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The Place and Importance of Turkish Culinary Culture from a Gastrodiplomacy Perspective: A Review on TasteAtlas

Neşe Köktürk

Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Çaycuma Vocational School, Department of Transportation Services, 67900 Zonguldak, Türkiye

Emre Aykaç

İskenderun Technical University, Tourism Faculty, Department of Tourism Management, 31200 İskenderun, Türkiye

Aytaç Toptaş

Bandırma Onyeddi Eylül University, Erdek Vocational School, Department of Management and Organization, 10500 Balıkesir, Türkiye

Emre Akmanoğlu

Sinop University, Tourism Faculty, Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, 57000 Sinop, Türkiye

Aydın Ünal

Sinop University, Tourism Faculty, Department of Recreation Management, 57000 Sinop, Türkiye;
aunal@sinop.edu.tr

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Abstract

The TasteAtlas platform, which actively incorporates gastronomic information from around the world, offers gastronomic guidance with over 17,000 global gastronomic products. Given the sheer volume of gastronomic data available on this platform, the position, scope, and future of Turkish culinary culture have become a subject of interest within the context of gastronomic diplomacy. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the place and importance of Turkish culinary culture within the TasteAtlas platform from the perspective of gastrodiplomacy. The research was conducted using qualitative research methods, specifically archive research and content analysis, and was an-

alyzed by expert academics in the field. The data obtained are discussed in the findings section with graphs and visuals, concluding that Turkish culinary culture holds a significant and promising position from the perspective of gastrodiplomacy. In particular, its dishes, desserts, and products have shown a significant increase in world rankings in recent years. Turkish cuisine, having achieved great success in world rankings, can reach even better positions with new studies and new tourism policies. Future studies are recommended to ensure sustainability and implement new practices.

Keywords: Tourism, Gastronomy, Turkish Culinary, Gastrodiplomacy, TasteAtlas.

1. INTRODUCTION

A country's gastronomic diversity forms an integral part of its cultural fabric. Just as the development of culture is shaped by long historical processes and social transformations, the formation and development of gastronomy is considered the result of centuries of accumulated experience. In this context, gastronomy has become one of the key elements contributing to increased tourism revenues. Developing countries, whose economies largely depend on the tourism sector, are increasingly developing new strategies to diversify and strengthen tourism. The success of countries that stand out internationally in the field of gastronomy is generally based on their historical heritage and deep-rooted culinary traditions [1].

While the concept of "gastrodiplomacy" in its modern sense had not yet emerged in antiquity, it is known that food culture and hospitality practices played a significant role in establishing, maintaining, and strengthening diplomatic relations. In this context, banquets were frequently held to celebrate important political developments, honor peace treaties, or consolidate political alliances. Indeed, in Ancient Greece, sporting competitions and festivals held between city-states served not only as cultural and sporting events but also as platforms to celebrate political reconciliation and alliances. The hospitality shown to representatives from different city-states at banquets held as part of these events contributed to the strengthening of diplomatic relations. Similarly, in the Roman Empire, it is known that it was common practice to present culinary elements from different regions of the empire at diplomatic banquets, and such banquets were considered a symbolic means of showcasing Rome's wealth, cultural diversity, and generosity [2].

Gastronomy diplomacy, considered within the scope of cultural diplomacy, is defined as the use of a country's culinary culture, food, and beverages by states and official institutions for diplomatic purposes. A relatively new field of study in diplomatic literature, culinary diplomacy involves leveraging food culture to improve diplomatic relations between countries, strengthen mutual ties, promote cooperation, and foster a peaceful environment. In this context, examples of culinary diplomacy include meals served during visits by heads of state, ambassadors, and other high-ranking representatives, official invitations and state dinners, and the promotion of a country's food and beverages abroad through official institutions [3].

Although gastronomic diplomacy may seem new, it is considered a display of power dating back to ancient times. In this context, this study aims to examine Turkish gastronomic diplomacy through the TasteAtlas platform. The study has limitations in terms of material resources and access, but the platform's universal recognition, security, and validity are assumed to be acceptable. Furthermore, the study has received support within the framework of the Generative Artificial Intelligence guidelines published by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

With the increasing popularity of the concept of "gastronomy," various concepts using the prefix "gastro" to refer to different disciplines related to food are emerging in the literature. One of these concepts, gastrodiplomacy, emerged in the early 2000s and reflects an approach particularly influenced by transformations in the field of public diplomacy. Today, some countries use food as a significant public diplomacy tool to promote their national culture, strengthen their national brands and images, enhance their tourist appeal, and improve relations with other countries. To better understand the scope of gastrodiplomacy, which has a wide range of applications from state institutions to individual actors, it is necessary to first identify the fundamental components of the concept of gastronomy, which arises from the multifaceted relationship between food and people [4].

