

A close-up photograph of an olive branch with several green olives and silvery-green leaves. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the same foliage. The lighting is natural, highlighting the textures of the leaves and the smooth surface of the olives.

Jordanian Traditional Food

A selection of traditional products & dishes

This book was developed with the support of the FAO/EBRD joint cooperation project 'Strengthening backward linkages between agrifood producers and the tourism sector'.



**Women for Cultural Development
(Namaa)**

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I. Background

Nestled in the heart of the Middle East, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan boasts a rich and diverse culinary heritage that reflects centuries of history and a tapestry of cultures. Jordanian cuisine is a testament to the country's warm hospitality, deep-rooted traditions, and cultural mosaic, influenced by Arab, Mediterranean, and Levantine flavors.

Whether savoring the aromatic spices of Za'atar, indulging in hearty stews like Mansaf, or delighting in the delectable sweets like Lazagyat, every dish tells a story. Each recipe is a reflection of the skill, craftsmanship, and deep-seated love for food that has been passed down through generations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), within their collaborative framework, recognize that preserving and promoting local, traditional food products can be a driver for economic development, especially in least-developed rural areas. It can also contribute to addressing social and environmental challenges, which are critically linked to issues of poverty and the overall sustainability of ecosystems in a country.

Traditional food systems often rely on a wide variety of local and indigenous ingredients, including crops, native plants, and breeds of animals. By promoting the cultivation and consumption of such diverse species, traditional food practices help preserve biodiversity. This, in turn, can protect ecosystems and promote more sustainable agricultural practices. In addition, traditional food is an integral part of a culture's identity and heritage. Preserving and promoting





these food traditions can help maintain a community's cultural roots and foster a sense of belonging. This cultural continuity can contribute to social stability and cohesion, which are important for sustainable development. Also, traditional food systems are a repository of valuable knowledge about local ecosystems, food preparation techniques, and preservation methods. This knowledge can be harnessed to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to current challenges in food production, such as climate change adaptation and the promotion of organic farming practices. Besides, traditional food systems can provide economic opportunities for local communities. These systems often involve small-scale farming, artisanal food production, and traditional culinary skills that can support livelihoods and promote economic development in rural and marginalized areas.

In view of supporting the preservation and promotion of the Jordanian food heritage, FAO and EBRD joined forces to identify traditional food products and dishes in Jordan. As a result, FAO and EBRD have researched iconic food products in Jordan, describing the specific practices and processes involved. This book aims to promote such traditional food products and Jordan's rich culinary and natural heritage, while highlighting the specific traditional knowledge of farmers and processors.

Through carefully curated recipes, vibrant photographs, and heartfelt narratives this book explores the culinary treasures that have been cherished by Jordanians for centuries. From the bustling kitchens of local homes to the bustling markets, this book explores the ingredients, techniques, and traditions that make Jordanian food products so special. This book is a testament to the importance of food in bringing people together and celebrating the heritage that binds them.

II. Jordan's Biodiversity & Agriculture

Jordan's unique location at the meeting point of three continents makes it a rare case of rich biodiversity despite its small size. The country embraces a diverse range of landforms and biological variety, including species, landscapes and ecosystems.

The formation of the Jordan Rift Valley millions of years ago significantly contributes to the country's diversity. This geological formation also gave rise to the high western mountains, resulting in a significant fluctuation in altitudes. The Dead Sea, located around 400 meters below sea level, stands in stark contrast to the southern heights, exceeding 1850 meters. Furthermore, the majority of Jordan's landscape consists of desert, characterized by basalt or Hammada, an ecologically rich ecosystem recognized in Jordan and Syria.¹

In terms of classifying Jordan's biodiversity, the country primarily relies on eco-regions, ecosystems and vegetation types. These factors play a crucial role in understanding and preserving the natural heritage of Jordan's diverse flora and fauna. The country encompasses four distinct bio-geographical regions: the Mediterranean, Irano-Turanian, Saharo-Arabian and the Sudanian Penetration, each with its own unique characteristics and features. Together they serve as a natural habitat for over 4,000 species of plants and animals.²

The Mediterranean region is primarily found in the highlands, stretching from Irbid in the north to Ras Al-Naqab in the south, in addition to isolated areas in the mountains of Wadi Rum in the south. With altitudes ranging from 700 to 1850 meters above sea level and an annual rainfall

¹ Jordan Biodiversity, First National Report, 2001.

² Ibid.



This region is characterized by the absence of trees, consisting mainly of small shrubs and bushes.

of 300 to 600 millimeters, this region is the most fertile part of the country. It is also the home of approximately 90% of Jordan's population.

The Irano-Turanian region forms a thin strip of varying width that surrounds the Mediterranean eco-zone, excluding the northern areas. This region is characterized by the absence of trees, consisting mainly of small shrubs and bushes. Altitudes range from 500 to 700 meters, and the annual rainfall ranges from 150 to 300 millimeters. The Saharo-Arabian region encompasses the eastern desert, known as the Badia, which covers approximately 80% of Jordan's total area. Altitudes in this

region range from 500 to 700 meters, with an average annual rainfall of 50 to 200 millimeters. The vegetation predominantly consists of small shrubs and annuals that grow in the valley beds. As for the Sudanian penetration region, it extends from the northern part of the Dead Sea to the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba in the south, following the Dead Sea depression and Wadi Araba. This region is notable for being the lowest point on Earth, with areas near the Dead Sea sitting at 410 meters below sea level. The rainfall in this region ranges from 50 to 100 millimeters annually. Vegetation showcases tropical tree elements along with a few shrubs and annual herbs.



Jordan serves as a significant center of origin for a wide range of agricultural diversity. It boasts a rich abundance of landraces, ancient cultivars, wild species and wild relatives of various crops, including wheat, barley, legumes, olives, lentils, chickpeas, almonds, grapes and figs. These crops and the derived products they yield hold a pivotal role in ensuring food security and supporting the livelihoods of Jordanian farmers.

Within Jordan's agricultural sector, livestock and cultivation each play a vital role. Livestock accounts for 55% of the sector, while cultivation makes up the remaining 45%. The availability of water greatly influences agricultural practices in Jordan. Owing to limited water resources and low rainfall, only 4.7% of the land surface is considered cultivable land, which is equivalent to 4.20 million dunums (420,000 ha).³ Out of this, 25% are irrigated and predominantly located in the Jordan Valley (situated in the western part of the country) and stands out as the most fertile and productive agricultural area relying on surface water from the Yarmouk River, which is stored in dams. Remaining irrigation takes place in the highlands, where groundwater serves as the primary water source.⁴

The Jordan Valley is considered a natural greenhouse with some 0.3 million dunum (30,000 ha) cropped land. The area is characterized by its fertile soil and unique climate with long day hours, high temperatures and the ability to produce fresh products in winter. Also, the area is considered the feeding basin of Jordan where high quality and high return fruits and vegetables are produced outside the season. Over half of Jordan Valley lands are used for vegetable production and include mainly tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and eggplants, while

³ Jordan, Water Along the Food Chain, FAO/EBRD, 2015.

⁴ Ibid.



around 35% of the lands is used for fruits such as citrus, banana, date palm and mixed fruit trees including grapes and peach.⁵

Irrigated areas in the highlands mainly consists of fruit trees and vegetable plantations. Large areas are planted with olive and other stone fruit such as apples, peaches and almonds. Farmers also grow oregano, mint and sage. Vegetables in the highlands are produced in winter and summer. The remaining 75% of land is rain-fed and spans across the highlands to the east of the Rift Valley. The Highlands are mountainous lands that covers the areas of Ajloun, Jerash, Salt, Amman, Madaba, Karak, Tafelah and Showbak. By the 2000s, the area planted with fruit trees was 539,000 dunum, 89% occupied with olive trees and the rest planted with grape, fig, apple, almond, peach, apricot, pear and plum.⁶

The area extending from the east of the Western Highland to the west of the desert, covers Jordan from the north to the south. Major crops grown there are barley and wheat, where both are grown in rotation. The productivity of this area is usually unstable and depends on the amount of rainfall received. Farmers in these areas usually own small ruminants (sheep and goats). The rainfed area also include the Range

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Medicinal and Herbal Plants Cultivation, for MOA/NCARTT, 2002.

⁷ Assessment of the Agricultural sector in Jordan, EU report, 2012.



Lands which occupy the largest area in Jordan referred to as the Badia (desert) in the eastern part of the country and occupies around 80% of the land mass.⁷ However, important medicinal and herbal plants grow there.

Livestock farming in Jordan predominantly centers around small ruminants, including sheep and goats as well as cows and poultry. Additional livestock such as horses, camels and donkeys serve primarily as labor animals, although camel milk is utilized by small rural communities in the Badia regions. Among the livestock, sheep and goats hold immense importance owing to their comprehensive contributions. They provide dairy products, meat, wool, hair and hides. Sheep are primarily distributed in the eastern and southern regions of Jordan, while goats are concentrated mainly in mountainous areas. However, many farmers choose to mix sheep and goats within a single flock, capitalizing on their complementary traits and benefits.



III. Methodology

The focus of this book is to identify and document key traditional food products and iconic dishes of Jordan in the governorates of Irbid, Ajloun and Jerash in the north, Balqa and Madaba in the mid region as well as Karak, Tafileh, Maan and Aqaba in the south.

The information contained in this book will generate a better understanding of the existing food experiences and how food products and dishes are perceived by the people who make them. The inventory of products was prepared following literature review, interviews and field visits engaging with local producers and other stakeholders in the selected governorates to understand the historical background, production, processing, and cooking methods of these products and dishes.

The result is a non-exhaustive inventory of 60 iconic products that have a historical root in Jordan and represent a special local and traditional knowledge and know-how related to the memory and identity of Jordanian communities. The selected products also represent and highlight the biodiversity of the country.

The book is structured into two parts:

1. Traditional Jordanian food products used of in the Jordanian kitchen including processed products;
2. Jordanian Gastronomy traditions highlighting the traditional dishes and deserts.

IV. Matrixes

The matrixes below detail the two parts of the book.



IV.1 Matrix of food products

Main category	Subcategory	Governorates
Wheat	Freekeh	Balqa, Madaba
	Burgul	Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun
	Jareesheh	Albalqa, Karak, Tafileh, Aqaba
	Qalyeh	Balqa
Dairy Products	Zebdeh Baldiah	Country wide
	Laban Makheed	Country wide
	Laban Msaha	Balqa
	Labaneh	Balqa, Madaba, Ajloun, Jerash
	Jameed	Country wide
	Kishek	balqa, Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash
	Jebneh Baladieh	Country wide
	Samneh Baldiah	Country wide
Olives	Kabees	Irbid, Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun, Tafileh
	Olive oil	Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun, Tafileh
Maakeed		Irbid, Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun
Grapes	Zbeeb	Ajloun, Jerash, Al Balqa, Tafileh,
	Tabeekh Enab	Balqa and Ajloun
	Molasse	Ajloun, Jerash, Al Balqa, Tafileh,
	Khabeesah	Ajloun, Jerash, Balqa,
Pomegranate	Molasse	Ajloun, Jerash, Balqa,
Carob	Molasse	Ajloun, Jerash, Balqa,
Figs	Quttain	Ajloun, Jerash, Tafileh, Karak, Ma'an
Tomatoes	Sundried Tomatoes	Ajloun, Jerash, Tafileh
Sumac		Balqa, Ajloun
Hwajeh		Balqa
Zaatar Mix		Irbid, Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun,
Zaatar Mix		Irbid, Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun,
Hekayet Sitti	Feryal Karadsheh	Madaba

IV.2 Matrix of food consumption

Main category	Subcategory	Where to find it
Bread and Baking	Arbood breed	Balqa, Ajloun, Karak, Tafileh, Ma,an
	Shrak bread	Country wide
	Taboon Bread	Country wide
	Qras el Eid/ Qusmat	Irbid, Ajloun, Ma'an
	Fatayer & Mtabag	Ajloun, Jerash, Irbid, Balqa, Karak
Traditional Jordanian Dishes	Mansaf	Country wide - Originally from Karak
	Hafeet	South - Originally Karak
	Rashoof	Country wide
	Zarb	Ma'an, Karak, Tafileh, Aqaba
	Athan El Shayeb	Country wide
	Magloubah	Country wide
	Makmorah	Irbid
	Mahashi	Country wide
	Waraq Dawali	Country wide
	Lsieneh	Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun and Balqa
	Sayadieh	Aqaba
Vegetarian Cuisine	Galaeiht Bandorah	Country wide
	Akoob	Ajloun, Jerash, Irbid, Balqa,
	Faiteh	Madaba, Karak
	Khobaizeh	Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash, Madaba, Karak
	Chaacheel	Irbid
	Abeetah	Irbid, Ajloun
Traditional Jordanian Sweets	Lazagyat	Country wide
	Haitaleih	Country wide
	Saleegha	Country wide - popular among Chris-tians
	Knafeh	Country wide

V. Jordanian Food Traditions

To understand the food traditions of Jordan, one needs to analyze the social fabric of the country that gave way to these traditions, mainly generated by the biogeographical regions of the country.

Researching the history and heritage of Jordan reveals that the majority of society are Bedouins (half settled - half nomadic), while small farming communities are predominantly in the north of the country.⁹ The Bedouin and farming traditions and way of life became intertwined, reflecting on the agriculture and the food traditions of Jordanian society. Jordanian agriculture is mainly represented by grain cultivation, especially wheat along with the breeding of sheep and goats and the products processed from it, in addition to other important food such as olives, grapes, along with pomegranate and figs.¹⁰

The majority of Bedouins are settled in villages while preserving their traditions and heritage of belonging to their tribes. They became productive farmers and/or herders of sheep and goats. Families grow their daily household needs of fresh fruits, vegetables and greens in a garden around the home, in addition to a shed for the goats, sheep and sometimes chickens. In many houses there is a room, either separate, adjacent or inside the house, for the storage of food products.¹¹

Livestock breeding also involves herding and caring for animals. Owners or hired shepherds protect and guide the animals to fertile pastures during weeks-long journeys. Grazing starts in spring, with seasonal

⁹ معزب رباح: Entry to the Bedouin and farming production Heritage and food traditions of Jordan, Nahed Hattar & Ahmad Abu Khalil, Ahli Bank publication 2014.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

movements to different areas. In colder months, some animals are kept in a permanent base and fed grains. After grazing the shepherd will bring back the sheep to the house of their owner to be milked. Both farming and Bedouin communities used to make different types of dairy products.

In harvest seasons, the whole family relocates to where the cultivated land is. They usually take their tents and provisions with them as the season may be long, extending into months at times. After the harvest, the family returns to the village where the part of the harvest is prepared for selling as fresh produce and part is left for the family consumption either fresh in season or processed to be preserved for the rest of the year. This concept is referred to in the Levant as Mooneh.

This movement or relocation during the harvest seasons became part of the traditions and the heritage of the country and is referred to as Ta'azeeb. The Ta'azeeb comes with its own food traditions, as the food consumed in the village is not practical outdoors, which consists of simpler dishes with simpler ingredients that can be prepared on a campfire. Wheat and dairy products together form the basis of the traditional Jordanian kitchen. Many traditional recipes rely on wheat (whether in the form of whole wheat, cracked wheat, green wheat, flour or bread) and cooked yogurt with recipes handed over for many generations.

The social fabric of the country experienced many changes throughout the years, whether influenced by economic, social or political events. Therefore, Jordanian food traditions have evolved and became richly diverse with the adaptation of traditional dishes from neighboring countries such as Palestine, Syria and Saudi Arabia and became part of the Jordanian table.

.....
*Wheat
and dairy
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traditional
Jordanian
kitchen.*
.....

PART 1

Jordanian Traditional Food Products

Food production traditionally involves the act of storing food that is abundant in its season and using different methods of preservation for yearlong storage including drying, pickling and processing to other products with longer shelf life. In the Levant region, this is referred to as Mooneh, which means in Arabic “what is deducted and stored”. This tradition was and still is an essential activity for many agricultural food-producing communities in the region. As for Jordan, Mooneh, till this day plays a major role in the Jordanian food production habits.

Traditionally households used to allocate a sizable cool or a shaded space to store products like jams, pickles, dried yogurt, Samneh (ghee), olive oil, dried legumes, grains and wheat products, dried herb mixes and spices, vinegars, molasses, and dried vegetables and fruits. Whereas modern families nowadays keep their Mooneh in kitchen cupboards, refrigerators, or tiny shelved pantry rooms. Nowadays food products either are still processed by the family in their households or bought from local markets or directly from small home-based producers in local communities.





