

Baklava Recipes from the Greek King Otto I to the Present¹

*By Osman Güldemir**

Baklava is important in Turkish cuisine because of its international recognition and its place in important days and tables in the society. It has many varieties such as melon, curd, almond, hazelnut and pistachio from past to present. Friedrich Unger, the confectioner of Otto I, the first king of Greece, visited Istanbul in 1835. “Conditorie des Orients”, published by Unger in 1838, is a unique resource for Ottoman confectionery. In this study, the recipe for baklava written by Unger was compared with the recipes for baklava in two books. The first of these is the 19th century Ottoman Turkish cookbook Kitabüt Tabbahin. The other is the Turkish cuisine book, which includes the recipes of today’s classic Turkish dishes. Baklava with almond recipes in these three books were compared with three general criteria. These criteria are the material used, the preparation of the baklava, and the nutritional values. Flour is used in all three recipes. In the first recipe honey is used as a sweetener, in the second it can be used honey or sugar, and in the third sugar. Their preparations are very similar, with slight differences. Nutritional values also show changes due to the difference in the material used.

Keywords: *oriental confectionery, Turkish desserts, Friedrich Unger, baklava, dessert recipe*

Introduction

In “eating and drinking”, which can be explained as nutrition with various foods and beverages, there have been changes in approximately three hundred thousand years from the existence of human being to the present. There are many factors that affect these changes. Of course, one of the factors is time. Then, many factors such as geography, agriculture, animal husbandry, economy, communication, consumption habits, belief, philosophy of life, science and culture that includes all of them are important. Food, history and culture studies, which are quite comprehensive, are handled in an interdisciplinary approach and in interaction with each other. For example, historians do quantitative research on nutrition, while ethnographers and anthropologists study the relationship between dietary choices, the symbolic significance of different foods, diet and religious taboos, culinary practices, table behavior, and more generally myth, culture and social structure (Flandrin and Montanari 2013, p. 3).

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Throughout the history, we encounter patterns that are repeated and quite different in people's thoughts about food, its place and importance in daily life (Freedman 2008). However, in this field, it is quite difficult to make simple chronological comparisons like in other historical studies, due to the strong anthropological implications of food history (Montanari 1995). Because the issue is intertwined, that is, it is quite confusing and complex. For this reason, the concepts of culture, history and civilization should be included in the mind, and then it is necessary to deal with food that is also part of national identity in the axis of history and culture (Zábrowská 2017, p. 237).

It is understood that the Mediterranean food culture has achieved cumulative development and change in the historical process. In this process, it is noteworthy that especially cows, sheep and goats are raised and their meat and products are obtained, as well as milk and products. In addition, the production of grains and legumes, vegetables and fruits also add wealth. Agricultural and food activities with high added value such as grapes and activities such as beekeeping-honey cultivation have brought a distinct attraction to the Mediterranean region. Of course, there are also migrations and interactions with other geographies and civilizations (Claval and Jourdain-Annequin 2018, p. 239). Living in a wide geographical area such as Anatolia, Black Sea region, Eastern Europe and South Africa; Turkish cuisine, which is naturally a cumulative and ancient culinary culture, has remarkable features in terms of academic studies. One of these features is desserts.

Turkey is one of the Mediterranean societies has a wide variety of different category desserts such as fruity, milky, paste and made by syrup. Among these varieties, baklava is important because of its international recognition and its place in important days and tables in the society. Baklava has many varieties such as melon, curd, almond, hazelnut and pistachio from past to present (Efendi 2015, Kâmil 2015, Sefercioğlu 1985, Şirvanî 2018). Among these, melon and curd varieties, which are perceived differently today, are included in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1. *Baklava with Melon*



Figure 2. *Baklava with Curd*



Many desserts such as baklava must have attracted attention at that time as Friedrich Unger, who was the confectioner of Otto I, the first king of Greece, visited Istanbul in 1835. He studied the works of halvah and confectioners in the city and compiled their recipes. *Oriental Confectionery*, published by Unger in

1838, is a unique resource for Ottoman confectionery. One of the recipes in this book is baklava.