In this context, the concept of "gastronomy diplomacy" refers to planned and sustainable public diplomacy activities, usually in cooperation with non-state actors, aimed at strengthening the value and international reputation of a national brand through national culinary culture and food elements. These activities carried out within the scope of gastronomy diplomacy include strategic communication practices aimed at improving relations with the public and investments, and promotional campaigns aimed at promoting the country's gastronomic values [5].

Gastronomy diplomacy is defined as the use of food products and culinary culture as a public diplomacy tool by states to achieve cultural and economic goals. The main aim of this approach is to increase the visibility of food as a cultural element, strengthen the country's international image and perceived value, and encourage mutual interaction between different societies. In this context, countries can positively contribute to their foreign policy goals by promoting their culinary cultures on international platforms. This is because food directly appeals to the senses, creating a foundation for intimate and emotional experiences; it also becomes a symbolic representation of lived experiences due to its strong connection with memory. In this context, gastronomy diplomacy aims not only to achieve economic and commercial gains but also to reach the minds and hearts of societies by establishing emotional connections through food. States leverage the appeal of food to enhance their international reputation, promote their cultural heritage and traditional values, and make them more attractive. Thus, gastronomy diplomacy becomes an important tool that concretely supports public diplomacy practices by building strong ties between societies through softer and culturally based strategies [2].

As understood, gastrodiploacy is defined as an important concept in increasingly significant international relations [6]. To properly understand the concept of gastronomy diplomacy, it is first necessary to define the related concepts and determine the basic components of this field. Accordingly, the framework of cultural diplomacy is examined; within this framework, there are sub-concepts such as culinary diplomacy, gastronomy diplomacy, and food diplomacy [3].

Public diplomacy is also considered a multi-dimensional structure encompassing various sub-fields such as cultural diplomacy, science diplomacy, gastronomy diplomacy, citizen diplomacy, and music diplomacy. In this context, gastronomy diplomacy stands out as a relatively new approach integrated into Türkiye's foreign policy practices and increasingly used more visibly and effectively through public diplomacy tools. Soft power elements and public diplomacy practices have gained a more prominent place in Türkiye's foreign policy strategy. Activities aimed at increasing cultural interaction in Turkish foreign policy are carried out through various institutional structures, primarily the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, the Yunus Emre Institute, and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities. Initially operating under the Prime Ministry, these institutions continue their work under the umbrella of the relevant ministries following subsequent institutional restructuring [7].

In short, gastronomic diplomacy offers individuals who lack access to entertainment opportunities the chance to learn about other cultures through their sense of taste, providing them with hands-on experiences [8]. Indeed, gastrodiploacy is considered a subfield of public diplomacy, using food as a tool to attract audiences to support specific foreign policy objectives through the influence of cuisine [9].

Gastronomy is considered an effective tool in achieving diplomatic goals; it not only replaces hard power for medium-sized powers but also functions as a complementary element of hard power for superpowers and as a means of providing legitimacy for subordinate national actors. In this context, gastronomic diplomacy is positioned not only as a niche area of diplomacy but also as a strategic tool encompassing the entire spectrum of diplomatic activities. Food stands out as one of the most suitable tools of public diplomacy due to its capacity to influence "hearts and minds" [5].

Countries like Indonesia and China also recognize the suitability of using gastronomic diplomacy as a diplomatic tool. For example, in 2008, the Indonesian Embassy in the United States established a Restaurant Task Force to promote Indonesian restaurants and raise awareness of Indonesian cuisine [10].

Indeed, gastronomy diplomacy is known to have emerged as a widespread public diplomacy strategy, particularly in East and Southeast Asian countries. Differentiating national brands and enhancing the appeal of national culture through unique culinary delights is seen as a fundamental component of the soft power concept. Following Thailand's pioneering steps in gastronomy diplomacy in 2002, countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, Peru, and the USA have adopted similar strategies. The use of national cuisines as a tool for foreign policy and cultural promotion, and the planned and systematic application of gastronomy diplomacy as a tool within state policies, has gained significant momentum, especially since the early 2000s.

One notable example of this process is the "Global Thailand Plan" developed by Thailand. This policy aimed to increase the number of Thai restaurants worldwide from approximately 5,500 to 8,000, and to utilize the national cuisine as an effective element in international promotion. Another initiative complementing this approach is the "World Thai Cuisine" program, run by the Thai Ministry of Commerce. Businesses meeting the specified quality and authenticity criteria are granted "Thai Brand" status; thus, the goal is to promote Thai cuisine globally, as well as to ensure the accurate international representation of the country's unique gastronomic traditions and culinary practices [11].