CHAPTER 1

Wheat - القمح

The Fertile Crescent (which includes Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, southeastern Turkey, and western Iran) is considered the original home of wheat. In fact, it was among the first regions to domesticate cereals and pulses over 10,000 years ago, especially in the central and/or southern Levant which includes Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.¹² Emmer wheat is the oldest cultivated wheat in large quantities but today its cultivation is on a decline. It can be found only in small traditional farming communities. Archaeological evidence supports this, showing that wild emmer was exploited in the area occupied by pre-Neolithic cereal gatherers in the southern Levant around 9600 BCE before the appearance of domestic types.¹³ Ancient emmer wheat's resemblance to wild wheat (in the mountains of the area) reinforces this connection, and

most records point out that it is the center of origin for the bread wheat currently grown in the world.¹⁴ Research points that the wheat domestication's entire system of agricultural techniques spread from this area along the shores of the Mediterranean and up the banks of the Danube River and down the Rhine, eastward to the Indus and northern India and southward across Arabia, the Yemen and into the Ethiopia.¹⁵

A publication by Wasfi Zakaria titled *Field Crop Cultivation in Bilad AlSham* (1951) mentioned that the origin of all wheat cultivars in the Levant is the Hourani which originated in the Houran plateau that extends from southern Syria into north Jordan and many varieties have been derived from it.

Research indicates that Jordan still has a wide diversity of land races, old cultivars, wild forms and wild relatives of wheat..¹⁶

In Jordan wheat production was considered one of the most important crops during the Umayyad period (661-750 AD). Wheat has played a vital role in the lives of many communities since the 19th century. Regions such as Irbid, Balqa and Karak witnessed the flourishing of wheat cultivation, thanks in part to the laws imposed by the Ottoman Empire

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹² The Origins of Agriculture and Crop Domestication, The Harlan Symposium, 1997.

¹³ Ibid.



and the construction of the Hejaz Railway. However, the stability of wheat production faced challenges in the 1970s when Jordan suffered from drought seasons leading to a decline in cultivation. Nonetheless, wheat continues to be grown in various regions of Jordan, such as Balqa, Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, Amman, Madaba and Karak, primarily in dry and semi-dry areas. Today, although Jordan's wheat yield ranks among the lowest in the world, the latest data indicates 30,000 tons of production in 2021.¹⁷

Wheat is the main component of many traditional foods in Jordan as well as the Middle East as a whole. It had and still has many uses since ancient intertwining with the heritage and traditional identity of the people. It became a cornerstone ingredient in their traditional dishes and held a prominent place on Jordanian tables for centuries.

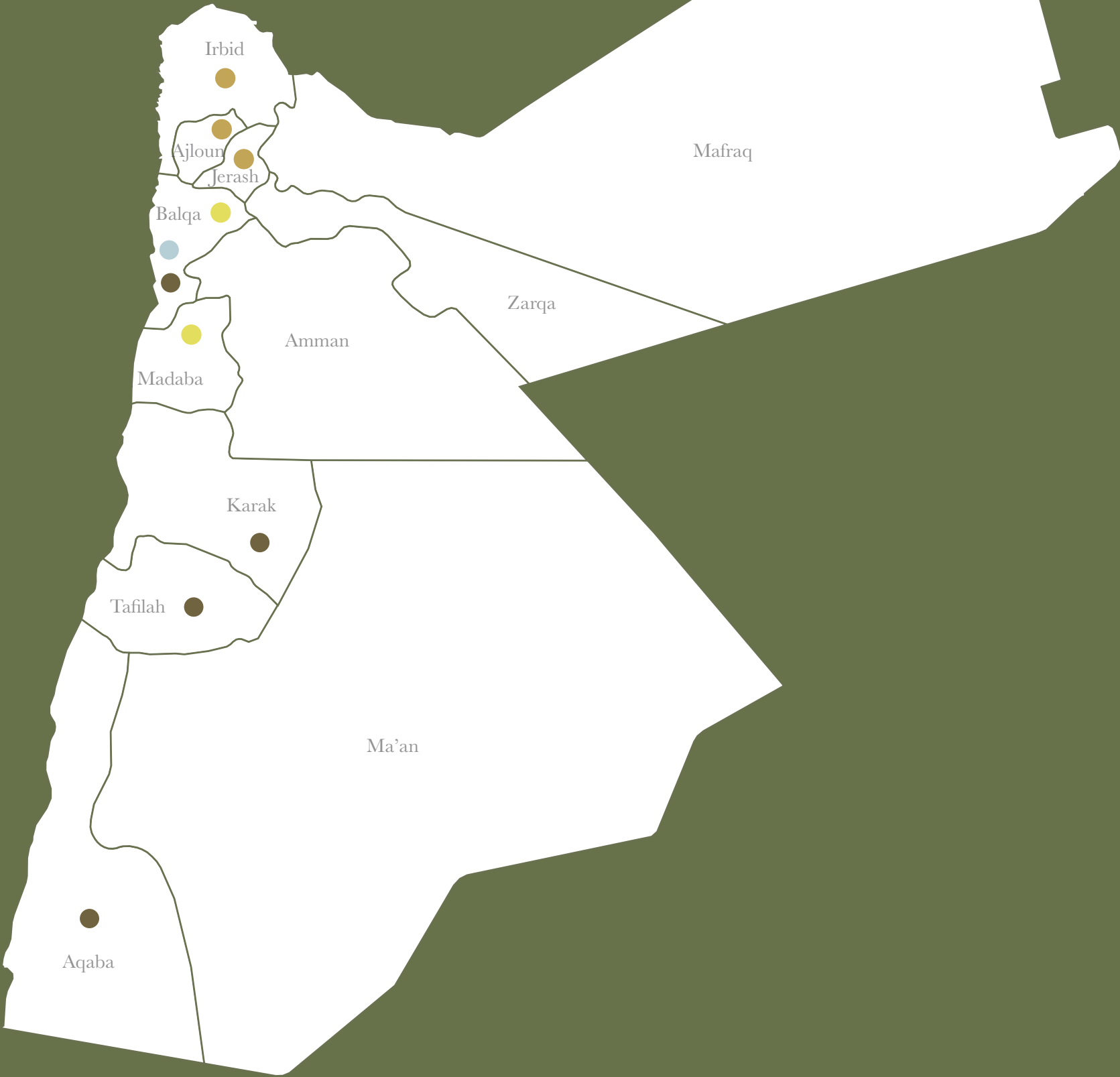
Milled wheat flour is transformed into different kinds of homemade bread, such as Khobz Awies, Shraak, the round and fire-baked Qors Al Nar and the traditional sweet made with Khobz Al-Lazaqiat. It is also milled to different levels to produce many different kinds of products such as Jareesheh and Burgul, adding depth and texture to a wide array of dishes. One of the most iconic are: Freekeh, smoky flavored green wheat grains roasted over an open fire, or the Qalayiah, roasted whole grains of wheat. Types are not limited to these

products only, there are many other that enrich the table of Jordanians, which we will be described here in detail.

In terms of history, there is no specific record on when the Bulgur, Jareesheh and Freekeh were made first. However, they are mentioned in the Arabic heritage books and most elders will tell you that the knowledge was passed on by generations before them. However, research on Agriculture in the Levant during the Umayyad period (661-750 AD) mentioned these products being made and well-known in the Levant during that period and even mentioned how the farming communities at that time made them.

¹⁷ FAOSTAT: <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QCL>

Geographical spread of wheat



- Freekeh
- Burgul
- Jareesh
- Qalyeh

Freekeh – فريكه

a unique grain with a distinctive process

Freekeh is wheat, harvested at an early stage when the grains are still tender and green. The grains are then parched, roasted, dried and finally rubbed, giving a distinctive texture and flavor. Interestingly, “Freekeh” refers in Arabic to the process of rubbing the grain between the hands after roasting.

Freekeh holds a special place in Jordanian cuisine, its early harvest ensures a delicate and nutty flavor that sets it apart from other wheat products. This versatile grain can be used in various dishes, from hearty salads to comforting soups and stews. Its robust texture adds depth and substance to meals, making it a favorite among culinary enthusiasts.





Jareesheh – جريشة

a cracked wheat tradition with endangered knowledge

Jareesheh, a variety of cracked wheat resulting from the fragmentation of raw wheat kernels into smaller granules, holds a profound historical significance deeply interwoven with the cultural heritage of Jordan. It was once a revered and cherished culinary commodity, forming the cornerstone of traditional dishes in the region. Unfortunately, in recent times, the knowledge and utilization of Jareesheh have witnessed a significant decline, predominantly attributed to the increasing popularity of rice. Regrettably, this decline has placed Jareesheh at risk of obsolescence, with only a select few individuals who continue the cultivation of wheat preserving its production.

In the traditional process of Jareesheh preparation, meticulous attention was paid to the use of hand-operated mills and grinders, such as the venerable stone mill known as Hajar Al-Rahaa or the circular disk grinder referred to as Jarousheh. This labor-intensive technique was employed to safeguard the retention of the wheat berries' nutrient-rich bran and germ layers.

The significance of Jareesheh transcends its role as a fundamental foodstuff. It plays a pivotal function in the production of local ghee, recognized as Samneh Baladiah; facilitating the removal of impurities during the clarification process. The resultant by-product of this refinement, known as Geshdeh consists of cooked Jareesheh immersed in ghee, enhanced with a proprietary blend of indigenous wild herbs and plants, collectively referred to as Hwajeh. Geshdeh serves as an energy-dense delicacy, suitable for consumption whether served warm or chilled.



Burgul – برغل

a distinctive wheat product with historical roots

Bulgur, a wheat product with deep historical roots, distinguishes itself through a meticulous preparation process. In fact, Recipes for burgul were found in recipe books from 1000 years ago.¹⁸ Traditionally, it involves washing wheat grains, sun-drying them, boiling, followed by a second drying phase with frequent turning, and finally grinding to the desired consistency, ensuring year-round availability. Its unique flavor and texture enhance salads, pilafs, and stuffings, maintaining its historical significance in Jordanian cuisine, even as production methods have modernized.

¹⁸ Recipes for burgul were found in recipe books from 1000 years ago: Kitab Al-tabeeekh, Al Bagdadi



Qalyeh – قلية^٣

a nourishing wheat grain for sustenance and tradition

Qalyeh, a toasted whole wheat grain, symbolizes sustenance and tradition. With its origins among farming communities in the Levant, Qalyeh is prepared by roasting whole wheat grains in a traditional iron coffee roaster called Mehmas over a wood fire pit, allowing the grains to roast and develop their distinct flavor.

During the winter months, farmers enjoy it as a breakfast source of energy or as a snack when families and neighbors gather around the fire. It can be savored on its own or mixed with roasted Butum (Terebinth) and Hab Qraish (Aleppo Pine). Traditionally, Qalyeh was made during the wheat harvest in May and June or whenever desired by roasting stored wheat grains.





CHAPTER 2

Dairy Products

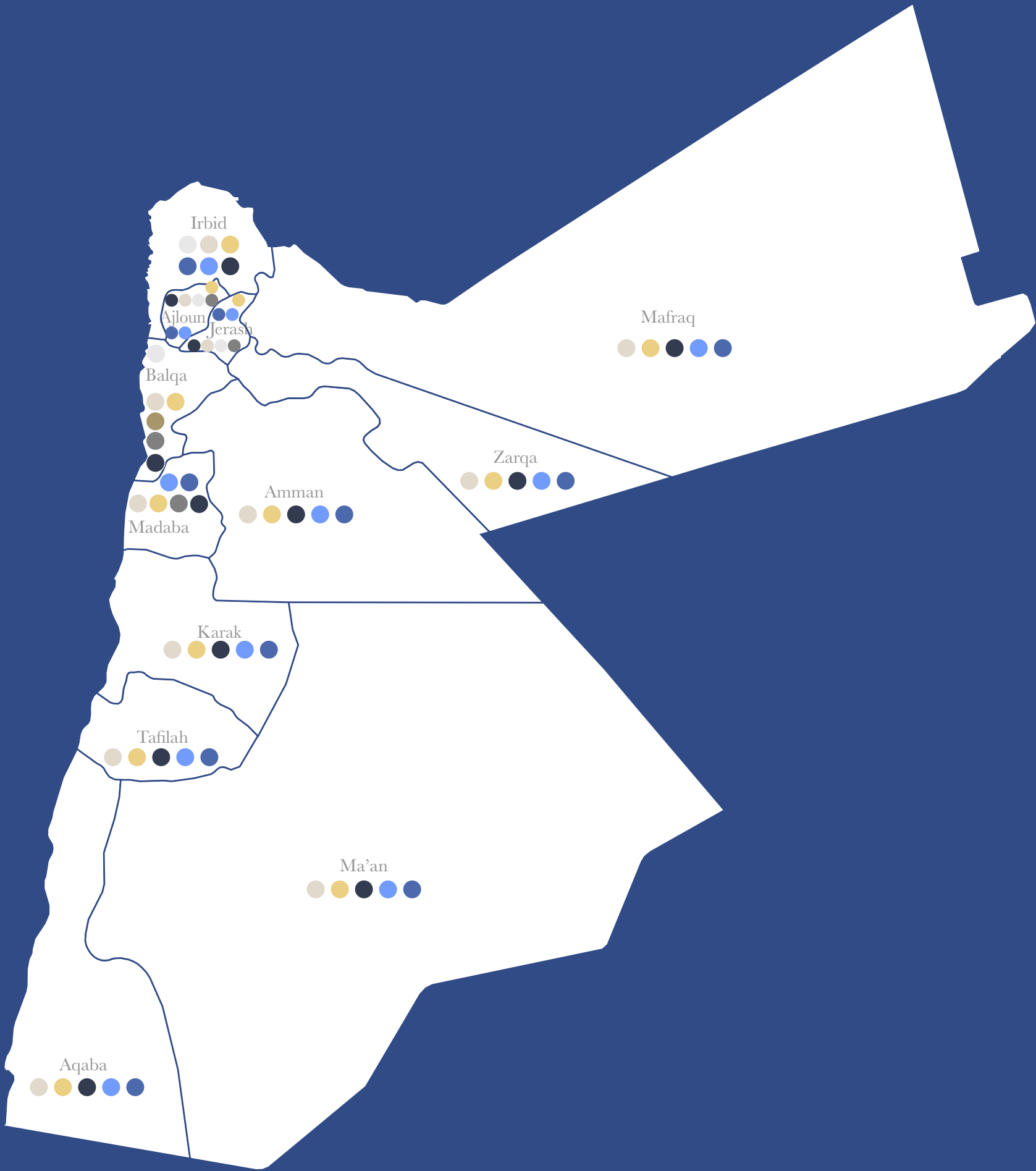
Sheep and goats have long roamed the fertile crescent region, weaving their hoofprints through the annals of history. Their domestication traces back a staggering 11,000 years ago, near the ancient shores of the Levant. These remarkable creatures, lovingly referred to as Samar (goats) and Bayiad (sheep) by locals, hold the key to Jordan's vibrant traditional food production system. Within the borders of this culinary oasis, a tapestry of indigenous breeds thrives, each adapting to distinct environments and serving diverse purposes.

One noble breed of sheep reigns supreme in Jordan—the revered Awassi. This distinguished breed also claims the title of the mainstay in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Resilient and resourceful, the Awassi has stood the test of time, preserving its heritage through generations. As for the goats of Jordan, they too hold their distinguished place in national

dairy traditions, with four prominent breeds: The Desert Goats gracefully roam in the Northern Badia region, the Mountain Goats in the rugged embrace of the mountainous regions, and the Black Bedouin Goats are found in the south. Lastly, the Damascus Goats, cross the length and breadth of the country, Jordan's shepherds have interwoven these breeds, crafting a story of adaptation, ingenuity, and ancestral wisdom.

In the heartland of Jordan, dairy production plays a vital role, intricately interweaving cultural heritage, nutrition, and economic sustenance. Proficiently managed by skilled women, the process begins with the collection of goat's milk, the preference in rural communities. Subsequently, the milk undergoes natural fermentation at room temperature, or a shorter fermentation period is achieved by introducing yogurt from a previous batch, a practice referred to as Tarweeb. This tradition stands as a testament to the profound connection between tradition, dairy, and the livelihoods it supports.

Geographical spread of dairy products



- Zebdeh Baldiah
- Laban Makheed
- Laban Msaha
- Labaneh
- Jameed
- Kishek
- Jebneh Baladieh
- Samneh Baldiah

Zebdeh Baldiah

زبدة بلدية

After the milk is fermented it is churned traditionally in a leather bag made from goat skin called Al-Shakwa to separate the yoghurt from the butter. The bag is hanged and the women start the labor-intensive process of churning by shaking the bag, called Khad in Arabic. This process takes a long time so it involves singing special songs designated for churning.