Baklava is a dessert prepared by putting flavorings such as crushed peanuts, hazelnuts, walnuts and almonds between very thinly rolled doughs (Halıcı 2013, p. 35). In the *Turkish Dictionary*, with the emphasis on sherbet, it is defined as “a type of dessert made from very thin dough and cooked with ingredients such as cream, peanuts, walnuts, almonds and poured sugar sherbet on it” (Akalin et al. 2009, p. 188). Baklava is a sweet that is a multi-layered syrupy dessert known in countries stretching from Central Asia to the Balkans, from Greece to Turkey and from Turkey to Egypt in a wide geography. Although Kronndl (2011) wrote that baklava existed as of the 16th century, there are different sources showed that it has been made in Turkish cuisine since the 11th century (Barkan 1979, p. 275, Bilgin 2008, p. 87, Işın 2015, p. 46, Perry 1988).

Especially in the Ottoman period, it is known that baklava was included in palace menus, distributed on special occasions in madrasahs and almshouses, and consumed during feasts and other banquet tables (Kütükoğlu 2006, pp. 244–245, Reindl-Kiel 2006, pp. 57–63, Sarı 1982, pp. 247–248). Baklava was especially preferred on important days. It is known that baklava is served in the ritual of visiting the Cardigan Sharif on the 15th day of Ramadan from the Seljuk Empire to the Ottoman Period (Akkaya and Koc 2017, p. 47). Known as *rikak*, *baklava* or *rikak baklava*, this dessert was consumed at iftar and feast tables. In addition, it is known that Janissaries are served on *ulufe* payment days (Bilgin 2016, p. 42).

Especially in the Ottoman Cuisine, there are 12 types of baklavas, whose names are given in Table 1 (Güldemir 2018, p. 72). Of course, as it is known that each baklava has different internal materials and different versions in these names, it is obvious that the number is much higher.

Table 1. *Baklava Names in 19th Century Ottoman Cuisine*

Baklava Names			
1.	Âdi Baklava (Ordinary Baklava)	7.	Kremalı Baklava (Baklava with Cream)
2.	Baklava	8.	Lorlu Baklava (Baklava with Curd)
3.	Cendere Baklava (Compressed Baklava)	9.	Musanna Kaymak Baklavası (Fake Creamy Baklava)
4.	Güllaç Baklavası (Baklava with Güllaç)	10.	Pirinç Baklavası (Baklava with Rice)
5.	Kavun Baklavası (Baklava with Melon)	11.	Rikak-ı Baklava (Thin Baklava)
6.	Kaymak Baklavası, Kaymaklı Baklava (Creamy Baklava)	12.	Saray Baklavası (Palace Baklava)

There is information that baklava has a widespread presence in Arab culture and even in some sources it passed from Arabs to Turks. Baklava, which has historical, geographical and cultural depth, contains not only a plain dessert but also rituals. In other words, it is possible to establish cultural, ideological, social, economic and health relationships through baklava (Al-Ismail et al. 2020, Bardenstein 2010, Dundar 2016, Goodwin 2014).

Otto I the King of Greece and the Book of Friedrich Unger

Friedrich Unger was the confectioner of the Greek King Otto I between 1833-1838. After Greek nationalism had been gained an independent state in 1830, with a treaty signed between England, Russia, France and Bavaria in 1832, Otto von Wittelsbach (1815-1867), the 17-year-old son of the King of Bavaria, was declared King of Greece under the name of King Otto I. However, due to Otto's young age, the Greek Kingdom was governed by three Bavarian consultants until 1835 (Clogg 1997, pp. 62–69, Pirinççi 2017, p. 63).

