (*ay baklavası*), *cendere baklavası*, *samsa*, and *sarığıburma*. Notably, these baklava recipes feature the use of both clarified butter (*sadeyağ*) and olive oil. Although the number of baklava layers is not clearly specified, the cutting technique that defines the baklava shape is distinctly described. With the Housewife cookbook, baklava varieties produced in different shapes using different techniques such rolling one *yufka* as in *cendere baklavası*, *samsa*, and *sarığıburma* or cutting in half-moon shape as in *ay baklavası* began to appear in the cookbooks literature. *Ay baklavası* is made by

cutting the baklava layers into crescent shapes using a cup. Meanwhile, *cendere baklavası* and *sarığiburma* are prepared using a rolling-pin (*oklava*) pulling technique: the dough is rolled onto two or three separate rolling pins, then gathered from both ends toward the center, and carefully pulled off the rolling pins. The naming of *güllaç baklavası* and *kaymaklı güllaç baklavası* is likely related to their cutting style or layering method, as explicit details on layers and cutting are not provided in the recipes.

At the end of the *musanna kaymak baklava* recipe, Ayşe Fahriye criticizes the clotted cream substitute made from black-eyed peas found in *Melceü't-Tabbahin* (pg.95). This critique reflects the presence of clearly defined boundaries regarding the definition and ideal form of baklava within the Ottoman culinary tradition. The text particularly mirrors the normative palate reflected in the culinary manuscripts published during the second half of the 19th century. The “deliciousness” of clotted cream baklava is presented as an ideal taste standard, while alternative fillings such as milk pudding, lor or fresh cheese, are regarded as deviations from this norm. This indicates that the concept of baklava normativity is defined not only through taste but also through cultural codes.

The criticism of the pudding-based version common in Rumelia with the phrase “its trouble is not worth its taste” reveals how regional variations were compared to the central culinary perspective. Such remarks also imply the hegemony of the Istanbul-centered culinary culture over other local cuisines of the period.

Moreover, the technical criticism based on the syrup’s inability to “penetrate” the pudding reveals that not only the ingredients but also the cooking and sweetening techniques play a significant role in defining the identity of baklava. From this, it becomes clear that baklava recipes were constrained not only in terms of ingredient lists but also in terms of cooking technique and taste preferences.

Finally, the fact that desserts made with *lor cheese* or cheese are defined as “sweet börek” demonstrates that the recipe-based distinction between baklava and börek was drawn with clear boundaries, and that the terminology used to name a dish was a matter of importance. This shows that, in Ottoman cuisine, the distinction between dessert and börek was taken seriously both in terms of taste and classification.

4.3.3 Baklava Recipes in 20th Century

During the last decades of the Ottoman era, until 1923 we encounter cookbooks such as “The Chief Cook (Aşçıbaşı)” (1900), “The New Cookbook with Additions (İlaveli Yeni Yemek Kitabı)” (1907), “The Chef Says (Aşçıbaşı Diyor ki)” (1913-1915), “The Cook’s Book (Aşçının Kitabı)” (1914), “The Perfect and Detailed Culinary Master (Mükemmel ve Mufassal Aş Ustası)” (1918-1922), “The School of Cooking (Aşçı Mektebi)” (1920), and “The Art of Cookery (Fenn-i Tabahat)” (1921). (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Baklava Recipes in 20th Century Cookbooks

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
Head Cook (Aşçıbaşı) (1900) ²⁵	<i>Tırtıl (Sisirun Baklavası)</i> (Caterpillar)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Crushed hazelnuts/peanuts/pistachios/walnuts/almonds
	<i>Baklava</i>	40 layers / Baklava form	Almond/Pistachio kernels
	<i>Deli Oğlan Sarığı/ Sıkma/Samsa</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, bending	Crushed hazelnuts/pistachios/walnuts/almonds
	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)	8 layers / no cutting information provided	Clotted cream or fake clotted cream made with Purée of boiled rice in milk mixed with egg whites
New Cookbook with Additions (İlaveli Yeni Yemek Kitabı) (1907) ²⁶	<i>Baklava</i>	13-14 layers / Baklava form	Unspecified

²⁵ Işın, M. (Translated). (1998). Mahmud Nedim bin Tosun Aşçıbaşı. İstanbul: YKY.

²⁶ Aşçıyan, O. (2008). Aşçının kitabı (T. Tovmasyan, Translated.). İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
	<i>Pirinç Baklavası</i> (Rice Baklava)	Baklava form	
	<i>Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava)	10 layers / no cutting information provided	Clotted cream
Headcook Says (Aşçıbaşı Diyor ki) (1913-1915) ²⁷	<i>Gülbeç Baklavası</i>	It resembles a halva-like dessert. Although not specified in the recipe, it is likely named baklava because of the way it is cut.	
The Cook's Book (Aşçının Kitabı) (1914) ²⁸	<i>Baklava</i>	12-15 layers	Very finely ground and roasted walnuts or sugar-roasted flour called khoriskh
		Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Roasted and finely chopped walnuts
		Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Crushed and roasted walnuts
		Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut
Perfect and Detailed Cook (Mükemmel ve Mufassal Aş Ustası) (1918-1922) ²⁹	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers / Diamond shaped	Crushed hazelnuts
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	21 layers / Diamond shaped	Curly clotted cream, cut into baklava shape and dipped in cold, thick sugar syrup
	<i>Bademli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Almond)	22 layers / Diamond shaped	Almonds boiled in hot water, peeled and finely crushed with sugar
	<i>Fıstıklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Pistachio)	23 layers / Diamond shaped	Crushed pistachios
	<i>Yağsız Baklava</i> (Baklava without oil)	24 layers / Diamond shaped	Almonds on each layer
	<i>Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava)		
	<i>Ay Baklavası</i> (Crescent Baklava)	5 layers / Crescent shaped	Almonds/walnuts/peanuts on each layer
	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like Sarıgörmüş)	5 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Cream/Hazelnut/Pistachio/Walnut

²⁷ Afiyet Gazetesinden Aşçıbaşı Diyor Ki. (2022). Aylin Koç Giannopoulos. ed. İstanbul: Palet Yayınları

²⁸ Tovmasyan, T. (Translated). (2008). Bogos Piranyan Aşçının Kitabı. İstanbul: Aras Yayınları.

²⁹ Kültürel, Z., & Koç Angelopoulos, A. (Eds.). (2019). Mükemmel ve Mufassal Aş Ustası. Palet Yayınları.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
Cook's School (Aşçı Mektebi)(1920) ³⁰	<i>Samsa</i>	5 layers / Diamond shaped	Almonds/peanuts/walnuts on each layer
	<i>Sarığuburma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	5 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Almonds/peanuts/walnuts on each layer
	<i>Adi Baklava</i> (Simple Baklava)	15-16 layers / Diamond shaped	Crushed hazelnuts/walnuts
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	15-16 layers / Amulet shaped	Pieces of clotted cream soaked in cold, dark syrup
	<i>Bademli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Almond)	15-16 layers / Diamond shaped	Boiled and peeled almonds, finely crushed with sugar / almonds and sugar-crushed unsalted pistachios
	<i>Sarma Baklava</i> (<i>Sarığuburma</i>) (Coiled Baklava)	Multi-layered / Spiral or finger shaped	Crushed walnuts/hazelnuts/almonds with fine granulated sugar
	<i>Hamaylı</i> (It is a baklava made by putting fake clotted cream made thick milk pudding with semolina between layers of dough cut in the shape of an amulet.)	Multi-layered / Amulet shaped	Milky thick pudding
	<i>Yağsız Baklava</i> (Baklava without oil)	15-16 layers / Diamond shaped	Almonds on each layer
	<i>Ev Gözlemesi</i> (Homemade Turkish Pancake)	Single layer / Round pan-sized	Fine granulated sugar
	<i>Ay Baklavası</i> (Crescent Baklava)	5 layers / Crescent shaped	Hazelnut/Almond/Peanut
	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like <i>Sarığuburma</i>)	5 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Clotted cream
	<i>Samsa</i>	5 layers / Baklava	Hazelnut/Almond/Peanut
	<i>Sarığı Burma ya da Deli Oğlan Sarığı</i> (Coiled Baklava)	5 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Hazelnut/Almond/Peanut
	<i>Yalancı Baklava</i> (Fake Baklava)	10-12 layers / Shape not specified	Crushed walnuts/hazelnuts
	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)	8 layers / Shape not specified	Curly clotted cream

³⁰ Şevket, A. (1920). Aşçı Mektebi. İstanbul: Suhulet Kütüphanesi.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
Cooking Science (Fenn-i Tabahat) (1921) ³¹	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like Sarığburma)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Optionally, clotted cream
	<i>Sarığı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Desired inner filling
	<i>Kaymaklı Sünbül-i Tebir Tatlısı</i>	15-16 layers / In a Brioche mold, like a cupcake	Raw clotted cream mixed with granulated sugar
	<i>Muska (Trigona) Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Amulet)	4-5 layers / Amulet shaped	Almond filling to be made with bread
	<i>Kuş Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)		
	<i>Muska Baklavası</i> (Amulet Baklava)		
Dessert Master (Tatlı Ustası) (1924) ³²	<i>Baklava</i>	16-19 layers / Baklava form	Unspecified
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Clotted cream
	<i>Ay Baklavası</i> (Crescent Baklava)	16 layers / Crescent shaped	Clotted cream
	<i>Hanım Dudağı</i> (Lady lip's or Sweetheart lip's)	Multi-layered / Lip shaped	Clotted cream
	<i>Sarığı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Clotted cream
	<i>Bohça Baklavası</i> (Bundle Baklava)	8-9 layers / Bundle form	Clotted cream
	<i>Sigara Baklavası</i> (Cigarette Baklava)	Single layer / Cigarette form	Unspecified
	<i>Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava)	Baklava form	Unspecified
	<i>Boğaçça Baklavası</i> (Bun Baklava)	2 layers / Baklava form	Unspecified
The Perfect Cookbook (Mükemmel Yemek Kitabı) (1926) ³³	<i>Baklava</i>	16-19 layers / Baklava form	Unspecified

³¹ Işın, M. (Ed.) (2018). Fenn-i Tabahat 1340-41. İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi.

³² Fahriye, H. (2002). Tatlıcibaşı (Translated. Osmanlıca Seminerleri Grubu). İstanbul: BATEŞ

³³ Tovmasyan, T. (Translated). (2010). Mükemmel Yemek Kitabı. İstanbul: Aras Yayınları.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
In Turkish Style and European Style Cookbook (Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Kitabı) (1933) ³⁴	<i>Ay Baklavası</i> (Crescent Baklava)	4 layers / Crescent shaped	It is not specified but it is said that clotted cream is an exception.
	<i>Hanım Dudağı</i> (Lady lip's or Sweetheart lip's)	4 layers / Lip shaped	It is not specified but it is said that clotted cream is an exception.
	<i>Sigara Baklavası</i> (Cigarette Baklava)	Single layer / Cigarette form	Unspecified
	<i>Güllaç Baklavası</i> (Güllaç Baklava)		Unspecified
	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like Sarıgıburma)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Walnuts / Hazelnuts
	<i>Sarık Burması</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Unspecified
	<i>Trigona (Muska Baklavası)</i> (Amulet Baklava)	4-5 layers / Amulet shaped	Almond filling to be made with bread
	<i>Kuş Yuvası</i> (It is made without dough, just by frying egg yolks and adding syrup.)	Bird's Nest Shaped	Clotted cream
	<i>Adi Baklava</i> (Simple Baklava)	15-16 layers / Baklava form	Crushed hazelnuts / walnuts
	<i>Cevizli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Walnuts)	3 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Walnut
	<i>Sarma Baklava</i> (Wrapped Baklava)	Single layer / wrapping form	Crushed walnuts or hazelnuts with granulated sugar
	<i>Hamaylı</i> (It is a baklava made by putting fake clotted cream made thick milk pudding with semolina between layers of dough cut in the shape of an amulet.)	Single layer / Amulet shaped	Milky thick pudding
	<i>Ay Baklavası</i> (Crescent Baklava)	5 layers / Crescent shaped	Crushed almonds/hazelnuts/peanuts
	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like Sarıgıburma)	3 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Clotted cream

³⁴ Fahriye, N. (1933). Alaturka ve Alafranga Mükemmel Yemek Kitabı. İstanbul: İnkılap Kitaphanesi.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
In Turkish Style and European Style Cookbook (Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Kitabı) (1944) ³⁵	<i>Samsa</i>	5 layers	Crushed almonds/hazelnuts/peanuts
	<i>Sarığı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	5 layers / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Crushed almonds/hazelnuts/peanuts
	<i>Yalancı Baklava</i> (Fake Baklava)	8-10 layers / Cutting information is not given	Crushed hazelnuts/walnuts
	<i>Nemse Baklavası</i>	Multi-layered / Cutting information is not given	Fresh and unsalted cheese mixed with granulated sugar
	<i>Ev Gözlemesi</i> (Homemade Turkish Pancake)	Single layer	
	<i>Baklava (Hazır Baklava Yufkasından)</i> (from ready-made baklava dough)	Multi-layered	Ground almonds or walnuts
	<i>Sigara Baklavası (Hazır Baklava Yufkasından) / Cigarette Baklava</i> (from ready-made baklava dough)	Single layer / Cigarette form	Ground almonds or walnuts
	<i>Kremalı Tatlı Börek (Hazır baklava yufkasından) / Sweet Pastry with Cream</i> (from ready-made baklava dough)	29 layers / Baklava form	Pastry cream
	<i>Baklava Hamuru</i>		
	<i>Baklava (Cevizli)</i> (Baklava with Walnut)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut
	<i>Baklava Şam Fıstıklı Antep Usulü</i> (Antep Style Baklava with Pistachio)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Pistachios crushed with granulated sugar
	<i>Baklava (Muhallebi)</i> (Baklava with pudding)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Pudding made with semolina and milk
	<i>Baklava (Kremalı)</i> (Baklava with Cream)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Cream
	<i>Baklava Kuru Kaymaklı Halep Usulü</i> (Halep Style Baklava with Dry Clotted Cream)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Dry clotted cream
	<i>Kuru Baklava</i> (Dry Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Ground pistachios

³⁵ Yeğen, E. M. (1944). Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Öğretimi. İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınevi.

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
	<i>Beyaz Baklava</i> (White Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Peeled, ground almonds
	<i>Sarığı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Ground almonds
	<i>Cendere Baklavası</i> (like Sarığıburma)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Clotted ream
	<i>Samsa</i>	Multi-layered / Like a long roll	Peeled, ground almonds
	<i>Hamaylı Tatlısı</i> (It is a baklava made by putting fake clotted cream made thick milk pudding with semolina between layers of dough cut in the shape of an amulet.)	Multi-layered / Amulet shaped	Pudding made with semolina and milk
	<i>Baklava Yanya Usulü</i> (Yanya Style Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Ground almonds
	<i>Arnavut Baklavası</i> (Albanian Style Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Ground almonds
	<i>Kıyılmış Baklava</i> (Chopped Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Peeled, ground almonds
Selected Dishes (Seçme Yemekler) (1966) ³⁶	<i>Hazır Yufkadan Tırtıl Baklavası</i> (From ready-made yufka)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold, etc.	Walnut kernels
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's Nest)	Single layer / Nightingale's Nests form	Green pistachios
	<i>Dilber Dudağı</i> (Sweetheart's Lip)	Single layer / Lip shaped	Green pistachios
	<i>Gözleme Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Turkish Pancake)	Single layer	Walnut kernels
Turkish Dessert Art (Türk Tatlı Sanatı) (1971) ³⁷	<i>Bohça Baklava</i> (Bundle Baklava)	Single layer / Bundle form	Green pistachios
	<i>Antep Bülbülü</i> (Antep's Nightingale)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Unspecified
	<i>İstanbul Bülbülü</i> (Istanbul's Nightingale)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Peanuts/Walnuts/Almonds + powdered sugar + water
	<i>Dilber Dudağı</i> (Sweetheart's Lip)	Multi-layered / Lip shaped	Peanuts/Walnuts/Almonds + powdered sugar + water

³⁶ Gökalp, T. (1966). Seçme Yemekler. İstanbul

³⁷ Ertürk, N. (2015). *Türk tatlı sanatı*. Remzi Kitabevi. (First published in 1971.)

