



## Investigation of the Level of Usage of Traditional Fruit Dishes in Gaziantep Cuisine in Restaurant Menus

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### Abstract

Traditional fruit dishes are one of the attraction elements of destinations. These dishes should be presented to visitors as a gastronomic product. However, in order to benefit from these dishes, visitors must be able to access mentioned dishes. Restaurant menus, on the other hand, are a tool that delivers these products to visitors. In this study, it is aimed to examine the status of local fruit dishes belonging to the cuisine of Gaziantep Province in restaurant menus. The menus of 9 restaurant establishments operating in Gaziantep Province were analyzed by content analysis method. It was determined that fruit dishes are mostly not included in restaurant menus. In addition, it has been concluded that only four of the fruit dishes are on the menus and the others are not on the menus.

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## INTRODUCTION

Food and drinks are one of the motivating factors for traveling in destination choices. Food and drinks have an impact not only on the purpose of gastronomic tourism, but also on the satisfaction levels of people traveling for different purposes. The regional cuisine evaluated within the scope of the cultural element is an important dynamic that contributes to the economic development of the region in which it is located (Şengül, 2017, p. 376). Tourists have begun to prefer to visit these regions in order to be able to taste the food and to observe the production sites and stages that are famous in the destination and integrated with the location (Şen & Silahşör, 2018, p. 415). Tourists desire to try the local dishes of the region they visit. Even for gastro tourists, the food of the region is an element of attraction (Bayat, 2018, p. 718). Therefore, businesses that have achieved a certain level of quality and trust in offering local food can take a more advantageous position compared to other businesses. The main reason for this advantageous position is that the local dishes of the destination are a motivator for visitors. For this reason, culinary culture is seen as an element of appreciation and representation among the factors that make destinations popular (İflazoğlu & Yaman, 2020, p. 1944). In other words, it is important from the point of view of gastronomic tourism that restaurants include local dishes in their menus.

Considering that gastronomy businesses are among the stakeholders that have the most active role in promoting and marketing the culinary culture of a region, the extent to which local dishes are included in restaurant menus comes into prominence (Çağlı, 2012, p. 5). Because the menus of gastronomy businesses are also an indicator of the gastronomic products they display belonging to their authentic location, and it is the most striking proof that gastronomic attractions turn into products in terms of tourism (Kılınç & Kılınç, 2018, p. 400). Fruit dishes belonging to the Gaziantep cuisine are also among the gastronomic products. The use of fruits with or without meat in the form of stuffing, stew, broiled and so on is a feature of Turkish cuisine (MEGEP, 2011, p. 4).

In previous studies (Mil & Denk, 2015; Bayat, 2018; Yıldırım, Karaca & Çakıcı, 2018; İflazoğlu & Yaman, 2020; Seçim & Esen, 2020), the status of local dishes on menus has been examined, but no studies have been found on the status of fruit dishes on menus. In this study, it is aimed to examine the status of local fruit dishes belonging to the cuisine of Gaziantep Province in restaurant menus. In this case, it reveals the importance of the study in terms of literature.

### Conceptual Framework

In this part of the study, information about the concepts of “Gaziantep Culinary Culture” and “Fruit Dishes” were examined in the light of the information contained in the literature.

### Gaziantep Culinary Culture and Traditional Fruit Dishes

Culture is a set of material and metamaterial values that societies have (Saçılık & Toptaş, 2017, p. 108). Culture is the most important qualifier of a society, it is the value that make it different and unique (Akkuş & Akkuş, 2019, p. 1449). Culture, which includes knowledge, art, morality, customs and traditions, all the abilities and habits that a person acquires from the society in which he lives, is a set of material and spiritual values inherited from his ancestors to individuals (Kafesoğlu, 1992, p. 15). The transfer of cultural values to subsequent generations is the transfer of social elements, a kind of social personality. For this reason, it is very important that all elements of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, are preserved and transferred in accordance with the original (Akkuş & Akkuş, 2019,