The success of gastronomy diplomacy initiatives implemented in five different countries is measured by various activities. For example, unhealthy fast food products are negatively positioned under the "Made in Japan" brand, while traditional and healthy alternatives like "sushi" are highlighted. A second indicator is the success in disseminating and transmitting food culture within society. This is particularly observed in the southern regions of Thailand, where the Muslim population is concentrated, and in the settlements of Phatthalung province, where the Sasanufatum School Foundation is located. A third indicator is the success in promoting culinary delights with philosophical and cultural roots at an international level. In this context, Malaysia is described as a "food paradise" thanks to its structure where communities of different ethnic origins, cultures, and beliefs live together, and its rich culinary diversity. Fourthly, the emphasis on culinary culture as an integral part of the national cultural heritage stands out. For example, Thailand demonstrates its support for this heritage by preserving traditional ways of life and architectural elements, especially the wooden house culture. Finally, the importance given to culinary aesthetics is also considered a significant indicator of success. In Thai cuisine, the emphasis on cleanliness, order, visual appeal, and flavor in the food preparation process is considered one of the distinctive features of the country's gastronomic diplomacy practices [12].

The United States' internationally recognized hamburger restaurant chain is a remarkable phenomenon not only in the culinary and food categories, but also on a political and symbolic level. The hamburger stands out as a symbol representing a new consumer culture, national identity, and modern lifestyles. The US approach of using food as a strategic tool on a global scale is expressed by the concept of "McDonaldization," and this process is considered a critical example in the application of gastronomic diplomacy [13]. In an effort to explore the Muslim food market, the Korean government is

collaborating with halal certification providers in its gastronomy diplomacy efforts, as halal certification is of particular importance to the halal food market, especially in Indonesia [14].

Using gastronomic diplomacy as a tool of government policy is a common practice, particularly in Asian countries. In contrast, the diplomatic and promotional use of national cuisines is considered a relatively less common method in other parts of the world, especially in Latin America. However, Peru is a notable exception in this regard. In recent years, the Peruvian Gastronomy Association, together with the Ministry of Trade and various institutions and organizations operating in the fields of Culture and Tourism, has been conducting collaborative and coordinated efforts to increase the international recognition and reputation of Peruvian cuisine. These initiatives fundamentally aim to create a strong "Peruvian brand" through gastronomic diplomacy [13].

In gastronomic diplomacy, countries use food as a tool to promote their culture, build their image, globalize their food industries, attract foreign tourists, and establish relationships with international audiences. Diplomatic actors are no longer limited to state politicians but also include food companies, chefs, travel agencies, public relations firms, public diplomacy experts, television cooking shows, and social media [15]. It can be said that gastronomic diplomacy activities cannot be stopped today [16].

In general, countries are developing increasingly innovative strategies to promote their national cuisines. However, global food-related problems are also emerging, making the implementation of gastronomy diplomacy even more challenging. These problems include food safety breaches, counterfeit or fraudulent products, food production and environmental sustainability, trade protectionism practices, and competition over cultural heritage. Such food safety issues can lead to tensions in international relations. For example, dozens of Japanese citizens were poisoned by counterfeit dumplings exported from China, and the two countries disputed the source of the contamination [17].

From another perspective, gastronomic diplomacy, with its growing interest in foreign cuisines, encourages audiences to take a closer look not only at the gastronomic aspects of the introduced country but also at its cultural and social characteristics. This process can contribute to the development of more tolerant and understanding attitudes towards different societies. In democratic political systems, such intercultural interactions indirectly and positively influence formal relations between states due to the impact of public opinion on foreign policy. Indeed, it is argued that the global popularity of sushi has also contributed to softening the tone of international criticism of Japan's overfishing policies [18].

Juyan Zhang's study, "Foods of the World: Mapping and Comparing Contemporary Gastronomy Diplomacy Campaigns," examines the role of the food and beverage industry within the context of gastronomy diplomacy. This study analyzes in detail the gastrodiplomacy campaigns conducted by Far Eastern countries. Using different methodologies, this analysis revealed that countries created different strategies and slogans [19].

