



Be
Local Eat
Local
by Karavan



CREATE YOUR OWN TURKISH MENU

At Karavan Turkey, our goal has always been to show our guests Turkish culture up close and to make them feel like a local. So what better way is there to demonstrate this than eating like one!

Geographically Turkey has been the crossroads of numerous civilisations and cultures throughout history hence the variety of Turkish cuisine today.

We aim to provide our guests with an experience enabling them to understand, feel and share the same passion as a local, as we take them from one region to another to taste

the Turkish delicacies. In light of this motto we compiled the below **Be local Eat local** guide showcasing what we feel to be the best in Turkish cuisine, from sublime street food through to gastronomic delights.

Treat this as your **A La Carte Menu** and feel free to pick and choose any particular item that your clients would like to try. We shall then ensure that they will taste them during their stay in Turkey. These personally curated experiences have all been handpicked by **Karavans Gourmet Experts** as the best way to take you on a culinary journey.



UNIQUE DINING EXPERIENCE WITH LOCALS

When travelling in any country we believe it's important to live like a local and so nothing is better than joining in a very special local dinner. This is a great opportunity to meet local people in their homes, immerse yourself in their culture and daily life, listen to their stories and taste many delicious homemade local dishes. This may take place in an apartment, an art gallery or even in an atelier of a local artist. With Karavan you are able to join the locals at their table, discover the best kept secrets of local life, hear the stories and breathe in the wonderful aromas of their local dishes, flavours unlike any you have experienced before!

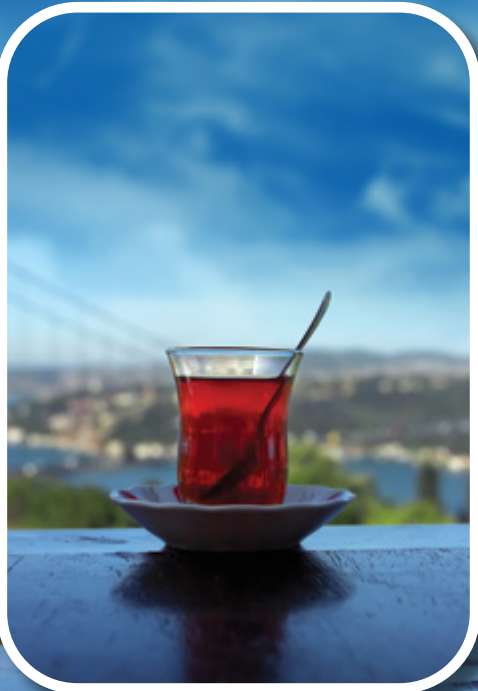
SIMIT

Simit is a savoury ring shaped dough and as you can imagine it has a lot of crust. This is sometimes light caramel, other times deep reddish brown, but always satisfying, crunchy and delicious!. Along with the dough it's also made of grape molasses and an essential ingredient, sesame seeds. Simit is a great option for a quick breakfast and goes well with some Turkish feta or goats cheese not to mention a glass of freshly brewed Turkish tea.



CAY

Whether it is early in the morning or in the middle of a busy day or simply catching up with a friend or family member, Turkish people do not need an excuse to drink a glass of Turkish tea! A simple but also a great way to interact with locals who love to offer their guests something to drink, a glass of Turkish tea is always a good ice breaker. Tea is prepared and consumed all over the world but the way Turkish people prepare and drink it is a bit different. We brew tea in a pot which consists of two parts. The bottom part, containing only water is placed directly on the hob and the top part is where the tea is brewed with a little bit of water so it can be made lighter or stronger as required. Turkish tea is mostly served in a traditional tea glass which comes in a small tulip shape. The deep red colour of the tea depends on how light or strong one requests and is always served with some sugar on the side. Some people prefer their tea with a slice of lemon too.



BOREK

Borek is a family of baked filled pastries made of a thin flaky dough known as filo, found in the cuisines of the former Ottoman Empire. A borek may be prepared in a large pan and cut into portions after baking, or served as individual pastries. It always comes stuffed with different ingredients such as spinach, minced meat, cheese etc. Borek is also a delicious starter for a traditional Turkish lunch or dinner and tastes even better with a glass of ayran (a cold yoghurt beverage mixed with water and a pinch of salt).



LAHMACUN



Lahmacun is a round, thin piece of dough topped with minced meat (beef or lamb), minced vegetables and herbs including onions, tomatoes and parsley, and spices such as cayenne pepper, paprika etc. It is then baked. It has a crust like a pizza but is a lot thinner therefore making it healthier. Lahmacun is served best with ayran or salgam (turnip juice made with the juice of red carrot pickles then salted, spiced and flavoured. Lahmacun is often served as street food or as a starter for kebabs.

KOZDE MISIR



During the summer every street corner in Istanbul will feature vendors selling sweet smelling corn on the cob from their small carts. It is served either roasted on coal fires or boiled and a pinch of salt always makes the taste even more sublime.

