



Ghillie Başan

---

THE

---

# TURKISH

---

# COOKBOOK

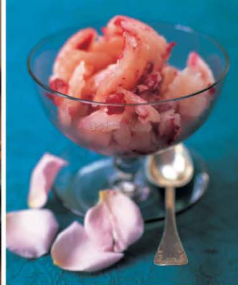
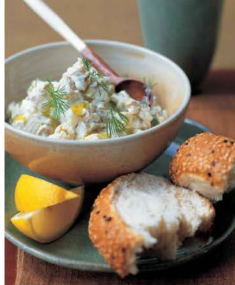
---

Exploring the food  
of a timeless cuisine

LORENZ BOOKS

# Contents

Introduction	6
An abundance of ingredients	36
Meze and salads	94
Soups and hot snacks	138
Vegetable dishes	176
Beans, peas, lentils and pilaffs	212
Fish and shellfish	252
Meat and poultry	294
Sweet snacks and jams	336
Nutritional notes	376
Index	380
Acknowledgements	384





## Introduction

---

Turkey is a country of extraordinarily beautiful landscapes and bountiful seas through which its fascinating history and culinary culture are vividly weaved. There are few places in the world where the cuisine is so rich and diverse, where the traditional merges so effortlessly with the modern, where the people are so friendly and proud of their heritage, and where the hospitality shines like a bright beacon.



Above Surrounded by sea on three sides, with the narrow Bosphorus as a link, Turkey acts as a geographical and cultural bridge between Europe and Asia.

## Greet a Turk and you will eat

The Turks are passionate about their cuisine. If you ask them about their favourite dishes, they will chat animatedly for hours describing the fresh, crunchy salads, scented with herbs; glorious, garlicky dips made with yogurt; succulent vegetables stuffed with aromatic minced lamb and pine nuts; meat balls and kebabs; breads and savoury pastries; and the sumptuous and divine milk puddings and syrupy pastries packed with nuts and bathed in syrup. They are so proud of their diverse culinary culture that it gives them pleasure to share it with you and it is their generous hospitality that draws me to the country again and again.

When I first went to Turkey in 1984, I was struck by the luring aromas of cooking in the streets and the bustle of the spice bazaars but the most striking thing of all was that everywhere I went I was offered a glass of tea, a nugget of soft, scented Turkish Delight and if there was a pudding or pastry shop nearby, someone would fetch a piece of melt-in-the-mouth pistachio baklava – simple gestures of hospitality at the bus station, in a bank or shop, in the street or at the market. There is a lot of truth in the saying: ‘Greet a Turk and you will eat’.

And wherever you go in Turkey there truly is something delicious to eat. Whether you are in the busy streets of Istanbul, in a small village in Anatolia, on the slopes above Bursa, or in a tourist resort in the Mediterranean, the enticing aroma of grilling, baking, and spices fills the air – warm bread rings covered in sesame seeds; deep-fried mussels with a garlicky sauce; roasted chestnuts, almonds and pistachio nuts; savoury pastries filled with melting cheese; lamb roasting on a spit; aubergines smoking over charcoal; and the scent of fresh peaches. You can try the famous Ottoman puddings in Istanbul; juicy apricots stuffed with rice in Cappadocia; anchovy pilaff along the Black Sea coast; fiery kebabs served on a sword in Adana; and the hallucinogenic honey of Kars in eastern Anatolia.

Every town and city has a market, where you will find a wealth of fresh, seasonal produce, such as plump olives and crunchy pickles, juicy figs, ruby-red pomegranates, ripe melons, strings of dried red chillies, and leafy herbs, which are sold like bunches of flowers. The beauty of Turkish food is that it is seasonal and abundant. Traditional recipes have been handed down from generation to generation and modern chefs add their own twists. There is something for everyone in this never-ending moveable feast.

Turkey, itself, is as thrilling as its food. With one foot planted in Europe and the other immersed in Asia, the country acts as a geographical and cultural bridge between the two continents, a fact that is vividly represented in the diversity of the cuisine.



Opposite top A timeless tradition: a cup of coffee with a piece of Turkish delight.

Opposite bottom Colourful dips and salads are often enjoyed with raki, the national aniseed-flavoured spirit.