3. METHOD

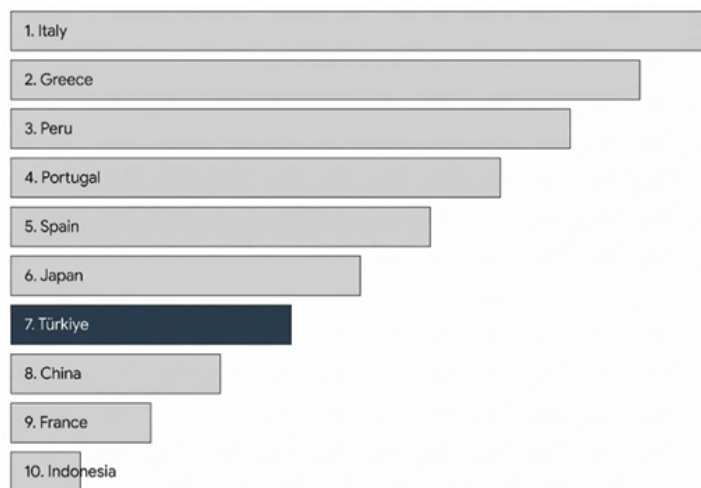
This study employs a qualitative research method to reveal the current state of Turkish cuisine in gastrodiplomacy, determine its potential, and demonstrate how it is represented in the international gastronomy field. This method utilizes document analysis, content analysis, and observation techniques. Document analysis, based on the systematic examination of secondary data sources, is an ideal method for this study [20]. The limitations of the study include the use of data from specific digital databases and, in particular, reliance on user opinions. The fact that the study was conducted in 2026 and covers the years 2020-2026 also indicates a specific time frame limitation. The global scale of the digital platforms used as databases in this study also demonstrates the reliability of the data.

This study utilized the TasteAtlas platform, a platform with a robust dataset, as its data source [21]. The lists of the world's and Türkiye's best cuisines, dishes, desserts, cities, regions, and product categories found on this platform were examined. Tables were created by identifying Turkish cuisine and products included in these rankings published between 2020 and 2026. Furthermore, these rankings were included in the research to support the analysis with data from Google Trends [22] and La List [23]. The data obtained were evaluated using descriptive analysis and content analysis techniques. The resulting tables, visuals, graphs, and themes were assessed in the context of the place of Turkish culinary culture in international gastronomy rankings, the success of products, their gastronomic value, and their digital visibility [24].

4. FINDINGS

4.1. THE POSITION OF CULINARY CULTURE ON A GLOBAL SCALE

When the relevant data is examined, Türkiye ranks 7th among the top 10 countries, including gastronomic giants like Italy and Greece, thus being recognized as having one of the world's most distinguished cuisines. This ranking proves that Turkish culinary culture is not only a regional treasure but has also reached a similar level of international prestige to countries with deep-rooted culinary traditions such as China, France, and Japan (Figure 1).



Hierarchical Success Index (Representative)

Figure 1. Ranking of the world's best cuisines according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]

This graph is based on extensive user ratings from the TasteAtlas platform. Analysis of the data shows that Türkiye's culinary culture, which ranked 12th in 2020, rose to 6th place in 2024 and is projected to maintain its strong position as 7th globally by 2026 (Figure 2).

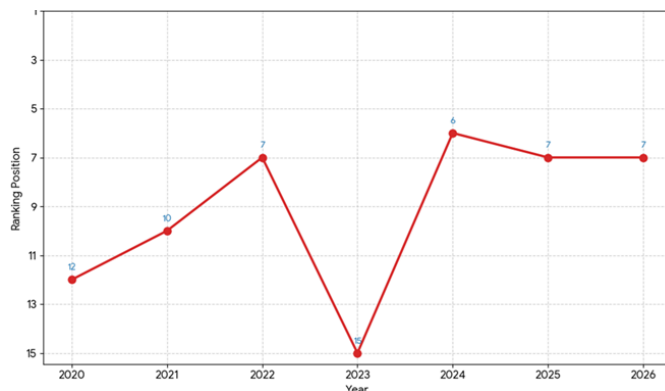


Figure 2. TasteAtlas 'world's best cuisines' ranking of Türkiye by year (2020-2026). Source: [21]

Global data from the TasteAtlas database reveals the strength of Turkish culinary culture in urban destination branding. In this hierarchy, where Italian cities like Naples and Milan are at the top, Gaziantep's ranking of 17th in the world with 4.67 points, and Istanbul (24th) and Izmir (84th) respectively, attests to the international reputation of the local gastronomic heritage (Table 1).

Table 1. The world's best food cities according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]

World Ranking	Country	City	Featured "Iconic" Flavors	Rate
1	Italy	Napoli	Pizza Margherita	4.99
2	Italy	Milano	Risotto alla Milanese	4.99
3	Italy	Bologna	Tagliatelle al ragù	4.98
4	Italy	Floransa	Bistecca alla Fiorentina	4.89
5	India	Mumbai	Vada Pav	4.78
6	Italy	Cenova	Trofie al pesto	4.78
7	France	Paris	Croissant	4.77
8	Austria	Viyana	Wiener Schnitzel	4.76
9	Italy	Roma	Carbonara	4.74
10	Peru	Lima	Ceviche	4.74
—	—	—	—	—
17	Türkiye	Gaziantep	Baklava, Beyran, Katmer	4.67
24	Türkiye	İstanbul	Döner, Hünkâr Beğendi	4.63
84	Türkiye	İzmir	Boyoz, Kumru, İzmir Köfte	4.38

4.2. PRODUCT-BASED GASTRODIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Table 2 features iconic flavors that have stood out among thousands of recipes worldwide. According to the findings, Oltu Cağ Kebabı is ranked 5th in the world, and Çökertme Kebabı is ranked 7th.