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
	<i>Çubuk Baklavası (Vezir Parmağı)</i> / (Stick Baklava/ Grand vezir's finger shaped pastry in thick syrup)	Multi-layered / Stick shaped	Green pistachios
	<i>Beyaz Baklava</i> (White Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Peanuts + powdered sugar + water
	<i>Portakallı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Orange)	Multi-layered / Roll	Orange peel + granulated sugar
	<i>Elmalı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Apple)	Multi-layered / Roll	Apple + powdered sugar
	<i>Ananashlı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Pineapple)	Multi-layered / Roll	Pineapple
	<i>Kirazlı ve Portakallı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Cherry and Orange)	Multi-layered / Roll	Orange peel + granulated sugar + candied cherry
	<i>Hurmalı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Date)	Multi-layered / Roll	Date
	<i>Kabak ve Cevizli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Pumpkin and Walnut)	Multi-layered / Roll	Pumpkin + powdered sugar + walnuts
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Kaymak is made with milk and semolina
	<i>İsteğinize Göre Baklava</i> (baklava according to your request)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Green pistachio / Almond / Walnut / Hazelnut / Coconut
	<i>Saray Burma (Sarığı Burma)</i> / (Coiled Baklava)	Multi-layered / Pulled from rolling pin, folds etc.	Green pistachios + powdered sugar + water
	<i>Kuru Baklava</i> (Dry Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Green pistachios / Almonds / Walnuts
	<i>Saray Baklavası Hamuru</i> (Palace Baklava Dough)		
	<i>Kaymaklı Saray Baklavası</i> (Palace Baklava with Clotted cream)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Fake clotted cream made with milk and semolina
	<i>Saray Baklavası</i> (Palace Baklava)	Single layer / is folded like a <i>Çiğ Börek</i>	Green pistachio / Almond / Walnut / Hazelnut / Coconut
	<i>Samsa Tathısı</i>	Single layer / Roll	Green pistachio / Almond / Walnut / Hazelnut / Coconut

Name of the Book	Name of the Baklava	Form	Filling
	<i>Kaymaklı Samsa Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Samsa with Clotted cream)	Single layer / round (like Izmir bomb)	Fake clotted cream made with milk and semolina
	<i>Elmalı Samsa Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Samsa with Apple)	Single layer / round (like Izmir bomb)	Apple + powdered sugar
	<i>Portakallı Samsa Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Samsa with Orange)	Single layer / round (like Izmir bomb)	Orange peel + powdered sugar
	<i>Köroğlu Sarması</i> (Köroğlu's Wrapped)	Single layer / round (like Izmir bomb)	Crumbled fresh Bolu goat cheese
	<i>Samsa Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Samsa Nightingale's Nest)	Single layer / like a money bag with its mouth slightly open	Ground walnuts/green pistachios

Upon examining these cookbooks, we see that butter was commonly used in the recipes, and sugar syrup was used to sweeten the baklavas. As for the filling ingredients, almonds hazelnuts, walnuts, pistachios and clotted cream were generally used, although some rare variations with different ingredients also appear. The number of dough layers varies, some recipes specify five layers, while others mention 30–40 layers. It would not be incorrect to say that the cooking technique had almost entirely shifted to oven baking by this time.

The cookbook “The Chief Cook (Aşçıbaşı),” published in 1900 in Istanbul by Mahmut Nedim bin Tosun, stands out within the corpus of Ottoman culinary literature not only for representing the cuisine of Istanbul but also for including regional dishes from various parts of Anatolia. The author states that he wrote the book to provide solutions to the difficulties caused by not knowing how to cook during his military service. The book offers rich content that reflects not only the classical Istanbul cuisine but also the food cultures of various geographical regions such as Eastern Anatolia, Rumelia, the Mediterranean, and the Aegean. By including regional recipes, the

cookbook became an important source documenting the gastronomic diversity of the period (Samancı, 2020).

In this cookbook, there are four baklava recipes, namely *baklava*, *tırtıl/sisirun baklavası* (caterpillar), *deli oğlan sarığı/sıkma/samsa*, and *Laz böreği*. In the baklava recipe, Tosun describes how 40 layers of ultra-thin dough are filled with almonds or pistachios, baked in the oven, and then sweetened with sugar syrup. He recommends that once the baklava has cooled and is served on plates, powdered sugar and cinnamon be sprinkled on top before eating. He also emphasizes that the baklava layers should be extremely thin, in fact, so delicate that if a small coin (*onluk* in Turkish) is dropped from the height of the tray, it should be able to tear through the layers and reach the bottom. As the name suggests, *tırtıl baklavası* is made in a crinkled or curled form using the rolling-pin pulling technique. *Deli oğlan sarığı* is prepared by sprinkling crushed walnuts, pistachios, or almonds over the rolled-out dough, wrapping it around a rolling pin, and then compressing it from both ends toward the center. After removing it from the pin, it is coiled starting from the center of the tray, baked after being greased, and finally drizzling in syrup. In the *Laz böreği* recipe, it is described that four thinly rolled sheets of dough are placed at the bottom and four at the top, with clotted cream (*lüle kaymak*) used as the filling. It is baked under sac (cambered sheet iron), on ember. Tosun also notes that if clotted cream is unavailable, a milk-based pudding can be used as an alternative. Uniquely, before placing the chilled pudding between the pastry layers, whipped eggs are applied both below and above the filling. This technique clearly aims to prevent the pudding from soaking through and deforming the pastry sheets. Today, *Laz böreği* is still prepared especially in the Black Sea region. Although it has not undergone significant technical changes, unlike the recipe here that uses clotted cream, the modern version

generally employs a milk-based pudding as the filling. What makes Tosun's recipes particularly interesting is his use of lye water (küllu su) in the preparation of baklava dough. Even today, in Amasya, there are still recipes that employ lye water in baklava making (Objektif Amasya, 2025).

In the cookbook titled as “İlaveli Yeni Yemek Kitabı (New Cookbook with Additions published in 1907)”, written in Turkish using Armenian script by Ohan Aşçıyan, there are three recipes named baklava, rice baklava (pirinç baklavası), and güllaç baklava (güllaç baklavası). Although the baklava recipe does not mention the number of layers or the filling ingredients, it does not technically differ from the baklava recipes found in earlier cookbooks. The other two recipes, however, were likely named "baklava" solely due to their cutting technique. This example also illustrates that baklava was appreciated and prepared by different ethno-cultural groups, which indicates its established and significant role within the culinary culture of Istanbul.

The cookbook titled “Aşçıbaşı Diyor ki (The Head Chef Says published in 1913-1915)” is more than merely a collection of recipes; it is compiled from a series of articles published under the heading “*Aşçıbaşı Diyor ki*” in the illustrated weekly newspaper *Âfiyet*, published between 1913 and 1915 in Istanbul. From its first issue, the newspaper embraced the principle “a healthy mind in a healthy body,” explicitly aiming to build a society that was healthy both physically and mentally. The contents of this book include not only recipes but also cooking and preservation methods, along with insights into the food, beverage, and balanced dietary practices of that era. Its importance lies in the fact that the *Âfiyet* newspaper, an official publication, served as a direct intermediary in conveying culinary culture to the public. This book includes a recipe called *gölbeç baklava*, but it is closer to halva than a baklava recipe. Milk, semolina flour, and sugar

are cooked, spread onto a tray, allowed to cool, topped with oil, cut, and then baked in the oven. Although the form is not explicitly mentioned, it was likely referred to as baklava due to its baklava-like diamond-shaped slices.

The cookbook “Aşçının Kitabı (The Cook’s Book)”, written in 1914 by Boğos Piranyan in Merzifon, is among the cookbooks composed in Turkish using Armenian script. Piranyan himself served as a cook at the Merzifon American College. In his cookbook, he includes four distinct baklava recipes. In the first recipe, he suggests using very finely ground and roasted walnuts or a filling called “*khorkh*”, a halva-like substance made from roasted flour but without syrup. Here, for the first time, a filling ingredient other than nuts, cream, or similar dairy products appears. Although this choice of filling might be attributed to the conditions of the period or region, it may also reflect local culinary traditions, as the mentioned “*khorkh*” is also used in Merzifon as a filling in “*kete*”, a traditional pastry. The remaining three baklava recipes are varieties of rolled baklava (*burma baklava*), made using the rolling-pin stretching technique, as seen in earlier cookbooks. It can be observed that recipes found in cookbooks written in Armenian script closely resemble those published using Arabic script. These cookbooks reflect the richness of Istanbul cuisine, demonstrating that baklava was prepared similarly across the diverse ethnic communities composing Istanbul’s culinary heritage.

The cookbook titled “Mükemmel ve Mufassal Aş Ustası (The Perfect and Detailed Master Chef)” includes ten different baklava recipes. Although the majority of these recipes largely overlap with the cookbook *The Housewife* in terms of ingredients and methods, a particularly notable technical difference can be observed in the recipe for *kaymak baklavası* (baklava with clotted cream). To prevent the clotted cream from melting during baking, this recipe adopts an alternative technique instead of the

traditional substitution with milk pudding. In this method, the baklava is baked without any filling, then syrup is poured over it, and it is left to cool. Afterward, pieces of clotted cream, pre-cut into baklava shapes and soaked in cold syrup, are carefully inserted between the layers by gently separating the baked pastry sheets. This technique not only preserves the shape of the clotted cream but also introduces a new layered presentation of baklava. A similar method can also be observed in the recipe for *cendere baklavası*. However, according to the recipe, this method is applicable not just for clotted cream but also for other classical fillings.

The cookbook titled “Aşçı Mektebi (The School of Cooking published in 1920)” includes thirteen different baklava recipes. Besides the recipes observed in earlier cookbooks, this volume also introduces new recipes named *hamaylı*, *ev gözlemesi*, *yalancı baklava*, and *Laz böreği*. The recipe called *hamaylı* is made with a milk-based pudding filling, folded into a triangular shape similar to a talisman (muska). Today, it continues to be produced with milk pudding and walnuts in Çankırı, a city in Central Anatolia, and has obtained a geographical indication under the name *Çankırı Hameyli Tatlısı* (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2022). The recipe called as “*ev gözlemesi*” does not directly align with classical baklava methods. Instead, thin sheets of dough (yufka) are fried, stacked in layers, and either sprinkled with granulated sugar between layers or stacked without sugar and later drizzled with syrup. While resembling pancakes more closely than baklava, the thin sheets and syrup likely led to its classification under the baklava heading. The *yalancı baklava* (false baklava) recipe is technically like classical baklava, with its naming likely derived from placing dough sheets in a wrinkled rather than smooth manner in the baking tray.

In the cookbook “Fenn-i Tabahat (The Art of Cookery published in 1921)”, six baklava recipes are presented. Although most recipes resemble those familiar from previous cookbooks, we come across one original recipe by the author himself. Named “*kaymaklı Sümbül-i Tebir*” Mehmed Reşad’s recipe involves preparing individual-sized baklava portions resembling cupcakes baked in brioche molds. While this technique appears for the first time here, it is highly likely that it emerged under the influence of European culinary culture. The recipe also suggests substituting pastry cream and pistachios for clotted cream. Additionally, this cookbook is the first to document the use of tail fat in the preparation of baklava, specifically in the recipe called *cendere baklavası*.

The cookbook “Tatlı Ustası (Master of Sweets)”, written by Hadiye Fahriye in 1924, provides significant insights into both preserving and diversifying traditional baklava recipes during the early years of the Turkish Republic. In addition to nine different baklava recipes, the book includes separate sections on preparing dough and rolling out thin pastry sheets (yufka) before starting with the actual recipes. Under the section titled “Baklava,” there is a general description regarding the preparation of baklava. Furthermore, the section titled “Hamur Tatlılarına İç” (Fillings for Dough-based Sweets) provides detailed information about fillings used for baklava and similar pastries, including walnut filling, hazelnut filling, almond filling, pistachio filling, *çayır peynirli iç* (fresh cheese filling), and a faux-clotted cream filling. Additionally, this cookbook introduces new baklava recipes requiring novel techniques, such as *sigara baklavası* (cigar-shaped baklava), *bohça baklavası* (bundle-shaped baklava), and *boğaca baklavası*, into culinary literature.

“Mükemmel Yemek Kitabı (Perfect Cookbook)” is a Turkish-language cookbook published in Armenian script in 1926 during the Republican era. It contains nine baklava

recipes. In addition to classic recipes, it includes the “*trigona*” recipe, previously featured in *Fenn-i Tabahat*. Likewise, the cookbook also contains the “*cendere baklavası*” recipe from *Fenn-i Tabahat*. This indicates that earlier cookbooks continued to be sources for new culinary publications, highlighting the continuity of Istanbul's culinary culture and the shared tradition of flavors even into the early Republican period. Furthermore, the recipe titled “*Kuş Yuvası*” (Bird’s Nest) found in the book appears to be more of an egg-based recipe rather than a traditional baklava; however, it was likely categorized under baklava either because it was syrup-soaked or because it included clotted cream.

The cookbook titled “*Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Kitabı* (Cookbook of Turkish and European Cuisine)” published in 1933, written by Fahriye Nedim, hints at a transformation even through its title. The book contains eleven baklava recipes, showcasing both traditional varieties such as *adi baklava* (simple baklava) and *sarığiburma*, as well as newer recipes like *nemse baklavası* and *yalancı baklava* (false baklava). Another notable aspect of the book is the inclusion of controversial recipes such as *ev gözlemesi* within the baklava category. This may indicate a shift toward redefining baklava based on form, structure, and layers. Fahriye Nedim’s cookbook represents a discourse during the early Republican period, positioning household management and home economics as essential responsibilities of women, thus contributing to constructing the identity of the modern woman (Samancı, 2020). This period was marked by redefining the modern woman's relationship with cooking and domestic roles, strongly reflected in this cookbook. Indeed, recipes are described systematically, in a precise educational manner, using accurate measurements and gram-based ingredients.

The culinary, dessert, table arrangement, and etiquette books by Ekrem Muhittin Yeğen, a teacher at the Akşam Girls' Art School, first published in 1944, have been

considered foundational sources representing classic Turkish cuisine to the present day. Yeğen's works highlight the duality between *alaturka* (traditional Turkish) and *alafranga* (European) cuisines, and these books have served as essential references for young women learning to cook, present in nearly every household for decades. Furthermore, Yeğen's contributions are significant as they reflect the transformation and evolution of Turkish cuisine from the early 1900s to the 1950s (Samancı, 2020). His cookbook includes eighteen baklava recipes, and given its educational purpose, detailed visual instructions on baklava preparation were incorporated, marking a first in the history of Turkish cookbooks. Each recipe is carefully detailed, introducing recipes previously unseen, such as Antep Style with pistachio, Aleppo Style, Ioannina (Yanya) Style, and Albanian Baklava.

