

Furniko Flour: An Emblematic Traditional Food of Greek Pontic Cuisine

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Abstract : Although the gastronomy of the Greeks of Pontus is highly prominent, it has not received the same level of scientific analysis as another local cuisine of Greece, that of Crete. As a result, we intended to focus our research on Greek Pontic cuisine to shed light on its unique recipes, food products, and, ultimately, its features. The Greeks of Pontus, who lived for a long time in the northern part (Black Sea Region) of contemporary Turkey and now widely inhabit northern Greece, have one of Greece's most distinguished local cuisines. Despite their gastronomy being simple, it features several inspiring delicacies. It's been a century since they immigrated to Greece, yet their gastronomic culture remains a critical component of their collective identity. As a first step toward comprehending Greek Pontic cuisine, it was attempted to investigate the production of one of its most renowned traditional products, furniko flour. In this project, we targeted residents of Western Macedonia, a province in northern Greece with a large population of descendants of Greeks of Pontus who are primarily engaged in agricultural activities. In this quest, we approached a descendant of the Greeks of Pontus who is involved in the production of furniko flour and who consented to show us the entire process of its production as we participated in it. The furniko flour is made from non-hybrid heirloom corn. It is harvested by hand when the moisture content of the seeds is low enough to make them suitable for roasting. Manual harvesting entails removing the cob from the plant and detaching the husks. The harvested cobs are then roasted for 24 hours in a traditional wood oven. The roasted cobs are then collected and stored in sacks. The next step is to extract the seeds, which is accomplished by rubbing the cobs. The seeds should ideally be ground in a traditional stone hand mill. We end up with aromatic and dark golden furniko flour, which is used to cook havitz. Accompanied by the preparation of the furnikoflour, we also recorded the cooking process of the havitz (a porridge-like cornflour dish). A savory delicacy that is simple to prepare and one of the most delightful dishes in Greek Pontic cuisine. According to the research participant, havitzis a highly nutritious dish due to the ingredients of furniko flour. In addition, he argues that preparing havitz is a great way to bring families together, share stories, and revisit fond memories. In conclusion, this study illustrates the traditional preparation of furnikoflour and its use in various traditional recipes as an initial effort to highlight the elements of Pontic Greek cuisine. As a continuation of the current study, it could be the analysis of the chemical components of the furniko flour to evaluate its nutritional content.

Keywords : furniko flour, greek pontic cuisine, havitz, traditional foods

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