Table 2. *The world's best foods according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]*

World Ranking	Country	Product Name	Category	Rate
1	Paraguay	Vori-vori	Soup	4.64
2	Italy	Pizza Napoletana	Pizza	4.58
3	Italy	Tajarin al tartufo bianco d'Alba	Pasta	4.52
4	Indonesia	Sate Kambing	Street Food	4.52
5	Türkiye	Oltu Cağ Kebabı	Meat Dish	4.51
6	Greece	Kontosouvli	Meat Dish	4.51
7	Türkiye	Çökertme Kebabı	Meat Dish	4.41
8	Brazil	Picanha	Meat Dish	4.41
9	Türkiye	Beyti Kebap	Pastry	4.40
10	Poland	Pierogi	—	4.40
—	—	—	—	—
26	Türkiye	İskender Kebap	Pastry	4.53*
38	Türkiye	Mantı	Stewed Dish	4.48
51	Türkiye	Hünkâr Beğendi	Meat Dish	4.39
57	Türkiye	Adana Kebap	Meat Dish	4.36
61	Türkiye	Alinazik Kebabı	Sandwich/Doner	4.36
89	Türkiye	Tombik Döner	Soup	4.47

This visual, which demonstrates Türkiye's diplomatic success in the field of desserts among countries, shows Antakya Künefe (Hatay) Künefe in first place with 4.51 points, followed by Gaziantep Baklava in 5th place with 4.42 points. Pistachio sarma follows in 6th place with 4.42 points. As this visual shows, Türkiye has achieved great success in dessert diplomacy with 3 products in the top 10 (Figure 3).

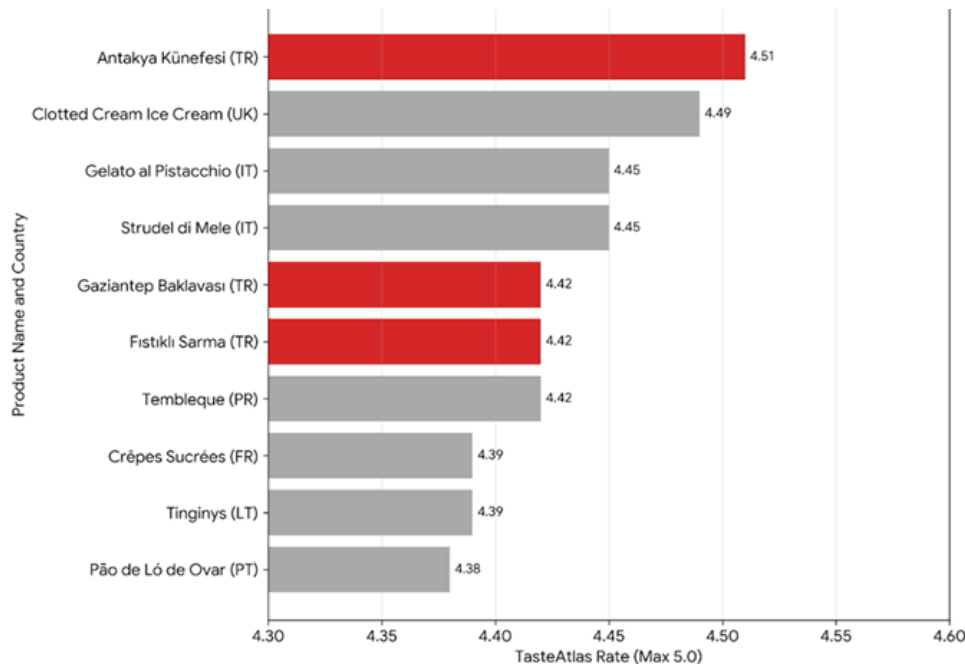


Figure 3. *The world's top 10 desserts and Türkiye's success in dessert diplomacy. Source: [21]*

Upon examining the visuals, we see that while Türkiye had 4 dishes in the world's top 100 in 2020, this number has increased over time. The number rose to 5 in 2021, 7 in 2022, and 8 in 2023. It maintained its position with 8 dishes in 2024, and increased to 9 dishes in 2025. It continues to have 9 dishes among the world's top 100 in 2026 (Figure 4).

