

Chapter 27

A Route Suggestion for Traditional Cheeses: Kandırif and Gorcola Cheeses

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ABSTRACT

With its wide and rich diversity across cultures, Cheese offers sensory pleasure and reveals a historical background of the region's traditions, production methods, and stories (Paxson, 2012). In addition to being an important foodstuff, cheese can also be associated with rural areas, the ethnic and ecological structures of those regions, and tourism with the effect of sustainability (Ermolaev et al., 2019). Carlsen and Charter (2006) state that cultural heritage, which is the basis of gastronomy tourism, has the potential to encourage social development and heritage protection. In addition, it emphasizes that with good planning and management, cultural heritage will develop the society economically, and culinary traditions can be preserved together with the products.

INTRODUCTION

With its wide and rich diversity across cultures, Cheese offers sensory pleasure and reveals a historical background of the region's traditions, production methods, and stories (Paxson, 2012). In addition to being an important foodstuff, cheese can also be associated with rural areas, the ethnic and ecological structures of those regions, and tourism with the effect of sustainability (Ermolaev et al., 2019). Carlsen and Charter (2006) state that cultural heritage, which is the basis of gastronomy tourism, has the potential to encourage social development and heritage protection. In addition, it emphasizes that with good planning and management, cultural heritage will develop the society economically, and culinary traditions can be preserved together with the products. Therefore, the deep-rooted history and cultural

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connection of cheese triggers the emergence of tourism destinations and the unique attraction of these tourist centers with traditional products and production techniques, not only in kitchens or tables but also in many parts of the world.

Preserving and promoting traditional cheeses is crucial for preserving cultural heritage, ensuring quality, and supporting local economies. Traditional cheeses often have unique characteristics that depend on specific regions and production methods, making them valuable cultural assets. These cheeses are often associated with protected designations of origin or geographical indications that recognize traditional production methods and are linked to specific geographical areas (Beuvier & Duboz, 2013).

Traditional cheeses are important to a country or region's cultural heritage and gastronomic richness. These cheeses are obtained through special recipes and production techniques passed down from generation to generation. However, preserving and promoting traditional cheeses is becoming increasingly important with increased industrial food production. In this process, tourism can also be used as a powerful tool to unlock the value of these cheeses.

Cheese, produced with traditional methods and needs mastery, shapes the preferences of many tourists and taste lovers with the cultural structure and heritage in its production. In addition, the desire to learn about the craft in their production, along with the different flavors and aromas behind these traditional cheeses, each of which is different, and the eagerness to experience these products arouse interest in travel lovers day by day (Denk, 2023a). Tourists and consumers tend to turn to these traditional products, which they think represent the local identity and have a positive quality, and prefer them to purchase (Nyamakwere et al., 2021). Therefore, local cheeses primarily support the promotion of production with the support of tourism. While it helps to establish a deep bond between the visitors of the region and the local culture, it also contributes to economic sustainability by encouraging tourists to buy cheese as souvenirs, thus increasing the demand and enriching the tourism experience in the region (Magri-Harsich et al., 2024).

Turkey is a country with a rich diversity in terms of cheese. As a matter of fact, in a recent study, 287 different types of traditional cheese were identified throughout the country (Denk, 2023b). Therefore, although cheese production and consumption are common in all seven regions of Turkey, they can be considered a preferred and leading dairy or food product in traditional nutrition. Although cheese production has been continuing traditionally in these seven regions and regions for years, no studies have been found that define the region's culture, reveal the production stages, and ensure the sustainability of these special products by recording them on behalf of the two selected cheese types. However, in addition to supporting rural regions, no work has been carried out to bring cheeses to tourism and to introduce rural regions to tourism. The study examined kendirif cheese from the Erzurum region and gorcola cheese from Ardahan province in the nearby region.

The purpose of choosing these two cheeses is that they are consumed with particular love in their regions, that their production has been going on for many years, that they are at risk of being forgotten and lost, and that they are considered to be at risk of being forgotten and lost, and that they want to be brought to the fore within the scope of tourism by ensuring their sustainability. Preserving traditional cheese-making processes is essential to maintaining the authenticity and uniqueness of these products (Beuvier & Duboz, 2013).

Although traditional cheeses have cultural significance, there are challenges in balancing tradition with modern production methods. Industrial production techniques can help promote local cheeses to a wider market while retaining their traditional characteristics (Pappa et al., 2020). However, it is crucial

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