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Original Article

The gastronomic cultures' impact on the African cuisine

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ABSTRACT

Background: The countries of the African continent have had centuries of European colonial rule. Historically, African countries have been influenced by gastronomic cultures of the colonial European countries and eventually developed their own gastronomic culture. Every country has adopted a different food culture from a neighboring society and every society has taken the food culture from those who migrated from far away countries.

Methods: In this study, literature search was carried out on the gastronomic cultures transferred to African cuisines. Zimbabwe in the west, Nigeria in the east, Morocco in the north and Republic of South Africa in the south were selected for the research. Scientific researches, articles, graduate theses, printed scientific books and historical documents were examined for this study.

Results: We see that African countries still use the culinary culture they received from the European civilizations they lived in the past years.

Conclusion: The foods that they have transferred to their own country's culinary cultures still continue to be consumed with fondness. Historical relations play a very important role when evaluating the country kitchens.

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1. Introduction

Eating and drinking are the most important need for an individual to continue his/her life. This requirement is at the forefront of the necessary steps to be taken in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. When we look at the meaning of food and cuisine, there are various definitions. For example, the famous gastronome Savarin described the culinary culture as gastronomy, and he continued, "Gastronomy is a scientific discipline that examines the relationship between culture and food". From another angle, in America, the description of food and cuisine and the concept of gastronomy are defined as follows: Gastronomy includes good food and the art of eating and contains culinary traditions related to certain regions [6]. In 1801, a French writer Joseph Berchoux defined gastronomy as "Passion of eating good food, hygienically and well prepared, enjoyable delicious cuisine, food layout and preparation method" In Karl Steuerwald's German dictionary "Deutsch - Türkisches Wörterbuch," gastronomy is expressed as "Feine Kochkunst - Fine

Art of Cooking". In Swedish, gastronomy is described as "Hogre Kokkonst high cooking art" [10].

When assessing culinary cultures, their geography, history, climate, survival struggles, and lifestyles should not be forgotten [7] because these issues affect the kinds of food cooked in the kitchens of the country. The culture that is intertwined with the society has the ability to embody lifestyle as a whole. Values and norms such as parties, funeral ceremonies, culinary habits, and literary artifacts are all under the umbrella of culture. Culture is not just for elite people, but for all people who share the same values. In other words, culture can be defined as the ethical values that a nation perceives, the economic systems, and realities [14]. In a scientific sense, they transfer culture from the neighboring countries and from the civilizations they have in their administration.

2. Method

To understand African culinary culture that is influenced by culinary cultures of foreign civilizations, we investigate the countries in different parts of the African continent. In the study, literature search was carried out on the gastronomic cultures of Zimbabwe in the west of Africa, Nigeria in the east, the South African Republic in the south, and Morocco in the north. Scientific research, articles, graduate theses, printed scientific books, and

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historical documents were examined for this topic. As a result of the study, the culinary culture interactions of the countries were identified and evaluated.

3. African culinary cultures

3.1. South African cuisine

South Africa remained under the colonial rule of the Dutch, German, French, and British governments for many years. Every European civilization that came to South Africa brought its own culinary culture. A variety of gastronomic cultures have emerged in these years as slaves such as Indians, Malaysians, and Pakistanis who were brought in from Asian countries brought their own culinary culture to South Africa.

South Africa was formed starting from the Cape Town area by the Dutch in 1652. For this reason, the cuisine of South Africa has been influenced by the Dutch cuisine. For a short period, South Africa was ruled by France; as a result, French cuisine greatly influenced the cuisine of this country. The inclusion of cream and mutton was introduced by the French. In 1899, the Germans ruled South Africa; therefore, the local cuisine was also influenced by the German cuisine. For example, *Boerewors*, a kind of traditional sausage which is commonly consumed in the whole country, is the contribution of the Germans (Fig. 1D). *Boerewors* name is derived from the African words boer and wors. In African language, *boer* means farmer, and *wors* means sausage. *Boerewors* contains meat or pork.

After the German dominance, the British colony ruled South Africa. During the British era, slaves were brought from India; men worked on the farms, and women worked as cooks. Owing to this reason, various spices of India entered the South African cuisine. To summarize, the South African cuisine has been influenced by many

foreign cultures, and this the foreign influence has mixed with the local food, resulting in a rich and unique cuisine [1].

The most commonly used ingredients in cooking are coriander, hot peppers, salt, black pepper, anise, garlic, and spices, which is the indication of Indian influence [11]. The cleanliness of water resources is questionable; therefore, homemade beers are produced by fermentation and frequently consumed. Beer came from the Dutch culture.

In South Africa, as in many other countries, bread has an important place. Particularly, whole wheat bread and corn bread are popular and are often served alongside main courses. South Africans consume a lot of bread, most of which is brown. South Africans cook dry beef with coriander, season with salt and pepper, and cut into thin slices. In addition, thin dry sausages are very delicious. This dry meat and sausage are used both in cooking and can be eaten with every meal [9]. The bread culture and dry beef are tradition adopted from the Germans. South Africans love light desserts. The most famous desserts are *dumpling* and *milk tart*.

Dumpling is also calling as *Souskluitjies* in South African language (Fig. 1A). *Souskluitjies* is the South African name for an old-fashioned cinnamon dessert. *Dumplings* are thought to have originated in the Netherlands. When the Dutch settlers arrived at South Africa in 1652, they brought with them their cooking tradition, and by that time, *dumplings* were already known in Holland. But the dumpling's ingredients have changed. Because during the old time in South Africa, there was no milk, water has been used instead of milk in the dessert. Nowadays, *dumpling* dessert includes white flour, baking powder, butter, eggs, milk, and salt. *Dumplings* are served with jam as a dessert. *Milk tart's* original name is "Melktar" which is a Dutch dessert (Fig. 1B). It is a traditional South African dessert that is very easy to prepare. This popular South African *milk tart* dessert can be prepared quickly and easily. All the ingredients of this milk tart dessert are present right in every house's kitchen, and they are cheap ingredients. It includes milk, eggs, sugar, flour,



Fig. 1. South African famous traditional meals. (A) South African *Dumpling*. *Dumpling* is also calling as *souskluitjies* in South African language. *Dumpling* includes white flour, baking powder, butter, eggs, milk, and salt. *Dumplings* are thought to have originated in the Netherlands. (B) South African *milk tart*. *Milk tart's* original name is "Melktar" which is a Dutch dessert. It includes milk, eggs, sugar, flour, corn flour, and salt. (C) South African *bobotie*. It has spicy fruity taste and Indian curry. It contains bread soaked in milk, minced beef, onions, dried apricot slices, almonds, lemon juice, bay leaves, curry leaves, and red pepper powder. (D) South African *boerewors*. *Boerewors*, a kind of traditional sausage which is commonly consumed in the whole country, is the contribution of the Germans. *Boerewors* contains beef, lamb, or pork.

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