The person who introduced Friedrich Unger's German book named *Conditorei des Orients* (1838) to Turkish gastronomy researchers is Konya Tourism Association President Mr. Feyzi Halıcı. He presented a paper about the book at the *Traditional Turkish Cuisine Symposium* held in Konya on September 11, 1982 (Halıcı 1982). Seeing the importance of the book for the history of Ottoman cuisine, he published its Turkish translation under the name *Doğu'da Tatlıcılık (Confectionery in the East)* (Unger 1987). After seeing some of the deficiencies in this translation, Işın started to search for the original text. Finally, a few years later, she searched the internet catalogs of German libraries to find that a copy of the book was found at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. When the microfilm, which was commissioned in 2000, was printed, she saw that the text was longer than the Turkish translation and that there were beautiful and interesting colorful visuals in the book. Then she prepared and published the English translation of it (Unger 2003). She encountered many problems regarding the terms used in the work; she found both words that were not in German dictionaries and words whose definitions did not match their meanings in the text. She turned to many resources and experts to learn enough about confectionery to be able to define mysterious terms and understand recipes. Finally, the Turkish edition, which was discussed in this study, was published. There are many footnotes and explanations at the end of some chapters for the easiest understanding of the book, which contains very valuable information about the situation of Turkish confectionery in the first half of the 19th century. At the beginning of the book, Unger is introduced as "Chief Confectioner of the Venerable King of Greece". In addition, Unger wrote of his excitement to go to Greece in the service of King Otto I as follows:

"The opportunity to stay in Greece, which is one of the countries very close to the Orient, for a long time, is very great because I have the opportunity to enrich my knowledge by learning the preparation of many oriental confections. I was happy. In this regard, I have not neglected to take advantage of every opportunity from the first moment."

In addition, he states that when he came to Istanbul via Izmir, he made a lot of effort to enter the palace kitchens. But he sadly writes that he could not have this privilege. Some of the recipes in the book are explained in a very comprehensive way, while some are given very superficially. Unger occasionally criticizes by citing his professional observations (Unger 2020).

In many countries of the world, pastry has been modernized as of the 20th century and has undergone changes in terms of methods, materials and terms. For this reason, most of the information given by Unger cannot be practically applied in today's kitchens (Işın 2005, pp. 1269–1273). With the method followed in this research, old units should be transformed into the present and the descriptions should be harmonized.

Materials and Methods

The purpose of this research is to compare the baklava recipe written by Unger (2020) with the recipes for baklava in two cook books. The determination of these two cook books were provided by the interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, and the statements of four experts, whose characteristics are specified in Table 2. The first of these experts is a food writer, the second is a retired lecturer, the third is a cookery instructor, and the fourth is the chef of the Ottoman cuisine-themed restaurant business.

Table 2. *Information Regarding Experts*

No.	Date of Birth	Professional Experience	Profession	Level of Education
1	1941	58 yr	Food writer	Doctorate
2	1956	44 yr	Research associate (retired)	Doctorate
3	1986	21 yr	Culinary instructor	Doctorate
4	1976	33 yr	Chef, business manager	Secondary School

The first of these cook books is the 19th century Ottoman Turkish cookbook *Kitabü't Tabbahin* (Güldemir 2015). The other is the *Turkish Cuisine* book, which includes the recipes of today's classic Turkish dishes (Halıcı 2009). The recipes of baklava with almonds in these three cook books were compared with three general criteria. The first of these criteria is the materials used in cooking almond baklava. The second criterion is the preparation of baklavas. The third criterion is the nutritional value of a portion of these recipes.

Therefore, the first stage focused on the materials in the books. In the second stage, their preparations were evaluated step by step. In the last stage, the amounts of a portion were compared by making nutritional analysis with the Nutrition Information System (Erhardt 2010). In addition to the nutritional value obtained, the daily requirement ratio for individuals aged 19-50 in Turkey are calculated. The recommended daily energy and nutrient reference values are taken from the Turkey Dietary Guidelines complies with World Health Organization data (TÜBER 2016, pp. 164–176).

Results

The findings of the research are presented under the subheadings of materials that used for cooking baklava, directions for baklava cooking and nutritional values of the recipes.