p. 1449). The transfer in question is subject to change from society to society. For example, every culture has a different approach in terms of getting satisfaction from eating and drinking. A foodstuff that is considered disgusting in one society may be the most important example of taste in another society (Talas, 2005, p. 275). Accordingly, culinary culture is one of the important cultural values that vary from society to society. Local delicacies made from vegetables and fruits grown in a locality reflect the local culinary culture of that region (Güven, 2016, p. 334). One of the unknown aspects of Turkish cuisine is the use of fruits with or without meat such as stuffing, stew, cutlet and so on (MEGEP, 2011, p. 4). Consumption of meat dishes combined with fruits is associated with both giving flavor and facilitating the digestion of acidic secretions of fruits by softening the meat (Block, Norkus, Hudes, Mandel & Helzlsouer, 2001).

Anatolia has become acquainted with tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and similar vegetables after the discovery of America, as well as in Europe. Therefore, the use of fruits in meals was quite common in Ottoman cuisine (Güldemir, Şallı, Yıldız, Tugay & Çelik Yeşil, 2022; Yeni Şafak, 2018). In particular, in the book *Melceü't-Tabbâhîn*, known as the Ottoman manuscript book, the dish stuffed with melon with meat comes to the fore as a recipe in which sweet and salty are compatible (Güldemir, 2010, p. 155). Besides, dishes such as apricot stew (*kayısı yahnisi*), plum stew (*erik yahnisi*), quince stew (*ayva yahnisi*), chestnut stew (*kestane yahnisi*), stuffed plum (*erik dolması*), stuffed apple (*elma dolması*), pear basti (*armut bastısı*), apricot basti (*kayısı bastısı*), plum basti (*erik bastısı*), quince basti (*ayva bastısı*) are some of the known fruit dishes (MEGEP, 2011, p. 4). Similarly, it is stated that stuffed melon (*kavun dolması*), stuffed quince (*ayva dolması*), melon baklava (*kavun baklavası*), pine nut compote (*çamfıstığı hoşafı*), stuffed watermelon (*karpuz dolması*), pickles made from peach, desserts prepared with melon seeds are also included in Ottoman cuisine (Ayyıldız, 2018, p. 575).

In Turkish cuisine, it is stated that the dishes are also flavored with fruit or dried fruit, cooked with oil and consumed as a meal (Kaya, 2016, p. 10). However, nowadays, the use of fruits in food is found in several provinces in Turkey (Güldemir & Halıcı, 2009). For example, in Konya, some fruit dishes that are made with butter in the form of or with meat, cutlet and stuffing; quince stuffed (*ayva dolması*), quince basti (*ayva bastısı*), apricot stew (*kayısı yahnisi*), stuffed apple (*elma dolması*), apple basti (*elma bastısı*) and stuffed yellow plums (*sarı erik dolması*) are prominent (Alptekin, 2007). It is stated that molasses obtained from grapes is used in local dishes such as “hariri”, “molasses sherbet”, “isfirê” and “incassiyê” in Mardin, and the dried plum is used in “incassiyê” and “alluciye” meat dishes (Toprak, Güngör & Gürbüz, 2018, p. 1100). In addition to these, traditionally a fruit food festival has been held in Halfeti in May since 2016 (Tenekeci, Dursun & Temiz, 2020, p. 110; Atçı & Akan, 2021, p. 2537). It is stated that delicacies made from 25 different fruit dishes such as mulberry pilaf, stuffed melon, stuffed quince, egg plum, sautéed plum and shirbot fish with mulberry sauce are traditionally exhibited at the festival every year. It is stated that many fruit dishes such as onion kebab with pomegranate syrup, fried plums, loquat kebab, mixed dried fruit pilaf and quince casserole made with herbs grown in the region are presented at the festival, which was held for the fifth time in 2021 (Atçı & Akan, 2021, p. 2537). Finally, the festival, which was held for the sixth time in May 2022, started with a natural fruit gathering walk and continued with various panels, exhibitions, fruit food treats and music banquets of famous names. On the last day of the festival, the closing was held with culinary interviews of famous chefs (Media Urfa, 2022; Urfadasın, 2022).

