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THE HISTORY OF THE FORMATION AND EVOLUTION OF THE BUKHARA TRADITIONAL CULINARY SCHOOL

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Abstract.
This article provides a scholarly study of the emergence, development, and historical evolution of the Bukhara traditional culinary school through the prism of gastronomic tourism. Drawing on primary sources, it analyzes the cross-cultural integration of foods and spices during the era of the Great Silk Road, as well as the system of social stratification between the court (elite) and popular (mass) kitchens during the period of the Emirate of Bukhara. The article highlights the distinctive recipes of national dishes (Oshi sofi, Baxsh, Gijduvon kebab) that took shape as a result of the oasis's natural environment, ecological conditions, and the mutual integration of various ethnic groups (Uzbeks, Tajiks, Bukharan Jews). It substantiates the strategic role of Bukhara's gastronomic heritage in ensuring international tourist appeal today, along with its unique marketing advantage.

Keywords: Gastronomic tourism, Bukhara culinary school, Great Silk Road, Emirate of Bukhara, Oshi sofi, Baxsh, ethno-ecological factors, Ibn Sina's dietetics.

"If you wish to know a people's temperament and culture, look into their history and taste from their table."

During the era of the Great Silk Road, the Bukhara oasis emerged as a center of cross-cultural gastronomic exchange. The principal strength of the Bukhara culinary school during the Silk Road period lay in its reliance on the foundation of two distinct economic and cultural ways of life. Situated in the lower reaches of the Zarafshan River, the oasis was simultaneously a meeting point of pastoral nomads (the tribes around the Kyzylkum Desert) and settled farmers (the sedentary population at the heart of the oasis). The Arab traveler and geographer Ibn Hawqal (10th century), in his work "Kitab Surat al-Ard" ("The Book of the Image of the Earth"), appraises Bukhara's agricultural culture as follows:

"Bukhara is a place whose every district consists of interconnected gardens and verdant fields. The melons, raisins, and dried fruits here are unrivaled in the world for their sweetness and quality..." This fertile soil continuously supplied the caravans with food staples (grain, rice, vegetables, and fruits) as well as meat products. Through the caravans, Bukhara's renowned fresh and dried fruits, along with its specially prepared dried meats (qax) and cheeses, became goods of international export.

The international ingredients that entered Bukhara via the Great Silk Road completely transformed and enriched local culinary traditions. This can be systematized in the form of the following map-table: Local cooks blended extremely precious spices arriving from distant lands (for example, saffron and pepper) with the oasis's livestock and agricultural products in such a way that a chain of new national recipes emerged that were both medicinally beneficial for the body and sharp in flavor. The Infrastructure of Caravanserais and the Formation of Public Catering. From the standpoint of gastronomic tourism, the most important historical factor is the system of communal

dining in Bukhara's caravanserais and bazaars. Hundreds of caravanserais operated within the city of Bukhara itself and along the roads surrounding it (for example, the Rabati Malik caravanserai). The caravanserais served not only as inns but also as the earliest "restaurants." Here, dishes suited to the tastes and religious views of travelers of various nationalities and faiths (Chinese, Indians, Persians, Europeans) were prepared. This environment shaped the earliest tourism-related experience for Bukhara's cooks in working with international clients and satisfying their gastronomic needs. Food Technologies and Hygiene (The Symbolism of Ibn Sina). The greatest problem for Silk Road travelers was adapting (acclimatizing) to alien climates and alien waters. The Bukhara school of medicine and nutrition took the lead in solving this problem. The great physician Abu Ali ibn Sina, in his work "The Canon of Medicine," gave special instructions for travelers and scientifically demonstrated that, to avoid being poisoned by the water of an unfamiliar place, a traveler should mix locally ripened pomegranate juice, vinegar, or yogurt into their food. The local caravanserai cooks prepared food precisely on the basis of these hygienic and dietary criteria. Likewise, long-lasting travel provisions for wayfarers — round qurut (dried curd balls), oven-dried breads (Bukhara qotirma), and fried meat preserves (qiyma) — were technologically perfected precisely because of the needs of the Silk Road. The transformation of the Bukhara oasis into a center of cross-cultural gastronomic exchange during the era of the Great Silk Road was not merely an increase in the variety of dishes, but a historical factor that ensured the region's international gastronomic attractiveness.