In addition, Fahriye Nedim's *Alaturka ve Alafranga Mükemmel Yemek Kitabı* (published in 1933) and Ekrem Muhittin Yeğen's *Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Kitabı* (published in 1944) are two fundamental works that have continued to be reprinted and published up to the present day (Samancı, 2020).

Necip Ertürk's book, *Türk Tatlı Sanatı* (Turkish Art of Desserts) published in 1971, shows clear signs of professionalization in confectionery by the mid-20th century. The book contains twenty-six distinct baklava recipes. The detailed dough instructions, the diversity of fillings, and exotic additions like "Pineapple," "Date," and "Orange" introduced an innovative dimension to dessert culture. This reflects both increased opportunities at the time and a trend towards merging modern pastry arts with Ottoman heritage. The institutionalization of cream-filled baklava varieties began with this book. Moreover, the presence of a section titled "Baklava According to Your Preference" demonstrates that baklava had evolved into a universally appealing dessert, open to

personal customization. Like Yeğen's cookbook, Ertürk's volume also incorporated visual elements, making it highly informative.

The cookbook titled *Seçme Yemekler* (Selected Dishes published in 1966), authored by Tahire Gökalp, a culinary instructor at the Kadıköy Girls' Art School, offers fewer yet concise recipes, presenting traditional and nostalgic tastes. The recipe for *dilber dudağı* (Sweetheart's lips) includes instructions for choux pastry, clearly exemplifying Western culinary influences. Practical recipes like *hazır yufkadan tırtıl baklava* (Ready-made Dough Caterpillar Baklava) provide convenient solutions tailored for home cooking. Additionally, the preservation of classical recipes such as *Bülbül Yuvası* (Nightingale's Nest) strongly communicates a message of continuity in traditional flavors. In the 1980s, the blending of tradition with modern presentation became notably prominent.

Between 1923 and 1980, Turkish culinary culture, particularly in the preparation of baklava and other desserts, experienced both continuity and transformation. In the early Republican period, cookbooks such as Fahriye Nedim's *Alaturka ve Alafranga Yemek Kitabı* (1933) emphasized the systematic, educational presentation of recipes, reflecting both traditional Ottoman techniques and modern domestic ideals, including precise measurements and gram-based ingredients. This period also highlighted the role of women in household management and home economics, positioning cooking as an essential skill for the modern woman. In 1944, Ekrem Muhittin Yeğen's cookbooks further documented the duality between traditional and European cuisine, offering detailed visual instructions and introducing regional baklava variations such as Antep, Aleppo, and Ioannina styles, thus reinforcing the continuity and diversification of Istanbul's culinary heritage. During the 1960s, cookbooks like Tahire Gökalp's *Seçme*

Yemekler (1966) combined traditional flavors with practical, modern solutions for home cooking, including the use of ready-made dough and Western pastry techniques. By the 1970s, Necip Ertürk's *Türk Tatlı Sanatı* (1971) marked the professionalization of dessert-making, presenting twenty-six baklava recipes with innovative ingredients such as pineapple, date, and orange, as well as customizable fillings. In this period, baklava became both a symbol of cultural heritage and a culinary product shaped by the skills and taste of the modern housewife; therefore, 1923–1980 stands out as a period in which traditional techniques were preserved while modernization and diversification progressed together.

4.4 Baklava Recipes From Ottoman to Turkish Republican Eras

The baklava recipes found in Ottoman-era cookbooks provide more than merely instructions for preparing a dessert; they offer multilayered insights into the culinary tastes, technical expertise, kitchen organization, and cultural norms of their period. From the 15th century onward, baklava underwent continuous transformations in terms of ingredients, preparation, and cooking techniques. The culinary culture that began to take shape in earlier periods further diversified in 18th-century treatises, particularly through recipes featuring clotted cream-filled and layered baklavas. By the end of 19th century, the recipes became more sophisticated both in terms of content and techniques. It is evident from these recipes that butter was a constant element, while the preferred sweeteners transitioned clearly from honey to sugar. Recipes became richer in terms of the number of pastry layers, cutting techniques, cooking methods, and fillings, resulting in the emergence of various subtypes such as *musanna baklava*, *cendere baklavası*, and *ay baklavası* in cookbooks like *Housewife* and *School of Cooking*. The technical details used in these recipes reflect not only flavor but also aesthetic presentation, ideal forms,

and a normative understanding of baklava. Criticism directed particularly towards *musanna baklava* demonstrates that Ottoman cuisine placed great emphasis not just on content, but also on technique, appearance, and classification. Additionally, differences in recipes between the central culinary culture and local cuisines reflect Istanbul's role as a standard-setter. All these data illustrate clearly that baklava was not just a dessert consumed by the palace or the public, but also evolved into a culinary narrative intersecting technical skill, cultural taste, and class symbolism.



5. BAKLAVA IN TURKISH REGIONAL CUISINES

The study of baklava varieties belonging to Turkey's seven geographical regions reveals that this dessert is not merely a type within the culinary repertoire, but also a multilayered phenomenon directly linked with cultural memory, social ritual, and modes of economic production. The regional differentiation of baklava points to a diversity shaped at the intersection of numerous factors—such as climate, agricultural production, access to ingredients, social tastes, and ritual practices. For this reason, regional analysis allows baklava to be positioned both as a component of a shared Turkish culinary heritage and as a bearer of local identities.

The examinations in this section have been systematically classified according to the number of layers, formal variations, types of fat used, filling ingredients, sweetening agents, and cooking techniques. In this way, the distinctive technical features and unique preferences of each region's baklava production have been identified, while also demonstrating how baklava has been redefined across different geographies around shared symbolic value.

Regional diversity especially brings to light the dynamics of continuity and change. In Gaziantep and its environs, baklava becomes a demonstration of mastery and prestige through the skill of rolling paper-thin sheets and the use of pistachios; in Central Anatolia, forms produced with a single sheet of dough highlight simplicity and creativity. In the Aegean and Mediterranean, the use of olive oil reflects the projection of these regions' agricultural practices into dessert culture; in Eastern Anatolia, recipes sweetened with molasses symbolize the resistance of traditional flavoring methods in the face of modernization. The nut-filled baklavas of the Black Sea region, made with hazelnuts and walnuts, incorporate local natural products into culinary memory, while the Marmara

Region's varieties—both multi-layered and simplified—reflect the synthesis of urban culinary practices with traditional forms.

In conclusion, the regional study of baklava demonstrates that this dessert is not only a gastronomic product, but also the bearer of a wide world of meaning that extends from economic indicators to social rituals, from cultural identities to aesthetic preferences. In this framework, baklava may be regarded as a “sweet map” that renders visible the geographical and cultural diversity of Turkey.

5.1 Baklavas With Designation of Origin

Geographical indications are a mechanism that formally guarantees the unique production, processing, or preparation methods of a product that is specific to a particular region, as well as its characteristic link with that region (Turkish Patent and Trademark Office [TÜRKPATENT], 2024b). In Turkey, baklava is an important dessert that represents regional identity in both historical and cultural contexts, and many of its varieties are protected through geographical indication registration. These registrations aim to safeguard the traditional production techniques of baklava, the use of local ingredients, and its distinctive flavor profile (TÜRKPATENT, 2024a).

The first baklava to receive a geographical indication was *Antep Baklavası* (Gaziantep Style Baklava) (Registered: 2008). This Gaziantep³⁸ specialty, prepared with extremely thin layers of dough, abundant Antep pistachios, and a filling enriched with butter, has become the symbol of the region's gastronomy (TÜRKPATENT, 2008). In later years, *Tavas Baklavası* (Baklava in Tavas style) (Registered: 2018), distinguished

³⁸ Gaziantep is a city located in South-Eastern region of Türkiye; designated as the first UNESCO creative city of gastronomy in 2015.

by the production techniques and local flour blend unique to Denizli³⁹'s Tavas district, was also registered (TÜRKPATENT, 2018a). That same year, *Sivrihisar Muska Baklavası* was registered, notable for its triangular (muska) form and walnut filling, specific to the Sivrihisar district of Eskişehir⁴⁰ (TÜRKPATENT, 2018b).

From the Zonguldak⁴¹ and Bartın⁴² regions in western Black Sea region, *Devrek Beyaz Baklavası* and *Bartın Beyaz Baklavası* (white baklavas in Devrek and Bartın style) (Registered: 2020) are distinguished by their controlled baking techniques that prevent browning on the upper surface and their walnut-based fillings (TÜRKPATENT, 2020a; 2020b). *Pekmezli Baklava*, a traditional dessert of Erzurum⁴³ (Registered: 2021), is prepared with mulberry or black mulberry molasses instead of sugar syrup, offering a distinctive taste and color profile (TÜRKPATENT, 2021a).

From Konya's⁴⁴ Akşehir district, *Akşehir Peynir Baklavası* (Registered: 2021) stands out with its use of unsalted fresh cheese and its custom of being served warm (TÜRKPATENT, 2021b). In 2022, *Afyonkarahisar Hurma Baklavası* and *Kayseri Gül Baklavası* were registered, characterized by their unique date and rose-shaped presentations, respectively (TÜRKPATENT, 2022a; 2022b). In the same year, *Uşak Baklavası* and *Amasya Cevizli Ballı Baklava* were registered, both prepared with local dough and syrup techniques (TÜRKPATENT, 2022c; 2022d). *Uşak Baklavası* is made of 65–70 layers of pastry, with a dough composed of wheat flour, water, eggs, salt, and sunflower oil, filled with finely chopped walnuts, baked with clarified butter, and

³⁹ Denizli is a city located in Aegean region of Türkiye.

⁴⁰ Eskişehir is a city located in Central Anadolu region of Türkiye.

⁴¹ Zonguldak is a city located in Black Sea region of Türkiye.

⁴² Bartın is a city located in Black Sea region of Türkiye.

⁴³ Erzurum is a city located in Eastern Anatolia region of Türkiye.

⁴⁴ Konya is a city located in Central Anatolia region of Türkiye.

sweetened with a sugar syrup made from beet sugar. *Amasya Cevizli Ballı Baklava* is consisting of 40 layers of dough made from eggs, sunflower oil, milk, apple vinegar, salt, special-purpose wheat flour, water, and saffron, filled with finely ground walnuts, baked with melted butter, and sweetened with a honey-based syrup, where apple vinegar provides a crisp texture and saffron gives a golden yellow color.

Among the most recent registrations are *Çerkeş Sırma Baklavası* (Registered: 2024) and *İskilip Baklavası* (Registered: 2025). Both varieties are characterized by their use of regional ingredients and adherence to traditional production methods (TÜRKPATENT, 2024a; 2025). *Çerkeş Sırma Baklavası* is made from dough prepared with special-purpose wheat flour, eggs, vinegar, yogurt, milk, sunflower oil, and salt, rolled into thin sheets, sprinkled with coarsely chopped walnuts, shaped over a rolling pin to create a lightly wrinkled exterior, baked with a mixture of melted butter and sunflower oil at 190–200 °C for 30–35 minutes, and sweetened with a sugar-lemon syrup, where the rolling, shaping, and resting techniques give the baklava its characteristic appearance and texture. *İskilip Baklavası* is prepared with dough composed of wheat flour, sunflower oil, grape vinegar, eggs, and salt, rolled into thin sheets using wheat starch, filled with crushed walnuts, shaped into five varieties—*Gül*, *Döşeme*, *Şıkırdım*, *Gazete*, and *Bülbülyuvası* (Rose, Laying, Şıkırdım, Newspaper and Nigtinghale’s Nest)—baked with melted butter at 150 °C, and sweetened with a sugar-lemon syrup, where the rolling, shaping, and baking techniques are distinctive and ensure its characteristic texture and form. These varieties not only preserve Turkey’s gastronomic heritage but also make significant contributions to regional economies and tourism.

5.2 Mediterranean Region

The Mediterranean Region encompasses various local interpretations and preparation techniques under the category of baklava within Turkey's traditional sweets repertoire. This diversity is not limited solely to dough shaping or the number of pastry layers; it notably includes a wide variety of elements such as the type of fat used, filling ingredients, choice of sweeteners, and baking techniques. Baklava varieties collected from provinces such as Adana, Antalya, Burdur, Hatay, Isparta, Kahramanmaraş, Mersin, and Osmaniye clearly reflect this pluralism (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 *Baklava in Mediterranean Region*

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
ADANA	<i>Baklava</i>			Adana İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Hayatın dönüm noktaları*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://adana.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219100/hayatin-donum-noktalari.html
	<i>Karakuş</i> (Walnuts are placed inside the rolled-out dough, folded, and cut. The cut pieces are deep-fried and then placed in syrup.)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, Diagonal cutting	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği. -- Yöresel Mutfaklar- Serkan Şengül & Ali Çakır & Gülay Çakır
	<i>Sarığıburma</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
ANTALYA	<i>Yüksük Baklavası</i> (Ring Baklava)	Single layer / Ring form, roll	Walnut	grandmadesign.com
	<i>Cevizli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Walnut)	30 layers / Baklava form	Walnut	Antalya İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Cevizli baklava*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://antalya.ktb.gov.tr/TR-307260/cevizli-baklava.html
	<i>Kıvrım (Sarı Burma)</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Walnut kernels	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
BURDUR	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Sarı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Baklava</i>	60 layers	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Sarı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with clotted cream)	40 layers	Clotted cream	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Kesme (Samsa)</i> (If it is cut into a diamond shape, it is called "kesme", and if it is made into an amulet, it is called "samsa".)	Single layer / Amulet form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
ISPARTA	<i>Dilber Dudağı</i> (Sweetheart's Lip)	20 layers / Lip form	Clotted cream	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Kesmik Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Curd)	14 layers / Baklava form	"Curd" obtained by curdling milk	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Ceviz Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Walnut)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Samsa</i>			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Oklava Çekmesi</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Peynir Baklavası</i> (Cheese Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Sarı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer /Pulled from rolling pin, wrapping it around the tray	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
KAHRAMANMA RAŞ	<i>Maraş Kıvrımı</i> (Bending of Maraş)	Single layer / Roll form, bending	Walnuts + granulated sugar	Nursel'in Evi. (2023, Eylül 1). Maraş Kıvrımı [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvIBlhup2x4
	<i>Gülloş Baklavası</i>			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Kıvrım (Sarı Burma)</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Bending	Walnuts + granulated sugar	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnuts + granulated sugar	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
MERSİN	<i>Tarsus Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Tarsus style)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnuts/Hazelnut s/Peanuts	M. Işın& B. Onaran - Kırk Kat Baklava Tarihi / pg.174
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnuts + granulated sugar	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Sarığt Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Walnuts + granulated sugar	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
	<i>Karakuş</i> (Walnuts are placed inside the rolled-out dough, folded, and cut. The cut pieces are deep-fried and then placed in syrup.)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Unspecified	HALICI, N. (1983). Akdeniz bölgesi yemekleri. Konya Turizm Derneği.
OSMANİYE	<i>Yer Fıstıklı Burma Kadayıfı</i> (Twisted Kadaif with Peanut)	Single layer / Rolling, twisting	Peanuts	Osmaniye İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yer fıstıklı burma kadayıfı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://osmaniye.ktb.gov.tr/TR-161022/yer-fistikli-burma-kadayifi.html
	<i>Osmaniye Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Osmaniye Style)	Baklava form	Walnut kernels	SehriMosmaniye.com. (n.d.). Osmaniye'nin eşsiz baklavası tarifi. Retrieved October 4, 2025, from https://sehriMosmaniye.com/tr-osmaniye-mutfagi-tarifleri/osmaniye-nin-essiz-baklavasi-tarifi/156922
	<i>Osmaniye Fıstıklı Burma Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of twisted burma with Peanut)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
	<i>Sarı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaclar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Karakuş</i> (Walnuts are placed inside the rolled-out dough, folded, and cut. The cut pieces are deep-fried and then placed in syrup.)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaclar. Beta Basım Yayım.
No city information	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Akdeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information	<i>Oklavadan Çekme</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Akdeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

Analyzing the baklava based on the number of pastry layers reveals a broad spectrum across the region. This spectrum ranges from simpler forms prepared by individually pulling pastry sheets using a rolling-pin technique (such as *yüksük baklava*, *sarı burma*, and *Maraş kıvrımı*) to classic baklava recipes consisting of up to 60 layers (grandmadesing.com; Halıcı, 1983; Nursel'in Evi, 2023). This variation suggests not only technical differences but also indicates a production logic shaped by consumption contexts. For instance, Burdur's 60-layer baklava strongly reflects this province's tradition of finely hand-rolled dough, while simpler versions like the single-sheet "*sarı burma*" might indicate sweets intended for quicker preparation and daily consumption (Halıcı, 1983).