DONER



Doner is a type of Turkish kebab, made of lamb, beef or chicken and cooked on a vertical rotisserie. The doner tradition has been around for centuries in our food culture and it is the perfect definition of Turkish street food. Depending on different tastes, doner is sometimes served plain and sometimes wrapped in a pita bread.

DOLMA

Stuffed vine or cabbage leaves are commonly known as dolma. Other common vegetables that are stuffed and could be called dolma are tomato, pepper, zucchini and aubergine. The stuffing may or may not include meat. Meat dolmas are generally served warm and often served with garlic yogurt sauce. Meatless or simply those stuffed with rice are generally cooked in olive oil and served cold. The cold dolmas can also be served as meze (classic Turkish sharing starter) and warm dolmas as a main course.



BOZA (VEFA BOZACISI)

Don't be surprised to hear a street vendor shouting "bhoo-zaaa" in the middle of a cold winters day in Istanbul as he is trying to promote a very traditional Turkish drink "Boza". A drink which has been referred to in so many Turkish novels and stories, "Boza" is made from yeast, sugar, water and bulgur rice. Because of its thick consistency boza is mostly served with a spoon and always tastes better when topped with cinnamon and roasted chickpeas (leblebi). It can also be found in the Caucasus and the Balkans too. A visit to the famous Vefa Bozacisi is a must for those who want to try this delicious traditional boza in Istanbul.



BALIK-EKMEK

One of the most popular street food traditions in Istanbul is balik ekmek or better known as a fish sarnie. As you walk around the neighbourhoods of Karakoy or Eminonu, you can't escape the irresistible smell of the fish coming from the boats docked by the shore. Added in the sandwich with small chopped pieces of fresh tomato, lettuce or arugula, this delicious street food is one of the best around and a must try.



BAKLAVA

Baklava is a rich, sweet pastry made of layers of filo filled with chopped walnuts or pistachios and sweetened and held together with syrup. It was a signature dessert of the Ottoman Empire for centuries and tastes heavenly. For any foodie, a visit to Turkey is not complete without a slice of baklava.

IRMIK HELVASI

Helva, commonly known and written as halva is a dessert made with semolina. Mostly, served hot, a pinch of pine nuts along with some cinnamon adds a nice flavour to this delicious dessert. Milk is also commonly added as an ingredient. Although semolina may sound a little different, don't miss it while you are in Turkey as you may be pleasantly surprised!

AYVA TATLISI

Avya tatlisi is a Turkish dessert made from quince. After cooking the quince in boiling water, syrup is added and it is then topped with delicious clotted cream. Turkey is probably the only place in the world where you actually eat quince as a dessert and it can be enjoyed either cold or warm. As it's a seasonal fruit this quince dessert is best enjoyed in winter.

KESTANE

One popular Turkish delicacy found on every street corner in Istanbul is the famous Turkish roasted chestnuts. Although there are different varieties of chestnuts grown in the Northern Hemisphere, the kind that is indigenous to Turkey is *Castanea Sativa*, better known as the Anatolian Chestnut. The chestnut stands in Istanbul will always provide hot roasted chestnuts for everyone, a great alternative for a quick bite and ideal street food choice. Turkish people are known for their sweet tooth and will make sweets from almost anything. Obviously, chestnut candy is something that Turkish people love to eat too. Either made with sugar or covered with chocolate, it is definitely a candy not to be missed.



TURK KAHVESI

The most important thing to know about Turkish coffee is that it is not Greek! Joking aside, it has become one of the signature drinks in our part of the world. Served in small cups Turkish coffee is definitely a popular drink to enjoy over good conversation. After drinking the coffee, act like a local and make sure that you have your fortune told to you by a fortune teller. The thick grounds of coffee make strange shapes around the cup, therefore making for great story telling!



SAHLEP

Sahlep is a flour made from wild orchids and is used to make beverages and desserts, especially in places that were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire. In England this drink used to be known as saloop and was popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. The sahlep powder was added to water until thickened then it would be sweetened. Nowadays sahlep is often made with hot milk instead of water and it is by far the most popular drink in winter as it is warm, comforting and utterly delicious.



TURSU & SALGAM SUYU

The English word “pickle” in Turkish is ‘tursu’ (“turshu”) and this dish is prepared from fermenting fruits and vegetables with either lemon juice or vinegar. Typically Turkish people like to eat “tursu” as a side dish to accompany a main meal. There are actually close to 150 different varieties of “tursu” in Turkey and we take great pride in our ability to make pickles out of almost out of every vegetable. Turkish people also like to drink pickle juice as it is incredibly healthy and packed with plenty of natural minerals. One other Turkish traditional drink is Salgam (Shalgham), a turnip based fermented vegetable juice. This very popular drink is believed to be originated from Adana, in the southern part of Turkey, hence the reason salgam always accompanies the spicy Adana kebab. Sometimes it is also served with Raki as a chaser.