The perfect synthesis of Eastern spices and Western agricultural culture within Bukhara's popular cuisine created the genetic foundation of today's gastronomic tourism brands (Bukhara pilaf, Gijduvon kebab, Bukhara halvas). Thus, Bukhara's gastronomic tourism is not a direction that emerged today, but a fundamental system possessing 1,500 years of experience in international integration.

The Court (Elite) Kitchen: Pomp, Offices, and the Phenomenon of "Oshi Sofi." In the court of the Emirs of Bukhara (in the Ark fortress and at Sitorai Mohi-Xosa), the preparation of food was not merely a necessity but a major state-level ceremony and a form of political symbolism. The administrative system of the court kitchen consisted of a highly complex hierarchy:

The Dasturxonchi (Table Steward) — the senior official responsible for all the dishes, pastries, and fruits served at the Emir's table. To ensure the ruler's safety, he had the right to taste the dishes before the Emir (protection against poisoning). The Miraxur and Sharbatdor — holders of special offices who oversaw the beverages (sherbets, teas, sour fruit juices) and the arrangement of the table at court banquets.

The pinnacle of court cookery, and today the principal brand of Bukhara's gastronomic tourism, was Oshi sofi (a dietary, boiled pilaf). The key feature distinguishing this dish from the people's pilafs is its preparation technology. The meat, carrots, and raisins were boiled and cooked in separate cauldrons. The rice was half-boiled separately in water, completely cleansed of its starch, then layered piece by piece in special copper cauldrons and steamed with heated oil poured over the top. The copper cauldron lent the dish a distinctive flavor and was regarded as a mark of the court elite's wealth. At court, saffron and medicinal mountain herbs were added to the pilaf, and this method was an obligatory attribute of lavish diplomatic receptions and court weddings. The Popular (Mass) Kitchen: Teahouses and Bazaar Cookery. Beyond the palace walls — in Bukhara's bustling bazaars, caravanserais, and teahouses — an entirely different, lively, and popular culinary atmosphere prevailed. The Hungarian scholar Ármin Vámbéry, who wandered through Bukhara in 1863 disguised as a dervish, describes the popular cuisine of this period with admiration: "Bukhara's teahouses are the heart of the entire city's life. If you enter any teahouse, for a few coins

they will bring you a most nourishing soup, qozon kebab, or hot bread. The local population possesses great skill in cooking meat dishes, especially in making efficient use of fat-tail (dumba) fat..." The popular menu was strongly tied to seasonality and the gifts of nature. In daily life, Gijduvon kebab (mincing the meat in a special way and beating it together with spices), qozon kebab, lagman, and various meat soups predominated. Teahouses were centers not only of dining but also of social interaction, where men would gather to organize pilaf-cooking competitions ("oshxo'rlik"). Owing to Bukhara's hot climate, special methods of bread baking (Bukhara gijda bread, qotirma) and the preservation of meat by frying (qiyma) became highly developed in the popular kitchen.

A Comparative Analysis of the Court and Popular Kitchens The differences and distinctive features of the two major culinary branches of the Emirate period can be expressed, for this dissertation, through a special table:

During the period of the Emirate of Bukhara, the division of culinary traditions into court and popular directions led to the formation of a dual gastronomic heritage in the oasis. While the court kitchen elevated cookery to an aesthetic and scientific-dietary level (the traditions of Ibn Sina), the popular kitchen preserved and refined the mass brands (kebab-making, teahouse culture) that continue to attract tourists to this day.

From the standpoint of gastronomic tourism, these two major branches form the foundation of today's Bukhara restaurant business: in modern restaurants, both the "Oshi sofi" ceremonies that evoke the atmosphere of the Emir's court and the folk dishes cooked over an open fire in traditional national teahouses serve as an unrivaled source of historical appeal for tourists.