Known as the “city of gastronomy” (UNESCO, 2020), each of the more than 400 types of food in Gaziantep

cuisine has the potential to be a main dish (Şahin, İşlek & Bingöl, 2018, p. 58). The use of local products in food is very important and is at a very high level (Süzer & Özkanlı, 2020, p. 121). Among these dishes, there are certain fruit dishes in Gaziantep that are cooked both in a pot and in an oven, the main ingredient of which is fruit. Çavuşoğlu (1994, p. 52), he expresses that the people of Gaziantep cook meat, cereals and vegetables, even some fruits in the same pot; they also cook various dishes and kebabs from fruits such as quince, apples, plums, sour cherries, and malt plum. For example, quince is used as fruit, jam and dessert in general while it is also used in kebab, rice and pot dishes in Gaziantep cuisine (Sabbağ, 2015, p. 205). In addition, apple roasting, plum roasting, quince sour cutlet, green almond dish and fig dish are some of the known fruit dishes (Akın, 2018, p. 303).

Ingredients are used in season in Gaziantep cuisine (Şahin, İşlek, & Bingöl, 2018, p. 54). Depending on the season, fruits such as loquat, sour cherry, fig, cherries, green almonds, plums, apples, dried quince and grapes are used in Gaziantep meat pot dishes (Sabbağ, 2015, p. 205). In summary, it is stated that all fruits and vegetables grown in Gaziantep are definitely used in Gaziantep cuisine in some way (Uçuk & Kayran, 2020, p. 263). Tokuz (2016) stated that the most commonly used fruits in Gaziantep Cuisine are quince, apple and apricot. Then, green almonds, plums, crocuses, loquat and cherries were pointed out. The fruit dishes that can be highlighted during the last century are listed as follows. Kebab with Quince (Ayvalı Tas Kebabı), Kebab with Sour Cherry (Vişne Kebabı), Apple Kebab (Elma Kebabı), Quince Kebab (Ayva Kebabı), Loquat Kebab (Yeni Dünya/Malta Eriği Kebabı), Sour Cutlets (Ekşili Taraklık Tavası), Apple Roasting (Elma Tavası), Quince Roasting (Ayva Tavası), Small Meatballs with Quince (Ayvalı Ufak Köfte), Apricot Dish (Zerdali/Çir Aşı), Green Almond Pilaf (Çağla Pilavı), Crocus Dish (Çiğdem Aşı), Green Almond Dish with Yoghurt (Yoğurtlu Çağla Aşı), Fig Dish (İncir Aşı), Apple Dish (with yoghurt and tomato paste) (Yoğurtlu ve Salçalı Elma Aşı), Quince Dish (Ayva Aşı), Dried Fruit Stew (Çir Yahnisi). Erdoğan and Özkanlı (2021, p.1171) listed fruit dishes, apple roasting, plum roasting, green almond dish, fig dish and sour scallops with quince. On the other hand, Serinkaya (2017) indicated Gaziantep fruit dishes as apple roasting, plum roasting, green almond dish, fig dish, sour lamb cutlets with quince. In line with this information, fruit dishes in Gaziantep cuisine were tabulated.