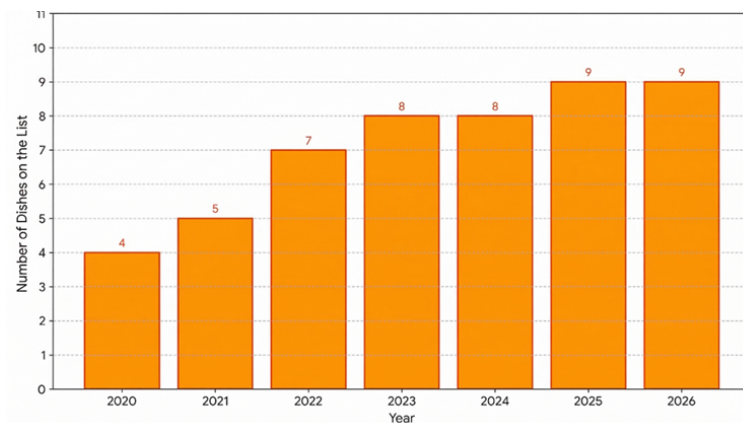


Figure 4. Turkish dishes featured in *tasteatlas*' 'world's top 100 foods' list (2020-2026). Source: [21]

As shown in Table 3, the highest-rated dishes in Turkish cuisine are listed. Among these dishes, Tombik Döner ranks first with the highest score (4.6). This is followed by Hünkâr Beğendi (4.5), İskender Kebap (4.5) and Çökertme Kebap (4.5), all with the same score. Mantı (4.4), Adana Kebap (4.4) and Alinazik Kebap (4.4) also have the same score.

Table 3. Türkiye's best dishes according to *tasteatlas* data. Source: [21]

Ranking	Product Name	Rate
1	Tombik Döner	4.6
2	Hünkâr Beğendi	4.5
3	İskender Kebap	4.5
4	Çökertme Kebabı	4.5
5	Mantı	4.4
6	Adana Kebap	4.4
7	Alinazik Kebabı	4.4
8	Sarma	4.3
9	Karnıyarık	4.2
10	Hamsi Tava	4.2

When the world's best desserts are examined, Antakya (Hatay) Künefe ranks first with a score of 4.51, followed by Gaziantep Baklava in 5th place, Fıstıklı Sarma in 6th, Maraş Dondurma in 21st, Fırın Sütlaç in 49th, Kazandibi in 51st, İrmik Halva in 54th, Katmer in 62nd, and Şöbiyet in 81st. Türkiye has achieved great success with 9 desserts in the top 100 (Table 4).

Table 4. The world's best desserts according to *tasteatlas* data. Source: [21]

Ranking	Country	Product Name	Rate
1	Türkiye	Antakya Künefesi	4.51
2	England	Clotted Cream Ice Cream	4.49
3	Italy	Gelato al Pistacchio	4.45
4	Italy	Strudel di Mele (Apple Strudel)	4.45
5	Türkiye	Gaziantep Baklavası	4.42
6	Türkiye	Fıstıklı Sarma	4.42
7	Puerto Rico	Templeque	4.42
8	France	Crêpes Sucrées	4.39
9	Lithuania	Tinginys	4.39
10	Portugal	Pão de Ló de Ovar	4.38
—	—	—	—
21	Türkiye	Maraş Dondurması	4.30
49	Türkiye	Fırın Sütlaç	4.24
51	Türkiye	Kazandibi	4.20
54	Türkiye	İrmik Helvası	4.16
62	Türkiye	Katmer	4.11
81	Türkiye	Şöbiyet	4.08

Turkish desserts are ranked similarly to globally in TasteAstlas data. Antakya Künefe is ranked first with 4.5 points, followed by Fıstıklı Sarma with 4.4 points, Gaziantep Baklava with 4.4 points, and three desserts – Dondurma, Künefe,

and Fırın Sütlaç – with 4.3 points each. Kazandibi and Baklava are ranked 4.2 points each, while İrmik Halva is in 9th place with 4.1 points and Şöbiyet is in 10th place (Table 5).

Table 5. Best turkish desserts according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]

Ranking	Product Name	Rate
1	Antakya Künefesi	4.5
2	Fıstık Sarma	4.4
3	Gaziantep Baklavası	4.4
4	Dondurma	4.3
5	Künefe	4.3
6	Fırın Sütlaç	4.3
7	Kazandibi	4.2
8	Baklava	4.2
9	İrmik Helvası	4.1
10	Şöbiyet	4.1

4.3. REGIONAL AND CITY-FOCUSED GASTRONOMIC VALUES

Table 6 shows that gastrodiplomacy activities are carried out not only at the national level but also at the regional level. While different regions of Italy and Greece are among the top 10, Türkiye lags behind somewhat. The Marmara Region is ranked 33rd, the Aegean Region 60th, and the Black Sea Region 65th.