When evaluated in terms of form, alongside classic triangular or rectangular slices, distinctive local shapes such as *muska* (also known as *samsa*), *dilber dudağı* (lady's lips), roll, twist, and pleated forms stand out (Bayrak, 2015a; Halıcı, 1983). In Kahramanmaraş, rolled and spiral forms are prevalent, whereas in Burdur, the triangular

muska shape underpins varieties labeled both “*samsa*” and “*kesme*” (Halıcı, 1983). Osmaniye demonstrates more complex structures employing combined techniques of rolling-pin pulling, twisting, and pleating. Such technical diversity is directly linked not only to aesthetic aspects but also to accumulated knowledge of production and craftsmanship.

The choice of fats reflects the direct influence of geographical conditions and local agricultural practices. Olive oil is commonly used, especially in areas such as Burdur and Osmaniye, where olive cultivation is widespread. On the other hand, butter usage in Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye points to a richer, more aromatic, and traditional flavor profile. In Antalya, the use of vegetable oil and margarine mixtures highlights the impact of modernization on domestic culinary practices and indicates the integration of industrial kitchen methods. The dessert known as *Karakuş*, commonly found in Adana, is prepared through the rolling-pin pulling technique and filled with walnuts. The rolled dough is cut diagonally, fried in deep oil, and subsequently immersed in syrup (Halıcı, 1983). Although it cannot be strictly classified as a conventional form of baklava, it may be regarded as a proto-baklava. This suggests either a transitional culinary form that anticipates baklava or, alternatively, a practical adaptation aimed at producing a baklava-like taste through less labor-intensive methods, given the demanding nature of traditional baklava preparation.

Regarding fillings, walnuts serve as the most common regional preference. Walnut’s suitability to the local climate and the aromatic depth it adds to baklava contribute to this choice. However, fillings with clotted cream (*kaymak*) in Burdur and “*kesmik*”, a product obtained by curdling milk in Isparta, showcase the direct influence of dairy production in regional dessert culture (Halıcı, 1983; Şengül, Çakır & Çakır,

2015). The baklava variant containing peanuts in Osmaniye not only represents the integration of a regional agricultural product into traditional dessert forms but also demonstrates how local agricultural practices actively shape culinary identity and diversify the definition of baklava within Turkish gastronomy.

In terms of sweeteners, there is notable regional consistency, with sugar syrup generally used across recipes. However, the presence of molasses in a *sarı Burma* recipe from Burdur suggests historical periods when sugar was not readily available domestically and indicates the occasional preservation of traditional sweeteners (Halıcı, 1983).

Baking methods across the region predominantly involve oven baking, particularly suited for evenly cooking multi-layered baklava. Some recipes from Isparta note the need for resting oiled baklava overnight before baking the next day, a technical practice it may be regarded as aimed at ensuring more uniform absorption of syrup and a cohesive internal structure.

In conclusion, baklava varieties from the Mediterranean Region not only reflect shared culinary traditions but also showcase unique interpretations developed by each province based on local dynamics. Local production practices, agricultural opportunities, taste preferences, and social rituals significantly shape baklava production. Therefore, baklava should be viewed not merely as a type of dessert but as a cultural carrier and a means of preserving collective memory.

5.3 Eastern Anatolia Region

In Eastern Anatolia, most baklava recipes feature layers ranging from 20 to 40. Erzincan's dry baklava (40 layers) and Van baklava (30 layers) are classic examples emphasizing layered structure and dough craftsmanship (Table 5.2). However, recipes

made from single sheets of dough also draw attention (such as *sarıklı burma*, *kadayıflı gül baklava*, and *kesme kadayıf*). In recipes like *Arapgir Deli Kız baklavası*, the pre-cooked dough is not re-baked, allowing for a more practical dessert preparation. In this recipe, layering is combined with aesthetics through unique cutting techniques reminiscent of carrot slicing (Bayrak, 2015b; Show TV, 2016; Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2023).

Table 5.2 *Baklava in Eastern Anatolia Region*

Provinces	Name	Form	Filling	References
BİNGÖL	<i>Ev Baklavası</i> (Homemade Baklava)	19 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Bingöl İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Ne yenir*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://bingol.ktb.gov.tr/TR-183264/ne-yenir.html
BİTLİS	<i>Kadayıflı Gül Baklava</i> (Rose Baklava with Kadaif)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, rose shape	Kadayıf + Walnuts	Show TV. (n.d.). Nursel ile Ramazan Sofrası: Bitlis mutfağından kadayıflı gül baklava tarifi. https://www.showtv.com.tr/programlar/sahne/nursel-ile-ramazan-sofrasi-bitlis-mutfagindan-kadayifli-gul-baklava-tarifi/23855
ELAZIĞ	<i>Dolanger</i> (like Sarıgıburma)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
ERZİNCAN	<i>Kuru Baklava</i> (Dry Baklava)	40 layers / Carrot slice	Walnuts + granulated sugar	ShowTürk. (n.d.). Erzincan mutfağından kuru baklava [Video]. https://www.showturk.com.tr/programlar/video/erzincan-mutfagindan-kuru-baklava/172681
	<i>Lüle Baklava</i> (Curl Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	None	Kanal D. (n.d.). Lüle baklava tarifi. https://www.kanald.com.tr/mutfagim/haberler/lule-baklava-tarifi/40276.aspx?p=1
ERZURUM	<i>Kırım Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Kırım Style)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	ShowTürk. (n.d.). Erzurum mutfağından kırıklı baklavası [Video]. https://www.showturk.com.tr/yemek-tarifleri/video/erzurum-mutfagindan-kirim-baklavasi/173571

Provinces	Name	Form	Filling	References
	<i>Pekmezli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Molasses)	3 layers / Roll form	Walnuts / Pistachios + Mulberry Molasses	Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu. (2021a). Erzurum Pekmezli Baklavası. https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/cogرافي-isaretler/detay/1165
MALATYA	<i>Arapgir Deli Kız Baklavası</i> (It is a baklava made by stacking dried yufka on top of each other without any cooking process and flavoring them with walnuts and molasses.)	10 layers / Carrot slice	Mulberry molasses + walnut kernels	Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu. (2023). Arapgir Deli Kız Baklavası. https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/cogرافي-isaretler/detay/
VAN	<i>Van Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Van style)	30 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Hürriyet. (2019, Aralık 4). Van baklavası tarifi. https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/lezizz/van-baklavasi-tarifi-41388730
No city information.	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Doğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Sarıklı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Doğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Kesme Kadayıf</i> (<i>Kibrit Baklavası</i>) / (Cutting Kadaif) (Match Baklava)	One layer, no layers / Cut like kadaif	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Doğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Delikiz Baklavası</i> (It is a baklava made by stacking dried yufka on top of each other without any cooking process and flavoring them with walnuts and molasses.)	12 layers / Triangular slice	Molasses + Walnuts	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Doğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Dilberdudağı</i> (Sweetheart's Lip)	7 layers / Lip form	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Doğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

In Eastern Anatolia, most baklava recipes feature layers ranging from 20 to 40. Erzincan's dry baklava (40 layers) and Van baklava (30 layers) are classic examples

emphasizing layered structure and dough craftsmanship. However, recipes made from single sheets of dough also draw attention (such as *sarıklı burma*, *kadayıflı gül baklava*, and *kesme kadayıf*). In recipes like *Arapgir Deli Kız baklavası*, the pre-cooked dough is not re-baked, allowing for a more practical dessert preparation. In this recipe, layering is combined with aesthetics through unique cutting techniques reminiscent of carrot slicing (Bayrak, 2015b; Show TV, 2016; Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2023).

Butter lies at the heart of nearly all recipes in Eastern Anatolia. Olive oil is not used. However, in places like Erzurum and Erzincan, blends of butter and vegetable oil, or even olive oil and butter, can be seen. In recipes like Erzincan's *lüle baklava*, unusual ingredients such as powdered sugar mixed into the dough stand out; this practice ensures an even distribution of sweetness and reduces the need for syrup (Kanal D, 2012).

Walnuts constitute about 90% of fillings in the region. However, some recipes also include pistachios (as in Erzurum's molasses baklava). The combination of *kadayıf* and walnuts in "*kadayıflı gül baklava*" creates a notable alternative to traditional layers. Such fillings are not only nutritious but, when combined with sugar, can result in longer shelf life (Show TV, 2016).

The most characteristic feature of the region appears in its sweeteners. While sugar syrup is standard in many recipes, mulberry molasses is used uniquely, especially in Malatya, Erzurum, and some Elazığ/Erzincan recipes. For example, molasses baklava (Erzurum) is sweetened not with sugar syrup but with syrup prepared from mulberry molasses. In recipes like *Arapgir Deli Kız baklavası*, no syrup is used at all; instead, molasses is incorporated into the dough, providing natural sweetness and preservation (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2023). This practice reflects the expression of traditional flavors in the kitchen rather than simply a scarcity of sugar production.

In Eastern Anatolia, baking is generally the primary cooking technique. However, some recipes are prepared without any baking. In *Arapgir Deli Kız baklavası*, for example, pre-baked yufka sheets are used without further cooking; here, the use of dried baklava dough comes to the fore (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2023). These practices aim both at resource savings and at extending the dessert's shelf life.

Shapes and names reflect Eastern Anatolia's storytelling tradition through baklava. Rose form, lip form, and roll-wrapping are classic motifs frequently seen. The "carrot slice" shape (especially in Malatya) is rare in Anatolia but has become characteristic of this region. Names such as *Arapgir Deli Kız*, *sarıklı burma*, and *lüle baklava* refer to legendary folk figures, humorous narratives, or shape characteristics (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2023; Bayrak, 2015b; Kanal D, 2012).

Baklava traditions in Eastern Anatolia are shaped around principles of loyalty to natural ingredients, devotion to traditional sweeteners like molasses, ease of preparation, and durability. Rather than abundance of ingredients, recipes adapted to rural life and rich with cultural memory come to the fore. The presence of no-bake recipes, simplicity in shapes, and local creativity in cooking and syruping techniques are among the region's distinguishing features.

5.4 Aegean Region

Baklava production practices in the Aegean Region constitute a multi-layered tradition intertwined with the region's agricultural structure, collective memory, and culinary heritage. Recipes recorded in provinces like Afyonkarahisar, Aydın, Denizli, İzmir, Kütahya, Manisa, Muğla, and Uşak exhibit remarkable diversity in terms of ingredients, techniques, and terminology, offering an insightful window into the evolving culinary habits of the region (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 *Baklava in Aegean Region*

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
AFYONKARA- HİSAR	<i>Hurma Baklavası</i> (Date Baklava)	Date form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara. Afyonkarahisar İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Hurma baklavası*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/afyonkarahisar/neyenir/hurma-baklavasi--firma-baklavasi
	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with clotted cream)	15 layers / Baklava form	Cream	Afyonkarahisar İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Kaymaklı baklava*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/afyonkarahisar/neyenir/kaymakli-baklava
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
AYDIN	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Saraylı</i> (Imperial)	Single layers / wrapped	Roasted, crushed sesame seeds	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Kaymak Bohçası</i> (Clotted cream bundle)	3 layers / Bundle form	Walnuts + Cream / Butter	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
DENİZLİ	<i>Tavas Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Tavas style)	40 layers / Baklava	Walnut kernels	Denizli İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yöresel tatlılar ve tarifleri*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://denizli.ktb.gov.tr/TR-250590/yoresel-tatli-lar-ve-tarifleri.html
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Denizli İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yöresel tatlılar ve tarifleri*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://denizli.ktb.gov.tr/TR-250590/yoresel-tatli-lar-ve-tarifleri.html

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
İZMİR	<i>Kolay Baklava</i> (Easy Baklava)	30 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Denizli İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yöresel tatlılar ve tarifleri*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://denizli.ktb.gov.tr/TR-250590/yoresel-tatlılar-ve-tarifleri.html
	<i>Saraylı Tatlısı</i> (<i>Oklavadan</i> <i>Çekme</i>) / (Coiled Baklava)	Single layers /Pulled from rolling pin	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Lor Baklavası</i> (Lor Baklava)	Single layers / Pipe, like arm pastry	Curd	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Baklava</i>	15-16 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Nünük Tatlısı</i> (<i>Oklava</i> <i>Sıyırması</i>) (Scraping the rolling pin)	Single layers / Pulled from rolling pin	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
KÜTAHYA	<i>Cevizli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Walnut)	45 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Kütahya İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Kütahya mutfak kültürü*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://kutahya.ktb.gov.tr/TR-353234/kutahya-mutfak-kulturu.html
	<i>Ev Baklavası</i> (Homemade Baklava)	46 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Kütahya İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). Yöresel yemekler. Kütahya Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. https://kutahya.ktb.gov.tr/TR-69393/yoresel-yemekler.html
	<i>Kaymak</i> <i>Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Clotted cream)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Baklava</i>	40 layers / Baklava form	Walnuts + starch	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of yufka)	6 layers	Walnuts + starch	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
MANİSA	<i>Baklava</i>	40 layers / Baklava form	Almond	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
MUĞLA	<i>Kaymaklı Baklava</i> (Baklava with clotted cream)	2 layers / Amulet form	Almond	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Yufka Kırmısı</i> (Crumble of Yufka)	Multi-layered	Almonds / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Damat Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Groom)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Almond	Muğla İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Ne yenir*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://mugla.ktb.gov.tr/TR-296375/ne-yenir.html
	<i>Yörük Baklavası</i> (Yoruk's Baklava)	10 layers / Baklava form	Sesame tattoo + Walnut kernel	Muğla Büyükşehir Belediyesi. (n.d.). Muğla mutfağı: Yöresel tatlar [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_G-S16tNJ0&ab_channel=MuglaB%C3%BCy%C3%BCk%C5%9FehirBelediyesi
	<i>Muğla Saraylısı</i> (Imperial in Muğla Style)	Single layers / Rolling, Wrapping	Sesame tattoo + Walnut kernel	Nursel'in Evi. (n.d.). Saraylı Tatlısı [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH-b7ZnSLYc&ab_channel=Nursel%27inEvi
	<i>Baklava</i>	Minimum 35 layers / Baklava form	Walnuts / Almonds	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
UŞAK	<i>Saraylı</i> (Imperial)	Single layers / Rolling, Wrapping	Walnut kernel	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
	<i>Uşak Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Uşak style)	65-70 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernel	UTSO TV. (2019, Mayıs 21). Uşak baklavası yapımı [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCTX2_YFI2I&ab_channel=UTSO-TV
	<i>Cendere Tatlısı</i> (like Sarıgıburma)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnuts / Chickpeas + Sesame	HALICI, N. (1981). Ege yemekleri. Konya Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. Güven Matbaası: Ankara.
No city information.	<i>Ev Baklavası</i> (Homemade Baklava)	20 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Ege yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
No city information.	<i>Cendere</i> (Like Sarığburma)	Single layers / Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Ege yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

In the Aegean region, baklava types demonstrate significant variation in terms of the number of layers. For instance, *Uşak baklavası* is notable for its high-layer count of 65–70 layers, whereas certain varieties like *kaymaklı baklava* (baklava with clotted cream) (Afyonkarahisar) feature around 15–20 layers. Recipes such as *saraylı* or *cendere*, prepared using individual sheets of dough, are regarded as practical forms suitable for daily consumption and as unique products shaped by traditional technical knowledge (Uşak Valiliği, n.d.; UTSO TV, 2019; Halıcı, 1981).