After the churning is over, the butter is separated from the yogurt by pouring the yogurt through a piece of cloth made from sacks that are normally used for storage (similar to a cheesecloth), called the Khareetah, into a large pot where the yogurts undergoes further processing.





Laban Makheed

لبن مخيض

The yogurt that was separated from the butter after churning is called Laban Makheed. The pot is placed on the fire to heat the Makheed until it just starts to boil as this will thicken it. The Makheed is allowed to cool down at room temperature, afterwards it is ready to be consumed or stored in a cooled place.

All traditional dairy production starts with producing Laban Makheed, wherever you are in the country the people will tell you this. Laban Makheed, also known as Shaneenah, is a sensational yogurt that carries the rich heritage of Jordan. Its sharp, acidic taste, accompanied by a strong buttermilk flavor and smooth, watery consistency, makes it a unique and refreshing experience.

For centuries, Bedouin communities have relied on Laban Makheed to replenish water and salts in their bodies. But this beverage is not only cherished to quench thirst but also revered as a culinary cornerstone. When available during its season, it becomes the coveted base for all other dairy products, as it takes center stage in traditional recipes, infusing them with its tangy goodness and lending a distinct character to dishes passed down through generations.

Whether enjoyed as a refreshing beverage or used as the foundation for mouthwatering culinary creations, Laban Makheed stands tall as the epitome of dairy excellence, rooted in tradition and adored by all who taste its tangy flavor. In the north regions Makheed is used in cooking Mansaf instead of Jameed, while in the middle and south regions, Jameed is the basic ingredient, and Makheed is used in other dishes or drank cold.

Laban Msaha

لبن مسهي

Born from the remnants of Laban Makheed, this exquisite dairy delight boasts a thicker texture and an intensified sharp, acidic taste, showcasing the essence of its origin. Also known as Laban Gatee'a or Laban Gatee'a Msaha.

The making process of Laban Msaha starts with boiling Laban Makheed in a pot until it thickens, then set aside to cool. Once it is at room temperature it is poured into a piece of cloth made from sacks that are normally used for storage (similar to a cheesecloth) called the Khareetah. The whey is gently separated up to 4 hours, giving rise to a velvety yogurt that adds an enchanting touch to this gastronomic delight.

Laban Msaha is very special as it is only made for the family's consumption, though some producers make it as a special order for restaurants and other clients. It is enjoyed as a delightful breakfast or even dinner topped with olive oil and dipped with freshly baked bread, it is well known for its unique flavor that has captivated anyone that tries it.





Labaneh – لبننة

Labaneh is produced all over Jordan, but the Jerash Labaneh is known as the best in taste and quality. It is extracted from the milk of the “Al-Samar” goat. These goats are known in the region and produce milk for several months. It so happens that there are some goats that produce milk throughout the year, and they call them “Sholia”. However, the “Al-Samar” goat’s milk is relatively little, and working with it requires a lot of effort. Goats are milked individually, and their milking requires the ability to control them, while in the case of “white” sheep, the heads are lined up together and fixed in a rope in the form of rings, called “Al-Shabaq”, so that the whole herd can be lined up and remains stable, which facilitates control and milking.

The amount of labneh in Al Sammar milk varies according to the season. It is abundant in the winter, then begins to decrease gradually. Labneh derived from Al Samar has a more acidic taste, higher fatness, and a slightly yellowish color. The “Jarashiya” usually has a texture of varying hardness in three degrees: soft, semi-soft, and solid to be preserved in oil. The latter is preserved for a long time. According to official 2019 statistics, there are more than 70 licensed dairy factories in Jerash Governorate, and the people of the governorate own 65,050 heads of sheep and goats, in addition to 1,632 heads of cows.¹⁹

This velvety treasure, obtained from Laban Makheed, undergoes an extended draining process, offering a thick, cream-like consistency that captivates the taste buds. When you indulge in Labaneh you experience the perfect harmony of its sharp, acidic taste, intense buttermilk flavor, and luxurious texture. One can embrace the artistry behind its creation as the Makheed is patiently drained for up to 12 hours, resulting in a culinary masterpiece that can be enjoyed for breakfast or transformed into delectable Labaneh balls preserved in olive oil.

¹⁹ <https://www.7iber.com/society//عملها-الجرشية-وطريقة-صناعة-اللبننة-الجرشية>

Jameed – جميد

Jameed, an integral part of Bedouin communities for centuries, holds a significant role in their nutritional wellbeing. Born out of the need to preserve fresh Laban Makheed throughout the year, Jameed is a remarkable invention that has stood the test of time.

It is said that King Mishaa in the 9th century BC was the first to cook Mansaf (see Mansaf)²⁰, where Jameed is an essential ingredient. We can say its history can go this far. Karak area is the main origin of it, and till today the Karaki Jameed is the most popular in Jordan and the region. Other parts of Jordan like Balqa, Irbid and Madaba, have their own Jameed recipes.

Bedouin groups, relying on sheep and goats for sustenance, treasure milk products as vital sources of protein in their dynamic lifestyle. With the absence of refrigeration in ancient times, the ingenious solution was to sun-dry dairy products, allowing them to endure for extended periods. Thus, Jameed was created—a product that lasts a long time, perfectly adapted to the Bedouin way of life.

The journey begins as Laban Makheed is boiled until it thickens then it is poured into the Khareetah to drain the whey from the yogurt, transforming the Makheed into Jibjib – a thick lumpy kind of yogurt - after about a week. This stage marks the beginning of the Jameed-making process. Then this Laban is salted and kneaded into a paste, which is then shaped into either discs or domes. Placed under the scorching sun for four days, the Jameed undergoes a thorough drying process. Traditionally, Bedouins would dry it atop their tents, and production starts from spring to the beginning of winter when the milk of the sheep and goats is abundant, and preserved to be consumed all around the year as it lasts a long time.

Interestingly, different regions in Jordan have their own preferences for shaping Jameed. The areas of Balqa favor the disc shape, allowing for quicker and more thorough drying. On the other hand, the rest of the country opts for the domed ball

²⁰ Ethno-archaeological study: The ancient Jordanians ate mansaf more than 7,000 years ago by Jordan Heritage Company
<https://www.jordanheritage.jo/jordanian-mansaf/>



shape, despite the longer drying time it requires. It's a testament to the rich diversity of culinary traditions across the land.

Incorporated into their diets, Jameed sustains Bedouins through the winter months, serving as a vital source of nourishment as it offers a sharp, acidic, and salty flavor with an unmistakable buttermilk essence.

The centuries-old legacy of Jameed endures, connecting present generations to their ancestral roots and offering a taste of the past in every savory bite. Jameed plays a key role in the authentic flavors of Jordanian cuisine reconstituted to create the legendary Jameed sauce, enriching many traditional dishes mainly the mansaf.



Kishek – كشك

Kishek is an exceptional blend of Laban Makheed and finely ground Burgul wheat, crafted during the summer and sun-dried for ten days. This labor-intensive process yields thick, flavorful discs, which, when rehydrated, become a versatile ingredient.

To make the Kishek, the traditional method calls for a big clay pots with wide opening, the Bulgur is placed inside and covered with Makheed, the pot is covered with a cloth and placed under the sun for 10 days. During the 10 days, everyday milk and Makheed are added in alternative days until the tenth day the mixture will be thicker, that's when it is removed from the pot and shaped into discs that are dried in the sun for days until it hardens.

Kishek is celebrated in Irbid and Ajloun, adding its unique taste and aroma to various traditional dishes, though it remains less known in the middle and southern regions of Jordan.

Jebneh Baladieh

جبنة بلدية

Jebneh Baladieh is a traditional Jordanian cheese, highly regarded for its authentic and unique qualities. Crafted from the finest sheep or goat's milk, what sets it apart is the addition of Masah which is a substance collected from the stomach of young sheep or goats to aid coagulation. The cheese is expertly prepared through milk boiling, whey extraction, shaping, and drying of cheese squares. It is stored in brine, which contributes to its distinct character.

Jebneh Baladieh is a staple in Jordanian cuisine, gracing breakfast and dinner tables. It can be enjoyed with fresh bread, paired with herbs and olives, or used in various dishes like Manakeesh –(a dough baked with Zaatar or local cheese spread over it) , providing a distinct local flavor.

While all parts of Jordan produce white cheese, it is well known that Madaba and Jerash produce the most delicious, high quality, and longest shelf life.





Samneh Baladieh سمنة بلدية

Samneh Baladieh, the local Jordanian ghee, is a culturally significant and unique culinary component. What distinguishes it is the infusion of Hwajeh, a blend of wild herbs added during the cooking process, imparting distinctive color, taste, and flavor.

The Al-Balqaa region produces Samneh Baladieh with the highest quantity of wild seasonal herbs, including at least 21 varieties, which are carefully processed and blended to create its unique taste. It is used in rice dishes, meat preparations, sweets, and as a flavor enhancer in various culinary applications throughout the day.





CHAPTER 3

Olives

Jordan is one of the oldest historic olive habitats in the world and home to some of the oldest olive trees in the world, as the earliest evidence of olive stones from settled sites in the Levant can be dated back to the Neptunium period, more than 10 000 years ago. Evidenced by a joint report by Jordanian and French archeologists, the ancient village (Hadeib Al-Reeh, in Wadi Rum of southern Jordan) could be the oldest site of olive tree cultivation in the world. Ash analysis from three village fireplaces revealed cultivation of olive trees dating back to the Chalcolithic period (ca.5400 BC). ²¹

Researchers studying olive tree DNA claim that many of the varieties sold worldwide may be descended from Mehras, a local variety. The Romans were the first to cultivate the olive tree systematically, but the plant has its roots in the land of the river Jordan and is intertwined with Jordan’s history and the culture and traditions of the three great monotheistic religions. Of the 11 million olive trees in Jordan, almost 20% are from the Roman category; these

trees are so old they are a witness to history. Up to 20% of the agricultural land in Jordan is dedicated to olive trees. With over 80,000 businesses involved in olive growing, the olive sector is one of the most dynamic sectors in the Kingdom. ²²

Ten trees were named as the oldest olive trees in the world in various Governorates of the Kingdom as follows: ²³

1. Grandma Zaytouna Ain Sirin	Tebneh town - Irbid Governorate
2. Grandma Zaytouna Arar	Jedita town - Irbid governorate
3. Grandma Zaytouna Khaled bin Al-Waleed	Aqraba town - Irbid Governorate
4. Grandma Zaytouna Al-Noor	Umm Joza town - Balqa Governorate
5. Grandma Zaytouna, Fajer of Palestine	Sawada town - Balqa governorate
6. Grandmother Zaytouna Afra	Afra town - Irbid Governorate
7. Grandma Al-Zaytouna Aima	Aima town - Tafilat governorate
8. Grandma Al-Zaytouna Al-Maysir	Al-Hashmiyah town - Ajloun governorate
9. Grandma Zaytouna Famia	Jerash Governorate
10. Grandma Zaytouna Rum	Wadi Rum - Aqaba Governorate

²¹ Olive and Olive Oil Production in Ancient Jordan: Contextualizing the Evidence, Nabil Ali in Dirasat, Human and Social Sciences, Volume 46, No. 1, Supplement 2, 2019.

²² <http://www.ncare.gov.jo/NARCDATAInfo/OtherPublications/Olive/Oliveen.pdf>

²³ Ibid.



Beyond their gastronomic importance, olive trees form an intrinsic part of Jordan's cultural fabric, contributing significantly to the livelihoods of many families. Olive farms, predominantly owned by small and medium-sized holders, not only offer a source of income for more than 80,000 families, generating domestic income estimated at 120 million Jordanian dinars annually, but also generate numerous seasonal job opportunities. The olive harvest season stands as a pivotal moment, etched into the collective memory of farmers, families, and the local community. This festive time brings loved ones together to laboriously handpick olives, accompanied by joyful folklore songs and the sharing of traditional meals. It is a time of collaboration, as entire families unite to sort, classify, and press the harvested olives. Typically, olive harvests commence in mid-November, following the initial winter rains, signifying a time of shared toil and celebration.

The production of olives developed significantly from 1995-2020, with production increasing from 63,000 tons in 1995 to 215,000 tons in 2019. The production rate of olive fruits between 2011-2020 is estimated to be about 154,000 tons, 22% of which are used as table pickled olives and 78% as olive oil. The production rate of olive oil during the same period was about 23,400 tons.

In the present day, Jordan stands proudly among the top 10 olive-producing countries worldwide, boasting over 20 million olive trees. Jordanian olive oil shines as a beacon

of excellence, renowned for its exceptional quality. Olive trees blanket approximately 72% of the fruit tree cultivation area, spreading their branches across the western and northeastern regions of the country. These areas, predominantly rainfed, yield olives that are primarily destined for olive oil production (80%), with the remaining portion reserved for the production of delectable table olives. A remarkable feat was achieved in the year 2000 when Jordan attained self-sufficiency in olives and olive oil production.

There are thirteen different local varieties cultivated all over the Kingdom, although many foreign varieties that were introduced throughout the years, the local varieties still are considered the most suitable as they are most resilient to local dry climatic conditions, not to mention they are considered of higher quality:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Nabali Baladi | 6. Shami | 10. Arabi Altafila |
| 2. Rasei | 7. Kfari Romi | 11. Ketat |
| 3. Nabali Muhassan | 8. Kfari Baldi | 12. Bathni |
| 4. Nasouhi Jaba | 9. Kanabisi | 13. Rosa |
| 5. Souri | | |

Although olive trees are found in Jordan in general, the northern regions (Irbid and Ajloun) and Balqa region are considered the most important in terms of quality and abundance of production, and usually they produce the best virgin olive oil that people prefer to consume.

²⁴ <http://www.ncare.gov.jo/NARCDATAInfo/OtherPublications/Olive/Oliveen.pdf>



Geographical spread of olives

- Kabees
- Olive oil

Jordanian Olive Oil

زيت الزيتون

The main products of the olive tree are the olive oil, the fruit itself (table olives) and the leaves (used in many alternative medicine therapies). Olive oil is an important agriproduct to complement local food and is used in cooking, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, medicine, as fuel to light oil lamps and to produce soap. This traditional heritage product is consumed daily, as a part of the Jordanian diet, with an average consumption of 4.6 kg per person per year.²⁵

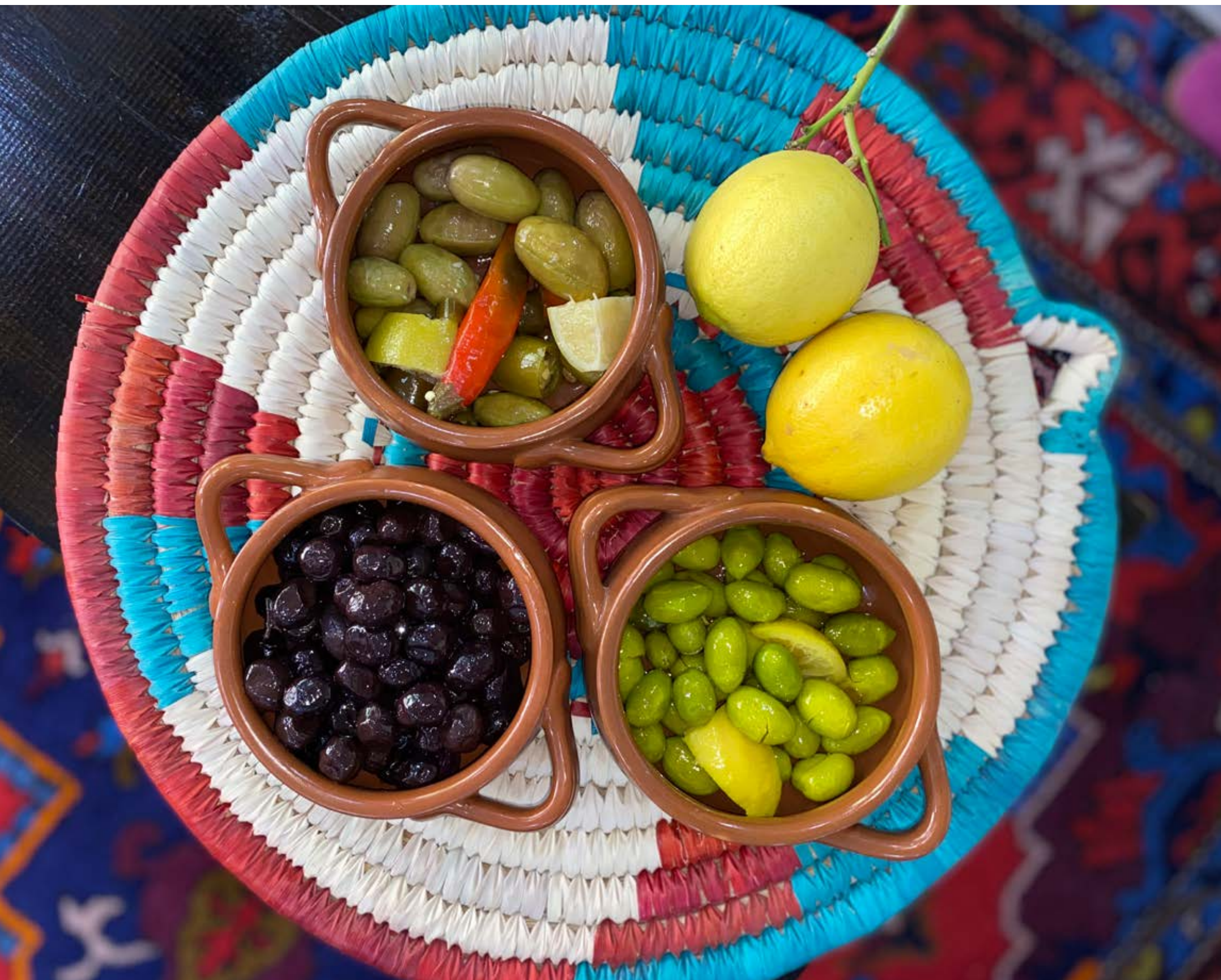
Used as a multi-purpose cooking In Jordanian cuisine, olive oil reigns as a social elixir, farmers meticulously handpick perfectly ripe olives straight from the trees, embarking on a journey that extends beyond the orchards. These carefully selected olives embark on a swift journey to local mills, where the transformative cold-pressing method takes place. The magic lies in the simplicity and purity of the process, preserving the olives' essence.