Table 6. The world's best food regions according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]

World Rankings	Country	Region	Featured Flavors	Rate
1	Italy	Campania	Pizza Napoletana, Mozzarella	4.60
2	Italy	Emilia-Romagna	Parmigiano Reggiano, Lasagna	4.58
3	Greece	Crete (Girit)	Dakos, Girit Zeytinyağı	4.58
4	Italy	Sicily	Arancini, Cannoli	4.51
5	Greece	Macedonia	Kontosouvli, Bougatsa	4.51
6	Greece	Cyclades	Fava Santorinis, Graviera Naxou	4.49
7	Italy	Tuscany	Bistecca alla Fiorentina	4.48
8	Greece	Peloponnese	Kalamata Zeytini	4.47
9	Italy	Lazio	Pasta Carbonara, Guanciale	4.46
10	Greece	North Aegean	Sakız Adası Ürünleri	4.45
—	—	—	—	—
33	Türkiye	Marmara Region	İskender Kebap, İnegöl Köfte	4.22
60	Türkiye	Aegean Region	Zeytinyağlılar, Boyoz, Çöp Şiş	4.16
65	Türkiye	Black Sea Region	Pide, Mısır Ekmeği, Muhlama	4.13
78	Türkiye	Gaziantep	Baklava, Beyran, Lahmacun	4.67
80	Türkiye	Central Anatolia	Mantı, Pastırma, Yağlama, Etli Ekmek	4.11

These data, reflecting Türkiye's diplomatic potential in the field of viticulture and wine production, show that Urla Nero D'Avola achieved a flawless global rating with a perfect score of 5.0, while local producers such as Akberg Lethe and Chateau Kalpak continued this success with a score of 4.8 (Table 7).

Table 7. Best Turkish wines according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]

Ranking	Product Name	Rate
1	Urla Nero D'Avola - Urla Karası	5.0
2	Akberg Lethe Erciş Karası	4.8
3	Chateau Kalpak	4.8
4	Yedi Bilgeler Vindemia Defne	4.8
5	Kayra Vintage Öküzgözü	4.7
6	Kavaklıdere Prestige Boğazkere	4.5
7	Kocabağ Leo's	4.5
8	Doluca Tuğra Öküzgözü	4.4
9	Pamukkale L Series Kalecik Karası	4.3
10	Vinkara Mahzen Kalecik Karası	4.2

Looking at the ranking of the best Turkish cheeses, Divle Obruk cheese takes first place with 4.9 points, followed by

Erzincan and Bergama Tulum cheese with 4.4 points. Examining the list, Kars Gravyer cheese is in 4th place, and Tulum cheese is in 5th place. It is evident that the vast majority of Turkish cheeses are appreciated and receive high scores worldwide (Table 8).

Table 8. *Best Turkish cheeses according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]*

Ranking	Product Name	Rate
1	Divle Obruk Peyniri	4.9
2	Erzincan Tulum Peyniri	4.4
3	Bergama Tulum Peyniri	4.4
4	Kars Gravyer Peyniri	4.3
5	Tulum Peyniri (Genel)	4.2
6	Mihaliç Peyniri	4.1
7	Dil Peyniri	4.1
8	İzmir Tulum Peyniri	4.0
9	Beyaz Peynir	3.9
10	Lor Peyniri	3.6

Looking at the table of the best Turkish mezes, Kalamar Tava takes first place with 4.5 points, followed by Paçanga Böreği with 4.3 points. Hummus and Piyaz are in 3rd and 4th place respectively with 4.2 points. An examination of these mezes reveals their significant place in Turkish cuisine and their popularity worldwide (Table 9).

Table 9. *Best Turkish mezes according to tasteatlas data. Source: [21]*

Ranking	Product Name	Rate
1	Kalamar Tava	4.5
2	Paçanga Böreği	4.3
3	Humus	4.2
4	Piyaz	4.2
5	Haydari	4.1
6	Çiğ Köfte	4.1
7	Kabak Mücver	4.1
8	Kısır	4.1
9	Cacık	4.0
10	Arnavut Ciğeri	4.0

4.4. REFINED CUISINE AND INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION

When Table 10 is examined, it is seen that only 5 restaurants from Türkiye are included among the world's 1000 restaurants. These restaurants are seen to be elite or corporate establishments, as opposed to those involved in mass tourism. Turk Fatih Tutak ranks first with the highest score (93.0), while establishments like Mikla (87.5) and Neolokal (84.5) offer traditional products in a more modern form and at higher prices. Two establishments with a score of 75.0, 7 Mehmet and OD Urla, stand out as businesses that have brought this success to Anatolia.