The Influence of the Oasis's Nature on Gastronomic Evolution (The Ecological Factor). The dry, sharply continental climate of the Bukhara region and the convergence of the desert (Kyzylkum) and river-valley (Zarafshan) ecosystems determined the region's food reserves and the culture of processing them. Water composition and the philosophy of sour-salty (nordosh) taste: Because of the high salt and mineral content of the oasis's soil and water, Bukhara's cooks made efficient use of sour fruits (pomegranate juice, unripe grapes — g‘o'ra, plums, barberry) and herbs to soften the flavor of dishes and maintain the body's salt balance. This gave Bukhara's dishes their distinctive sour-sweet (nordosh) flavor profile. The necessity of conservation (preservation): To keep meat from spoiling in the scorching summer heat, the technologies of frying it for a long time (the qiyma method), drying it in the sun (qax / qoqi meat), and preparing long-keeping qurut from dairy products were perfected in an evolutionary manner.

The Synthesis of Ethnic Composition (The Ethnographic Factor) The richness of Bukhara's cuisine lies in its ethnic diversity. As Academician K. Shoniyozov demonstrated in his research, three major ethnic strata in the oasis left their imprint on the menu:

Nomadic and semi-settled Uzbek tribes: introduced the culture of animal husbandry to the menu — pure meat dishes, a high concentration of fat-tail fat, qozon kebab, and the secrets of processing milk and curd products. Settled Tajik population: as representatives of farming and horticultural culture, they enriched the menu with grain crops, complex dough-based dishes, vegetables, spices, and sweets (halva, pastries).

Bukharan Jews (the Golo's): Owing to their religious rules (Kashrut — not mixing meat and milk, not lighting a fire from Friday evening until Saturday nightfall), entirely distinctive technological methods (cooking in a bag, slow simmering and steaming) took shape in Bukhara cookery.

A Scholarly Analysis of the Evolution of the Main Types of Dishes

A. The Evolution of Pilaf: The Convergence of "Oshi Sofi" and "Baxsh" In Bukhara, pilaf is not merely a dish fried in a single uniform way; according to the views of the ethnic groups, it is divided into two major historical branches:

Because traditional fried pilafs were heavy on the body in the oasis's hot climate, Oshi sofi was devised under the influence of Ibn Sina's dietetics and the settled population's culture, while Baxsh — rich in green herbs and fresh greens — was made a popular staple by the Jewish community.

B. The Evolution of Kebab-Making: The Gijduvon School The Gijduvon kebab, considered the pinnacle of the Bukhara kebab-making school, is the supreme synthesis of pastoral and settled artisan culture. Its technology: The meat of the sheep of the desert regions was, by its nature, exceptionally pure and wholesome. Local cooks did not merely cut the meat into pieces; they beat it with special wooden mallets to reduce it to mince, adding only the onions and cumin that grow in the oasis. To keep the mince from falling off the skewer, a technology for controlling the temperature of a special fire (mainly saxaul fuel) was developed, and this method makes Bukhara kebab-making unrivaled in world gastronomy.

C. The Evolution of Pastries and Sweets Bukhara's ancient urban culture (the Bukharan Tajiks and the class of jewelers and artisans) elevated the preparation of the tea table and of sweets to the level of high art.

Bukhara halvas (Sabuniy, Lozin, To'g'ramali halva): To prevent sweets from quickly melting or spoiling in the hot desert climate, a technology was devised to thicken them and preserve them for a long time. Halvas made from walnut, almond, and sesame oils were durable enough for long journeys. Qush tili ("bird's tongue") and types of somsa: The tradition of rolling out dough layer by layer with exceptional skill (qatlama, rolled somsa) and filling it with sour fruits or greens alongside the meat (the spring green somsa) is an evolutionary expression of the gifts of the oasis's nature.

Conclusion and Analysis of the Scholarly Novelty. The study of the historical evolution of Bukhara's national dishes shows that the oasis kitchen was not a one-sided, closed system. While, in response to nature's dry and saline climatic challenges, the cooks created a style of dietary lightness and sourness (the Ibn Sina concept), the coexistence of the Uzbek, Tajik, and Jewish ethnic groups enriched the recipes of the dishes.

In the strategic planning of gastronomic tourism, this "ethnic and ecological dualism" (ethno-ecological dualism) serves as Bukhara's greatest unique marketing advantage (Unique Selling Proposition) in the international tourism market. For when a tourist comes to Bukhara, they do not merely eat; rather, they consume the historical evolution of the dishes of several dissimilar civilizations.

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