Materials

The materials included in Unger's almond baklava recipe and *Kitabüt Tabbahin*, which was focused within the scope of the research, and the materials of almond baklava in *Turkish Cuisine* recipe are presented in Table 3. The measurements of these materials in old units such as *dirhams* and *kıyye* were converted into today's modern measurement units. Then the amount in each recipe is proportioned to approximately one serving. Finally, it has been compared with the material properties and quantities. The amounts are divided into 25 for the recipes in *Kitabüt Tabbahin* and *Turkish Cuisine* books; It is divided into 16 for the recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* for this specified purpose. Consequently, it is possible to obtain tray quantities when the reverse process is performed. In these processes, the amount of flour constituting the physical structure in the portion is taken as a basis. The ingredients are listed in order of use.

Table 3. Ingredients of the Baklava Recipes

Oriental Confectionery		Kitabüt Tabbahin		Turkish Cuisine	
Amount	Ingredient	Amount	Ingredient	Amount	Ingredient
20 g	wheat flour	20 g	wheat flour	20 g	wheat flour
1.8 g	clarified butter	8 g	egg	8 g	egg
6.2 g	egg	4 ml	milk	4 ml	milk
0.3 g	salt	0.2 g	salt	0.2 g	salt
7.5 ml	water	8 g	wheat starch	8 g	wheat starch
6.2 g	wheat starch	0.8 g	clarified butter	0.8 g	clarified butter
1.2 g	clarified butter	6 g	clarified butter	10 g	clarified butter
10 g	almond	8 g	almond	10 g	almond
9.3 g	clarified butter	16 g	honey	0.8 g	sugar
10 g	honey	24 ml	water	0.08 g	cinnamon
20 ml	water	4 g	sugar	30 g	sugar
				20 ml	water
				0.4 g	lemon juice

What Unger wrote as a material and the materials used in its preparation do not match each other. For example, salt, starch, butter and water are used in its preparation although they are not listed in the ingredients (Unger 2020, p. 115). For this reason, especially these materials are written in quantities by logical adaptation to the practices of the recipe. In *Kitabüt Tabbahin*, on the other hand, there is no priority material listing (Güldemir 2015, p. 243). Therefore, the ingredients are reported while giving the description. However, the quantity of most of the materials in this book is also not specified. Therefore, quantities are determined with a logical harmonization suitable for the preparation. In the *Turkish Cuisine* book, both the ingredients and their features are clear that everyone can easily understand in modern kitchens. Otherwise, in this book, there are sugar

and cinnamon in addition to almond in the filling material. Sugar and lemon juice are also different for the syrup (Halıcı 2009, pp. 240, 244–245). The use of clarified butter in Figure 3 is quite common in Turkish desserts, especially in cooking baklava. It can be said that clarified butter is the essential oil obtained by melting the butter and taking the residue, that is, the casein contained in it. Since casein, which is a type of protein, has a very low burning rate, the dishes that it is used in decomposition are both more appetizing in appearance, more qualified in terms of taste and more recommended in terms of health (Güldemir 2018, p. 192).

Figure 3. *Clarified Butter*



Almonds, which are the defining ingredients of all three recipes, are separated from their hard shells and membranes, although they are not specified in the recipes. For this, raw almonds are left in boiling water. After about a minute, it is taken with a colander and taken into ice water and filtered. In this way, the skins are peeled off more easily.

Directions for Baklava Cooking

The directions of baklava recipes with almonds in three sources, which were focused within the scope of the research, are summarized in Table 4.

A very small amount of salt is used when kneading dough in all three recipes. When flour, water and salt come together, a gluten complex is formed. Thus, the dough can gain elasticity and structure. In this way, it is possible to give the dough the desired shape. There are also flat statements that desserts with light salt are perceived as tastier (Dizlek 2012, pp. 43–46). Centuries ago, the conscious or unconscious use of salt coincides with modern gastronomy knowledge.