Usually olives are cold-pressed and the first pressings, which require no further treatment, are known as “virgin”. Many studies have confirmed that Jordanian virgin olive oil has excellent advantages and characteristics in terms of taste and smell, and is very suitable for the various preferences of consumers in global markets.²⁶ Olive oil, is consumed raw for breakfast and dinner, used for cooking fresh and vibrant dishes, and even lending its magic to baking, embodies the essence of Jordanian cuisine.



²⁵ <http://www.ncare.gov.jo/NARCDATAInfo/OtherPublications/Olive/Oliveen.pdf>

²⁶ Ibid



Kabees- كبیس

Kabees, pickled table olives, where green olives are carefully selected and undergo a remarkable transformation where the bitterness is removed through scoring, revealing a luscious, buttery essence.

Fermentation adds an enchanting dimension to Kabees. Soaked in brine, complemented by fresh lemon juice, lemon peels, laurel, and olive leaves, the olives undergo a delightful metamorphosis. Fermentation renders them a rich complexity, enhanced by touches of white vinegar or olive oil in select recipes. Although Kabees is used in the three meals of the Jordanian community, yet it is essential in their breakfast.

CHAPTER 4

Fruit Molasses, Jams & Dried Fruits

دبس الفواكة ، المعاقيد (التطلي) والفواكة المجففة





Geographical spread of maaked

○ Maaked

Maaked المعاقيد / التطلبي

In Jordan, the significance of fruit extends far beyond its immediate consumption. Traditionally, fruit trees adorned homes and gardens, not only providing sustenance for families but also serving as a means of exchange between loved ones. Meanwhile, the fertile Jordan Valley and select regions in the North cultivated fruit trees as a valuable economic commodity.

As each fruitful season draws to a close, a remarkable preservation process begins, ensuring that the vibrant flavors of fresh fruits could be relished throughout the year, particularly during the winter months. The art of fruit preservation takes two distinct forms: drying the whole fruit or transforming it into delightful jams, known as Maakeed. Additionally, certain fruits, such as grapes and pomegranates, are used to create luscious molasses.

Maakeed is a testament to the skill of Jordanian cooks as they transform the fruit into delectable spreads that grace breakfast tables and elevate desserts. The process commences with ripe fruits, simmered gently with sugar to unlock their flavors, this artisanal tradition, historically executed over a crackling wooden fire, imparts a subtle smoky note. The finished product is carefully stored in glass jars, maturing in darkness to achieve flavor harmonization.

Jordan's Maakeed selection spans a diverse range whether it's the fig jam, apples and apricots to plums, quince, and even an unconventional such as eggplant jam for those seeking an unexpected delight, these preserves encapsulate the very essence of Jordan's bountiful harvest.





Dried fruits الفواكة المجففة

Dried fruits, on the other hand, brimming with natural sweetness, offer a taste of summer's abundance even during the coldest months. These chewy treats, bursting with concentrated flavors, provide a nutritious snack and a burst of energy for those indulging in their delightful essence.

Molasses

الدبس

Lastly, the thick, syrupy molasses derived from grapes and pomegranates delivers a unique depth of flavor to both sweet and savory dishes. Its versatility in enhancing everything from traditional pastries to savory meat marinades has made it a beloved ingredient in Jordanian cuisine.

The tradition of preserving fruits through molasses, jams, and drying methods has allowed Jordanians to savor the natural sweetness of their land long after the harvest season ends. This section unveils the secrets behind these time-honored practices, providing a glimpse into the rich heritage and exquisite flavors that have become an integral part of Jordan's culinary tapestry.





CHAPTER 5

Grapes – العنب

In the ancient lands of the Middle East and the Mediterranean, grapevines held a special place as one of the first cultivated fruits. It is believed that these luscious fruits originated in the Levant during the latter half of the 4th millennium B.C., showcasing their enduring presence throughout history.

Research has revealed the paramount importance of grapes, alongside figs and olives, in Jordan and the wider Levant region, grapes were relished in their fresh, succulent form, while also being transformed into a variety of exquisite creations. From the delectable jams to the enchanting molasses, vinegar, Khabeesa (fruit leather) desserts, and the treasured raisins, grapes offered a vast array of flavors and textures that captivated the palates of Jordanians.

The legacy of grapes lives on as a testament to the enduring relationship between the people and the land. The versatility of grapes, with their ability to be enjoyed fresh or transformed into an array of beloved products, speaks volumes about their significance in Jordan's culinary heritage. The custom of picking and preparing the grapes is deeply rooted within the local community. Traditionally, families would relocate during the grape season, setting up camp in tents made of black goat hair amidst the vineyards. It was a time of communal effort, hard work, and joyful celebration, forming an emotional connection that lingers in the memories of those who experienced it.

Geographical spread of grapes



- Zbeeb
- Tabeekh Enab
- Molasse
- Khabeesah



TabeeKh Enab طبيخ العنب

At the end of the grape season, when the fruits reach their peak sweetness around September and October, a special treat awaits—TabeeKh Enab. This delightful creation, akin to jam but with whole grapes intact, holds a cherished place in Jordanian cuisine, particularly during winter.

TabeeKh Enab is made by carefully handpicking the finest grapes. The grapes are lightly crushed and then cooked in a pot over a gentle fire. Slowly, they soften and become immersed in a syrupy juice. To enhance the flavor, a touch of lemon juice is added. A unique mixture of anise seeds, nigella seeds (Habet el barakeh), and toasted sesame seeds imparts an exquisite depth of taste. Traditionally, TabeeKh Enab was stored in clay pots, though modern times have seen a shift to glass jars. This delectable creation takes pride of place as a healthy winter breakfast item. Enjoyed by dipping bread into its luscious goodness.

Zbeeb

الزبيب

Dried grapes, known as Zbeeb in Jordan, offer a delightful snacking experience on their own or alongside a medley of nuts. Zbeeb was mentioned in one of (Ibn Sina) medical books, 1200 years ago, as good for liver, heart and kidneys. The traditional process of making Zbeeb is similar across Jordan, with slight variations. Grapes are left on the vine until they reach maturity and attain their natural sweetness. Once ready, the grape bunches are carefully cut from the vines. Meanwhile, a special mixture of olive oil and water mixed with ash from burnt wood is prepared in a pot. The grapes are then dipped individually into the mixture, ensuring they are well coated. Afterward, they are spread out to dry under the warm sun for approximately two weeks or longer. As the drying process completes, the grapes gently fall from their stems, and any remaining ash residue is removed by hand.

In certain areas of southern Jordan, a simpler approach is embraced. The grapes are rubbed individually with olive oil and left to dry under the sun until they naturally separate from the stems. In both ways the dried grapes are stored to be enjoyed throughout the year.





Grape Molasse دبس العنب

Grapes molasses is an ancient food, popular for its nutritious qualities and delightful flavor, it was used not only as a sweetener but as a remedy as well, research shows that one of the earliest mentions of grape syrup comes from the fifth-century BC Greek physician Hippocrates, In the Arab world it was mentioned in a cooking book that is 1000 years old written by Muhammad Al Baghdadi, It is thought to be one of the first sweeteners before cane sugar were introduced in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions. It remained as the preferred sweetener in the Middle East for centuries.

The dark-colored, thick, and viscous liquid of grape molasses exudes a distinctively sweet flavor with pungent notes and a subtle smoky aroma, reminiscent of its preparation over a wood fire. Grapes are patiently harvested at their peak sweetness, separated from bunches and stems, and squeezed by hand to extract the juice. The juice is filtered, cooked on a fire, and carefully skimmed to reduce it into thick, honey-like molasses, prepared at the end of the summer months to be savored throughout winter.

Khabeesah الخبیصة

Khabeesah, also known as Malban, stands as one of the classic sweets derived from grapes. The tradition of making Khabeesah is intricately intertwined with the customs of picking and preparing grapes, a cherished heritage deeply embedded within the local community. Grapes are squeezed by hand, cooked with whole wheat flour, and flavored with sesame seeds or Aleppo Pine. The mixture is spread thinly, dried, and peeled to form a unique, sweet yet slightly sour, leather-like delight. In Ajloun and Jerash, a different technique prevails. The Khabeesah mixture is poured into large trays with high rims and left to dry and set for an extended period. Once ready, it is cut into squares and stored accordingly.





CHAPTER 6

Pomegranate – الرمان

The pomegranate tree is mentioned in the Holy Quran and in the Bible 2000 years ago, and is considered a sacred tree, in addition to olive and fig trees. It thrives across the diverse landscapes of Jordan, providing livelihoods for farmers and traders throughout the years. From the depths of the rift valley to the highlands and beyond, this magnificent fruit finds its place in the heart of Jordan’s agricultural tapestry. While regions like Irbid, Mafraq, Zarqa, Ajloun, and Balqa boast the largest pomegranate cultivations, the fruit’s historical presence in southern areas like Maan is not forgotten.

With an impressive array of over 25 varieties, Jordan’s pomegranates captivate with their diverse tastes and colors. From the lusciously sweet to the tantalizingly sour, each variety tells a unique culinary story. Shades of black, red, dark red, yellow, and pink adorn the vibrant fruits, adding a visual feast to their irresistible allure.

The most common pomegranate varieties in Jordan can be narrowed down in general to:

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| 1. Khudary | 6. Halawy | 10. Shwashy |
| 2. Baradi | 7. Ta’efy (Introduced to the Jordan recently) | 11. Zarouri |
| 3. Red-Qraty | 8. Mawardy | 12. Abu Surrah (common in the Bani Kinana district). ²⁷ |
| 4. Shamy | 9. Melesy Molouki | |
| 5. Frasy | | |

Other varieties are also available for Jordanian cultivation such as the recently introduced:

American variety:

- | |
|----------------|
| 1. Wonderful |
| 2. Khashaby |
| 3. Zeglaby |
| 4. Nouran |
| 5. Ras Elbaghl |
| 6. Yara |

In addition to a number of Spanish varieties which have been recently introduced in the Northern Shounch area.

The pomegranate tree, its flowers and fruits have a great influence on the region, not only on the level of food and cuisine, but also on the level of arts in all its forms. The shape of the pomegranate fruit was found in the decorations of our old walls, and the bright red color of the pomegranate flower is our favorite color in clothes and embroidery. While the pomegranate fruit also decorated the various dishes of our Jordanian cuisine.

²⁷ Farmers in Jordan use the term “Halawy” when referring to other varieties such as Barady, Mawardy, Shamy and Red-Qrati

²⁸ Marketing and communications plan for pomegranate producers through jordan exporters and producer’s association (jepa) for fruits and vegetables- Final Report, MARCH 24, 2010.



Geographical spread of pomegranate

● Pomegranate Molasse



Pomegranate Molasse

دبس الرمان

Pomegranate fruits, molasse, juice and vinegar have long been cherished ingredients in traditional dishes, imparting a delightful tanginess. In fact, historical records suggest that pomegranate molasse was used as a souring agent in place of tomatoes before their introduction to the region in the early 19th century.²⁹ Beyond its role as a fresh, seasonal delight, pomegranates offer versatility in their preservation. Drying allows these fruits to be savored throughout the year, while juicing creates a refreshing drink. Its value-added products enrich the culinary landscape with their unique flavors and textures, especially Pomegranate molasses, that holds a pivotal role in our cuisine. Extracted from the lusciously sour pomegranates, this dark, syrupy nectar is done by extracting pomegranate seeds from their bitter peels. Hand-pressed and filtered, the juice flows into a deep pot above a crackling woodfire. Over time, the liquid metamorphoses into a dark red syrup. Its tangy, musky nuances and subtle sweetness. It breathes life into marinated meats, adds flair to salads like Tabouleh and Fattoush and grilled veggies, and serves as a delightful substitute for lemon or vinegar.

²⁹ <https://academic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/tomato>



CHAPTER 7

Carob – الخروب

The Carob tree, an ancient marvel, belonging to the legume family, delving deeper into the annals of history, we uncover the Canaanites' ingenious use of carob. They employed its seeds as a reliable measure for weighing precious metals and gemstones, giving birth to the famed unit of measurement we know today as the “carat.”

The Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research/International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, recognized that the carob tree has been grown since antiquity in most countries of the Mediterranean basin, usually in mild and dry places with poor soils. Its value was recognized by the ancient Greeks, who brought it from its native Middle East.

In the beautiful landscapes of Jordan, native carob trees thrive under the Mediterranean climate, gracing both the northern regions and the arid Badia. These resilient trees have

adapted to their new environment, thanks to the nourishing influence of water from the Shara Mountains. Abundant water, optimal soil moisture, and a temperate, non-extreme climate have facilitated the growth of these remarkable trees.

The only available statistical data is found in the Jordan Plant Red List. It states that the carob tree estimated area of occupancy throughout all of Jordan is 116 in km². As the trees grow in the wild, locals in villages nearby have used the carob pods either for their own consumption, raw or processed, or as feed for the animals. Carob is used traditionally to produce two products; Carob Molasses, and Carob Juice or Sharb El Kharoub which is well known juice during the fasting month of Ramadan, it is one of the preferred beverages offered at the Iftar table.

³⁰ Batlle, I. and J. Tous. 1997. Carob tree. *Ceratonia siliqua* L. Promoting the conservation and use of underutilized and neglected crops. 17. Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research, Gatersleben/International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, Rome, Italy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245000623_Carob_tree_Ceratonia_siliqua_L

³¹ Jordan Plant Red List. Authors, Hatem Taifour, Ahmad El-Oqlah. Contributor, Royal Botanic Garden, Jordan. Publisher, Royal Botanic Garden, 2014. <https://jo.chm-cbd.net/biodiversity/species-diversity/flora-jordan/jordan-plant-red-list>



Geographical spread of carob

○ Carob Molasse

Carob Molasse

دبس الخروب

A dark, gelled syrup with its almost black hue holds an enticing aroma of roasted sweetness, reminiscent of caramel, jam, and dried fruits.

Harvested pods are washed, crushed, and soaked before being simmered over a low wood fire. Diligently stirred, the liquid thickens into a luxurious syrup, surpassing the consistency of honey.

For generations, the combination of carob molasses and Samneh Baladiah (local Jordanian ghee) has delighted palates, serving as a traditional breakfast. Whether consumed alone, paired with bread and olive oil, or added to cooked meats, this molasses imparts a distinctive depth of flavor, captivating the senses with each indulgent taste.