RAKI

Our national drink is produced by twice distilling grape pomace in traditional old fashioned copper distilling apparatus. It is then flavoured with aniseed to give that delicious distinctive taste. Diluting the raki with water then causes it to turn a milky white colour which has since resulted in the drink being popularly referred to aslan sütü or lion’s milk. As aslan is actually Turkish slang for a strong, courageous man, raki is also known as “the milk for the strong”. Because of it’s high alcohol content, raki is best enjoyed consumed with food, especially with mezes and seafood.



DURUM

A durum is like a delicious roll or a wrap that is usually filled with typical döner kebab ingredients such as beef, lamb or chicken. Additional ingredients such as lettuce, tomatoes, pickles and potato chips then elevate the taste to another level. The wrap is made from lavash or yufka flatbreads and durum is an excellent example of Turkish street food.



TANTUNI

Tantuni is a kind of durum filled with beef, tomatoes, peppers and an aromatic combination of various spices. It is always served in a wrap made from a very very thin lavash (tortilla). Although eaten in almost every city in Turkey, it is actually a local dish from the city of Mersin. The locals truly believe that a Tantuni is not a real tantuni if it does not burn your lips!



KUMRU

Kumru is a Turkish sandwich on a bun, typically with cheese, tomato and sausage and mostly associated with the food culture of Izmir. The name of this street food translates as “collared dove” and derives from the unique shape of the sandwich. The original kumru was ring-shaped and covered with sesame seeds and the modern day version first appeared in the mid 20th century, and soon became incredibly popular. The secret of its popularity lies in the tasty and soft bread and some Kumru stalls also serve it with pickled cucumbers, hot pepper, mayonnaise and ketchup. This Turkish delicacy is best served with ayran.

CIG KOFTE

Cig Kofte means a raw meatball dish in Turkish and it is very similar to a steak tartare. It is traditionally made with either beef or lamb and usually served as a starter or meze. In Turkish *çig* means «raw» and *köfte* means «meatball». In the beef version, ground beef is used and the tendons and fat are removed before grinding the beef. It is of course important to use expensive good quality beef so that the meat can be safely served raw. Cig Kofte is a specialty from Southeastern Turkey, specifically the cities of Sanliurfa and Adiyaman and a favorite way of eating this delicious dish is rolled in a lettuce leaf, accompanied by plenty of ayran. It is definitely an acquired taste but once you have developed a taste for it, it is impossible to live without it!

ICLI KOFTE

Icli kofte is a dish made of bulgur (cracked wheat), minced onions, and finely ground lean beef or lamb mixed with spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, allspice and walnuts etc. The most well known variety is a torpedo shaped fried croquette stuffed with cooked minced beef or lamb and onion. It is generally then served hot as pre-kebab dish. Although it is highly known as a Southeastern delicacy you will generally find it served all around Turkey.

MIDYE DOLMA

This is a dish of mussels stuffed with seasoned rice (often containing garlic, cinnamon, pepper and currants) and then served in their shells with a lemon wedge. Obviously some people may have reasonable reservations about eating these mussels as a street food but there are plenty of other excellent and reputable restaurants at which to indulge, and indulge one must, because these midye dolma are quite simply out of this world



KUMPIR

Kumpir has become one of the most popular street food for Istanbul locals in the last 3 decades. It is actually simply a baked potato stuffed with various ingredients. But please do keep in mind that this is not your average, ordinary potato. This is a gigantic potato sliced in half then stuffed with butter and cheese. Then depending on the order, it can be also be filled with pickles, olives, carrots, mayonnaise, ketchup, yoghurt, mushrooms etc. Kumpir always tastes even better when sitting down and watching the beautiful sight of the Bosphorus while you eat.



HAMSI

Hamsi is basically the European anchovy and although found in the sea of Marmara, it is mostly associated with the Black Sea and its people. For the Black Sea locals hamsi is not just a fish but also a symbol for their folkloric jokes and anecdotes. It is cooked in many different ways (almost 60!) not to mention the dessert in which it is used as a key ingredient.



GOZLEME

Gözleme is a traditional savory Turkish flatbread and pastry dish, made of handrolled leaves of yufka dough that are lightly brushed with butter and eggs and then filled with various toppings depending on the region, such as a variety of meats, vegetables (spinach, courgette, aubergine, mushrooms) and different kinds of cheese. Totally delicious served with aryan.

BOYOZ

Boyoz is a Turkish pastry from Izmir, where it is still prepared from the original recipe. As such, boyoz is now considered a real symbol of the city. The most widely preferred boyoz are served plain without the addition of any meat, cheese or spinach stuffings and then cooked by one of the handful of master boyoz bakers found in Izmir. Boyoz paste is a mixture of flour, sunflower oil and a hint of tahini and the best way to enjoy boyoz is to eat it accompanied by a cup of Turkish tea.



