

## Field Note 1: How migration changed cooking practices: examples of kabsa, fowl and shawarma.

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The below photo of lunch at a Syrian restaurant in Gaziantep taken by our teammate Canan Şeyma Demir led to a great discussion on our team's whatsapp group, where Yousef, Maia and Nour shared their observations and experiences of how their cooking practices changed after migration.



### NON-SYRIAN FOOD INFLUENCED BY THE SYRIAN IMMIGRATION

The immigration of Syrian did not only affect the Syrians themselves but also had a great impact on the food culture of the locals of the countries they immigrated to. By an observation I made in Iraq in March,

2023, I have noticed that the locals, Iraqis, have started using Syrian names for the food they cooked even before the Syrian immigration. I was born and raised in Baghdad from 2002 to 2015 and had visited too many restaurants yet hadn't come across any Syrian name on the menus. I only heard the name of a very famous Syrian meal "Shawarma" on TV. In Iraq we make something very similar to it but on the Iraqi style and we call it "Gass" كص. After I left Iraq and immigrated to Turkey in 2015, I did not have the chance to visit my homeland for 7 years until March, 2023. When I finally had the chance for a very quick visit, I noticed that Iraqis have started using the word Shawarma on the menus and even as restaurants titles such as "Ahmad's Shawarma Restaurant" (this is an imaginary title). It became so rare to see the word Gass again in Iraq. Now The Syrian restaurants are considered one of the most prestigious restaurants in Iraq especially in Baghdad and Erbil. Iraqis now are more attracted to the Syrian food (and Lebanese too) more than the Iraqi food after the Syrian immigration. I even noticed that the Iraqi food itself has a little bit changed and is under the Syrian style impact because most of the workers or the chefs in the restaurants owned by Iraqi businessmen are Syrians. Therefore, the immigration has enormously influenced the local restaurants and food. This may also raise a question to the food identity crisis in regions affected by immigration. Is it crisis or integration?

### **-Maia Alhares**

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Syrians love Kabsa and all other types of rice. This reminded me to share my mother's observations:

As you know, Kabsa, is a national dish in all the countries of the Arabian Peninsula. She said that we, as Syrians in Saudi Arabia, never made kabsa at home; if we wanted to eat it, we bought it from Saudi restaurants. Syrians in Syria also rarely eat and make kabsa at their homes; they make only the typical Syrian food. After coming to Turkey, my mother noted that almost all the Syrian families she knows are making kabsa at home, including us! She said that she cooked Kabsa in Turkey in the recent four years more than she had in her whole life—28 years in Saudi Arabia! It becomes very normal to find kabsa on Syrian restaurants' menus or at social occasions in homes.

Going back to Ful:

We always used to eat home-made Ful (fava beans) in Saudi Arabia; we used to get it as canned food from any supermarket. My father loves the typical Syrian taste. There was no ( Abu Abdu al fawal) or Syrian restaurants for Ful there. However, there is Ful in Saudi local restaurants, but they cook it on the Yemeni way, with different ingredients and serve it with fresh and hot Afghani bread called Tameez. In Ramadan, this is the local Iftar meal there for Saudi citizens!

### **-Nour Zanjer**

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This reminded me share my experience with fowl (ful) and hummus

A few months after arriving in turkey and starting to live and stabling my live I was looking to how I can get Syrian food in Istanbul.

In the beginning there wasn't Syrian restaurant that often as much as right now is and specially for someone who lives far away from the down town

And In Syria we used to buy foul( ful)and hummus from the store that we call (fawal) and almost all Aleppo the store called ( abu abdu Al fawal )

I was faced with figuring how I can make foul( ful) and hummus at home

I remember that when first I start to make foul ( ful) and hummus at that time I learned that foul and hummus include tahini and more ...

Which is right most Syrian people start to make foul( ful ) and hummus at their home and this change it's common especially among people they live out of the city.

Probably my food passion start after I lived in turkey

**-Yousef Saleh**