

Scents and Taste of Food in the Middle East

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Abstract

Since food is a basic concern for all human societies, thus anthropologists have extended interests, among others, in human diet and the socio-cultural classification of foods as edible or inedible, and the nutritional and medical consequences of particular consumption patterns. In the gradual socialization process that takes place surrounding food, the taste, the smells and the way food is prepared become matter-of-course to one degree or another, making it difficult for the adult person to adapt to other unfamiliar cuisine. An individual develops a very strong emotional tie to his mother's dishes to which they have become accustomed in childhood. Some Arab individuals choose their food according to principal elements: their scents, colors, taste and/or shape.

The aroma of a rich meat/food dish cooking, as it emanates from the house, is a sign of communication. As one of the main pleasures of life, food is often used in association with other pleasurable activities. The use of bread and salt, as a rite of friendship and as a symbol for the very act of eating together, is a highly developed code in daily life and behavior in the Middle East.

The aim of this paper is to describe scents and taste of food in the Middle East; and how most of the herbs are used both as food and as medicine, according to the seasons of the year.

Keywords: Arab, food, plants, scent, taste