CHAPTER 8

Figs - التين

In Jordan, the fig tree offers a treasure trove of diverse varieties, distinguished by their shape, color, and flavor. Fresh figs are cherished as a prized delicacy, eagerly enjoyed by locals. Yet, the fig's abundance is not wasted. Excess fruits are skillfully transformed into delectable jams, a delightful breakfast accompaniment. Dried figs, known as Qutain, serve as a wholesome snack, preserving the fig's natural sweetness and offering a burst of nourishment.

Jordanians and the people of the Levant have known the cultivation of the fig tree for thousands of years. The fig tree tolerates all environmental conditions and lives in all types of soil. It is sandy, clayey, and even rocky, and does not need large quantities of water and fertilizers, as it is resistant to pests and diseases, and all these characteristics made this tree

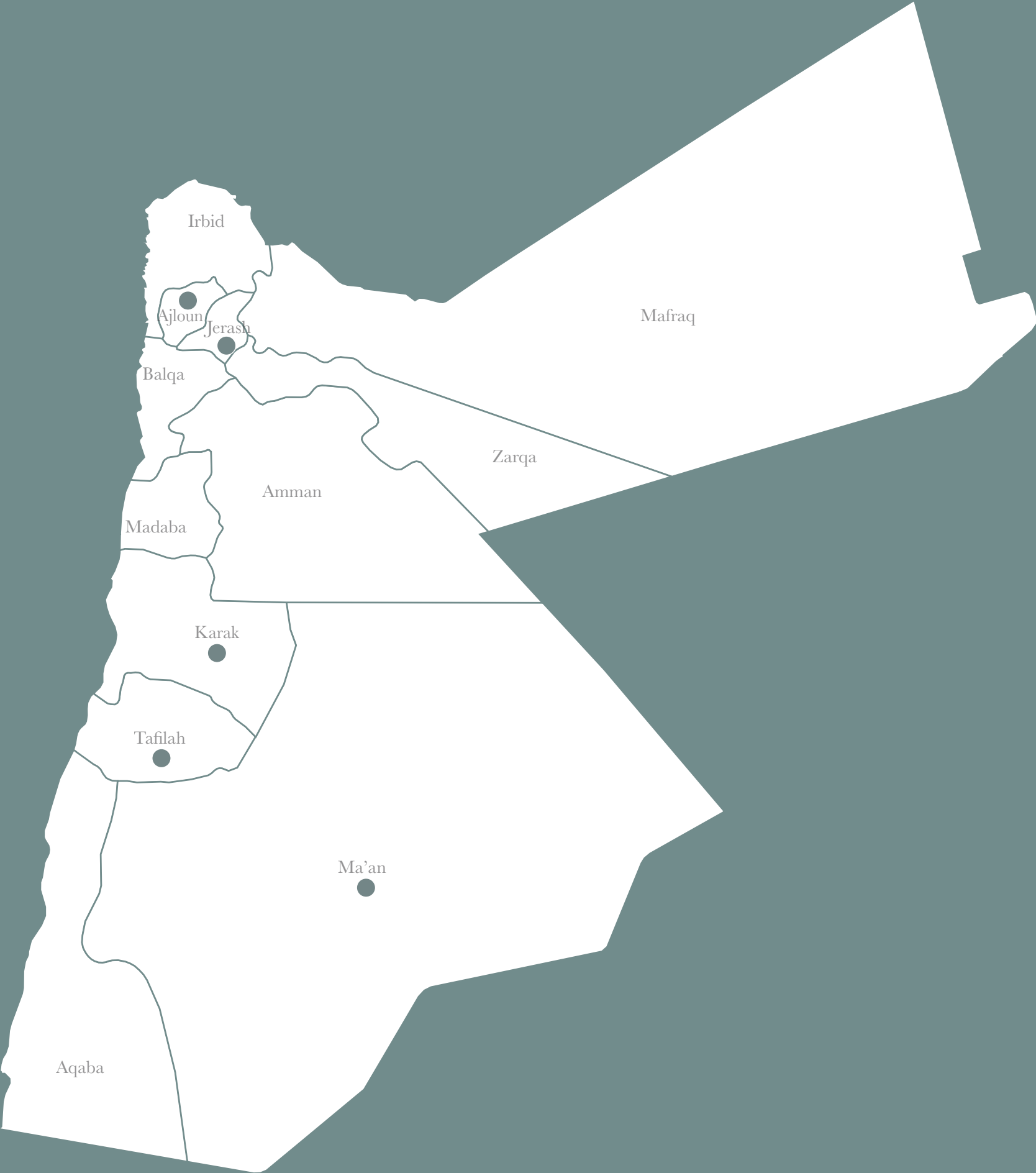
occupy a prominent place among the Jordanian farmers. The cultivation of fig trees is widespread in all Jordanian governorates, but is concentrated in Jerash region and its villages, the Ajloun Mountains and its villages, especially Wadi al-Rayyan, the Arjan region, the al-Arjani al-Khadari fig, as well as in the governorates of Irbid, al-Wasatiya, al-Kafarat, Koura, al-Salt, Zai, and Gilad. And west of Madaba, Karak, Shobak and Tafilah, which is called Hamat. There are more than 15 types of figs in Jordan:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Anaki | 6. Al-Qalibi | 11. Al-Adaisi |
| 2. Al-Asali | 7. Al-Sawadi | 12. Al-Kharoubi |
| 3. Al-Khadari | 8. Al-Gharabi | 13. Al-Hamri |
| 4. Al-Khartmani | 9. Al-Qaisi | 14. Al-Hamdhi (Al-Hamazi) |
| 5. Al-Mawazi | 10. Al-Meleesi | 15. Al-Falta'awi |

There are other names, some of which may have been mentioned, and others for other types, including: al-Ajlouni,

1. al-Halawi,
2. al-Safari,
3. al-Shaniri,
4. al-Shib'i,
5. al-Qara'i,
6. al-Mawani.

Geographical spread of figs



● Quttain

Quttain

القطين

Quttain embody the concentrated sweetness of Jordan's fertile soil. Most of the fig varieties mentioned are suitable for drying and transform into irresistible treats that is Quttain, and one of the best figs is the one that is made of black figs and smeared with oil and local wheat flour.³² In some regions, figs are carefully slit and laid over fennel greens, basking under the sun's warmth for up to two weeks, once dried the Quttain is gathered and stored in a cloth bag.

Other regions especially the south, opt for direct sun-drying, allowing the whole figs to mature then spread them under the sun to dry for a couple weeks, others leave the figs on the tree to dry on their own under the sun, after they dry they usually fall of the tree, then they are collected. These dried figs are called Thabali, which then are dipped in wheat flour so not to stick together and stored in cloth bags, or pierced with a thick needle and thread and gathered together and tied as a neckless.



³² <https://www.addustour.com/articles/1292673>



CHAPTER 9

Tomatoes – البندورة

Aqaba is the top region for tomato production in Jordan. As of 2021, tomato production in Aqaba was 80,864 tons that accounts for 49% of Jordan's tomato production. Other regions include Mafrq, Amman, Balqa, and Madaba. Jordan's total tomatoes production was estimated at 165,487.7 tons in 2021.³³

The production of tomatoes is unlike any other crop in Jordan. Around 32% of all cultivated crops grown are tomatoes. Regular tomatoes are generally grown in two areas, from September to May in the Jordan Valley and from April to August in the Highlands.

³³ Jordan Tomatoes Production by governorate, 2022 - knoema.com

Geographical spread of tomatoes

○ Sundried Tomatoes





Mashrooh el Bandoorah مشروع البندورة

In the sun-kissed lands of northern Jordan, a vibrant tradition of tomato cultivation thrives, fueling a burst of creativity among the local community. To capture the essence of these luscious fruits and savor their flavors beyond their season, ingenious preservation methods have emerged.

The process begins with ripe, succulent tomatoes carefully halved and sprinkled with a touch of salt. Arrayed on trays, they are then left to bask in the sun's warm embrace for an entire week. As nature works its magic, the tomatoes undergo a metamorphosis, their vibrant hues intensifying into concentrated bursts of flavor.

Known as Mashrooh el Bandoorah or Kishek el Bandoorah each tomato carries the essence of the sun, infusing dishes with a unique depth and richness that transports the taste of sun-drenched fields and warm Mediterranean breezes.



CHAPTER 10

Herbs, Spices, and Mixes

In Jordan, the essence of dried wild herbs and spices, forged from the untamed wilderness or cultivated in their own backyards, with most wild herbs flourishing briefly in early spring before flowering, a ritual emerges. They are carefully gathered during their seasonal peak and dried, either individually or in exquisite blends. These fragrant herbs hold immense significance and boast an array of herbs perfect for brewing teas, including mint, sage, zaatar, zaatar faresy, anise and chamomile.

In addition to a delightful assortment of spices like, khzama, rosemary, zaafaran (safron) and sumac. These aromatic mixtures embody the essence of Jordan's culinary heritage, Infusing dishes with flavors that enthrall.

Sumac – السماق

Sumac (Jordan's Purple Spice) a purplish spice with a tantalizing aroma, adds a unique zing to dishes and has been used for centuries in various cultures as a natural remedy. Ancient Arabs and Greeks used it to treat certain diseases such as gingivitis and to heal wounds Sumac is high in vitamin C and provides a rich number of important tannins which act as antioxidants. It is still widely used in modern medicine due to Gallic Acid and it is effective against bacteria, viruses and fungi.

As a popular seasoning spice in the Jordan, sumac lends its distinctive taste to meat, chicken, and salad preparations.

The traditional method of preparing sumac involves carefully drying the clusters under the sun and separating the berries from the twigs. In the past, women would gather around smooth stone surfaces, using stones or wooden pieces to crush the berries into a coarse powder.

Sumac is found in the northern regions of Jordan, especially Ajloun and Jerash, and in the central region in the Balqa villages. The Jordanian local sumac industry is considered an endangered industry due to the hard work it takes to get Sumac to the table due to the small-scale production of Sumac, as producers are normally families that have trees on their land. they do their own harvesting, production and selling.

According to Jordan's Plant Red List, Sumac's estimated area of occupancy covers 60 square km in the entire country. Recently more trees are being planted in new suitable areas to increase the production of the local sumac, a feasibility study showed that the current local yield from the available trees in Jordan is in average of 7 tons a year, considering each ton produce 400 kg of sumac spice which estimates that Jordan produce 2800 KG of sumac spice.

³⁴ Pre-Feasibility Study for Sumac Cultivation And Production Project Jordan Investment Commission, 2017.



Geographical spread of sumac



● Sumac



الحواجة – Hwajeh

Hwajeh derives from the Arabic word “Hajah” (need). It holds the key to add what is missing from the world of our cuisine. The heart of Hwajeh lies in the careful combination of wild dried herbs, particularly in the infusion of the Samneh Baladieh (ghee) where the main herb is White Sweet Clover Flowers (Handagog). However, this magical mix extends its influence as a versatile spice, enhancing a plethora of traditional recipes. While each region boasts its unique blend, it is Al-Balqa that shines as a renowned hub for Hwajeh production and may contain up to 21 different herbs such as:

1. Bay leaves (Waraq Ghar);
2. Wild Sage (Meramieh);
3. Dominica Sage (Khwaikh);
4. Wild Rosemary (Ikleel Al-jabal);
5. Bongardia flower (U’urf Al-Deek);
6. Calicotome Leaves and Flower (Al-Qindeel);
7. Hawthorn (AlNabag);
8. Common Chrysanthemum (Bisbas);
9. Wild Fennel Flowers,(Shomer Bari);
10. Wild Coriander Leaves and Flower (Kozbarah Baryeh);
11. Silene Crassipes Flowers and Leaves (Smeanneh);
12. Green Fenugreek (Helbeh Khadra);
13. Syrian Rue (Faejel);
14. Indian Melilot (Mehailbeh);
15. Cress (Rashaad);
16. Caraway (Karawya or Shwaimreh);
17. Pink Rockrose (Al-Lobaid);
18. Alyssum (Draihmeh);
19. Long-Beaked Stork’s Bill (Ibret Al-A’ajooz); and
20. Vitex (Shjairat Mariam).

Foraging the wild herbs and plants, brimming with biodiversity, is an art mastered by generations. Expert knowledge is required to distinguish these gems, found in diverse landscapes such as mountains, streams, valleys, and plains. Collecting these botanical herbs demands time, effort, and multiple excursions.

Spring, the season of abundance, witnesses the gathering of fresh herbs, carefully cleaned, and dried to perfection. They are then finely ground and mixed. The resulting blend emanates a light green hue, exuding a captivating aroma. When deployed in cooking, it imparts an earthy essence, transforming dishes with its authentic Jordanian fragrance and flavor, a lovable family tradition passed down through the ages.



Geographical spread of Hwajeh



● Hwajeh

Zaatar Mix – خليط الزعتر

This mixture takes its essence from the main ingredient, Zaatar, also known as oregano or thyme. Crafted through generations, Zaatar Mix remains an ancestral secret, passed down among housewives. Each family adds their personal touch, making this blend truly unique. The combination of sourness and saltiness from Sumac, the earthy bitterness of Zaatar, and the nutty undertones of sesame, roasted wheat, and or dried chickpeas create a harmonious symphony of flavors, leaving an indelible impression.

Each of Zaatar's ingredients is known for their benefits however the most benefits can be attributed to Zaatar, the main ingredient with the biggest concentration. Zaatar is loaded with antioxidants that help prevent cell damage, and it is an excellent source of fiber, vitamin K, manganese, iron, vitamin E, tryptophan and calcium. It has been said in traditional folklore that the Zaatar mix is great for strengthening memory, concentration and intelligence, therefore it's recommended to consume Zaatar for breakfast especially for children.

Traditionally, the journey begins with foraging fresh green Zaatar, drying it upside down before plucking the leaves. Each family's recipe dictates the process, from hand-rubbing the dried leaves to blending them with olive oil. Roasted wheat, ground chickpeas, sumac, sesame seeds, and, in the case of Al-Balqa, ground Jameed, contribute to the medley of flavors. Hab Qraish and Butom are also incorporated in Um Qais, adding their own distinctive touch.

Zaatar Mix serves as a breakfast staple, enjoyed with olive oil and freshly baked bread. The dried mix can be mixed with olive oil and spread on dough, transforming into mouthwatering Manakeesh Zaatar.

³⁵ Sripoo, A. R., Maheswari, U. T. N., & Rajeshkumar, S. (2022). Preparation of oregano, coffee and black cumin aqueous formulation and its anti inflammatory activity. International Journal of Health Sciences, 6(S3), 288-295. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS3.5184>



Geographical spread of Zaatar Mix



● Zaatar Mix

PART 2

Food Gastronomy: The Jordanian art of cooking and sharing food

Feasting in Jordan is an experience like no other. Indulging in the scrumptious delights of Jordanian cuisine, accompanied by the legendary hospitality, creates an ambiance of unforgettably joyous festivities with every meal. As food is considered a social event every time it is eaten, and it cannot be said that a person in Jordan may eat alone except in rare cases.

In Jordan, mealtime is not merely a basic necessity, but a lovable social gathering. Food symbolizes community, and Jordanians excel at fostering this tradition. Lunchtime, often referred to as the “meal of the day” is a time for gathering with loved ones, savoring generous portions of love, as food and hospitality go hand in hand in Jordanian culture. Jordanians are known for their warm and welcoming nature, and food is their expression of generosity. Regardless of their means, they take pride in filling your belly with nourishment and your heart with joy.

A Jordanian invitation carries the expectation that you bring nothing but an appetite, while you are treated to an abundance of culinary delights. It is a gesture accompanied by the popular Arabic phrase “Sahtain wa ‘Afiya” wishing you good health and happiness as you savor the flavors of Jordan.

Within the Jordanian diet, three main meals guide the rhythm of the day. Breakfast, an essential feast, boasts a diverse array of dishes sourced from the household’s offerings. Farming communities savor the likes of fried or boiled eggs, Labaneh, Baladie white cheese, Zaatar Mix drizzled with olive oil, and Samneh (ghee) or Zebdeh (butter) Baladie accompanied by bread. Fresh vegetables, such as tomatoes and cucumbers, adorn the spread, complemented by Taboun bread and a comforting cup of tea. Further south, the preferred choice is Shraak bread, enjoyed with Samneh (ghee) or Zebdeh Baladi (butter) either as is or immersed in hot milk or Makheed.



Lunch, the centerpiece of the day, takes on a significant role. A typical meal revolves around a hearty main dish featuring rice or legumes, accompanied by chicken, beef, lamb, or cooked vegetables, all served alongside bread. Traditionally, lunch was a time for family to gather, but as the pace of life has evolved, the time and location of consuming this meal have shifted. Nonetheless, lunch remains a vital occasion, whether enjoyed at home among family members or at work with coworkers and friends.