The use of shape-based terms such as *hurma* form (date form), *lüle* (curl), *bohça* (bundle), *muska* (triangle), *rulo* (roll), and *büzgü* (shirr) in region-specific recipes highlights not only visual diversity but also the region’s capacity for generating technical terminology. For example, *Afyon Hurma Baklavası*, despite lacking a layered structure, is still classified as “baklava” and has been geographically registered (Halıcı, 1981). This case suggests that the concept of “baklava” in local culinary culture operates not just as a technical category but also as a narrative element imbued with cultural values and representation.

The use of fats in the Aegean Region’s baklava reflects the region’s climatic and agricultural conditions directly. Olive oil is predominantly used in areas with significant olive production, such as Muğla, Aydın, and Kütahya, while Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, and İzmir often blend butter with olive oil. Alternative oils such as sesame oil (especially in Kütahya) or sunflower oil (Uşak) also appear in some recipes, reflecting the regional economy, product availability, and traditional flavor preferences.

Across the region, walnuts dominate as the primary filling, although almond usage is particularly notable in Manisa and Muğla. The incorporation of dairy products such as lor cheese (İzmir) and clotted cream (Afyonkarahisar, Aydın) in sweet fillings reveals the tangible influence of livestock farming on culinary memory. Examples like “*İzmir lor baklavası*” highlight how baklava’s traditional concept extends beyond classical definitions, becoming adaptable and locally distinct (Halıcı, 1981).

Sugar syrup is universally used as a sweetener in recipes across the Aegean Region, indicating sugar’s established role as a staple ingredient, despite the regional presence of alternative sweeteners like molasses. Baking remains the predominant cooking method; however, exceptional cases like “*Manisa yufka kırmısı*” involve frying (Halıcı, 1981). This particular recipe involves soaking cooked dough sheets, coating them in egg, frying, and then immersing them in syrup, exemplifying the intricate layering of traditional culinary practices, reflecting time and labor.

Certain recipes include oral traditions, such as “*Darı unundan baklava, incir ağacından oklava olmaz.*” (“You cannot make baklava from corn flour nor a rolling pin from fig wood,” Aydın) or “*Susam kokarsa saraylı, ceviz kokarsa baklava olur.*” (“If it smells like sesame it's saraylı; if it smells like walnuts, it's baklava.”), indicating that sweet-making in the region encompasses symbolic and ethical knowledge as well as technical skills (Halıcı, 1981). These sayings connect ingredients not only physically but culturally to what is considered “correct.”

In conclusion, the baklava varieties of the Aegean Region demonstrate that the traditional concept of sweets is not fixed but rather a dynamic field shaped by local economies, production techniques, belief systems, and social narratives. This diversity engages not only taste but also memory, labor, and place. In this context, baklava should

be considered not merely as a dessert to be eaten, but as a cultural representation and a carrier of local identity.

5.5 Southeastern Anatolia Region

In this region, where baklava culture has reached its peak, recipes are distinguished by fine craftsmanship in layering, the use of clarified butter (*sadeyağ*), pistachio-based fillings, and rich yet refined syrup techniques. These baklavas are not only desserts but also symbols of mastery, festive rituals, hospitality, and regional prestige (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 *Baklava in Southeastern Anatolia*

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
ADİYAMAN	<i>Burma Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Twisting)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
DİYARBAKIR	<i>Nuriye Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Nuriye / In Nuriye Style)	12 layers / Baklava form	Almond	N.Halıcı - Güney Doğu Anadolu Yemekleri
	<i>Burma Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Twisting)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
GAZİANTEP	<i>Antep Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Antep)	30-40 layers / Baklava form	pistachios	N.Halıcı - Güney Doğu Anadolu Yemekleri -- Yöresel Mutfaklar - Serkan Şengül & Ali Çakır & Gülay Çakır
	<i>Havuç Dilimi Baklava</i> (Carrot Slice Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Şöbiyet</i> (It is a type of baklava made by folding the pastry sheets into a triangle shape, with clotted cream and pistachios added between them.)	<i>Multi-layered / Triangle form</i>	Clotted cream+ Pistachios	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
	<i>Dolama</i> (Bending)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
KİLİS	<i>Burma Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Twisting)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
MARDİN	<i>Ev Baklavası</i> (Homemade Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnuts + Pistachios	Mardin Lezzetleri. (2022, Mayıs 2). Bayrama özel baklava tarifi (Kürtçe anlatımlı) [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENvPv0rXsxU
	<i>Kadayıflı Baklava</i> (Baklava with Kadaif)	Single layer / Rolling	Walnuts + Kadayif	Mardin Lezzetleri. (2021, Şubat 1). [Kadayıflı Baklava (kürtçe anlatımlı)] [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAYr8QamxrM
ŞANLIURFA	<i>Kuru Baklava</i> (Dry Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Fıstık Sarması</i> (Wrapping of Pistachio)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
ŞIRNAK	<i>Fireydin</i> (like Göynük dik börek)	Single layer / Rolling	Walnut	Şırnak İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Fireydin*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/sirnak/neyenir/fireydn
No city information.	<i>Nuriye Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Nuriye / In Nuriye Style)	16 layers / Baklava form	Almond	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Güneydoğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Baklava</i>	16 layers / Baklava form	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Güneydoğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Hirtlevik</i> (<i>Sargıburma</i>)/ (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Güneydoğu Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

In this region, where baklava culture has reached its peak, recipes are distinguished by fine craftsmanship in layering, the use of clarified butter (*sadeyağ*), pistachio-based fillings, and rich yet refined syrup techniques. These baklavas are not only desserts but also symbols of mastery, festive rituals, hospitality, and regional prestige.

The most prominent feature of the region is the high number of layers used in baklavas. While Gaziantep Baklava typically has between 30 and 40 layers, *Nuriye* dessert (from Diyarbakır) and other general Southeastern Anatolian baklava recipes can reach up to 16 layers. Beyond the sheer number of layers, how thin each layer is rolled and whether they separate after baking are also important. Thus, in Southeastern Anatolia, baklava mastery is defined not just by “how many layers” but also by “how many millimeters” each layer can be rolled.

Clarified butter (*sadeyağ*) is the backbone of Southeastern baklava. In major centers such as Antep, Urfa, Siirt, Diyarbakır, and Kilis, almost all recipes use clarified butter. *Sadeyağ* not only has a longer shelf life but also increases the burning point of the fat, thereby improving baking quality. In milk- or cream-based varieties like *şöbiyet*, clarified butter may be chosen specifically to preserve the delicate aromas of other ingredients.

The filling material reflects both the region’s economic status and its local production. In Gaziantep, pistachio is undeniably the primary filling today. Its unique aroma and color make it a preferred choice not only for taste but also for visual appeal. In examples such as Diyarbakır’s *Nuriye* dessert, almonds appear as an elegant alternative (Halıcı, 2015). Walnuts can be seen in some rural parts of the region, representing both a continuation of tradition and an economical alternative.

Sweetening is generally done using classic sugar syrup. However, in some regional recipes, particularly in *Nuriye* dessert, the syrup is prepared not just with sugar but with a mixture of sugar and milk. This gives the dessert a softer, “milky” texture that melts in the mouth. In recipes like pistachio wraps the amount of syrup is reduced; here, the flavor is carried mainly by the fat and the inner filling. In this sense, it can be said that

in Southeastern baklava, syrup functions more as a glaze and binder than merely a sweetener (Halıcı, 2015).

In recipes from Gaziantep and its surroundings, aesthetics and tradition go hand in hand. The classic baklava form dominates. Variations such as *şöbiyet*, *katmer*, *dolama*, *sarma*, *pistachio wrap*, and *carrot slice* differ in both cutting style and filling types. Proverbs encountered in Kilis, such as “*İtin akıl eksiği, baklavadan pay umar*” (“The fool dog expects a share from the baklava”), show that baklava is not merely a food but a cultural icon (Kilis İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, n.d.). Such expressions that reveal the regional value and symbolic weight of baklava indicate that it is represented not only in the kitchen but also in folk narratives.

Baking is generally done in a high-temperature oven. However, in types like “dry baklava,” the amount of syrup used after baking is kept low, possibly to ensure that the dessert lasts longer. In Southeastern Anatolia, baklava should not be “wet” but rather crisp and yet melt in the mouth. This texture may have been preferred to extend shelf life in the hot climate.

In this context, Southeastern Anatolia, and especially Gaziantep, is a geography where both technical mastery and production standardization in baklava have become institutionalized. The large number of layers, use of clarified butter, pistachio fillings, and dense syrup are common features of recipes unique to the region. The geographical indication registration of Gaziantep Baklava is significant not only as a geographical marker but also as a recognition and institutionalization of these production methods (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2008).

Today, we believe that Sütlü Nuriye, which is associated with the 1980 coup period and even referred to as the “Coup Dessert”, actually originates from a recipe called

“*terkib-i Nuriye*” found in an 18th-century culinary manuscript. Although in this early recipe, the baklava dough was kneaded with lemon juice or unripe grape juice (*koruk suyu*) rather than the usual method, and its syrup was prepared traditionally rather than with milk, the inclusion of almonds and cream components can be seen as a prototype for modern *sütlü Nuriye*. Moreover, this similarity is not only at the level of content but also in naming consistency, giving the impression of historical continuity.

The *fireydin* found in Şırnak is similar to the *Göynük dik börek* recipe from Bolu, made by rolling out a single sheet of dough, adding crushed walnuts, rolling it up, then slicing and arranging it vertically. While the recipe mentions frying, it's unclear whether this is done in the oven or in oil. Although the recipe states that it is sweetened with “*şıra*”, brought to mind that in the local language this could be molasses sherbet (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, n.d.).

Some pastries share baklava techniques or ingredients but cannot be strictly categorized as baklava. *Katmer* is often considered a prototype rather than a standard baklava. Other pastries such as *varak-keek*, *rayoş-u meketip*, and *kahyat* are made with yufka as well but do not fit neatly into the baklava category, highlighting regional experimentation and the fluid boundaries between dessert types.

5.6 Central Anatolia Region

Baklavas from Central Anatolia reflect a simple yet technically rich dessert heritage shaped by the philosophy of “making more with less.” The region’s climate, economic structure, and agricultural production characteristics are decisive factors that shape baklava recipes both in content and form. Throughout the region, unlike the multi-layered Istanbul-style baklava, sweets skillfully shaped from a single sheet of dough predominate. This highlights both material efficiency and artisanal skill (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 *Baklava in Central Anatolia Region*

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
ANKARA	<i>Beypazarı Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Beypazarı)	60 layers / Baklava form	Walnut	Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı. (n.d.). *Beypazarı baklavası*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ankara/neyenir/beypazarı-baklavası
	<i>Gazete Baklavası</i> (Newspaper Baklava)	Multi-layered / Shirred	Walnut	Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı. (n.d.). *Gazete baklavası*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ankara/neyenir/gazete-baklavası
	<i>Saraylı</i> (Imperial)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Perçem / Cevizli Perçem Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of forelock)	Single layer / a form between rose and bundle	Walnut	ShowTürk. (n.d.). Cevizli perçem tatlısı [Video]. ShowTürk. https://www.showturk.com.tr/yemek-tarifleri/video/cevizli-percem-tatlisi/279240 --
ÇANKIRI	<i>Çerkeş Sırma Baklava</i>	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, roll form	Walnut kernels	Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu. (2024a). Çerkeş Sırma Baklavası. https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/cografisaretler/detay/1539
	<i>Hameyli Tatlısı</i> (It is a baklava made by putting fake clotted cream made thick milk pudding with semolina between layers of dough cut in the shape of an amulet.)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Büzgü</i> (Shirred)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
ESKİŞEHİR	<i>Sivrihisar Muska Baklavası</i> (Sivrihisar Amulet Baklava)	Single layer / Amulet form	Thin-shelled walnuts	Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu. (2018). Sivrihisar Muska Baklavası [Coğrafi işaret tescil belgesi]. https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/Files/GeographicalSigns/381.pdf
KARAMAN	<i>Oklavadan Çekme</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
KAYSERİ	<i>Güllü Baklava</i> (Baklava with Rose)	Single layer / Rose form	Hazelnuts / Walnuts / Pine nuts	Kayseri İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). Yemek tarifleri. https://kayseri.ktb.gov.tr/TR-55147/yemek-tarifleri.html
	<i>Açma Baklava</i> (Spread Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Oklava Baklavası</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
KIRIKKALE	<i>Sarığuburma</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
KONYA	<i>Kaymak Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Clotted Cream)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Clotted cream	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2005). Konya yemek kültürü ve Konya yemekleri. Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş.
	<i>Kamıştan Çekme</i> (Pulling from a reed)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2005). Konya yemek kültürü ve Konya yemekleri. Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş.
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2005). Konya yemek kültürü ve Konya yemekleri. Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş.
	<i>Kıvrım</i> (Bend)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2005). Konya yemek kültürü ve Konya yemekleri. Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş.
	<i>Kırk Kat</i> (Forty Layers)	40 layers / Triangle cut	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2005). Konya yemek kültürü ve Konya yemekleri. Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş.
	<i>Akşehir Peynir Baklavası</i> (Akşehir Cheese Baklava)	14 layers / Square	Akşehir cheese or lor cheese	Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu. (2021b). Akşehir Peynir Baklavası. https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/cografi-isaretler/detay/978
NEVŞEHİR	<i>İrmikli Baklavası</i> (Baklava with Semolina)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Pudding made with semolina and milk	Kanal D. (n.d.). İrmikli baklava tarifi. Kanal D. https://www.kanald.com.tr/mutfagi-m/haber/irmikli-baklava-tarifi?p=1#