**Table 1.** Gaziantep Fruit Dishes

<b>Quince Kebab</b> (Ayva Kebabı)	The mutton is finely chopped with tail fat. Salt is added and meat is kneaded. The quince is cut into four parts, again divided transversely into three so that it is larger than the walnut. A quince and a meatball are placed on the skewers. It is fried on the grill. It is placed on a plate or tray. The oil is heated with water and poured over the kebabs, covered with a lid and steamed over low heat.
<b>Quince Dish</b> (Ayva Aşı)	Cook onions until they turn take on color. Boiled cubed meat and chickpeas are added to the onion and cooked by stirring until soft. Very little water is added as needed. Add tomato paste and spices and cook for a few more minutes. The quince, sliced without peeling, is kept in lemon water until the meat is cooked. Quince extracted from lemon water is added to the cooked meat and cooked for only 1-2 minutes. Lastly, pomegranate syrup is added and the dish is taken from the stove. It is usually served hot with rice.
<b>Green Almond Dish</b> (Çağla Aşı)	The mutton is cut into pieces and put in a pot and boiled by adding water. The formed foam is removed from time to time. Add onion, salt and pepper. When the boiled meat becomes soft, boiled chickpeas and pitted green almonds are added. Close the lid of the pan and continue cooking until the green almonds are soft. In another pot, strained yoghurt, egg and flour are mixed and cooked on low heat, and when it becomes thick, it is poured over the main dish. After boiled over 1-2 times, it is taken from the stove and prepared for service. As a finishing touch for the dish, it is served with the addition of saffron roasted in butter.

**Table 1.** Gaziantep Fruit Dishes (devamı)

<b>Apple Kebab</b> (Elma Kebabı)	It is prepared with sour winter apples, like Quince Kebab.
<b>Apple Dish</b> (Elma Aşısı)	It shows similarities with Quince Dish.
<b>Fig Dish</b> (İncir Aşısı)	It shows similarities with Quince Dish and Apple Dish.
<b>Fried Plum</b> (Erik Tavası)	<p>Fried Plum, which is a geographically marked dish, is cooked in two ways: in the oven and in a frying pan in the Antep kitchen.</p> <p><i>Baking in the oven:</i> Heat the oil in a pot. Optionally, minced meat or cubed meat is used (If meat is to be used, the meat is seared). Finely chopped onions are added to the meat and roasted until the onions turn pink. Add pepper paste and tomatoes and cook for another 20-25 minutes. The cooked mixture is placed on the baking tray. Peeled garlic, plums, granulated sugar, salt and pepper are added to the dish. Cover the tray with baking paper (aluminum foil is not recommended) and bake for 30-40 minutes in a preheated 180°C oven. The dish on the tray is opened for the last 10 minutes to fry it. Lastly, it is removed from the oven for serving.</p> <p><i>Cooking in the pot:</i> Minced meat or cubed meat is added to the oil heated in the pan. If cubed meat is preferred, it is seared. Finely chopped onions are added to the meat /minced meat and continue roasting until onions turn pink. It is combined with pepper paste, tomatoes and cooked for 20-25 minutes. Peeled garlic, plums, granulated sugar, salt and pepper are added to the dish being cooked. Taking care that the integrity of the plums is not disturbed, they are ready to be served when cooked for another 10-15 minutes.</p>
<b>Apricot Dish</b> (Zerdali Aşısı)	It shows similarities with Apple Dish.
<b>Loquat Kebab</b> (Malta Eriği Kebabı)	<p>Ingredients: Loquat fruit, mutton meat (the brisket of the sheep) is very finely chopped. It can be cooked in two ways. The first choice is loquat fruit and minced meat, which can be barbecued by placing them on skewers. In the second choice, after removing the seeds of the loquat fruits, the minced meat, which is formed into a ball, is placed between the loquat and cooked in the oven.</p>
<b>Apple Roasting</b> (Elma Tavası)	<p>The washed apples are divided into 4 slices, the seeds are removed and each slice is sliced in half. Sliced apples are soaked in cold water. While the apples are kept in cold water, the cubed meat is roasted in a pot with three spoons of olive oil until the water is absorbed. Chopped onions are added to the roasted cubed meat and roasted until it turns pink. Add 1 spoon of tomato/pepper paste to the roasted cubed meat and mix. Add 3 glasses of warm/hot water to the mixture and cook it until it becomes tender. Apples which are kept in water to prevent darkening, Gaziantep Molasses and salt, are added to the cooked meat and left to cook for 10 minutes. Sprinkle black pepper on the Apple Roasting, let it rest for 15 minutes and serve.</p>
<b>Sour Cutlets with Quince</b> (Ayvalı Ekşili Taraklık)	<p>Onions are peeled and chopped. In a wide frying pan, melt the butter and sear the cutlets on both sides. The meat is taken from the pan to another bowl, onions are added and roasted until they turn pink. When the onions soften, the meat is added again and cooked on low heat so that the meat absorbs its juice. Tomato and pepper pastes are mixed with a small amount of water and added to the meat. Pour 2 glasses of hot water on it, close the lid and cook on low heat until the meat is tender. Quinces are washed and sliced without peeling. The quinces, which are kept in water with lemon until the meat is cooked, are added to the pan 10 minutes before taking the food from the stove. Add the spices and cook the quince until soft. When the quinces become soft, add 2 tablespoons of pomegranate syrup. The dish, which is cooked until the sauce thickens, is served hot.</p>
<b>Dried Fruit Stew</b> (Çir Yahnisi)	<p>Dried fruits (such as plums, apricots, cherries) obtained in their season are washed and soaked overnight. Put half a glass of water and cubed meat in the pot. It is cooked on low heat with the lid closed until ingredient releases its own juice and absorbs it again. Oil and shallots are added to the meat, which is completely drained. Then the onions are roasted until the color turns yellow. Add tomato paste to the roasted onions and add water until it hits your first knuckle Add the molasses and salt, close the lid and leave to cook. Dried fruits and vinegar are added to the tenderized meat. If desired, the water in which dried fruits are kept can be strained and added to the meal. When the dried fruit softens and the juice of the dish thickens, it is taken from the stove and served.</p>