Dinner mirrors the diversity of breakfast, offering an assortment of delectable dishes to savor in the company of loved ones.

Food in Jordan is an opportunity to meet family, friends, and co-workers at any meal, and at any time of the day. You see people of Jordan eating in gatherings and with lots of chatting and laughing, which puts it on the responsibility of the host to provide different variations of food, use good ingredients in every meal and serve it with love.



CHAPTER 11

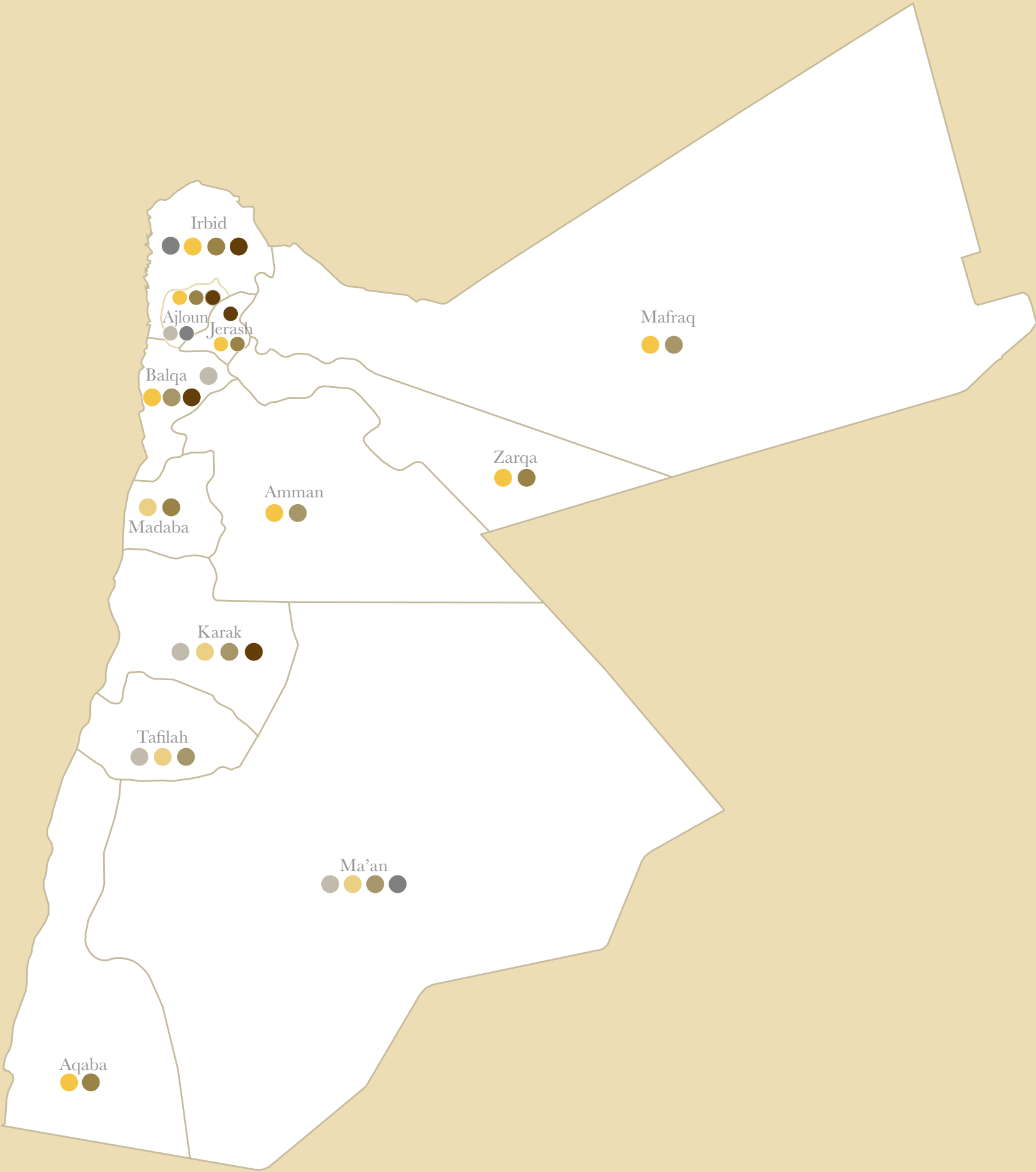
Bread and baking

In Jordan, bread holds a central position in the Jordanian cuisine, maintaining a profound link to local culture. While modern times have introduced new and improved bread varieties, the echoes of ancestors' traditional bread making methods still resonate. Commercially produced breads have become more prevalent, yet in villages and small towns, bakers diligently carry on the legacy by crafting these time-honored breads.

Jordanians are well-acquainted with two types of bread: Khobz Awies, the unleavened bread, and Khobz Khamer, the leavened bread. Khobz Awies, made solely from water and flour, encompasses delightful creations like Shraak, Qors Al Nar, and Khobz Al-Lazaqiat.

The process of crafting flatbread through the simple yet revered baking method has remained largely unchanged since ancient times. Cereals are ground and sieved, followed by kneading and cooking. Moreover, the technique of baking bread beneath layers of sand, embers, and ash endures as a practiced tradition in the nomadic communities in the region.

Geographical spread of bread and baking



Shraak Bread – خبز الشراك

Shraak is a flatbread, made from an unleavened dough known as Awees. A blend of wheat flour, warm water, and table salt is skillfully kneaded, allowing it to proof for a few hours. The dough is then divided into small pieces and placed on a flour-dusted tray. Once the Saj, a large hot metal grill resembling an inverted wok, reaches the optimum temperature, the dough is skillfully rolled and flipped by hand until it reaches the desired size and thickness. Each piece is gently placed on the Saj, cooked on both sides until perfection is achieved. Shraak's most iconic pairing is with the revered Jordanian dish, Mansaf.





Taboon Bread خبز الطابون

Taboon bread, also known as Radf, is one of the most famous Khobz Khamer (leavened bread) varieties in Jordan as whole. Rolled into a delightful disk shape, it undergoes a transformation in the Taboon oven, resulting in a culinary triumph.

In certain areas, such as Irbid, nigella and sesame seeds find their way into the dough, enhancing the bread's aroma and taste.

The Taboon oven itself is a labor of love, traditionally crafted by the skilled hands of women within the household. Combining clay, straw, or sand, the oven takes on a dome-shaped structure. Underneath, a dedicated space is designated for burning wood, providing the necessary heat for baking. An opening is carefully created either from the top or the front, serving as the entry point for the food. To ensure proper ventilation, a vent is incorporated, allowing smoke and heat to escape. The oven is then left to dry and harden for several days or even weeks, allowing the structure to fully cure.

Once the taboon oven is deemed ready, it becomes a versatile tool for various culinary endeavors. Baking bread, roasting meat, and fulfilling other cooking needs are all within its capabilities.

Arbood Bread – خبز العربود

Qors Al-Nar, also known as Arbood bread, cooked in ashes, harks back to ancient times, with its origins believed to date back to the Aramaic civilization of the Fertile Crescent around 2000 BC.

In fact, the history of bread making dates back to the Natufian age as charred remains of a flatbread baked 14,400 years ago by Natufian hunter-gatherer site which researchers found while working in the North-Eastern desert in Jordan resembles Arbood bread. The remains were found in two fireplaces, it may be understood that the inhabitants of the site produced bread-like products before they abandoned the site, which means that Its production is intended to be stocking up making it a suitable light, nutritional, and easily transportable foodstuff that can also be stored dried for several months, which remanded the way of life of the nomadic people or the bedouins. (Archaeobotanical evidence reveals the origins of bread 14,400 years ago in northeastern Jordan .

Arbood bread is made by starting a fire and allowing it to turn into coal. A dough made of flour and water is kneaded, flattened, and coated with flour before being placed on the ashes. More ash and coals are added, and the bread is periodically checked and flipped for even cooking. After approximately an hour, it is removed from the fire, cleaned of ashes, and left to cool. Shepherds, nomads, and farmers carry the necessary ingredients to make Arbood bread on their journeys. It is enjoyed with heated ghee and diluted Jameed or combined with sautéed onions and yogurt. Traditionally, the bread was preserved by the nomadic people kept the bread properly covered for a few days since it is dry from the outside, but nowadays it is made for immediate consumption on special occasions.

³⁶ Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 115(31), 7925-7930. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1801071115>





Qras el Eid/Qusmat

قراص العيد / قُسمات

Qras el Eid, also known as Qusmat or Ka'ak el Eid, is a special bread that serves as a sweet treat during festive occasions like Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Easter in Jordan.

The recipe varies across different regions of the country. The basic dough consists of wheat flour, safflower, a mix of seeds (nigella, sesame, anise, and fennel), sugar, milk or yogurt, and olive oil. The dough is left to leaven overnight and then divided into balls, which are further leavened.

In the North, special wooden molds with intricate patterns are used to shape the dough into discs. The bread is baked in a taboon oven and brushed with olive oil before serving. In some areas, the dough is stuffed with dates or raisins. Each region has its unique variations, such as the addition of curcumin, sesame seeds, or eggs, and different toppings like sugar or egg yolk.

In Madaba and Karak, this kind of bread is made in the Christian Easter, from non-fermented dough, with sesame, anise and black seed added to it.



Fatayer & Mtabag

الفطائر والمطابق

Fatayer and Mtabag are beloved stuffed breads in Jordanian cuisine. Both share a dough made from wheat flour, water, olive oil, and salt, but differ in their stuffing and shaping methods. Mtabag is skillfully spread into a thin disk, topped with fillings like Zaatar or fresh greens, and folded into a triangular shape known as “Tabeg”. Ajloun is famous for its Zaatar Mtabag, where sautéed onions and fresh Zaatar are combined. Fatayer, on the other hand, involves two dough rounds filled with various ingredients, sealed together, and baked to perfection.

A popular variation is Fatayer Kishek from northern Jordan, filled with moistened dried Kishek and sautéed onions. In southern regions, Fatayer is called Mtabag and sometimes layered with sautéed onions or meat. In the south, Mtabag dough is filled with sugar, sesame, and anis or with nuts and cinnamon and served with Qatter (simple sugar syrup). In Madaba and Karak, Mtabag is made from non-ferrous whole wheat dough with olive oil, and stuffed with cinnamon, sesame, black seeds, and served with Qatter.



Traditional Jordanian Dishes

Mansaf	Country wide - Originally from Karak
Hafeet	South - Originally Karak
Rashoof	Country wide
Zarb	Ma'an, Karak, Tafleh, Aqaba
Athan El Shayeb	Country wide
Magloubeh	Country wide
Makmorah	Irbid
Mahashi	Country wide
Waraq Dawali	Country wide
Lsieneh	Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun and Balqa
Sayadiyeh	Aqaba



TRADITIONAL JORDANIAN DISHES

Mansaf

Mansaf is the Jordan's National Dish. The history of the Jordanian Mansaf dates back to the reign of King Meshaa of the Moabites in 147 BC, the founder of the city of Karak and the unifier, as stated in the history books, because he united the Kingdom of Debul with the kingdom of Moab: "Mishaa commanded that the entire kingdom of Moab cook meat with Jameed, and whoever did not eat Jameed was considered with the enemies and not with his state." About 3,200 years ago, King Mesha succeeded in loading food with political connotations and used it as a means for a democratic referendum, so that he could know the extent of public opinion and popular satisfaction, and for assessing who would fight a fateful battle with him, against their opponents. From a scientific point of view, archeology confirms that the roots of Mansaf are older than that date and extend to 5000-6500 BC (that is, more than 7000 years ago at least).

Since then Mansaf has been truly Jordan's culinary masterpiece that weaves together the vibrant tapestry of Jordan's rich heritage, capturing the essence of its land, culture, and warm hospitality. It's a symphony of flavors and traditions that dances upon the



taste buds and nourishes the soul. It is an extraordinary dish, in which the very essence of Jordan comes alive, embraces the bountiful harvest of wheat, the noble beasts of the shepherds, and the creamy richness of dairy, all united in a harmonious medley. This exclusive dish embodies the harmony between the nomadic Bedouin spirit and the diligent farmers, merging their stories and traditions into a single culinary masterpiece.

To prepare Mansaf we start with the foundation, the delicate shraak bread, an inviting canvas that sets the stage for the symphony of flavors to come. As we build upon this base, a layer of aromatic jareesh or rice unfolds, imagine the lamb, its tenderness crafted through meticulous cooking, bathed in the velvety caress of laban Jameed. This lamb, a succulent treasure, takes center stage, captivating the senses with its divine essence. And as you take a bite, the revelation of taste and texture is nothing short of extraordinary. All this crowning glory - a cascade of the exquisite Jameed sauce, this creamy elixir, a harmonious blend of flavors, envelops the lamb, infusing it with richness and depth. Each mouthful is a journey, a symphony of sensations that dances on the palate, inviting us to savor every nuance.

Jordanians serve Mansaf in their joys and sorrows, in Eid seasons, and official occasions. It is considered the most popular dish, and the closest to the hearts of all Jordanians and all visitors to Jordan.



RECIPE

Mansaf

1. Make 2 to 3 cups of rice. (originally, Jareesh)
2. In a large pot over medium high heat, add one kilo of chopped leg of lamb into boiling water. add enough water to cover the lamb, cook slowly until the lamb is cooked.
3. Reconstitute 2 pieces of jameed by breaking them into pieces and soaking it in water, using a food processor, process the jameed and water to make a thick paste.
4. Mix the jameed paste with the meat broth and stir until you have a creamy white sauce.
5. Lay the shraak bread into the bottom of the tray you are using.
6. Ladle some of the Jameed sauce over the bread allowing the bread to soak it up.
7. Place a generous layer of rice over the shraak, some might even say make a mound of rice
8. Add the cooked lamb to the top of the rice and ladle the laban sauce over the rice and lamb.
9. Top with fried pine nuts, slivered almonds, or both.

³⁷ Ethno-archaeological study: The ancient Jordanians ate mansaf more than 7,000 years ago by Jordan Heritage Company <https://www.jordanheritage.jo/jordanian-mansaf/>

Hafeet – الهفيت

Hafeet also called Fateet is a well-known dish that has gained popularity throughout Jordan and can be defined as the Origin of Mansaf. Similar in concept to Mansaf, Hafeet involves boiling Jameed yogurt with tender meat pieces. Meanwhile, bread is cut into small pieces and placed in a deep platter. Once the meat is cooked, the creamy Jameed is poured over the bread, followed by the addition of the meat. This flavorful meal is traditionally enjoyed by eating with one's hands.

One of the distinct characteristics of Hafeet is the variation in bread and yogurt used across different regions. In the southern parts of Jordan, arboud bread and Jameed are preferred, while in the north, Shraak bread and Makheed yogurt are favored.

Interestingly, in certain areas of the north, such as Irbid, Hafeet is prepared without meat, showcasing the flexibility and adaptability of this beloved dish.



Rashoof

الرشوف

This thick soup has become a staple on Jordanian family tables, enjoyed for both lunch and dinner. Its popularity spans across the entire country, from the northern regions to the southern corners.

Known as Tafileh or Fateet al Rashadieh in some areas, Shorabah Hamdah in Maan and Rashoof in Karak and Balqa, it is a shared culinary delight that brings people together. The main ingredients include lentils, Jareesheh, Jameed, combined with Samneh Baladieh. However, there are regional variations in the choice of ingredients. In the north, Bulgur is used instead of Jareesheh, and Makheed replaces Jameed.

Another variation in the North Badieh region, the Rashoof is made with lentils, chickpeas, Makheed and meat. Lentils and chickpeas are boiled and placed in a pot with meat and Makheed to cook. Once the meat is cooked, fried onions in Samneh baladiah is poured on top.

In the South, only Jameed is used, and no meat is added in any form. Rashoof represents more than just a meal; it embodies the traditions and flavors of Jordanian cuisine. Its comforting and hearty nature makes it a beloved favorite among families throughout the country. Whether enjoyed on a casual day or during festive gatherings, Rashoof brings warmth and satisfaction to every Jordanian table.



Zarb

Zarb is a traditional cooking method that is well-known among Bedouin communities in the South of Jordan. It is primarily used to roast whole animals, including goats, lambs, deer, rabbits, chickens, and various hunted birds or animals. This culinary technique showcases the Bedouin's expertise in preparing flavorful, tender meats.