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
	<i>Gelin Sinisi</i> (Bride's Tray)	Single layer / Roll, wrapped	Walnuts / Hazelnuts	Nefis Yemek Tarifleri. (n.d.). Nevşehir gelin sinisi kıvırtma baklava. Nefis Yemek Tarifleri. https://www.nefisyemektarifleri.co m/nevsehir-gelin-sinisi-kivirtma- baklava/ -- YouTube. (n.d.). [Video başlığı] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =wC7H2dMXOaU
NİĞDE	<i>Tatlı Muska</i> <i>Böreği</i> (Sweet Amulet Patry)	Single layer	Walnut kernels	Niğde İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Niğde mutfağı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://nigde.ktb.gov.tr/TR- 74354/nigde-mutfagi.html
	<i>Tırtıl Baklavası</i> (Caterpillar)	Single layer / Amulet form	Walnut kernels	Niğde İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Niğde mutfağı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://nigde.ktb.gov.tr/TR- 74354/nigde-mutfagi.html
	<i>Fukara Baklavası</i> (Poor's Baklava)	7-8 pieces of trimmed layer	Walnut kernels	Niğde İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Niğde mutfağı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://nigde.ktb.gov.tr/TR- 74354/nigde-mutfagi.html
	<i>Sarım Burma/ Sarığı Burma / Kıvrım Börek</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	Kültür Portalı. (n.d.). Sarım burma – sarığı burma kıvrırma börek. https://www.kulturportalı.gov.tr/tur kiye/nigde/neyenir/sarim-burma- %E2%80%93sarigi-burma- kivirma-borek -- Niğde İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Niğde mutfağı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://nigde.ktb.gov.tr/TR- 74354/nigde-mutfagi.html
	<i>Sarı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
SİVAS	<i>Sarığıburma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Roll, wrapped	Walnut kernels	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Kıvrım Baklavası</i> (Bending Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnuts + granulated sugar	Sivas İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). Halk mutfağı. https://sivas.ktb.gov.tr/TR- 283279/halk-mutfagi.html

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
	<i>Gazete Baklavası</i> (Newspaper Baklava)	2 layers / Shirred	Walnut kernels	Nursel'in Evi. (2016, Nisan 11). [Gazete Baklavası] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qxHE4yZUaU&ab_channel=Nursel%27inEvi
	<i>Hamaylı Tatlısı</i> (It is a baklava made by putting fake clotted cream made thick milk pudding with semolina between layers of dough cut in the shape of an amulet.)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
YOZGAT	<i>Çiçek Baklavası</i> (Flower Baklava)	Single layer / Flower form	Walnut kernels	Nefis Yemek Tarifleri. (n.d.). Yozgat usulü çiçek baklava. Nefis Yemek Tarifleri. https://www.nefisyemektarifleri.com/yo-zgat-usulu-cicek-baklava/
	<i>Şöbiyet</i> (It is a type of baklava made by folding the pastry sheets into a triangle shape, with clotted cream and pistachios added between them.)	Multi-layered / Triangle shape	Clotted cream+ Pistachios	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
No city information.	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers / Baklava form	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). İç Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Oklavaç Baklavası</i> (Tırtıl Baklavası-Oklaç) (Caterpillar)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). İç Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Muska Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Amulet)	22 layers / Amulet form	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). İç Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Softa Sarığı</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	No inner filling	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). İç Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Çoban Sarığı</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). İç Anadolu yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

In Central Anatolia, many recipes are made with a single sheet of dough. Beyond economic reasons, this allows for masterful shaping techniques. Only a few exceptions, such as “*Beyazır baklavası*”, feature up to 60 layers. Recipes like *muska*, *kıvrım*, *sarığırma*, and *saç arası* exemplify how a single sheet can be transformed into a rich form. For example, “*Sivrihisar muska baklavası*” and “*tatlı muska böreğı*” use a triangular folding technique, while baklavas known as *tırtıl*, *kıvrım*, or *oklavaç* are shaped by pulling and gathering the dough. In recipes like “*gazete baklavası*”, the wrinkled form of the dough is deliberately preserved as a stylistic feature (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2013; Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2012; Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2018; Bayrak, 2015c; Halıcı, 2005).

In the region, clarified butter (*sadeyağ*) and butter are the prominent fat types. In some centers like Konya, pure clarified butter is preferred, whereas in places like Çankırı and Nevşehir, it is mixed with vegetable oil. While olive oil is occasionally seen (for example, in some *muska* recipes), it is rare compared to Marmara and the Aegean. The preference for clarified butter signifies an intention to intensify flavor and achieve traditional tastes.

Walnuts are the dominant filling throughout the region. However, alternatives such as hazelnuts and pine nuts appear in recipes like “*güllü baklava*”. In some recipes, such as “*irmikli baklava*” (Nevşehir), a semolina-based pudding serves as the filling. Nevertheless, walnuts remain indispensable for their balance of flavor and cost (Kayseri İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, n.d.; Niğde İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, n.d.; Kanal D, 2012).

Sugar syrup is the primary sweetener in all recipes. However, the use of molasses in the “*fukara baklavası*” from Niğde is particularly striking (Niğde İl Kültür ve Turizm

Müdürlüğü, n.d). In this recipe, there is no baking, and the dough is used in broken form, providing a striking example of how financial constraints transform dessert traditions.

In terms of shape, baklavas in the region diversify around three main techniques. The *muska* form, made by folding into a closed triangle, may carry protective or amulet-like symbolic meanings. The roll-wrapping style (like *sarığiburma*) might have been inspired by nomadic cooking methods. The crimping/gathering style (*tırtıl, kıvrım baklavası*), where the dough is gathered around a rolling pin, requires high manual skill.

The names are also remarkable. Names like “*gazete baklavası*” (newspaper baklava) arise from the dessert’s wrinkled appearance. The name “*fukara baklavası*” (poor man’s baklava) reflects economic status. Names such as “*softa sarığı*” (student’s turban) or “*çoban sarığı*” (shepherd’s turban) generate meanings on both symbolic and cultural levels.

The diversity of baklava in Central Anatolia exemplifies technical richness shaped by material scarcity. In this region, baklava is not merely a dessert but a symbol of labor, mastery, and patience. The transformative power of a single sheet of dough, the creative multiplicity of shapes, and the simple yet characteristic flavors are distinctive features of the region. In contrast to Marmara’s “material synthesis,” Central Anatolia follows a path of “labor-intensive simplification.”

5.7 Black Sea Region

Baklava varieties from the Black Sea Region reflect a deep culinary memory shaped by the area's mountainous geography and rich agricultural diversity. Recipes from this region gain significance not only through differences in ingredients and techniques but also via their contexts of use, methods of production, and local narratives. The diversity encountered across almost all provinces indicates that baklava is not a fixed

recipe, but rather a continually reinterpreted narrative and sensory memory unique to each locality (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 *Baklava in Karadeniz Region*

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
AMASYA	<i>Küllü Baklava</i> (Baklava with ash)	30 layers/ Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Objektif Amasya. (2025, Nisan 1). Amasya'nın meşhur tatlısı: Küllü baklava. https://www.objektifamasya.com/haber/24439852/amasyanin-meshur-tatlisi-kullu-baklava
	<i>Tırtıl Baklava</i> (<i>Oklavadan Sıyırma</i>) / (Caterpillar)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Walnut	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Cevizli Ballı Baklava</i> (Baklava with walnut and honey)	40 layers / Baklava form	Walnut	Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu. (2022d). Amasya Cevizli Ballı Baklavası. https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/cogra-fi-isaretler/detay/1301
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Döşeme Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Laying Yufka)	Multi-layered / Unspecified	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Yufka)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Yoka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Yufka)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
ARTVİN	<i>Büzme Katmer</i> (Shirring katmer)	Single layer/Pulling from/ a Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Granulated sugar + Walnuts	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
	<i>Baklava</i>	40 layers/ Baklava form	Walnuts + granulated sugar	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Yufka)			HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
BARTIN	<i>Beyaz Baklava</i> (White Baklava)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnuts + starch	Bartın İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Beyaz baklava*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://bartin.ktb.gov.tr/TR-340226/beyaz-baklava.html
	<i>Baklava</i>	50 layers/ Unspecified	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Baklava Dolaması</i> (Winding of baklava)	Single layer/ Kol börek, dolma	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)			HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Gelin Teli</i> (Tinsel)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Kabak Burması</i> (Twisting of pumpkin)	Single layer /Roll form	Walnuts + Sweet pumpkin	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Tatlı Börek</i> (Sweet pastry)	Multi-layered / Unspecified	Walnuts + Hazelnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
BAYBURT	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered/ Baklava form	Hazelnut	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Süt Böreği</i> (Milk pastry)	10 layers / Baklava form	Hazelnut	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
BOLU	<i>Göynük Dik Börek/ Göynük Oklava Tatlısı</i> (Göynük straight pastry / Dessert of Göynük rolling pin)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, roll form	Walnut kernels	Bolu İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yöre mutfağı ve gastronomi*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://bolu.ktb.gov.tr/TR-157474/yore-mutfagi-gastronomi.html

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
ÇORUM	<i>Mudurnu Baklavası</i> (Baklava in Mudurnu Style)	40 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Bolu İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yöre mutfağı ve gastronomi*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://bolu.ktb.gov.tr/TR-157474/yore-mutfagi-gastronomi.html
	<i>Baklava</i>	40-60 layers /Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Sarı Burma (Cevizli)/</i> (Coiled Baklava) (with walnuts)	Single layer / Rolling, twisting	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Sarı Burma (Kabaklı)/</i> (Coiled Baklava) (with pumpkin)	Single layer / Rolling, twisting	Pumpkin	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Gül Baklavası</i> (Rose Baklava)	Single layer / Rose form	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
	<i>Alaca Sarığı Burma/Sini Bağlama Tatlısı</i> (Alaca Coiled Baklava/ Dessert of Linking Tray)	Single layer / Rolling in a tray or shrinking by hand	Roasted flour + walnuts	Alaca Kaymakamlığı. (n.d.). *Alaca'nın kültürel değerleri: Alaca sarığı, burma sini, bağlama tatlısı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from http://alaca.gov.tr/alacanın-kulturel-degerleri-alaca-sarigi-burma-sini-baglama-tatlisi
	<i>Alaca Sıkma Baklava /Alaca Kocakarı Gerdanı Tatlısı</i> (Coiled Baklava)/ Alaca old women's neck spiral pastry dish)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	Alaca Kaymakamlığı. (n.d.). *Sini baklava*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from http://alaca.gov.tr/sini-baklava
	<i>Çorum Has Baklava</i> (Baklava in Çorum Style)	40 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Çorum Belediyesi Sosyal Tesisleri. (2024, Mart 19). Has Baklava tarifi [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/corumbelediyesosyaltesisleri/reel/C4rK-VItK8G/

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
GİRESUN	<i>İskilip Gül Baklavası</i> (İskilip Rose Baklava)	Single layer / Rose form	Walnut kernels	Show TV Yemek Tarifleri. (2021, Aralık 17). Gül Burma [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KKk_hm2g04&ab_channel=ShowTVYemekTarifleri
	<i>Çorum Baklavası (Gül Burma)</i> / (Baklava of Çorum) (Twisted Rose)	Single layer / Rose form or Pulled from rolling pin, twist form	Walnut kernels	Çorum İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Ne yenir*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://corum.ktb.gov.tr/TR-58764/ne-yenir.html
	<i>Baklava</i> (Has Baklava)	80 layers / Baklava form	Almonds / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Gül Baklava</i> (Rose Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, rose shape	Almonds / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Lüle Baklava</i> (Curl Baklava)	Single layer / Rolling, twisting	Almonds / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Fındık Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of yufka with hazelnut)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Ground hazelnuts	Giresun İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Fındıklı yufka tatlısı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://giresun.ktb.gov.tr/TR-216429/findikli-yufka-tatlisi.html
	<i>Fındıklı Burma Baklava</i> (Coiled Baklava with Hazelnut)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Roasted and crushed hazelnuts	ShowTürk. (n.d.). Nursel'in Mutfağında Giresun [Video]. https://www.showturk.com.tr/pr ogram/videolar/nurselin-mutfagi/182306/84/nurselin-mutfaginda-giresun--4-haziran/141924
	<i>Şerbetsiz Kıvratma</i> (Coiled Baklava without syrup)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Hazelnuts/Walnuts + granulated sugar	Renkli Yemekler. (2021, Ağustos 28). [Giresun Usulü Şerbetsiz kıvratma /Renkli Yemekler/Tatlı Tarifleri / Şerbetsiz Baklava Nasıl yapılır?] [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI5Y8w0N1-M
	<i>Baklava</i>	60 layers / Baklava form	Hazelnut	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)	Single layer / Pulling from a Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Hazelnut	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
GÜMÜŞHANE	<i>Burma Tatlısı</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	Giresun İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Findıklı yufka tatlısı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://giresun.ktb.gov.tr/TR-216429/findikli-yufka-tatlisi.html
	<i>Sarı Burma</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Hazelnuts/Walnuts	Özlem Yıldız. (2023, Nisan 18). [Gümüşhane yöresinin Sarı Burma Tatlısı] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jePn_uOSGY
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)	Single layer / Pulling from a Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Koca Karı Gerdanı</i> (old women's neck spiral pastry dish)	Single layer / Pulling from a Pulled from rolling pin, puckering	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Tatlı Yufka Böreği</i> (Sweet Yufka Pastry)	Multi-layered / Pastry slice	Granulated sugar + Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
KARABÜK	<i>Deli Oğlan Sarığı</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Shredded layer, no folds or forms.	Walnut kernels	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Oklava Dolaması</i> (Winded to rolling pin)			Karabük İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). Yiyecek-İçecek. https://karabuk.ktb.gov.tr/TR-63744/yiyecek-icecek.html
	<i>Çingene Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Gypsy)			Karabük İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). Yiyecek-İçecek. https://karabuk.ktb.gov.tr/TR-63744/yiyecek-icecek.html