**Source:** Güldemir & Halıcı, 2009, p. 566-568; Zeytinli Mutfak, 2013; Sabbağ, 2015, p. 205; Hürriyet, 2019: Türk Patent Enstitüsü, 2021; Sunar & Gökçe, 2018; Öztan, 2016; AntepSofrası, 2022; Lezzetler, 2022.

Loquat Kebab (Malta Eriği Kababı) and Plum Pan (Erik Tava), which is observed to be widely known by the public in Gaziantep fruit dishes, was registered by Gaziantep Development Foundation in 2021 (Türk Patent Enstitüsü, 2021). All these developments show the importance of fruit dishes in Gaziantep. In this direction, it is considered necessary to intensify research on fruit dishes.

### **Research Method**

In the collection of research data, document review analysis, which is one of the qualitative research techniques, was used. Document analysis is a qualitative research technique used for the purpose of meticulously and systematically analyzing the content of written documents (Wach & Ward, 2013, p. 1).

Document analysis includes the analysis of written materials containing information about the subjects that need to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In this direction, the necessary data for the research were obtained by conducting a written document review, which is one of the qualitative research methods, and the menus of tourism enterprises included in the study were accepted as data sources.

According to Harari (2012, p. 124), the tourism industry does not sell flight tickets and hotel rooms, it sells experience. The fact that tourism enterprises serving a destination offer local food to visitors is very important in terms of tourism experience (Giritlioğlu, Karakan, Ayverdi & Toprak, 2018, p. 138). Because the regional foods that destinations have are of great importance in choosing those regions (Erdem, Mızrak & Kemer, 2018, p. 47). In this study, it is aimed to determine the level of local fruit dishes belonging to Gaziantep culinary culture in the menus of tourism enterprises. In line with this purpose, “Are fruit dishes included in the menus of local restaurants operating in Gaziantep province?” the question comes to the fore as a research question.