Table 10. *Turkish restaurants included in La Liste's top 1000 restaurants. Source: [23].*

Restaurant Name	City	La Liste Score (Max: 100)
Turk Fatih Tutak	İstanbul	93.0
Mikla at The Marmara Pera	İstanbul	87.5
Neolokal	İstanbul	84.5
7 Mehmet	Antalya	75.0
OD Urla	İzmir	75.0

4.5. DIGITAL GASTRODIPLOMACY AND GLOBAL INTEREST

An examination of the image reveals that, according to Google Trends, searches for the term "döner" originate most frequently from Türkiye. Germany ranks second, followed by the United Kingdom in third, Cyprus in fourth, and Switzerland in fifth (Figure 5).

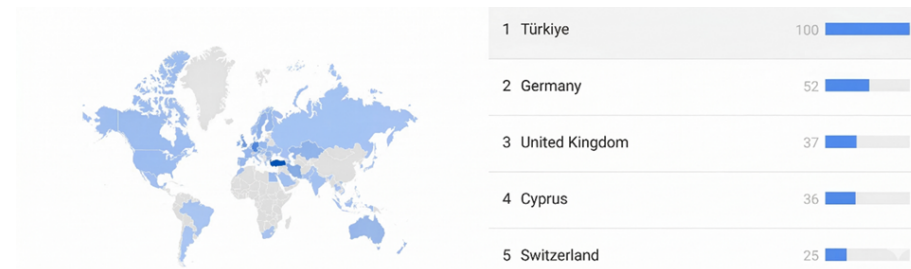


Figure 5. Global interest in the term "döner" according to google trends data (2025-2026). Source: [22]

According to Google Trends, when searches for the word "kebab" are examined, Türkiye ranks first with a perfect score of 100, followed by Poland in second place with 96 points, and France in third place with 63 points. Spain is in fourth place with 59 points, and Iran is in fifth place, also with 59 points (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Global interest in the term "Kebab" according to google trends data (2025-2026). Source: [22]

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gastronomy is a concept that has gained prominence in world literature in recent years and is constantly evolving in this field. Countries no longer view this concept solely as offering food or products, but have begun to use it as a tool of power. This research aims to reveal the place and potential of Turkish cuisine and dishes in terms of gastrodiplomacy by examining TasteAtlas data. In addition, Google Trends data was also analyzed to complete the research. The analysis of the obtained data reveals that although Türkiye does not have extensive work in the field of gastrodiplomacy, its cuisines and values represent a significant source of power.

According to TasteAtlas data, Türkiye's ranking among the top ten best cuisines in the world demonstrates the strength of Turkish cuisine. Furthermore, the recognition and appreciation of Turkish products and dishes by other countries over time has led to a continuous rise in the rankings. While this rise has been supported by political successes, in recent years it has been driven by technology and digitalization. Social media and advertising campaigns, in particular, have accelerated this momentum. Turkish cuisine, with its kebab varieties such as Oltu Cağ Kebab, Çökertme Kebab, and Beyti Kebab, dishes like Manti and Hünkâr Beğendi, and desserts like Antakya (Hatay) Künefe, Gaziantep Baklava, and Fıstıklı Sarma, ranks among the top in the world. In addition to these products, the success of other culinary items has resulted in significant gastro-diplomacy. Turkish cuisine has achieved great success not only nationally but also internationally, and Türkiye has come to the forefront regionally. Cities like İstanbul, Gaziantep, and İzmir have propelled themselves to the global top. Furthermore, the variety of mezes and cheeses, which hold an important place in Turkish culinary culture, contribute to its rich culinary heritage. Combined with modern kitchen technology, Turkish culinary culture has secured a strong position in international world rankings in recent years. The constant search volume for products like döner and kebabs in databases by other countries has created a significant global trend. Its digital visibility has also resulted in great success in terms of gastro-diplomacy.

When the results are examined generally, it is clear that Turkish cuisine, with its increasing success in recent years, has great potential in terms of gastrodiplomacy. By properly utilizing this power in the international arena, Turkish cuisine can become even stronger. This power will be further enhanced through sound tourism policies and the acquisition and protection of geographical indications. Success will be achieved even faster, especially with increased activities in the digital world and support from political power. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Turkish cuisine holds a significant position on a global scale within the context of gastronomy diplomacy and, when supported by the right strategies, can be used as an effective tool to strengthen Türkiye's cultural brand value. Future research that comparatively examines different gastronomy platforms, analyzes their sustainability, analyzes social media data, and evaluates the impact of gastronomy diplomacy on the tourism economy could make significant contributions to the literature.

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