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
KASTAMONU	<i>Safranbolu Ev Baklavası</i> (Safranbolu Homemade Baklava)	40 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım. -- Safranbolu Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. (2017, Eylül 19). [Baklava]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=176WABKfgKA&ab_channel=safiranboluk%C3%BClt%C3%BCrveturizm vakf%C4%B1
	<i>Cingan Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Gypsy)	Layers but fragmented / No form	Walnut kernels	Safranbolu Kültür ve Turizm Vakfı. (2017, Haziran 7). [Video title] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJXmOtvk7YQ
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Tırtıl Baklavası</i> (Caterpillar Baklava)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Cevizli Üçgen Baklava</i> (Triangle Baklava with Walnut)	20-40 layers / Triangular form	Walnut kernels	Show TV. (2015, Temmuz 8). [Kastamonu] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh5YUY91yZ4 Instagram. (2024, Haziran 14). [Kastamonu baklavası bilir misiniz?] [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8Nbrn5N_E2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
	<i>Baklava</i>	40 layers / Square or Triangle	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Sarım Burma (Deli Oğlan Sarığı) / (Coiled Baklava)</i>	Single layer / Puckering	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Şura Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Council)	40 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Tırtıl</i> (Caterpillar)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
ORDU	<i>Fındıklı Burma Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Twisted with Hazelnut)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Hazelnut	Kültür Portalı. (n.d.). Fındıklı Burma Tatlısı. https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ordu/neyenir/findikli-burma-tatlisi
	<i>Ev Baklavası</i> (Homemade Baklava)	60 layers / Baklava form	Roasted and crushed hazelnuts	Kültür Portalı. (n.d.). Ev Baklavası. https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ordu/neyenir/ev-baklavasi797395
	<i>Baklava</i>	60 layers / Baklava form	Walnuts / Hazelnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)	10 layers / Pastry slice	Milk pudding	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Ballı Börek) / (Dessert of Yufka) (Pastry with Honey)	6-8 layers / Unspecified	Walnuts / Hazelnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
RİZE	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)	Multi-layered / Square or Triangle	Milk pudding	Rize İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Halk mutfağı*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://rize.ktb.gov.tr/TR-191577/halk-mutfagi.html
	<i>Baklava</i>	35-40 layers / Baklava form	Walnuts / Hazelnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)	10 layers / Pastry slice	Milk pudding	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Muska Böreği</i> (Amulet Pastry)	Single layer / Amulet form	Cheese filling/Minced meat filling + milk pastry pudding	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Yufka)	6-8 layers of dry layer / Unspecified	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
SAMSUN	<i>Kıvratma/Çarşamba Kıvratması</i> (Bending/Bending of Çarşamba)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	Samsun İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Çarşamba kıvratması*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://samsun.ktb.gov.tr/TR-307326/carsamba-kivratmasi.html
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Şuruplu Yufka Böreği</i> (Yufka Pastry with Syrup)	Multi-layered / Like a pastry	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Toz Şekerli Yufka Böreği</i> (Yufka Pastry with Granulated Sugar)	Multi-layered / Like a pastry	Hazelnuts / Walnuts	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
SİNOP	<i>Cevizli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Walnut)	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Show TV Yemek Tarifleri. (2022, Mayıs 11). [Cevizli Baklava tarifi] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llGTmtxJB0Q&ab_channel=ShowTVYemekTarifleri
	<i>Kestaneli Baklava</i> (Baklava with Chestnut)	6 layers / Carrot slice (interesting)	Walnuts + Chestnuts	ShowTürk. (2020, 10 Mart). Sinop mutfağından kestaneli baklava [Video]. ShowTürk. https://www.showturk.com.tr/pr/ogramlar/video/sinop-mutfagindan-kestaneli-baklava/160312
	<i>Baklava</i>	60 layers / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)	Single layer / Rolling, rolling	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Kıvrım</i> (Bend / Fold)	Single layer / Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Yufka)	5-6 layers / Unspecified	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
TOKAT	<i>Büzgüli Gül Baklava</i> (Shirred Rose Baklava)	Single layer / Rose form	Walnut kernels	Show Türk. (2017, Temmuz 25). Tokat mutfağından Buzgulu Gül Baklava [Video]. ShowTürk. https://www.showturk.com.tr/pr ogramlar/video/tokat-mutfagindan-buzgulu-gul-baklava/143247
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Bülbül Yuvası</i> (Nightingale's nest/ Bird nest shaped pastry with nuts in thick syrup)	Single layer / Rolling, rolling	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Yufka Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Yufka)	Multi-layered / Unspecified	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
TRABZON	<i>Fındıklı Trabzon Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Trabzon with Hazelnut)	40 layers / Baklava form	Hazelnut	Hürriyet. (2020, Kasım, 24). Fındıklı Trabzon baklava tarifi. https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/lezi zz/findikli-trabzon-baklavasi-tarifi-41670578
	<i>Baklava</i>	30-40 layers / Baklava form	Hazelnuts + Granulated sugar	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.
	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
ZONGULDAK	<i>Beyaz Baklava</i> (White Baklava)	20-25 layers / Baklava	Walnut kernels	Zonguldak İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). Zonguldak mutfak kültürü. https://zonguldak.ktb.gov.tr/TR-383131/zonguldak-mutfak-kulturu.html TRT Belgesel. (2018, Nisan 25). *Beyaz baklavanın farklılıkları nelerdir? - Devrek/Zonguldak* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7g-t5bvdCs
	<i>Baklava</i>	Multi-layered / Baklava form	Walnut kernels	HALICI, N. (2001). Karadeniz Bölgesi Yemekleri. Gür-ay Ofset Matbaacılık.

Cities	Name	Shape	Filling ingredient	References
No city information.	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)	10 layers / Pastry slice	Milk pudding	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Beyaz Baklava</i> (White Baklava)	25 layers / Baklava	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Akçakoca Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Akçakoca)	40 layers / Baklava	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Burma Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Twisting)	Single layer / Rolling, twisting	Hazelnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Çullama</i> (Like walnut pastry with syrup.)	8 layers / Pastry slice or square	Milk egg mixture + Walnuts	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Koz Böreği</i> (Pastry with Walnut)	No shape	Walnut kernels	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Kabak Tatlı Börek</i> (Sweet Pumpkin Pumpkin Pastry)	8 layers / Pastry slice or square	Pumpkin + Walnuts + Granulated Sugar	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Karadeniz yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

In Black Sea cuisine, baklava production varies widely in terms of layers. Examples include multi-layered *Çorum has baklavası* (40 layers), *Amasya küllü baklava* (30 layers), *Sinop baklavası* (60 layers), and *Safranbolu ev baklavası* (40 layers). However, single-layer dough-based recipes are also noteworthy, particularly in Artvin, Bartın, Giresun, and Gümüşhane. These single-layer forms are often shaped through techniques such as rolling, pulling, twisting, or folding, reflecting both craftsmanship and practicality (Çorum Belediyesi Sosyal Tesisleri, 2025; Objektif Amasya, 2025; Şengül & Çakır & Çakır, 2015).

Butter prominently features in Black Sea cuisine, directly reflecting the region's strong livestock-farming tradition. Nevertheless, the combined or alternating use of olive oil and other vegetable oils also appears in recipes, especially in provinces like Çorum,

Giresun, and Tokat, highlighting variations based on ingredient availability and taste preferences.

Walnuts and hazelnuts are dominant fillings consistent with the Black Sea region's geography. Hazelnut-based recipes are prominent in hazelnut-producing provinces like Giresun, Trabzon, and Ordu, whereas walnut fillings are common in inland areas like Tokat, Amasya, and Çorum. Additionally, unusual fillings such as pumpkin (*Bartın kabak burması*), milk pudding (Rize and Ordu *Laz böreği*), and even chestnuts (*Sinop kestaneli baklava*) point to experimental creativity within regional cuisine (Halıcı, 2001; ShowTürk TV, 2015).

Sugar syrup is predominantly used as a sweetener in the region's baklava recipes, yet the presence of honey-based varieties (e.g., *Amasya cevizli ballı baklava*) and those sweetened with molasses (Tokat and Sinop) reveals the persistence of traditional sweetening practices. Recipes using molasses particularly resonate with rural or economically modest kitchens, reflecting a search for natural alternatives to refined sugar.

Baking is the prevailing cooking method throughout the region. However, traditional cooking methods such as stone ovens, cooking over embers on a griddle, or wood-fire techniques also persist. Zonguldak's "*beyaz baklava*", for instance, retains the "*kara fırın*" (black oven) tradition, involving careful baking under paper covers to avoid browning. Examples cooked over embers, such as Karabük's "*cingan baklava*" and Sinop's chestnut baklava, showcase technical diversity and how cooking methods influence flavor (Zonguldak İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, n.d.; Karabük İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, n.d.; TRT Belgesel, 2018).

Some regional recipes are integral not only to cuisine but also to social rituals. Gümüşhane Çullama, for instance, is traditionally prepared on the last day of wheat

harvesting (*ırgatlık*) (Bayrak, 2015c). In Çorum, certain baklava varieties feature prominently in weddings and festive celebrations, highlighting their ceremonial significance. The occasional use of ash-infused water (as seen in *Amasya küllü baklava* and *Çorum has baklavası*) indicates that traditional techniques are preserved through cultural practices and oral transmission.

In conclusion, baklava in the Black Sea Region transcends its role as merely a dessert; it embodies craftsmanship, local production, collective memory, and symbolic narrative. With its layered structure linking it to memory, ingredients rooting it to the land, and cooking techniques connecting it to daily life, baklava carries both tangible and intangible cultural codes. Black Sea baklava thus represents not only culinary tradition but a profound cultural expression.

5.8 Marmara Region

In Marmara, the number of baklava layers ranges widely from 3 to 60. While *Kırklareli ev baklavası* (60 layers) maintains the traditional multi-layered structure, recipes like *Balıkesir kaymaklı baklava* (baklava with clotted cream) (10 layers) and *dilber dudağı* (3 layers) show a reduction in layers. This simplification is meaningful both for time management and for adapting to urban kitchen practices. Forms such as *muska/mıska* (triangle), *oturtma* (The dough is filled with walnuts, rolled, cut, and placed vertically on a baking tray.) /also known as *kaz boynu* (goose neck), and *sarığiburma* (rolled from a single sheet) preserve the traditional formal richness while also pointing to strategies that accelerate production (Kırklareli İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, n.d.; Bayrak, 2015f; Şengül, Çakır & Çakır, 2015) (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 *Baklava in Marmara Region*

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
BALIKESİR	<i>Kaymaklı</i> (Creamy)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). <i>Yöresel mutfaklar</i> . Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Balıkesir Kaymaklısı</i> (Creamy of Balıkesir)	10 layers / Triangular slice	Clotted cream	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). <i>Marmara yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu</i> . Alfa Yayınları.
BİLECİK	<i>Büzme Tatlısı</i> (Dessert of Shirring)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). <i>Yöresel mutfaklar</i> . Beta Basım Yayım.
BURSA	<i>Oturtnma</i> (The dough is filled with walnuts, rolled, cut, and placed vertically on a baking tray.)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). <i>Yöresel mutfaklar</i> . Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Kaz Boynu</i> (Goose Neck)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). <i>Yöresel mutfaklar</i> . Beta Basım Yayım.
ÇANAKKALE	<i>Samsa/Samsı</i> (<i>Oturtnma</i>) (The dough is filled with walnuts, rolled, cut, and placed vertically on a baking tray.)	Single layer/ Baklava form	Almond + Clove	ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). <i>Yöresel mutfaklar</i> . Beta Basım Yayım.
EDİRNE	<i>Selanik (Yanya) Baklavası</i> (Baklava of Thessaloniki)	10 layers / Baklava form	Almonds + Granulated sugar	Trakya Gezi. (2016, Eylül 12). <i>Selanik (Yanya) baklavası</i> . https://www.trakyaagezi.com/selanik-yanya-baklavasi/
	<i>Cevizli Oturtma</i> (The dough is filled with walnuts, rolled, cut, and placed vertically on a baking tray.)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). <i>Yöresel mutfaklar</i> . Beta Basım Yayım.
KIRKLARELİ	<i>Oturtnma Baklava</i> (The dough is filled with walnuts, rolled, cut, and placed vertically on a baking tray.)	Single layer/ Roll form, arranged upright	Walnut kernels	Kırklareli İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). <i>Turizm Haftası kutlama etkinlikleri-2018</i> . https://kirkclareli.ktb.gov.tr/TR-206694/turizm-haftasi-kutlama-etkinlikleri-2018.html
	<i>Ev Baklavası</i> (Homemade Baklava)	60 layers/ Baklava form	Walnut kernels	Kırklareli İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). <i>Fotoğraf galerisi</i> . https://kirkclareli.ktb.gov.tr/TR-64337/fotograf-galerisi.html

Cities	Name	Form	Filling	References
	<i>Tırtıl</i> (Caterpillar)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Saraylı</i> (Imperial)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
SAKARYA (ADAPAZARI)	<i>Laz Böreği</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
	<i>Gıvırma</i> (Bending)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
YALOVA	<i>Yalova Sütlüsü</i> (Milky of Yalova)	Multi-layered / Square	Coconut/ Walnut/ Pistachio/ Hazelnut/ Almond	Yalova İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Yalova sütlüsü*. Retrieved October, 5, 2025, from https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/yalova/neyenir/yalova-sutlusu
	<i>Laponi (Laz Böreği)</i> (Baklava filled with milk pudding)			ŞENGÜL, S., ÇAKIR, A., & ÇAKIR, G. (2015). Yöresel mutfaklar. Beta Basım Yayım.
No city information.	<i>Baklava</i>	20 layers/ Baklava form	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Marmara yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Sarığıburma (Öküz ünüğü-Kaz Boğazı)</i> (Coiled Baklava)	Single layer/ Pulled from rolling pin, fold	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Marmara yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Mıska Tatlısı (Ardı Ardına)</i> (Triangler Shaped of Baklava (in a row))	22 layers /Amulet form	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Marmara yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Dilber Dudağı</i> (Sweethearts' lips)	3 layers / Lip form	Walnut	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Marmara yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.
No city information.	<i>Pumpkin Sweet Pastry</i>	12 layers / Roll, wrap	Pumpkin + Walnuts + Granulated Sugar	BAYRAK, M. F. (2015). Marmara yemekleri: Soframda Anadolu. Alfa Yayınları.

Marmara cuisine stands out for its combined use of olive oil and butter. In nearly all recipes, these two fats are used either alternately or mixed. In Thrace provinces, the joint use of vegetable oil and olive oil is also notable (for example, *Kırklareli oturtma*

baklava). This reflects an effort to balance the region's olive-growing tradition with the strong flavor profile of butter. The use of olive oil also meets the demand for a "lighter" baklava.

Walnuts are the dominant filling in Marmara; this can be explained by the region's extensive walnut production and the nut's ideal consistency and taste. However, in provinces like Edirne and Çanakkale, almonds (especially combined with cloves) stand out. In *Balıkesir kaymaklı baklava*, *kaymak* (clotted cream) also serves as a filling; this suggests the spread of luxurious ingredients from palace cuisine into rural kitchens. In the example of *Kabak böreği*, a pumpkin and walnut filling is noteworthy, showcasing a creative traditional form that adapts seasonal ingredients to sweets (Şengül, Çakır & Çakır, 2015; Bayrak, 2015e).

Marmara baklavas are visually striking in their shapes. In addition to the classic square or triangular slices, the *oturtma* form is common in provinces such as Bursa, Çanakkale, and Edirne; this refers to the dough being pressed flat (seated) in the baking tray. *Sarığiburma* (also known as *kaz boğazı*), spiral sweets made by rolling single sheets of dough with a rolling pin, demonstrate visual and technical mastery. It is also interesting that they are named with vivid descriptive phrases like "goose neck" (Bayrak, 2015d). Sweets like *dilber dudağı* (sweetheart's lip) with their eroticized name and shape, reflect the humor and playful storytelling of urban kitchens. The *muska* form, folded into a triangle, carries both symbolic (protective, closed) and functional meanings.

In all Marmara recipes, classic syrup made with refined sugar is used as the sweetener. This is related to the region's strong transportation network and wide ingredient availability. The absence of alternatives such as honey or molasses indicates a search for standardized flavor profiles aligned with urban taste preferences.

Most recipes in the region are baked in ovens, showing Marmara's early transition to modern kitchen practices. However, the stove-top preparation of *Balıkesir kaymaklı baklava* shows that this tradition remains alive, especially in rural areas. The practice of inserting cloves before baking (as in *Yanya baklavası*) carries a symbolic decorative meaning before cooking (Trakya Gezi, 2016).

The baklava culture of the Marmara Region embodies a synthesis that combines multilayered complexity with simplicity, traditional techniques with urban practices, and craftsmanship with suitability for mass production. The joint use of olive oil and butter, the balanced distribution of walnuts and almonds, the simple syrup approach, and the rich diversity of forms define this region as a "sweet transition zone." In Marmara baklava, Istanbul's cosmopolitan influence and rural traditional memory come together on the same tray.