Table 4. Recipes of the Baklava with Almonds

Oriental Confectionery	Kitabiüt Tabbahin	Turkish Cuisine
<p>Knead flour, clarified butter, eggs, salt and water. Cut it into small pieces, roll, and roll out a little with a rolling pin. Sprinkle these small circles with starch, stack and roll them together with a thin and long rolling pin to the thickness of a paper. Place the phyllo dough in the oiled tray. Sprinkle unshelled and chopped almonds between layers. Pour some clarified butter over it. When the layers are completed, cut them into a diamond shape and pour the remaining clarified butter. Bake in an oven that is not too hot. Mix the water and honey, heat and pour over.</p>	<p>Knead dough with flour, eggs, milk and salt. Cut it into pieces, roll it up, let it rest. Roll out doughs by sprinkling starch. Spread five doughs on a greased tray and drizzle with clarified butter. Sprinkle crushed almonds every ten phyllo doughs. Cut it into a diamond shape when 35-50 times according to thickness and materials. Pour clarified butter over it. Bake in the oven until golden brown. Mix honey and water and boil until it becomes thick syrup. Pour the sherbet over the baked baklava. Place it on plates and top with granulated sugar.</p>	<p>Knead dough with flour, eggs, water and salt. Cut into 16 pieces, roll and rest. Sprinkle starch on each piece and roll out doughs, spread on an oiled tray. Sprinkle with clarified butter with a brush in every three doughs. Crush the almonds with sugar and cinnamon. Spread this mixture after the ninth dough. Place all doughs on top of the dough by greasing once in three doughs. Cut with the oiled sharp knife's tip by pressing it. Pour clarified butter over it. Bake in the oven until golden brown. Mix sugar, water and lemon juice. Take it 2 minutes after boiling. After the baklava has cooled, pour the warmish syrup on it.</p>

There is no description in the recipe for the preparation of the dough and the roll out the doughs in *Kitabiüt Tabbahin* (Güldemir 2015, pp. 243, 290–291). Therefore, it is necessary to logically complete these materials and their preparation. In this book, almonds are crushed and thinned, unlike Unger's recipe. Almonds are chopped in Unger's recipe. The cutting method is not specified in all three recipes. However, the classic diamond cut is in the form of a *diamond shape* as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Classical Baklava Cutting Shape (Diamond Shape)

The *Turkish Cuisine* book contains the steps of the process that everyone can easily perceive and practice in the kitchen. However, it is noteworthy that in this book and the other two, the degree of cooking in the oven is not specified (Halıcı 2009, pp. 240, 244–245). Naturally, it is necessary to access other sources for the information that desserts such as baklava should be cooked at a temperature of ~170 °C.

At the end of baklava recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery*, it is located in expression “*here it is baklava known in the whole of Greece and Turkey*” (Unger 2020, p. 115). This means that baklava was known as a popular dessert in this geography in the 1800s.

Nutritional Values of the Recipes

The nutritional values of baklava with almonds in the three books considered within the scope of the research and the percentages of meeting the daily requirement for individuals aged 19-50 are given in Table 5. The coverage percentages were calculated separately for men and women, and then their averages were taken and wrote in a single value in the table.

Table 5. *Nutritional Values and Percentages of Meeting Daily Needs of the Baklava's*

Energy and Nutrients	Oriental Confectionery		Kitabüt Tabbahin		Turkish Cuisine	
	Values	%	Values	%	Values	%
Energy (kcal)	280.2	15	273.8	15	493.7	26
CHO (g)	28	11	38.1	15	82.2	33
Fiber (g)	1.8	7	1.6	6	1.8	7
Protein (g)	5.3	8	5.2	7	5.7	8
Fat (g)	16.3	28	11	19	15.4	26
Vit A (mcg)	92.2	13	60	9	86.6	13
Vit C (mg)	0.3	0	0.5	1	0.3	0
Vit E (mg)	3	25	2.4	20	3	25
Thiamin (mg)	0	0	0	0	0.1	9
Riboflavin (mg)	0.1	9	0.1	9	0.1	9
Vit B12 (mcg)	0.1	3	0.1	3	0.1	3
Folate (mcg)	9.8	3	9.9	3	11	3
Iron (mg)	0.7	5	0.7	5	0.8	6
Zinc (mg)	0.6	6	0.5	5	0.6	6
Calcium (mg)	16.4	2	21.1	2	23.7	2
Phosphorus (mg)	64.1	12	63.8	12	70.9	13

