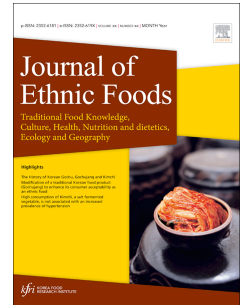


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Couscous: ethnic making and consumption patterns in the Northeast of Algeria

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Abstract

Couscous is an ancient dish that is nearly ubiquitous throughout the North African countries. It is well known as a staple dish in Algeria as many differences can be found concerning its ethnic preparation and making. The present work, based on a survey, aimed to identify the traditional making diagram of couscous and to describe how couscous based-dishes are prepared. The consumption patterns were also identified in the Northeastern localities of Algeria. This study was undertaken through direct interviews within 517 persons who prepare Couscous using the traditional practices in the regions of Bejaia, Jijel, Constantine, Guelma, Oum Elbouaghi, Khenchela, and Batna. From the survey, it seems that the first step of couscous making is a size classification of *Durum wheat* semolina into coarse semolina (CS > 500 µm) and fine semolina (FS < 500 µm). The second step consists on a steaming of CS before its hydration with salted water. The rolling-calibration includes three sub-steps: nucleation, shaping and finishing. The addition of cornstarch or wheat flour is performed during the finishing sub-step. After wet couscous steaming, the precooked couscous is dried under the shade followed by their exposition to the sun. The final step of couscous preparation, is the packaging of dried couscous by adding some preservative and flavoring products. Couscous is prepared for several local events, family celebrations, or religious feasts with vegetable sauces and different meat sources such as red meat, chicken meat, fish or ethnic-based meat products such as *Guedid*, *douara*, *bouzelouf* or *merguez*. Another variant of couscous, *mesfouf*, is further prepared with finely rolled semolina and some butter.

Keywords: Couscous; Traditional preparation; Semolina, Algeria; Couscous based-dishes.

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