The process of preparing a Zarb begins by creating a permanent oven. A pit is dug in the ground, and the walls are lined with stones and mud. In modern times, a metal barrel is often inserted into the pit for convenience. To start the cooking process, a fire is ignited at the bottom of the pit using wood. The fire is allowed to burn down until it turns into hot coals. Wire grills are placed as a barrier between the meat and the coal. In larger pits, multiple tiers of meat can be accommodated. The meat is carefully arranged on the grills, and the pit is closed using stones, mud. Finally, soil is placed on top to completely cover the pit.

The cooking time for Zarb varies depending on the type of meat being cooked. It can take anywhere from 3 to 4 hours, sometimes even longer. The slow and steady cooking process ensures that the meat becomes succulent and infused with smoky flavors.

Zarb is not just a cooking method; it is a social gathering and a celebration of Bedouin culture. It is said that the technique of Zarb finds its origins in the Bedouin culture. Due to the harsh desert conditions and the need to graze their animals, they structured their days around a specific schedule. Mornings would begin early, with the animals taken out to graze. However, the intense heat of the desert during midday necessitated a return to shelter, where both herders and animals rested until early afternoon. At that time, they would resume grazing until sunset.

During the scorching midday period, the Bedouin people engaged in relaxation and socialization, often gathering over a pot of tea. The central task during this period was food preparation. It is noteworthy that the Bedouin typically consumed small meals in the morning, reserving larger lunches and dinners.

For them, this arrangement presented a logistical challenge. While the midday offered an opportunity to prepare meals, there is a time when families would be away from the camp with their livestock, leaving food unguarded during this period risked its destruction by sand, predators, and vermin. Consequently, the Bedouin devised a practical solution known as the Zarb, which involves preparing meals during the midday heat and then placing the food in underground pits for cooking over several hours. By utilizing the retained heat of the desert sands, the food slowly cooks, allowing the herding families to return at sunset to uncover and enjoy their evening meal.

This method of underground cooking not only preserves the food from the harsh environmental factors but also ensures a hot and ready-to-eat dinner upon their return.

This method of underground cooking not only preserves the food from the harsh environmental factors but also ensures a hot and ready-to-eat dinner upon their return.





Athan El Shayeb

أذان الشايب

Athan El Shayeb is a beloved traditional dish in Jordan, featuring delightful stuffed dumplings. The process begins by preparing a dough made from wheat flour, a pinch of salt, and water. The dough is then rolled out and cut into circles, forming the base for the dumplings.

Meanwhile, a flavorful filling is created by sautéing minced lamb meat (or sometimes minced chicken) with chopped onions. The meat is seasoned with salt and pepper, while in certain regions like Tafileh and Maan, turmeric is added to the seasoning for an additional twist of flavor. The filling is carefully placed in the center of each dough circle, and the edges are folded and formed into balls, sealing the delicious filling inside.

The prepared Athan El Shayeb dumplings can be prepared in various ways based on personal preference. They can be dried, roasted, or fried, each method imparting a unique texture and taste. Once prepared, the dumplings are then dropped in boiling jameed.

To elevate the flavors further, a special element known as Kadhha is added. In this step, garlic is fried with Samneh until aromatic and golden. The fragrant garlic and Samneh mixture poured into the pot of cooked dumplings while still hot, enhancing the overall taste of the dish.

This dish has variations that reflect regional preferences and tastes. In Karak, for instance, cilantro and fried pine seeds are added to the filling, providing an additional layer of freshness and nuttiness. In Aqaba, lentils and fat are incorporated into the filling, offering a unique twist on the traditional recipe. Tafileh, on the other hand, includes Jareeshah in their version of the dish, further enhancing its flavor profile.

Magloubah – مقلوبة

Magloubah is a well-known and beloved dish throughout all regions of Jordan today. However, history suggest that its origins can be traced back to Salt in Balqa, where it is believed that rice was first introduced in Jordanian cuisine. This dish has since become a culinary staple, prepared with variations across the country, featuring either lamb meat or chicken and a variety of vegetables such as eggplants, cauliflower, potatoes, or green Foul (fava beans).

The preparation of Magloubah typically involves several steps. Firstly, the meat is cooked and seasoned, either by boiling or sautéing, until tender and flavorful. It is then placed in a deep pot, and in some variations, sliced tomatoes are added on top of the meat to enhance the richness of the dish. Next, the vegetables, which have been either coarsely chopped or sliced, fried and arranged on top of the meat. These vegetables may vary depending on personal preference or regional traditions.

Lastly, uncooked rice is added as the final layer on top of the vegetables. The pot is then filled with water, submerging the contents and allowing the flavors to meld together during the cooking process. The pot is placed over a low heat to cook, slowly simmering until the rice is tender and the flavors have infused into the dish.

Once the Magloubah is ready, it is time to serve this delectable creation. A serving tray is placed on top of the pot, and with a careful and confident flip, the pot is turned upside down, allowing the dish to gracefully slide onto the tray. The result is a beautiful presentation of layers, with the meat, vegetables, and rice forming a harmonious composition.



³⁸ Entry to the Bedouin and farming production Heritage and food traditions of Jordan, Nahed Hattar & Ahmad Abu Khalil, Ahli Bank publication 2014.

Makmorah – مكمره

Makmorah features layers of dough filled with sautéed chicken and onions, seasoned with sumac, creating a unique and delightful cake-like creation. To prepare Makmorah, the dough known as Awees is made, sometimes incorporating a mixture of sesame and nigella seeds for added flavor and texture. Onions are sautéed with olive oil until caramelized, then chicken is added to the pan and cooked together, seasoned with sumac to infuse the dish with its distinctive tangy taste. Once the chicken and onions are cooked and flavored to perfection, it is time to assemble the Makmorah.

Traditionally, wide and deep stainless-steel pots were used for making Makmorah, though any cooking pot can be used nowadays. The first layer of dough is rolled out to a size that allows it to hang over the edges of the pot. Then, a layer of the sautéed chicken and onion mixture is added. Another layer of rolled-out dough, sized to fit the pot, is placed on top of the chicken layer. This process is repeated, creating two or three layers of chicken and dough, depending on the size of the pot being used. The Makmorah is completed with a final layer of dough. The excess dough hanging from the pot is gathered and sealed tightly.

Traditionally, Makmorah would be cooked in taboon ovens, but nowadays, it can be baked in any household oven. The pot is placed in the oven to cook, allowing the flavors to meld together and the dough to become beautifully golden and crispy. Once the Makmorah is fully cooked, it is time to present this savory masterpiece by carefully flipped onto a serving tray, revealing the layers of dough and chicken. The Makmorah is then cut into cake-like pieces. Each slice offers a delectable combination of tender chicken, caramelized onions, and the rich flavors of sumac, all embraced by layers of savory dough.

Makmorah represents the culinary heritage of northern Jordan, mainly Irbid, as it is not well known in other parts of Jordan.





Mahashi – محاشي

This is one of the dishes that is adapted into the traditional dishes of Jordan learned from neighboring Palestine and Syria. Vegetables such as zucchini (Kousa), eggplants (Bathenjan) and pumpkin (Yaktin) are emptied and stuffed either with Jareesheh, Freekeh, Burgul or most recently rice mixed with minced meat (sometimes the meat is omitted as well), Samneh (ghee) or olive oil and flavored with mixed spice or Hwajeh, salt and pepper.

The most famous Mahashi in Jordan is Mahashi Kousa (zucchini) with Waraq Dawali (vine leaves). Sliced tomatoes are placed in the bottom of the pot before the Waraq and Kousa are placed and organized in a circular way in alternative layers in the pot, water is filled in the pot with some lemon juice until all the content is submerged, it is a habit to place a large plate on top to weigh down the content. The dish is ready when there is no water left in the pot. To serve the serving tray is placed on top of the pot and flipped similar to the Maglouba, however the content is spread through the tray.

Another popular Mahashi dish is Kousa Bil Laban, where Kousa is cooked either in Jameed or Laban Makheed when in season. It boils until the Kousa is cooked. Garlic fried in Samneh or olive oil are added while hot, sometimes some dried mint leaves are crushed and sprinkled on top.

Irbid in the north has its special Mahashi dish, where Kousa is stuffed with Burgul and fresh wild min while cooked in water and olive oil.

Waraq Dawali

ورق دوالي

Waraq Dawali (Vine Leaves), it is a well-known dish throughout Jordan, either cooked alone or with Mahashi Kousa.

Another stuffing for Waraq Dawali is known as Yalanji. It consists of Burgul or Jareesh mixed with finely chopped parsley and tomatoes, mixed with olive oil, salt and pepper seasoning. It is cooked the same way as Mahashi Kousa, however it is mostly enjoyed in the spring and summer months either served hot or cold.

In Tafilah in the south, the stuffing preferred consists of fried onions with olive oil and lamb fat without meat mixed with burgul and lentils and cooked the same way.





Lsieneh – لسينة

Lsieneh is a flavorful stuffed leaf dish. It is a large leaf, comparable in size to grape vine leaves, that is commonly used in traditional Jordanian cuisine. Originally, it grows in the spring naturally and randomly without human aid. Women gather and cook it by filling the green leaves with Jareesheh, but nowadays rice is often used as a substitute. The filling is seasoned with salt, pepper, and ground fennel, which adds a distinct flavor to the dish.

To prepare Lsieneh, the leaf is boiled, laid out, and a portion of rice and minced meat is placed near the bottom end. The leaf is then folded over itself and rolled, creating a compact and neatly wrapped package. In a pot, sliced tomatoes and garlic are prepared as a flavorful base. The rolled Lsieneh leaves are then arranged on top of the tomato. To facilitate the cooking process, some water is added to the pot.

The pot is placed on the fire, allowing the Lsieneh rolls to cook slowly and absorb the flavors from the tomatoes and garlic. The cooking time may vary, but it is typically done when the rice is tender and the flavors have melded together.



Sayadiyeh

صيادية

While Mansaf holds the title of the country's most famous traditional dish, Sayadiyeh takes center stage in Aqaba and is widely enjoyed throughout the nation. A seafood delight that represents the flavors of the sea with its exquisite use of freshly caught fish.

To prepare Sayadiyeh, the fish is meticulously cleaned and seasoned to enhance its natural taste. In a pot, a generous amount of finely sliced onions is sautéed in oil until they turn golden, releasing their aromatic flavors. Water is then added to the pot and brought to a boil, creating a flavorful broth.

The seasoned fish is carefully placed in the pot and simmered for about an hour, allowing the fish to cook gently and absorb the essence of the onions and spices. Once the fish is cooked to perfection, it is carefully lifted from the pot, maintaining its tender texture and delicate flavor. In a separate pot, fragrant rice is cooked using some of the broth from the fish. The rice absorbs the flavors from the broth, infusing each grain with a delightful taste that harmonizes beautifully with the fish.





CHAPTER 1

Jordan Vegetarian Cuisine

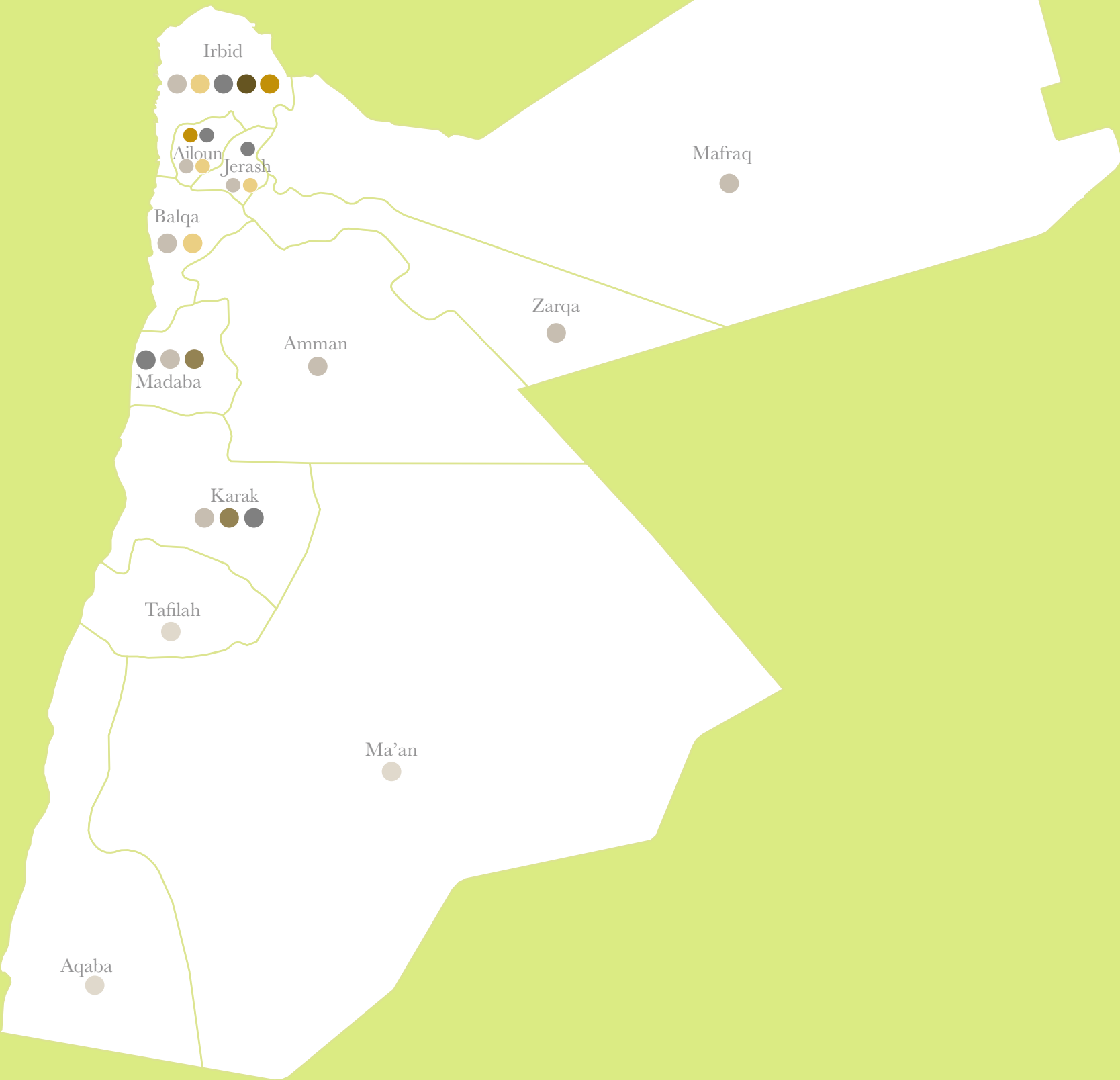
In Jordan, the diverse and bountiful land has blessed its people with a wide array of edible plants and vegetables that have been utilized as food for generations. Whether as a main meal or as accompaniments, these plants have played an essential role in the culinary traditions of the country, particularly during harvest seasons and wilderness excursions known as Taazeeb. The knowledge of wild herbs as both medicine and food, along with the utilization of various wild plants like Faiteh, Khobazeh, Lseinh, Akoob, Huairneh, Kabseh and more, has been passed down through the ages.

In addition to the abundance of wild plants, the people of Jordan have cultivated vegetables in their home gardens, benefiting from the fertile land. These vegetables have become the

foundation of numerous dishes. Among the commonly grown vegetables are tomatoes, Kousa (zucchini), Bathenjan (eggplant), Foul (broad beans), and many others.

Preparing these vegetables in a simple yet delicious manner, they are often sautéed in olive oil sometimes with onions or garlic and sometimes without them, creating dishes known as Housat or Galaeiht. These sautéed delights are enjoyed by dipping fresh bread into them, creating a satisfying and flavorful experience.

Geographical spread of Vegetarian Cuisine



- Galaeiht Bandorah
- Akoob
- Faiteh
- Khobaizeh
- Chaacheel
- Abeetah

Galaeiht Bandorah

قلاية بندورة

Galaeiht Bandorah, or sautéed tomatoes, holds a special place as one of the most beloved Housat dishes in Jordan. Its popularity extends throughout the country and can be enjoyed at any time of day. In the past, it was primarily consumed during the tomato season when fresh tomatoes were abundant. However, in the northern regions of Jordan, such as Ajloun and Jerash, a practice emerged where tomatoes were dried (known as Mashrout Al Bandourah) during the peak season. This allowed the dried tomatoes to be used year-round in Housat and various other dishes, becoming an essential part of the Jordanian pantry. Nowadays, tomatoes are readily available throughout the year in Jordan.