Baklava with almond recipes have the lowest energy content in *Kitabiüt Tabbahin* (273.8 kcal) and the highest in *Turkish Cuisine* with 493 kcal. The recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* book meets the daily carbohydrate requirement at a rate of 11%. The fiber, protein, vitamin C, vitamin E, riboflavin, vitamin B12, folate, iron, zinc, calcium and phosphorus content of all three recipes are similar. The recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* book meets the daily fat requirement at a rate of 28%. The vitamin C content of all the recipes is almost nonexistent. The

daily vitamin E requirement is met by 25% of the recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* book and the recipe in *Turkish Cuisine*. In general, baklava with almonds has a rich content except for some components. Paying attention to the portion size and consumption frequency is important for a healthy diet (Baysal 2007).

Conclusions

In this research, it was aimed to compare the baklava recipe written by Unger (*Oriental Confectionery*) with the recipes of baklava in two cook books. The first of these cook books is the 19th century Ottoman Turkish cookbook *Kitabiit Tabbahin*. The other is the *Turkish Cuisine* book, which includes the recipes of today's classic Turkish dishes. The recipes of baklava with almonds in these three cook books were compared with three general criteria. The first of these criteria is the material used, the second is the preparation of the baklava, and the third is the nutritional values. The first stage focused on the materials in the books. In the second stage, their preparations were evaluated. In the last stage, the amounts of a portion were compared by making nutritional analysis with the Nutrition Information System. In addition to the nutritional value obtained, the daily requirement ratio for individuals aged 19-50 in Turkey are calculated. The recommended daily energy and nutrient reference values are from Turkey Dietary Guidelines.

Flour, salt, almond and clarified butter are used in all three recipes. In the first recipe, especially honey is used as a sweetener, it is emphasized that honey or sugar can be used in the second, and sugar is used in the third. In the *Turkish Cuisine* book, where Unger's recipe is compared, both the ingredients and their features are clear that everyone can easily understand in modern kitchens. Besides, this book contains sugar and cinnamon in addition to almonds in its filling material. Sugar and lemon juice are also different in sherbet. In *Kitabiit Tabbahin*, there is no recipe for the preparation of the dough and the roll out doughs. Therefore, it is necessary to logically complete these materials and their preparation. In this book, almonds are crushed and thinned, unlike Unger's recipe. The cutting method is not specified in all three recipes. Again, the cooking degree is not specified in all three recipes. Their preparation techniques are very similar, with slight differences.

Nutritional values also exhibit minor changes due to the difference in the material used. Baklava with almond recipes have the lowest energy content in *Kitabiit Tabbahin* and the highest in *Turkish Cuisine* with 493 kcal. The recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* book meets the daily carbohydrate requirement at a rate of 11%. The fiber, protein, vitamin C, vitamin E, riboflavin, vitamin B12, folate, iron, zinc, calcium and phosphorus content of all three recipes are similar. The recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* book meets the daily oil requirement at a rate of 28%. The vitamin C content of the recipes is almost nonexistent. The daily vitamin E requirement is met by 25% of the recipe in the *Oriental Confectionery* book and the recipe in *Turkish Cuisine*. In general, baklava with almonds has a rich content except for some components.

In future studies, preparation of standard recipes of three practices and their sensory analysis will enable different evaluations. Also, simply tracing the baklava from sources in different languages can quench the curiosity about the origin of this dessert. Compiling the information and recipes of baklava in historical sources can also enable scientific evaluation of the similarities and differences between them. In the nine groups that Balata et al.'s (2019, p. 236) analysis of Mediterranean destinations revealed, confectionery products, i.e., desserts, are also identified as a potential priority. Therefore, with the knowledge that ethnic restaurants are on the rise (Harris 2016, p. 270), different types of baklavas can be offered to customers in such restaurants and especially in Mediterranean destinations.

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