Although Istanbul is not included in this table, it stands out as the city where baklava gained its fundamental form. As the center of the Ottoman palace cuisine, Istanbul played a key role in shaping the pastry both technically and stylistically; from there, it spread across the region through culinary manuscripts and printed cookbooks. The origins of baklava and its development within the Ottoman palace have been discussed in detail in the second and third chapters of this thesis. A more comprehensive analysis could have been made through the varieties of baklava found in former Ottoman capitals such as Bursa and Edirne; however, the available data are not sufficient for such a comparison. Nevertheless, the "oturtma baklava" recipes encountered in these regions resemble common pastries such as *sarığiburma*, which are prepared by rolling the dough around a thin rod. This similarity indicates that these desserts are both connected to the

palace tradition—hence reflecting the Istanbul style—and related to the shared confectionery practices observed across Turkey’s seven regions.

5.9 Regional Varieties of Baklava

In this research, baklava recipes were examined on a provincial basis across 81 cities; however, no verifiable data could be found for fifteen of them: Ağrı, Aksaray, Ardahan, Batman, Düzce, Hakkari, Hatay, Iğdır, Kars, Kırşehir, Kocaeli, Muş, Siirt, Tekirdağ, and Tunceli. This absence of data does not mean that baklava is not produced in these provinces. Rather, since this study relies not on fieldwork but on the available literature for each region, the limitation stems from the scarcity of documented local sources.

Baklava varieties in Turkey’s regions show significant differences in technique, ingredients, and form, yet some motifs and preparation methods appear in multiple regions. For example, *sarığiburma* or *sarı burma* can be found in Central Anatolia, Marmara, and the Mediterranean, but the number of layers, dough handling, and shaping techniques vary in each region. In Central Anatolia, *sarığiburma* is usually made from a single sheet of dough and shaped with care, while in Marmara it often uses several layers and emphasizes visual presentation. The *muska* form is common in both the Mediterranean and Central Anatolia, but folding style and filling choices differ. *Katmer* is not directly classified as baklava, yet in Southeastern Anatolia it can be considered a prototype, showing the limits of regional technical variation. The *fireydin* from Şırnak, made from a single sheet of dough with walnuts, sliced vertically and arranged upright, shares some baklava techniques but differs in cooking and sweetening methods, demonstrating regional originality. Similarly, pastries such as *varak-keek*, *rayoş-u*

meketip, and *kahyat* use yufka but cannot be strictly classified as baklava, highlighting regional experimentation and the flexible boundaries between dessert types.

Different regions have developed distinctive approaches to ingredients and sweetening. In Southeastern Anatolia, clarified butter and pistachio dominate, whereas in Eastern Anatolia butter and walnuts are used, with mulberry molasses or *şıra* as traditional sweeteners in some recipes. In the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, olive oil provides a lighter taste and texture. Central Anatolia emphasizes single-sheet dough and labor-intensive shaping, while Marmara varies the number of layers and uses both butter and olive oil for diverse flavor profiles. In the Black Sea region, hazelnuts and walnuts are often combined, and experimental fillings like pumpkin or milk pudding appear in some recipes.

Sweetening methods also reflect regional differences. Southeastern Anatolia mainly uses sugar syrup, sometimes mixed with milk for a softer texture; Eastern Anatolia relies on molasses or *şıra*; and in the Aegean and Marmara sugar syrup is standard, with few alternative sweeteners. This illustrates how geography, economy, and culture influence dessert-making practices.

Similarities and differences across regions can be seen in both technique and form. Motifs such as *sarığırma*, *muska*, *dilber dudağı*, and *kıvrım* appear in multiple regions, but variations in layer number, dough thickness, filling, baking technique, and presentation create regional identity. For example, *muska* is widespread in Central Anatolia and the Mediterranean, but filling and folding styles mark local distinctions. *Sarığırma* exists in many regions but gains different character depending on craftsmanship and ingredient choices. *Fireydin* or *katmer* shows that desserts outside the

traditional baklava category can still share technical or content links, revealing regional creativity.

In conclusion, this analysis shows that baklava varieties can be understood both through shared technical motifs and through differences in ingredients and form. Although regions share similar motifs, each maintains uniqueness in ingredient choice, number of layers, filling, sweetening, and cooking method. This makes baklava not only a dessert but also a symbol of regional craftsmanship, cultural memory, and local creativity.



6. CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined baklava, one of the most emblematic and deep-rooted desserts of Turkish cuisine, in a holistic manner within its historical, cultural, and geographical contexts, thereby revealing its evolution in Turkish culinary tradition, its social and cultural meanings, its regional diversification, and its continuity. In other words, it has sought to evaluate baklava not merely as a food or dessert, but as a multidimensional cultural phenomenon situated at the intersection of history, cultural memory, and regional identity.

Firstly, debates about the origins of baklava have formed an important focus of the thesis. Thus, different theories regarding the origins of baklava were evaluated in the study. The tradition of thin flatbreads in Central Asian Turkish cuisine, examples of multilayered sweets in Byzantine sources, and syrup-based pastries in Arab-Persian culinary cultures were examined comparatively. These discussions demonstrate that baklava cannot be attributed to a single civilization; rather, it represents a multilayered culinary product that emerged within the historical sphere of interaction encompassing the Eastern Mediterranean, Central Asia, and the Middle East. In this sense, baklava is not merely a dish but also a bearer of historical migrations, cultural exchanges, and power relations.

As seen in the study, the similarities of baklava with the flatbread tradition of Central Asia, the multilayered sweets of Byzantine cuisine, and syrup-based pastries of Arab-Persian cuisine have been interpreted differently by various scholars. Yet the available evidence indicates that this dessert cannot be reduced to a single source; rather, it emerged from the shared accumulation of cultures that intersected throughout history.

In this context, baklava is a product that carries traces of multiple culinary traditions and attained its present identity through their synthesis in Anatolia.

Particularly the production of flatbreads in Central Asian Turkish cuisine, and examples of layered dough such as *qatma yuvgha*, play a critical role in understanding the historical background of baklava. Flatbread was not only a practical food form but also constituted the technical basis of baklava thanks to the ability to roll the dough into multiple thin layers. Similarly, examples such as *koptoplakous* mentioned in Byzantine sources or *lawzinaj* in Arab cuisine, though not identical to baklava, show the continuity of interest in layered and syruped desserts in different regional cuisines. Thus, baklava emerged as a multilayered cultural product through the synthesis of such techniques in the Ottoman kitchen.

The second stage of the thesis revealed the development of baklava in the Ottoman palace kitchen and its symbolic meanings therein. The techniques of rolling out thinner dough, the increase in the number of layers, aesthetic forms of presentation, and syruping methods developed in the palace kitchen transformed baklava into an element not only of taste but also of power, grandeur, and cultural representation. In this period, baklava functioned beyond its identity as a palace dessert, serving as a vehicle that embodied the refinements of Ottoman elite culture, displays of generosity by the ruling power, and symbols of social hierarchy. Rituals such as the Baklava Procession explicitly demonstrate the social and political functions of this dessert.

The most decisive stage in baklava's attainment of its present form was the Ottoman palace kitchen. The masters working in Topkapı Palace elevated baklava to its aesthetic and technical peak by perfecting dough-thinning, multiplying layers, and developing syruping techniques. These methods transformed baklava into not only a

dessert but also a work of art requiring fine craftsmanship. The ability to roll out forty layers of dough, balance the application of syrup, and emphasize visual presentation demonstrates that baklava became a product synonymous with mastery. In this respect, the Ottoman kitchen represents the turning point that standardized baklava both formally and culturally, defining it in its modern sense.

This development in the palace kitchen also found reflection in written culinary culture. The presence of baklava recipes in Ottoman culinary treatises from the fifteenth century, printed cookbooks of the nineteenth century, and modern culinary literature of the Republican era attests to the continuity of this dessert. Cookbooks served not only to transmit recipes but also to document the culinary outlook, ingredients, and techniques of their times. Changes in baklava recipes over time thus make it possible to trace the transformations of culinary culture from the Ottoman period to the present.

Baklava, however, did not remain confined to the palace but gained wider visibility in social life through written culinary culture. Recipes preserved in cookbooks from the Ottoman Empire to the Republican era reflect not only the technical dimensions of the dessert but also its social perception. These books transmitted normative recipes while simultaneously documenting the culinary practices of different social classes and the modernization processes of their times. The diversification of baklava recipes from the nineteenth century onwards, and their redefinition in cookbooks of the Republican period designed with modern pedagogical aims, provide written evidence of the dessert's social and cultural transformation.

Another striking development in this process was the expansion of baklava's social functions. Once associated primarily with special occasions, palace ceremonies, and religious festivals in the Ottoman period, baklava entered domestic kitchens and

commercial patisseries in the Republican era, and today has become a national symbol in both traditional and modern forms. Thus, throughout history, baklava has been continuously reinterpreted in different cultural contexts and adapted to the culinary sensibilities of each period.

In understanding baklava's historical trajectory, not only oral traditions and culinary practices but also written sources play an important role. The cookbooks examined in this study document the culinary perspectives of different periods and the transformations of baklava recipes, thereby revealing the cultural continuity of this dessert. Ottoman treatises and palace records conveyed the importance of baklava in the palace kitchen and the techniques applied, while printed cookbooks from the nineteenth century onwards brought baklava recipes to wider audiences. At this point, cookbooks functioned not only as vehicles of culinary knowledge but also as documents reflecting the social and cultural life of their times. For example, the diversity of ingredients used, the measurement systems in recipes, or the modes of presenting cooking techniques reveal not only culinary practices but also the production, trade, and consumption habits of their era.

By the Republican period, with the rise of printed culinary literature and the development of modern publishing, baklava recipes were transmitted in a more systematic, standardized, and "home kitchen-friendly" form. This development transformed baklava from a dessert prepared mainly for special occasions into one accessible to every household through standardized written recipes. Thus, baklava gained an identity not limited to the palace or elite kitchens but as a cultural dessert embraced by wider segments of society.

One of the main conclusions of this study is that baklava is not only an element of food culture but also a powerful medium of cultural identity, representation, and belonging. The documentary evidence provided by cookbooks clearly demonstrates the traces of regional diversity and historical transformation, explaining why this dessert must be evaluated not only as food but also as a cultural symbol.

Baklava's journey in Anatolia has been enriched not only by debates over its origins but also by its regional diversity and transformations over time. Regional baklavas, differentiated by ingredients used, number of layers, cooking techniques, and social contexts, present both diversity and unity within the national culture. Examples such as hazelnut-based baklava in the Black Sea, pistachio-based in the Southeast, and walnut-based in Central Anatolia illustrate how local agricultural products shape culinary practices. This shows that baklava is not only a symbol of national identity but also a carrier and expression of local cultures.

The basis of regional differentiation lies primarily in geographical conditions and the diversity of agricultural products. The examples examined in the study show that baklava has been reinterpreted in each of Turkey's seven regions using different ingredients, cooking methods, and local taste preferences. While pistachios and clarified butter stand out in Southeastern Anatolia, hazelnuts dominate in the Black Sea, walnuts in Eastern Anatolia, and almonds with unique flavorings in the Aegean. This diversity makes baklava not only a national dessert but also an element reflecting the unique cultural identities of each region. Thus, baklava cannot be reduced to a single "standard recipe," but instead gains new identities as each region incorporates its natural resources.

Regional developments are also noteworthy at the technical level. In the Southeast, thin dough and high numbers of layers are preferred, while in Central Anatolia,

less layered and more filling varieties suited to rural kitchens are favored. In the Mediterranean, lighter syruping and citrus aromas are used, whereas in Eastern Anatolia, denser syruping and thicker dough sheets are common. This diversity shows that baklava is not merely a culinary product but also a reflection of lifestyles, climatic conditions, and economic practices.

Therefore, baklava is a living culinary heritage through both its regional diversity and its historical development and transformations. In the Ottoman period, baklava developed with the most refined techniques in the palace kitchen, but as it spread to different regions of the empire, it was adapted to local cuisines. In the Republican period, it was redefined with more standardized recipes within the framework of modern culinary culture. Especially in the twentieth century, systematic documentation of baklava recipes in cookbooks and culinary magazines made this transformation traceable.

Changing social conditions, trade networks, kitchen technologies, and taste preferences have continuously reshaped baklava; yet these changes have strengthened rather than weakened its cultural identity. Today, baklava presents a rich tradition through its regional varieties while also occupying a special place in Turkey's gastronomic culture as a symbol of shared national identity.

Today, in addition to cookbooks, gastronomy magazines, television programs, and digital media have become important tools in transmitting baklava recipes. This demonstrates that baklava is not only a historical tradition but also an indispensable part of the modern culinary world. Recipes circulated through digital platforms have facilitated the global recognition of baklava's different interpretations, contributing to its role as a leading representative of Turkey's gastronomic identity on the international stage.

In this respect, baklava has both preserved its roots through historical continuity and been continuously redefined in the process of modernization. What makes it enduring and meaningful is precisely this duality: the balance it strikes between tradition and modernity, rendering baklava both a local heritage and a globally recognized product.

One of the most significant recent developments in understanding baklava's contemporary position is the process of geographical indications and designations of origin. In Turkey, the registration of Antep Baklavası as a geographical indication, and its recognition at the level of the European Union, shows that this dessert has become a protected cultural heritage not only locally but also internationally. Geographical indications safeguard production methods, ingredients, and regional identity, thereby contributing to cultural continuity. This protection mechanism highlights the labor of local producers and increases the economic value of regional products.

However, geographical indications also have certain limitations. The registration of a single type of baklava may lead to the neglect of unique regional interpretations of this dessert. Yet, as emphasized in different sections of this thesis, baklava is a rich culinary heritage produced in diverse forms throughout Anatolia. Thus, while geographical indications enhance the brand value of a specific product, they also risk representing only part of this diversity. In this regard, the inclusion of more local baklava varieties in future geographical indication processes would contribute both to the preservation of cultural diversity and the strengthening of regional cuisines.

The contemporary significance of baklava extends far beyond being a dessert. Today, baklava is seen as a powerful symbol of national identity, cultural heritage, and social belonging. Whether in religious festivals, weddings, special occasions, or even daily life, baklava functions as a component of social memory. Moreover, it has become

one of the most important products representing Turkey's gastronomic identity internationally, acquiring symbolic value in tourism, cultural diplomacy, and exports.

By presenting a multidimensional analysis of baklava, from its historical origins to its regional diversity, from its reflections in written culture to its contemporary significance, this thesis makes an original contribution to the literature. In particular, the analysis of cookbooks demonstrates how baklava has undergone transformations not only within the kitchen but also in broader cultural and social contexts. At the same time, the reinterpretation of baklava across different geographical and historical settings underscores the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in gastronomy research.

For future research, it is suggested that studies on baklava should not remain confined to historical and cultural dimensions, but also be linked to gastronomy economics, food policies, cultural diplomacy, and identity studies. In particular, detailed research on the impact of geographical indications on regional development, baklava's role in gastronomy tourism, its innovative reinterpretations in modern cuisine, and its position in global culinary culture would further enrich this field.

In conclusion, baklava reflects a multilayered historical accumulation in its origins, represents a living culinary tradition through its regional variations, and today has become a symbol of national identity and cultural belonging. This thesis has approached baklava not only as a gastronomic product but as a dynamic heritage at the intersection of history, culture, and society, thereby offering a new perspective to gastronomy studies.

This thesis has approached baklava not only in terms of its historical origins, its development in the palace kitchen, or its regional diversity, but also as a cultural representation and marker of identity, assessing this multilayered structure from a holistic

perspective. The research demonstrates that it is not possible to arrive at a definitive conclusion about the origins of baklava; however, it must be evaluated as a dessert shaped by the contributions of different cultures, elevated to its peak in the Ottoman palace kitchen, and diversified across the geographies of Anatolia.



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