There are various methods to prepare Galaeiht Bandorah, but they all start with chopped tomatoes, onions, green peppers and olive oil. In a sauté pan, the olive oil is heated, the onions and green peppers are added and sautéed until well cooked. Then, the chopped tomatoes are added and sautéed until they reach a fully cooked consistency. This basic recipe forms the foundation of Galaeiht Bandorah, and it remains the most popular version.

Another method, particularly famous in the northern region of Ajloun, involves baking Galaeiht Bandorah in a traditional Taboun oven. After chopping the tomatoes, the onions are sautéed in olive oil. The sautéed onions and tomatoes are then mixed together and poured into a clay casserole called a Tashtoush. The casserole is placed in the Taboun oven and baked until fully cooked. Sometimes, for a delightful breakfast variation, eggs are cracked on top of the mixture, allowing them to cook together in the Taboun oven.



‘Akoob – عكوب

‘Akoob, is a plant that grows abundantly in the north of Jordan. The fruit of the Akoob plant is small and green. It is commonly harvested when it is still unripe and firm. The fruit can be used in various dishes, adding a unique flavor and texture. One popular preparation method involves sautéing the Akoob fruit with olive oil and seasoning it with salt and pepper. The sautéed Akoob can be enjoyed as a side dish or incorporated into other recipes.

In addition to the fruit, the stalks of the Akoob plant have their culinary uses. The stalks are typically boiled until tender and then seasoned with olive oil, lemon juice, and salt. This simple preparation allows the natural flavors of the Akoob stalks to shine through. They can be served as a side dish, or added to salads.



Faiteh – فيته

Faiteh is a well-known plant that comes out early spring from the north of Jordan up until Karak in the south, the whole plant eaten loved for its hot bitter taste, however it should be picked and cooked before the plants flower as then the leaves become dry and inedible.

Sautéed with chopped onion and olive oil is the preferred way to make it, enjoyed with bread. Although Faiteh grows everywhere in Jordan, but it is used and cook only by the people of Madaba, Karak and Tafleh.



Khobaizeh – خبيزة

Another well-known plant that comes out early spring from the north of Jordan up until Karak in the south, the whole plant is eaten. Sautéed with chopped onion and olive oil is the preferred way to make it, and served with a splash of lemon juice squeezed on top and enjoyed with bread.

It is enjoyable dish among all Jordanians, and the fact that Khobaizeh and Faiteh leaves cannot be frozen or dried, the pleasure of eating these meals in the spring is unparalleled. Jordanians race to visit the nearby pastures to pick and enjoy the ripe leaves, and on some occasions this meal may be a generous gift to one of those whose time does not allow them to go out and get this wonderful spring harvest.



شعاشيل – Chaacheel

Chaacheel is particularly created in the areas where Jeadeh or Loof, a type of wild herb, grows abundantly. The nature of the region provides the main ingredients for this flavorful dish. To prepare Chaacheel, the Jeadeh or Loof herbs are first soaked in water to cleanse them. Once soaked, they are boiled until tender. After cooling down, the herbs are squeezed thoroughly to remove any excess water, ensuring a pleasant texture and eliminating any potential bitterness. The Jeadeh is then finely chopped and sautéed with onions in olive oil, allowing the flavors to meld together and create a fragrant base for the dish.

In a separate bowl, an egg is combined with flour and seasoned with salt and pepper. The sautéed Jeadeh mixture is added to the bowl, and everything is kneaded together until well combined. This results in a dough-like mixture that is full of flavor and ready to be transformed into the unique Chaacheel.

The dough is portioned and shaped into small balls, aptly called Chaacheel, which are set aside for the next step. In a pot, more chopped onions are sautéed in olive oil until golden and aromatic. Makheed, a type of yogurt-based sauce, is then added to the pot, creating a rich and creamy base for the dish. The pot is placed on the heat and allowed to cook until bubbles start to form in the sauce.



At this point, the prepared Chaacheel balls are gently dropped into the simmering Makheed. They cook in the sauce, absorbing the flavors and becoming tender. As they cook, the Chaacheel balls become infused with the creamy Makheed, resulting in a harmonious blend of flavors that represents the essence of northern Jordanian cuisine. Like Makmorah, Chaacheel represents the culinary heritage of northern Jordan, as it is not well known in other parts of Jordan.

Abeetah – عبيطة

‘Abeetah, is predominantly well-known in the northern regions of Jordan. It incorporates the use of Loof, which is prepared similarly to Chaacheel. The Loof is soaked in water and then boiled until tender. After cooling down, it is squeezed to remove excess water and eliminate any potential bitterness. The Loof is then chopped and sautéed with green onions in olive oil, adding a delightful aroma and flavor to the dish. lentil, is incorporated in the same quantity as the Loof, complementing the dish with its calm taste.

In the northern city of Ramtha and its surrounding areas, ‘Abeetah takes on a different form. Here, Bulgur is cooked and then sautéed with chopped Khobaizeh (a local herb) and onions in olive oil. Incorporates Bulgur with Khobaizeh and onions, ‘Abeetah highlights the creativity and richness of local ingredients and traditions.





Traditional Jordanian Sweets

Lazagyat	Country wide
Haitaleih	Country wide
Saleega - Burbara	Country wide - popular among Christians
Knafeh	Country wide

TRADITIONAL JORDANIAN SWEETS

Lazagyat – لزاقيات

Lazagyat, this delectable treat is crafted using a unique type of bread called Lazagyat bread, a thicker variation of the famous Shraak bread, as with any traditional dish there are many variations of how its made.

The typical process begins by layering the Lazagyat bread with the finest local ghee (Samneh Baladieh), and a generous sprinkling of sugar. The bread is typically made in multiple layers, creating a delightful symphony of flavors and textures. This is considered the standard recipe of making Lazagyat in the south regions of the country, with a variation of using Dibs Enab or Carob as sweetener, and Olive oil or Zebdeh Baladieh insted of local ghee (Samneh Baladieh), in addition to add nuts and Zbeeb for decoration.

In Balqa region, instead of layering the bread, Lazagyat bread is cut into small pieces and mixed together with sugar and Samneh Baladieh, ensuring that each bite is infused with sweetness and richness. In the north such as in Jerash the Lazagyat bread is cut into small pieces, however they add ground cinamon and milk in addition to sugar and Samneh Baladieh.

On the other hand, in Mafraq region in addition the standard recipe, they also have other variations in the same region. One of the recipes the bread consists of wheat, water and an egg which makes it a bit thicker than Lazagyat bread, and is served the standard way with the addition of milk. Another variation is that the Lazagyat bread has cinamon, cumin and sugar in the bread mix, this bread is then spread with Samneh Baladieh and sugar or Dibs Enab (modern addition includes Halava as sweetener) and cinnamon tea is poured on top served by cutting the bread into pieces (squares or triangles). In another variation involving the bread the mixture includes the black seed, anise and cumin. In another variation the bread is rolled and cut into pieces to serve.



It is said Lazagyat is a nostalgic sweet because it is too old, where only bread and Samneh Baladeyh with no other ingredients were used in sweets, but when Kunafah became a part of the Jordanian cuisine every one shifted to it especially younger generations, so now Lazagyat is prepared and eaten by elders, reminding them with the great taste of their younger age.



Haitaleih – هيطلية

This traditional dessert is a Jordanian milk pudding, flavored with rose water and garnished with nuts, crafted from sweetened milk sourced from local Baladi goats or Awassi sheep, thickened with starch to achieve a delightful gelatinous texture. To enhance its richness, it is served with a drizzle of melted local ghee, known as Samneh Baladiah.

According to legends, Haitaleih was introduced to the Levant region around the 6th century by a tribe called Hayatleh from Turkestan. These nomadic people inhabited Bukhara and Samarkand in northwestern Asia, and it is believed that Aleppo merchants brought the dish to the Levant through trade routes. From there, it gradually spread throughout the region, becoming a beloved sweet treat.

Saleega (Burbarah)

سليقة (بربارة)

This traditional sweet Saleega holds great significance, known among the Jordan Christian population as Barbarah. The dish is essentially made from boiled wheat grains that is flavored and sweetened with cinnamon, anise, and sweetened and a little splash of sugar, served in a bowl topped with raisins, walnuts, and almonds, sometimes just a mixture of chopped nuts.

Jordan Christian population call it Barbarah as it is typically made on Saint Barbara's Day, annually celebrated on December 4th in the Gregorian calendar (or December 17th in the Julian calendar) among Middle Eastern Christians in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey, and Georgia. The story says that Saint Barbara was attacked by Romans, as she fled, she miraculously passed through freshly planted wheat fields, which instantly grew to cover her path.

Saleega remains an important part of traditional rituals in many parts of Jordan, mainly the south especially during the winter season. It is highly valued for its ability to provide the body with energy and vitality, thanks to the nourishing properties of boiled wheat. Additionally, it is commonly prepared and served during social occasions such as children's teething ceremonies and Saint Barbara's Day, which marks the beginning of holiday celebrations for Christians. In Madaba and Karak, it is served on the third day of funerals in churches. In other parts of Jordan, it is served on other occasions.





Knafeh – كنافة

This rich sweet dish represents the strong deep connection between the west and east bank of the Jordan River brought together by social and economic ties. Knafeh was brought to Jordan back in 1916 from Nablus in Palestine to Salt in Balqa region being close to the city as well as it was one of the commerce centers during that time with restaurants and sweet shops. The new residents from Nablus set up sweet shops in Salt, one of these was Al Janaineh who made plain Knafeh without cheese, a sweet treat loved by many children at the time.

Since then, the Knafeh spread throughout Jordan and became an integral part of the Jordanian cuisine and traditions, served after Mansaf on special occasions.

Knafeh is made of wheat, white cheese, local ghee, drizzled with rose water and sugar syrup. Knafeh is usually served to celebrate a wedding, birth, family feast, or graduation, even job promotions or the first salary. Though the ingredients and making Knafeh are easily available and common knowledge, Jordanians do not make it at home and rather buy it ready from specialized shops.

³⁹ Ibid.

Annex I - List of Producers and service providers

#	Interviewee hosts, service providers	Service	Location	Contact
1	Bait Ali	Camp restaurant	Wadi Rum	0795548133
2	Abdullah Abu Awli	Host and service provider	Tafeelah	0784564562
3	Hussain shabatat	Host and service provider	Tafeelah	0799786864
4	Bait Al Baskoot	Wild Jordan	Ajloun	0796200212
5	Iman Abu Enab	Host and service provider	Ajloun	0775328890
6	Issa Dwekat	Host and service provider	Ajloun	0779734776
7	Wafaa Gharaibeh	Producer	Ajloun	0775328890
8	Bait Azeez	Restaurant	Salt	0799436969
9	Najah Rahahleh	Producer	Allan	0779712055
10	Asma Weshah	Producer	Al balqa	0777363289
11	Abu Hassan Al Zoubi	Producer / Farmer	Al balqa	0772467275
12	Kafah Arabiat	Producer	Al balqa	0772467275
13	Mohammad Faouri	Host and service provider	Al balqa	0797490854
14	Zeyad Al Yazejeen	Slowfod network	Al balqa	0790387786
15	Basma Abu Ruman	Producer	um alamad- Albalqa	0796245731
16	Mohammad Al Kilani	Host and service provider	Rumaimeen- Al Balqa	0785401431
17	Faraj Abu Aloush	local guide and service provider	Um Qais	0785258284
18	Mariam Abu Aloush	Bayt Al Faraj/ kitchen & home- stay	Um Qais	0785258285
19	Basam Mahmoud	Producer	Jerash	0795751711
20	Nabilah Ghalyoun	producer/ Host	Jerash	0796374881
21	Nabilah Al Zoubi	Alsultana home/ host and cook- ing classes	Dibeen	0770290472
22	Karam Kherashah	service provider	Karak	0798372030
23	Beit Al Jameed	producer/ Host	Karak	0772034933
24	Firas El Bdoul	Host and service provider	Petra	0776331628
25	Mahmoud Al Nouaffeh	Host and service provider	Petra/ Dana	0772177133
26	Rakan Mehیار	Carob House	Madaba	0797784433
27	Hekayet Sitti	Feryal Karadsheh	Madaba	0772000839

28	Elyas Kzouz	Food Basket Rest.	Madaba	0772000839
29	Bassam Twal	Dhana Hills	Madaba	0795533830
30	Noufan Al Sulaimat	local guide and service provider	Makawer/ Bani Hamedah - Madaba	0777037559
31	Manal Al Sulaimat	Producer	Bani Hamedah - Madaba	0777037560
32	Yasmeen Najdawi	Producer	Heedan	0797419779

Annex II - Field Interviewees



Mohammad Suliam Al-Hamran

Producer and service provider.

Products: Laban Makheed, Laban Jameed

Location: Madaba \ Mulah and Al-Hidan

+962 7 7922 4534



Nabila Al-Zubi – Bait Al-Sultana

Runs a guest-house for tourists and locals, Producer and service provider.

Products: Mansaf, Magloubah, Mahasi, Athan Al Shayeb and all vegan food.

Location: Nahleh between Jerash and Ajloun

Contact: +962 7 7029 0472



Hana Ma'ayta

Producer and service provider

Products: Mansaf, Hafeet, Faiteh and Khobaizeh

Location: Al Karak \ Wadi Ben Hammad

Contact: +962 7 9008 3729



Ahed Oudeh Al-Azazmeh

A Traditional baker of traditional bread

Products: arbour bread, uses local wheat from the area.

Location: Mlaih - Al Hidan

Contact: +962 7 7985 4770



Nofan Barakat (Abu Saif)

Producer and a service provider

Products: Laban Jameed, Laban Makheed, Jibjib, Samneh Baladeih and White Cheese

Location: Madaba \ Bani Hameda

+962 7 7703 7559



Mohammad Kilani Abul Ragheb

Producer and a service provider

Products: Mahashi, Magloubah, Galayat, Sajyat

Location: Ajloun \ Rmimin

+962 7 8843 6068

Annex II - Field Interviewees



Nabila Ghalyoun

Nabila started her own kitchen and home-based restaurant

Products: Breakfast items, Home-made Baladi

Products

Location: Jerash

Contact: 0796374881



Alfadi Dairy – Bassam Mahmoud

Inherited the family business of dairy production.

Products include Laban Makheed, laban, Labaneh (laban Jameed), Jameed, baladi cheese.

Location: Jerash

Contact: 0795751711



Wafaa Gharaibeh

A Traditional baker of traditional bread using the Taboon oven

Products: Taboon Bread, Qras el Eid / Qusmat, Fatayer and Mtabag uses local wheat from the area.

Location: Ajloun

Contact: 0775328890



Asma Weshah / Asma Healthy Products

Asma started a small business,

Products - according to the season: pickled olives, jams, Samneh baladi, baladi White cheese, grape Jam, grape molasses, pomegranate molasses, zaatar mix.

Location: Salt-Balqa

Contact: 0777363289



Kafah Arabiat (Um Hasan Al Zubi)

A micro producer and a service provider, She had her own day use restaurant.

Products: Sumaq, hwajeh, khabeesah, Zabeeb, jameed, kishk, and some.

Location: Zay-Balqa

Contact: 0772467275



Basma Abu Ruman

Micro dairy products producer, sheep and goats owner, she milks herself.

Products: Laban Makheed, Laban Msaha, Samneh Baladeih, Labaneh (laban Jameed), Jameed. She also caters for Haitaleih.

Location: um Al amad-Balqa

Contact: 0796245731

Annex II - Field Interviewees



Bait Al Saboon
Products: Khabeesah, Local Soap, honey, Bread and local Biscuits.
Location: Ajloun
Contact:0796200212



Manal Al Sulaimat
Producer
Products: Laban Jameed, Laban Makheed, Masaha, Khobaizeh ,Faiteh
Location: Bani Hameedah
Contact: 0779734776



Faraj Abu Aloush- Bait Al Faraj
Producer and Service provider
Products: Akoob, Lsaineh, Athan Al Shayeb, Chacheel
Location: Om Qais
Contact: 0785258284



Essa Dwekat- Essa Dwekat House
Producer and a service provider
rest House and restaurant
Products: Magloubah , Mahashi, Mansaf, Makmoura
Location: Debeen
Contact: 0779734776



Ghaith Bahdousheh- Kawon Restaurant and Bookshop
Products: Galyet Bandora, Traditional Cookies, Jams.
Location: Madaba
Contact: 07 9613 7225



Rakan Mehyar -Bait Al Carob
Products: introduce local food in a new way, using Carob Molasses.
Products: Carob Molasses, Carob Choclote Spread Honey, and Olive Oil.
Location: Madaba
Contact: 0797784433