The universe of the research is the province of Gaziantep, which is one of the few provinces where fruit dishes unique to Turkey are used (Güldemir & Halıcı, 2009). The sample consists of local restaurants in Gaziantep province. In the study, intentional sampling method was used because it is desired to obtain data from restaurants in destinations that are easily accessible, intend to share their menus and have a high potential to visit by tourists. During the data collection process, the restaurants in the region were visited and the concrete versions of their menus were requested. At this stage, a total of 96 restaurants were interviewed face-to-face and submitted applications, but restaurant businesses did not agree to provide an example of their menus. 9 of the restaurant enterprises have allowed their menus to be reviewed and registered. On this occasion, a total of 9 restaurant menus were reached and the data were analyzed by content analysis method.

### **Findings**

The research data obtained by examining the documents are tabulated primarily according to the food groups. It has been examined whether fruit dishes are included in the menus for research purposes.

**Table 2.** Categories of Restaurant Menus

Interview Number	Starters (Entree)	Appetizers	Soups	Salads	Pilafs & Cakes	Main Dishes	Kebabs	Desserts	Local Dishes / Starters	Beverages	Total
R1		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	8
R2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	9
R3			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
R4	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	8
R5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	9
R6	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	7
R7	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	7
R8		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	7
R9	X	X		X				X		X	6
$\Sigma$	6	6	7	7	8	7	8	8	3	9	69
%	<b>8.82</b>	<b>8.82</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows how the menus of restaurants are categorized according to the classic menu content. While creating the categories, those that are related within themselves are combined under one category. The menus of the restaurants are categorized into starters, soups, salads, rice / cakes, desserts, kebabs, local dishes / starters and drinks. Due to the menu content, some of the restaurant menus could not be categorized. Some of them are not included in the categories specified in the table. In Table 3, frequency analysis was performed on restaurant menus according to the menu categories obtained with Table 2.

**Table 3.** The menu categories obtained as a result of the data obtained from the menus

Menus	Menu Categories	$\Sigma i$	%	% (100,0)
	Beverages	9	13.0	100
Pilafs/ Cakes	8	11.7		
Desserts	8	11.7		
Kebabs	8	11.7		
Main Dishes	7	10.2		
Soups	7	10.2		
Salads	7	10.2		
Starters (Entree)	6	8.82		
Appetizers	6	8.82		
Local Dishes / Starters	3	4.41		
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>		

$\Sigma$ : Total

In Table 3, the categories obtained as a result of the examination of the menus are tabulated according to frequency. As it is seen in Table 3, there is a "beverages" category in all of the menus. However, the categories of kebabs, pilafs / cakes, desserts, main dishes, soups and salads are mostly included. However, the category of local dishes and starters was found only in 3 menus. It is not clear from the menu name alone that fruit dishes, which form the basis of the research subject, are included in the above menu categories, it is necessary to examine the menu content. In summary, there is no menu title that visitors who come to visit Gaziantep can choose by examining local fruit dishes under the menu title "fruit dishes".

**Table 4.** Fruit Dishes Included in the Menus

	The Section Included Fruit Dishes in the Menu	Name of Food	Number of Restaurants
<b>Fruit Dishes</b>	Antep Kebabs in Season	Loquat Kebab	1
	Main Dishes	Fried Plum	1
	Set Menu	Green Almond Dish	1
	Set Menu	Loquat Kebab	1

In Table 4, the question “Do the menus of local restaurants operating in Gaziantep Province include fruit dishes?” is designed for the purpose of the research. The answer to the question is included. Table 4 was formed for the main purpose of the research. As it is seen from Table 4, fruit dishes are given very little space in the menus. However, it seems that it is not clear in the section where fruit dishes are included in the menu, in some menus fruit dishes are included among the types of kebabs, and in others among the types of dishes. In addition, fruit dishes are included in only three menus. These dishes are “Loquat Kebab” (Yeni Dünya Kebabı), “Fried Plum” (Erik Tavası), “Green Almond Dish” (Çağla Aşısı).”

### Conclusion

One of the most important points that tourists focus on in almost all types of tourism, especially gastronomic tourism, is meeting the need for food. While this need is met, tourists also desire to experience the local foods of the region (Murat & Ergen, 2022, p. 565). Today, the desire of people to try different tastes in the region where the flavors belong is important in gastronomic tourism. On the other hand, gastronomy tourism is important due to the increase in the desire of people participating in tourism for different purposes to experience food and beverages specific to the regions they visit (Kılınç & Kılınç, 2018, p. 405). It is stated that the use of local products in restaurant menus exhibits an important advantage in revealing the differences compared to other touristic destinations of that region (Mil & Denk, 2015, p. 6). Because the presence of gastronomic values specific to the region or country is a vital resource in terms of gastronomic tourism. However, it is unlikely that gastronomic tourism will be developed unless gastronomic values are converted into products and offered to tourists. Therefore, the existence of restaurant enterprises that convert gastronomic values into products and present them to the taste of consumers is very important (Kılınç & Kılınç, 2018, p. 405). In this study, it was examined whether fruit dishes found in Gaziantep cuisine, known as the “city of Gastronomy” (UNESCO, 2020), are included in restaurant menus. In this direction, the menus have been examined and the menus have been categorized according to the data obtained. It has been examined whether fruit dishes are included in the menus in particular.

In the study, it was found that fruit dishes are mostly not included in the restaurants operating in Gaziantep province. It has been determined that the dishes included are only Loquat Kebab, Fried Plum and Green Almond Dish. It was concluded that (Güldemir & Halıcı, 2009, p. 566-568; Türk Patent Enstitüsü, 2021) Quince Kebab, Quince Dish, Apple Kebab, Apple Dish, Apricot Dish, Dried Fruit Stew and Fruit Dishes, which are thought to have an important place in Gaziantep cuisine, are not included in the menus. The research area has been monitored throughout the year, and it is seen that Turkey's first gastronomy city fails to highlight local fruit dishes, even in May-June, when the fruit harvest is abundant. The fact that fruit dishes, which are famous for their seasonal presentation,

are included in the menus at a limited level even in the spring season can be evaluated as a negative situation in terms of the image of the city. As a matter of fact (Şen, 2021, p. 199), it was stated that the amount of vegetables and fruits increases with the loss of the effect of cold weather in the spring season, and that fruits such as green plums, strawberries and loquats are among the first products to be seen in the vegetable-fruit markets in this season. However, another important result reached in the research is that there are no local dishes, desserts, appetizers, starters and similar regarding the sections in the menus. Even if local dishes are included, it is not stated whether the food is local or not. It is thought that this situation creates a limitation in the promotion of Gaziantep cuisine to tourists visiting Gaziantep. Since Gaziantep is a gastronomy city, it is inevitable for gastro tourists to visit the province. It is important to include these dishes in the menus in order for both domestic and foreign tourists to reach fruit dishes. Various recommendations have been developed in this direction.

### **Recommendations:**

- In the restaurant menus, especially the part where local dishes are included should be specified separately and descriptive information about the dishes should be provided.
- In order to promote Gaziantep cuisine, courses should be opened where forgotten dishes can be reintroduced to the public.
- Fruit dishes should be included in the menus in their seasons and they should be introduced to the tourists.
- Brochures promoting Gaziantep cuisine should be given to tourists who visit the city, so that information about which food can be reached where should be presented to tourists.
- “Gaziantep Fruit Dishes” festival should be organized.
- Necessary information and motivation factors should be provided to the local people for the production and sale of fruit dishes.
- Local dishes should be introduced at gastronomic festivals, participants should be provided with the opportunity to taste dishes.

Fruit, vegetables and agricultural products are common products produced in rural areas and can create added value in contributing to rural areas. In this context, Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism can lead the development of the rural population by including authentic food and fruit dishes in their advertisements and promotions (Gökçe, Sunar & Babat: 2018 p. 896).

It is hoped that the present study will contribute to tourism, gastronomy and business literature. Since data were obtained by qualitative methods in this study, it is thought that future studies with different methods and samples will contribute to the literature.

### **Declaration**

The contribution of all the authors of the article to the article process is equal. The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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